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Lúil 2022

**Joint Committee on Education, Further and
Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science**
Education and Supports Provision for Displaced Ukrainian Students

July 2022

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CATHAOIRLEACH'S FOREWORD



On 24 February 2022, Russian troops invaded Ukraine. Since that date, nearly 6 million Ukrainian citizens have been forced to flee their homes to escape the war, with this number rising every day. The vast majority of these are women and children. As of, 19 June 2022, more than 38,700 Ukrainian refugees have come to Ireland, and it is expected that the final number will be more than 200,000.

The Government, and indeed the citizens of Ireland, have responded to this crisis by welcoming these refugees and providing a vast range of measures in a short space of time to help them to settle and integrate into Ireland and Irish society.

This influx of children and young people will result in a range of urgent and pressing challenges within our education system, including Further and Higher Education. It will require significant teaching resources, not just in terms of additional numbers within the system, but also the additional needs, from English language supports to emotional and psychological assistance.

In March, Deputy Marc Ó Cathasaigh proposed that the Joint Committee should examine the key issues regarding Education Provision for Ukrainian Refugee students. The Committee endorsed this Proposal and commenced an examination of the Education and Support Provisions for Displaced Ukrainian Students.

The Committee received detailed briefing notes and engaged in further discussion with Ms. Norma Foley TD, Minister for Education and Mr. Simon Harris TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

The Committee also received commentary notes from key stakeholders and heard oral evidence from the Office of the Ombudsman for Children; Barnardos; the Irish Red Cross; the Irish Refugee Council; and the Library Association of Ireland (LAI), Schools Library Group (SLG).

There has been an overwhelmingly positive response to welcoming Ukrainian refugees into Ireland. This Committee would like to commend the efforts of both the Department of Education and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science for all the measures they have put in place in such a short timeframe to help and facilitate the children and students arriving as guests of our nation.

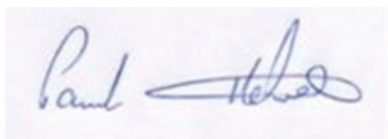
This is truly an unprecedented occurrence in Irish history and the Committee acknowledges the huge amount of work and effort that has been made by all those involved in education and related supports. This report is a synopsis of the work that has been done to date and will provide a snapshot in time of a momentous period in our history.

The recommendations are intended to be a roadmap to provide the best possible educational outcomes for displaced Ukrainian students. I genuinely believe education will be the key that unlocks a bright future for displaced students. It will give them a freedom that no one can take from them.

The Committee is committed to ensuring these recommendations are implemented as expeditiously as possible.

On 5 July 2022, the report was agreed to be published by the Committee.

The Joint Committee also requests that the issues raised in this report be the subject of a debate in both Houses of the Oireachtas.



Paul Kehoe T.D.,

Cathaoirleach,

**Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research,
Innovation and Science.**

5 July 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine on 24 February 2022 Ireland has been part of the European wide effort to support Ukrainian refugees fleeing their country. Around 90% of these are women and children of school age. As such, the Government has a responsibility to provide education and the appropriate in-school supports to the Ukrainian refugees arriving in Ireland.

The Irish Government has been quick to respond to the crisis as evidenced by the briefing notes submitted and oral evidence provided by the Ministers for Education and Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. In tandem, the Joint Committee sought written Commentary Notes from key stakeholders and held a roundtable discussion with five key organisations providing educational supports. The recommendations in the report are based on the evidence and findings from the written and oral evidence provided.

The existing funding structures under the free education scheme should be extended to all displaced Ukrainian students.

All schools should be resourced to designate a member(s) of staff (based on the size of the student population) as a Family Liaison Officer (FLO). The FLO appointments should be designated as a Post of Responsibility (POR) and carry an appropriate allowance.

The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) Library Project Digital Library Service should be expanded to become a *National Digital Library Service* for all second-level schools and Youthreach centres, to include a range of resources in Ukrainian and Russian.

An English language assessment must be carried out on all students at the earliest possible stage in their enrolment in education to assess what (if any) language supports they required. A *Language Support Plan*, tailored at an appropriate level, should then be provided. Signs, posters and other written

material should be displayed in Ukrainian and Russian as well as in English and Irish where possible to help foster an environment of inclusion and belonging.

All Further and Higher Education Institutions must put in place clear arrangements to facilitate displaced Ukrainian students completing placements and/or assignments as part of their coursework.

The National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) should be expanded to include therapeutic (including trauma) supports on site not only for the newly enrolled Ukrainian students, but also for existing students and the teachers who are providing support to distressed students.

A Sanctuary Room and/or designated calm space should be made available in all schools for displaced students.

The Department of Education should establish a *Digital Support Fund* so that Senior Cycle students can complete their exams as per the Ukrainian curriculum.

Other recommendations include:

- English as an Additional Language (EAL) support for students and their parents.
- Access to translators and interpreters for all education providers.
- Providing school transport.
- Providing Extra Curricular Activities.
- Fixed Rate Allowance for all school staff employed on Summer Schools programme.

TEN KEY REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are the Ten Key Report Recommendations, listed by order in which they appear in the main body of the Report. They are all equally important.

1. The existing funding structures under the free education scheme should be extended to all displaced Ukrainian students.
2. All Primary and Post Primary Schools should designate one (or an appropriate number based on the size of the student population) member of staff, as a Family Liaison Officer (FLO). Each FLO appointment should be designated a Post of Responsibility (POR) with the commensurate allowance.
3. The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) Library Project Digital Library Service should be expanded to become a *National Digital Library Service* for all second-level schools and Youthreach centres, to include a range of resources in Ukrainian and Russian.
4. All Further and Higher Education Institutions must put in place clear arrangements to facilitate displaced Ukrainian students completing placements and/or assignments as part of their coursework including previous credits acquired. Allowances should be considered for students who must repeat their placements/assignments. The arrangements should be provided in writing in Ukrainian and Russian to ensure absolute clarity.
5. An English language assessment must be carried out on all students at the earliest possible stage in their enrolment in education to assess what (if any) language supports they require. A *Language Support Plan*, tailored at an appropriate level, should then be provided.

6. The Department of Education must ensure that translators and interpreters are available to schools. These professionals should receive targeted training in advance, to include translating challenging and sensitive conversations. In addition, all Schools, Further Education Institutions (FEI)s and Higher Education Institutions (HEI)s must be equipped with translation services to ensure important documents are provided in Russian and Ukrainian.
7. Ringfenced funding should be provided by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science for Trauma Counselling and other mental health supports in all Further and Higher Education Institutions.
8. The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) must be expanded to include therapeutic (including trauma) supports for schools on site to enable them to support displaced Ukrainian students as well as for existing students.
9. The Department of Education should issue a Circular to all School Principals mandating them to provide a Sanctuary Room and/or designated calm space in all schools for the displaced students. School Libraries could also be used for this purpose. The inclusion of this room should be included in all Whole School Evaluations (WSE)s by the Department of Education Inspectorate.
10. The Department of Education should establish a Digital Support Fund so that Senior Cycle students can complete their exams as per the Ukrainian curriculum. These students should be provided with adequate broadband connection and appropriate digital devices such as laptops or iPads.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1. The Department of Education stated in its briefing note *‘in response to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive, the Government has adopted a whole of government approach to supporting the people who arrive here. This includes ensuring access to education for school-aged children and providing supports both to their families and schools.*

The Department of Education’s primary goal is to ensure that the children and young people of school-going age from Ukraine are provided with appropriate educational opportunities in the coming period. This includes resources and supports that address their needs in the areas of wellbeing, language and education.

Our schools have a strong tradition of welcoming children of all nationalities and backgrounds and have experience of doing this throughout the school year. We already support a linguistically and culturally diverse community in Ireland.’

2. In its commentary note, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated *‘education is a basic human right. It is guaranteed in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹ and in Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.² The fundamental right to education for displaced learners in host countries is included in Article 22 of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.³ Inclusive education is part of the United Nations’ 2030 agenda, particularly in Sustainable Development Goal 4.⁴*

The right to education of refugees is also guaranteed in European Union law, specifically in the Reception Conditions Directive 2013/33, Article 14, which mandates EU Member States to enrol displaced children in their national

¹ See <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

² See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

³ See <https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html>

⁴ See <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

school systems no longer than three months after lodging an application for international protection. EU Member States are also obliged to organize preparatory classes, including language classes, for displaced children that need extra support before they can be fully included in regular classes in the host country.

The right to access to education is also guaranteed for Ukrainian refugees who have fled their country since 24 February 2022 and who are beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in the European Union.⁵

3.The UNHCR further noted *‘as of 3 May 2022, more than 5.6 million Ukrainians had fled their country. Around 90% of those fleeing the country are women and children of school age. According to some estimates, around half of those fleeing are children who are of compulsory school age.⁶*

4.In its commentary note, the Irish National Teachers’ Organisation (INTO), made the point *‘hundreds of thousands of children and young people are fleeing the war in Ukraine into the European Union. Latest figures indicate that nearly 30,000 refugees have arrived in Ireland, approximately 6,000 of which are children or young people. These children need to have access to education, ensuring a fundamental human right, and providing a sense of normality, having suffered the trauma of war and displacement. In this context, Ireland and other European countries face the challenges of including these children quickly, taking care of their specific educational and care needs, providing sufficient help to learn a new language and helping them to become comfortable in their new environment.’*

5.The Department of Education commented *‘facilitating access to schools as quickly as possible will also enable them to build relationships with other children from Ukraine, and to meet and develop friendships with their Irish peers, thus supporting their inclusion into Irish society. Enabling children of school-going age*

⁵ See https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system/temporary-protection_en

⁶ See UNHCR’s data portal <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

to access a welcoming school environment also ensures a sense of security, safety and belonging.'

6. In oral evidence on 14 June 2022, Mr Nick Henderson, CEO, Irish Refugee Council (IRC), stressed the point *'education is a fundamental social good, but it is also a powerful equaliser. It allows people who have recently arrived in Ireland to integrate, form new communities, improve their career prospects, and progress in their new lives. Additionally, access to education for people with a refugee experience enriches Irish society through a diversity of perspectives and cultures. We very much welcome the Government's recognition of the importance of education for new arrivals from Ukraine.'*

CHAPTER 2 – EDUCATION PROVISION

7. The Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU) acknowledged '*integration into a new school system can be difficult and confusing.*' They recommended arriving Ukrainian citizens be provided with an Introduction to the Irish school system in English, Ukrainian and Russian, where possible.
8. In its commentary note, Tusla stated it has '*a role in ensuring that unaccompanied children and young people travelling from Ukraine receive adequate care and protection. Tusla is currently accommodating 50 such young people under the age of 18. Support is being provided to these young people to continue in their education, either by enrolling them in a local school or facilitating them to continue with online learning of the Ukrainian curriculum.*'
9. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) expressed the view '*it is also important to acknowledge that the family members of children and young people seeking protection in Ireland must also be welcomed as part of the school community. Proactive actions to involve, inform and support them to be active in the school community and to participate in student's education will benefit student experience and performance.*'
10. The IHREC further opined '*in respect of the provision of an inclusive education for Ukrainian and other students coming to our classrooms, it is not acceptable that children of a minority religion are still likely to be educated in line with a particular ethos, due to the integrated nature of the curriculum and the fact that few schools have the facilities or personnel to enable children to opt out of denominational teaching. There has been slow progress in establishing more multi-denominational schools. The Commission is concerned that this is a stagnant area of public policy and is of the view that it needs to be substantially addressed.*'
11. The National Parents Council Primary (NPC) explained, its officials '*have examined the needs of children and parents arriving in Ireland from Ukraine*

within an education context and in response, employed a Ukrainian person to operate a helpline for parents of early years and school-going age children. The employee has undergone intensive training on starting her employment, and as of the 4th May the Helpline is now fully operational.'

12. The Library Association of Ireland (LAI) School Libraries Branch (SLG) further reported *'research has shown the JCSP Library Project has positively impacted on literacy skills, attendance, engagement, academic attainment and retention to Senior Cycle. Ukrainian students have had to deal with some major traumas at a very young age and some may have very little spoken English. This puts them at risk of falling behind in school. The additional supports mentioned above that school librarians can provide could help bridge the learning gap and make them feel more socially included.'*

13. The LAI SLG stated *'it is likely that a wide variety of schools (including DEIS and non-DEIS schools), will open their doors to Ukrainian students. Expanding the JCSP Library Project Digital library service to all second level schools would be a very efficient and cost-effective way of providing access to a wide range of reading materials for all (for pleasure reading and for learning). The JCSP Library Project Digital Library Service, currently only available to JCSP/DEIS schools, has over 10,000 unique titles and over 40,000 copies of eBooks, eAudiobooks, Readalongs and Digital Magazines that all students and staff in member schools can access anytime anywhere on their PC, laptop, tablets or mobile devices. This digital library is already established and expanding the service to include all second-level schools could be implemented quickly.'*

14. In oral evidence, on 14 June 2022, Ms. Kathleen Moran, Chairperson, Irish Library Association (ILA) School Libraries Group (SLG), stated *'I would say that in terms of school library provision, School Libraries can target their supports at any particular group, at any particular time as I've said. But whatever is introduced to benefit a particular group, benefits everybody in our field. Whatever services are provided through a school library are provided for the whole school. They may be focussed on a particular group at a particular point in time. In terms*

of Ukrainian students at the moment, we have put in place particular supports for them. But those supports, if it's investment in resources or whatever it may be, are there for the benefit of everybody in the school.'

REGIONAL EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE TEAMS (REALT)

15. The Department of Education outlined how it *'has established 16 Regional Education and Language Teams (REALT) to support the needs of children from Ukraine arriving in Ireland.*

These REALTs will be hosted by the 16 regional Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and will be staffed by existing regionally-based education support personnel from a number of organisations, working closely together to ensure good coordination and alignment of supports for children from Ukraine. The Department will be liaising with the teams to ensure all necessary supports are provided as quickly as possible.'

16. The Department of Education continued, *'the primary role of the REALT will be to assist families in finding school places and to support schools in the area to meet the needs of these children as they emerge, to advise and support the Department in developing new capacity where required, and to co-ordinate the provision of education services to children and families across their defined area. These teams will ensure that clear, accessible information flows are in place between schools, local education support services and national support structures in relation to arrivals from Ukraine.*

The regional teams will be hosted and administratively supported within the ETBs and will lead a network of other key agencies, including Túsla Education Support Service (TESS), National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS) regional personnel, National Council for Special Education (NCSE) regional personnel and management body local nominees working together with local schools. All of the key agencies working together in a holistic manner will bring added value and efficiencies to the process of supporting the children from Ukraine.'

17. Tusla explained its Education and Support Service (TESS) *'has been working closely with the Department of Education regarding the set up of the Regional Education and Language Support Teams (REALT) in each Education and Training Board. The Interim Director of TESS is a member of the REALT Steering Group. TESS regional management are represented on each REALT. The experience of TESS staff in supporting Ukrainian Students is being gathered to ensure consistency of response and best practice is shared across the REALTs.'*

CAPACITY IN SCHOOLS

18. The Department of Education, referring to school capacity, reported *'the arrival of a large number of children from Ukraine will create capacity challenges in the system both in terms of physical school buildings in a position to accommodate additional pupils and also the human resources, teachers, Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) etc. with the skills to address their education needs. The challenges relate not just to mainstream primary and post primary school places but are also in respect of appropriate provision for pupils with special education needs.'*

19. The Department of Education added, *'the utilisation of capacity within existing schools across the country will be a very important aspect for addressing the immediate need for education provision for children from Ukraine. The Department already has data on capacity and under/over subscription at individual schools from its National Inventory of School Capacity based on schools' annual enrolment returns and utilises its Geographic Information System to facilitate spatial analysis of this and other data. It will work with the education partners to verify and supplement this data over the coming period, to provide valuable information on where the system can accept more students within existing infrastructure.*

Ultimately, the location of the accommodation provided for families from Ukraine will be relevant in identifying appropriate school capacity to meet their education needs and the Department is coordinating with the DCEDIY and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in this respect.'

20. In its commentary note, the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) stated *‘when Ukrainian students present at the school to look for admission, every effort is made to accommodate the student in the school in the appropriate year group for their age. Every effort to enrol students of Post-Primary age (12-18 years) is being made, in addition to endeavouring to integrate the students with their Irish peers.*

Schools that have been oversubscribed are mindful of their obligations under the Admissions Act, 2018, in relation to waiting lists and local students who had previously applied for a place and may still require or desire a place in the school as they had previously been unsuccessful in their application for a place.

Since the emergence of this crisis, school Principals have conducted curriculum audits to ascertain the number of places that they have available in each year group. The determining factor on capacity, in general, relates to the option subjects where capacity in Woodwork, Metalwork, Science, Art, etc. is limited to 24 and in Home Economics is limited to 20. Academic classes are capped at 30 but this is usually not the critical factor that determines capacity. Factors such as Teacher availability, building layout and facilities will generally determine the number and scope of option subjects offered by a school and schools are not in a position to alter their timetable and thus their capacity during the academic year.’

21. The NAPD further reported, while certain schools have capacity in their buildings, *‘the recruitment of teachers continues to be a challenge for schools and is likely to be a significant factor in planning for next year also. There are specific subjects and areas where the deficit in teachers are pronounced and there is little sign of improvement for next year.’*

FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS

22. In its commentary note, the Irish Secondary Schools Union (ISSU) recognised *‘taking on a large number of new students at short notice can be financially*

straining on a school.’ As such, the ISSU recommend ‘grants be made available to support schools on a case-by-case basis, in particular, DEIS schools.’

23. The LAI SLG highlighted *‘school libraries could play an integral role in providing education and supports to Ukrainian and other displaced students. International research has shown that school libraries and school librarians can have a very positive impact on young people’s personal outcomes.’*

School Libraries are dedicated spaces that can foster creativity, give students access to resources they otherwise may not have and offer sanctuary to all students, especially those who may end up living in cramped conditions. As the number of school libraries in Ireland is very low, as an immediate response, we recommend that the JCSP Library Project Digital Library Service receives appropriate operational funding and is expanded to include all second-level schools and Youthreach centres. This would give displaced migrant students access to a bespoke collection of eBooks, Audio Books and language resources.’

24. In its commentary note, Doras stated *‘reports of racism in primary and secondary schools is an ongoing concern, particularly where teachers and management don’t know how to respond effectively. Many schools will face new challenges in this area. Taking a proactive approach that includes resources for training and the development of anti-racism policies and guidelines is important.’*

25. In oral evidence, on 14 June 2022, Ms Nuala Ward, Director of Investigations, Office of the Ombudsman for Children (OCO), stated *‘culturally responsive education supports are important tools in ensuring integration and inclusion. The use of intercultural workers in schools – as in Northern Ireland through the Intercultural Education Service – is an example of good practice in promoting integration of children into schools. Due consideration should be given by the Department of Education, School Boards, REALTs and schools to providing culturally responsive supports to children as they transition into the Irish school system.’*

26. Ms. Moran noted *'only 30 schools have publicly-funded school libraries staffed by professional librarians in Ireland - only 30. These are all part of the JCSP Demonstration Library Project and all operate in second-level DEIS schools. Several hundred Ukrainian students have joined these 30 schools over the past few months and our JCSP Librarians have already introduced a wide range of tailored literacy, reading and wellbeing support programmes - including multilingual welcome packs, books, dictionaries and other resources in students' home languages, support materials across all subject areas and much more.*

Many of our librarians are opening their libraries in the early morning to facilitate students to attend early morning online Ukrainian school classes (using library devices and computers) - a very important support for the many students wishing to continue their Ukrainian education. Ukrainian students have been integrated into the wide range of extra-curricular library clubs and societies and our librarians have organised a range of arts and cultural trips for these students, to help them to integrate into Irish society. Supports to wider family members include parents' book clubs, facilitating loans (both physical and virtual) to parents and younger siblings, block loans of book collections to local accommodation hubs, etc.'

CURRICULUM

27. The Department of Education reported they have *'been focussed on ensuring that school places can be secured for students from Ukraine, with these students following the curriculum provided in Irish schools. In the medium to longer term, the Department is seeking advice from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) regarding the model of curriculum provision that should be provided for students from Ukraine.*

The NCCA has had contact with the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE) network of which it has membership. CIDREE includes organisations with responsibility for curriculum and assessment. These initial contacts have been useful in identifying the

approaches being taken in other countries in relation to education provision for students from Ukraine.

They have also been helpful in identifying what provisions the Ukrainian authorities have in place to support these students. These provisions include work being done by the Ukrainian government with international partners through the UNICEF Global Education Cluster to keep education going as the war continues, with the aim to avoid educational gaps, prevent fragmentation, and ensure education is delivered safely during crises.

Further, it has been reported that Ukraine's strong education response to Covid-19 has given the country a solid distance-learning infrastructure, which means that distance-learning tools developed during the pandemic have limited the need for physical learning spaces in internal displacement camps. Ukraine has several private service providers for distance-learning and the Ukrainian school system is continuing online. Ukrainian TV channels are working with the Ukrainian government to develop educational TV programmes for five to eleven year-olds, called Learning without Borders.'

28. The Department of Education further noted *'while provision will need to adapt as the crisis continues, there are a number of key points related to the provision of curriculum for newly arrived children from Ukraine. These include:*

- i. Integration into the education system at the earliest opportunity;*
- ii. A focus on providing supports for children for whom English is an additional language;*
- iii. A focus on providing an inclusive and welcoming learning environment;*
- iv. A focus on supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of the child;*
- v. A focus on supporting the sense of identity and belonging (social cohesion) children have with the school and peer groups;*
- vi. Providing supports and, potentially, tuition in the child's home language, literature, heritage and culture.'*

29. The Department of Education also reported *‘all newly-arrived children attending Irish schools in recent years have engaged, first and foremost, with the national curriculum of Ireland. Within this model, newly-arrived children experience the national curriculum (including Aistear – the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, the Primary School Curriculum, the Framework for Junior Cycle, and Senior Cycle) when they attend Irish schools and early childhood settings.’*
30. The UNHCR expressed the view *‘various international regulations, directives and guidelines recommend that displaced learners be included in national school systems within three months of arrival in a host country.’⁷ Parallel education systems only for refugee children are to be avoided since these are usually not sustainable, they may not be able to offer the same quality of education as the national school system, and because they are not conducive to the long term integration of refugee children in host communities.’*
31. The Department of Education stated *‘in considering the best approach to curriculum provision for children from Ukraine, there are a number of options – each with benefits and challenges to be considered. In considering whether it is more beneficial for these children to undertake the national curriculum in Ireland, to continue with their Ukrainian curriculum, or to develop a hybrid, bridging model between the two.’⁸*
32. The UNHCR reported *‘assumptions that short term humanitarian support and approaches were sufficient shaped earlier approaches to refugee education.’⁹ These were often based on use of country of origin curriculum, administered in*

⁷ See among other UNHCR's Refugee Education 2030, A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion <https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/publications/education/5d651da88d7/education-2030-strategy-refugee-education.html>; the Global Compact on Refugees section 68-69 <https://www.unhcr.org/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html>

⁸ Further details are contained in the Briefing Note from the Department of Education, page 10.

⁹ See among other this case study on education of Syrian refugee children in Turkey <https://assets.globalpartnership.org/s3fs-public/document/file/2021-01-05-gpe-turkey-case-history-education-provision-for-refugees-from-2017-to-2019.pdf?VersionId=l75Qd3aXvT4nqbMy.K6ITB4LTpATs9V> ; at the height of the Syrian refugee influx into Turkey, Syrian children were initially channelled into separate Temporary Education Centres. Since 2016, the Turkish government has channelled these refugee children into the national education system.

parallel to national education systems that were neither supervised nor certified by country of asylum education authorities, and had no vision of students as eventual members of the local community.

These assumptions have given way to a new understanding that short term approaches to refugee education are insufficient and inappropriate to displacement realities, which require medium to longer term development perspectives and opportunities for knowledge and skills acquisition.¹⁰ It is therefore recommended that any initiatives to continue teaching the Ukrainian curriculum in Ireland be limited in time and that they would serve principally to allow Ukrainian refugee children to finish the current school year.'

33. The UNHCR also noted *'for those Ukrainian children who were close to graduation before being displaced, UNHCR would recommend that they be enrolled in Irish school as soon as possible. This will allow them to start preparatory classes if needed and to start their inclusion into the Irish school system, so as to limit the time out of school in case the conflict in Ukraine prevents them from returning and re-entering the Ukrainian education system for a longer time. Additional measures may be considered to allow them to continue following the Ukrainian curriculum until they graduate and can receive a certificate or diploma, for example by organizing additional classes to complement the education they will receive when enrolled in an Irish school.'*
34. The UNHCR, referring to the long-term, stated *'while the Ukrainian emergency is still evolving, there are currently no signs the conflict will end immediately. Moreover, prospects of Ukrainian children returning to their country and resuming their education as before are becoming smaller as the conflict continues. Even if hostilities stop today, the security situation in the country, as well as the massive destruction of education infrastructure and displacement of a significant proportion of the Ukrainian teaching personnel will probably prevent a majority of displaced learners to return for the mid- to longer-term.'*

¹⁰ Ibid, see footnote 11, page 10

Therefore... it is necessary to include all refugee children and youths, Ukrainian as well as others, in accredited and accountable early childhood education and accredited primary and secondary education in Ireland as soon as possible after displacement.'

35. The INTO, making international comparisons, noted *'some countries such as France, Germany and Finland have established preparatory classes or 'bridging' classes to provide children with the necessary skills (including language skills) to transition to primary school and promote children's balanced development and integration into society.*

An alternative approach is to facilitate early immersion within mainstream classes and curricula, with additional specific support to accelerate social and academic learning. There is a growing trend in a number of jurisdictions to provide in-class support to migrant students to develop the language of schooling parallel to subject-specific knowledge employing innovative, inclusive, and multilingual pedagogies.'

36. The INTO further stated *'the provision of additional support similar to that afforded to schools as part of the Covid Learning and Support Scheme (CLASS) would be useful for Irish primary schools to provide targeted support for pupils who have been impacted by war and trauma. Under the CLASS programme this academic year (2021-2022) teachers are providing additional teaching support for pupils who require targeted intervention to address their needs. The granting of additional hours to schools as a response to the current humanitarian crisis would be helpful in supporting co-curricular activities that could reduce the negative impact on children's wellbeing and foster pupils' sense of safety, calm, efficacy and connectedness.*

The allocation of additional hours would be of immense benefit in facilitating such approaches and allow children to engage within the mainstream class with the targeted support required, thus ensuring that they are not segregated from peers

for valuable aspects of classroom learning as would be the case if they were withdrawn.'

37. The INTO also made the point *'Ireland has access to educational materials and pedagogical innovations which were developed during the pandemic and these can be enriched with the specific materials of Ukrainian language and other home languages. Adding to these existing suites of resources will be of great assistance to teachers. The Department of Education has made progress in this regard and content has been curated on the Scoilnet website which is accessible to all schools. Other examples of good practice in this regard include the Erasmus+ co-funded project "EDINA - Education of International Newly Arrived migrant pupils" (developed by policymakers, schools, and researchers from Finland, Belgium and The Netherlands) and 'Micreate'. It is important that the working group involved in the Department of Education's initiative continue to review and refresh materials to ensure resources within the toolkit are up-to-date, appropriate to the Irish context and evidence based.'*

38. Furthermore, the INTO noted *'play is "the work of the child" and provides children with opportunities to express their feelings and deal with their emotions, as reinforced in the 'Aistear' Framework. Providing opportunities for pupils to engage in creative activities will help to enhance their learning. Teachers are skilled in integrating drama, music and art into various curricular areas. An emphasis on Arts education can enrich pupils' learning experience and support their socioemotional and cognitive development.'*

39. The NAPD reported *'students arriving from Ukraine are being accommodated within existing timetables and are being offered access to the curriculum as it is currently offered in the school.'* The NAPD continued, *'it is fair to acknowledge that schools have been agile and innovative in their response to this immediate crisis and that schools have done their best within existing resourcing structures. It is equally fair to acknowledge that this current response has emerged temporarily and prudent planning and resourcing is required to properly cater for the needs of these students into the next academic year.'*

A small number of students have expressed a desire to undertake the Irish Leaving Certificate and schools are engaging with the State Examinations Commission to facilitate this where possible. In addition, a small number of students are planning to take Ukrainian exams and schools are supporting students to do this.'

40. In its commentary note, the Association for Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS) stated *'schools have reported that students at Stage 11 of the Ukrainian system are preparing for their final examinations, the equivalent of our Leaving Certificate. In such cases the students engage in Physical Education, Religious Education, Guidance etc., but when it comes to examination preparation, they access the Ukrainian curriculum online.'*

However, *'students who have entered 5th Year in the Irish system are more engaged in the Irish curriculum and at this stage appear intent on sitting the Irish Leaving Certificate if they remain within Ireland. In this regard we in ACCS have been asked can Ukrainian be included as one of the non-curricular languages examined in Leaving Certificate 2023.'*

41. In its commentary note, the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) agreed with this and stated *'the TUI also notes that the SEC already enables students to take Leaving Certificate examinations in 'non-curricular languages' such as Polish and Latvian. The range of 'non-curricular languages' is currently confined to EU languages. However, given the circumstances, the TUI believes that an exception could be made so that Ukrainian students could take a Leaving Certificate examination in their own language.'*

42. In its commentary note, the Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN) proposed *'where a group of Ukrainian children starts in a local school, it may be possible to use the local community centre, or a spare classroom in a school (if such exists) to bring them together with a Ukrainian teacher or parent(s) to offer a week or two of preparation before full immersion in the Irish education system.'*

This facility could be further used to ensure children are facilitated to practice and progress elements of their own culture e.g. language, dance, Ukrainian history etc. This would prepare them for their return to Ukraine after the war – however long that may be.'

43. Ms Ward stated *'on curriculum provision, we note exemptions from studying the Irish language are being issued in line with existing Department of Education guidance in Circulars 0052/2019 and 0053/2019, which we understand are currently under review. This means that children arriving from Ukraine under the age of 12, who do not have 'significant learning difficulties' as detailed in the circulars, may not qualify for exemptions.'*

44. Ms Ward recommended *'some children may benefit from a more flexible approach to Irish language exemptions, and we have recently engaged with the Department of Education on this matter. We have been assured that any changes to this circular will include consideration of the best interest of the child and we hope that will be reflected in practice. Children under the age of 12, for example, may benefit from additional time in their school day to adapt to studying English as an additional language, or for work supporting their movement to a different national curriculum.'*

45. In oral evidence on 1 June, Ms Norma Foley TD, Minister for Education stated *'in terms of the leaving certificate, the Deputy raised a very good point that many of the students who come here are probably in the upper senior cycle. I want to acknowledge that some of them - just over a 1,000 of them - continue to engage with the online Ukrainian system of education. Again, I want to salute the schools that have made this possible for those who want to do it. Many others are very happy to move into different year groups. The inspectorate is working very closely with the schools in helping them to identify what year groups at the senior level, as raised by the Deputy, are appropriate to the students.'*

Minister Foley continued, ‘we are co-ordinating with the Ukrainian authorities to provide online access for students who wish to avail of schooling in Ukrainian. Many of them wish to engage in the Irish education system as well. We have, at this point, more than 1,000 students who have availed of the online facilities and I want to acknowledge that our schools have made that possible. There is also the role of our inspectorate who work with the schools on the ground to ensure that the students are placed in the level that is appropriate to their needs. Equally, we have put huge resources into supporting students whose level of access in terms of language might not be what is require.

We are ensuring that where they wish to draw down the support of the Ukrainian education system, that is made available to them. If digital devices are required or any other supports in that respect, they are being provided. We are also giving them the opportunity to avail of the Irish education system. I have met many parents who came to the schools when I visited, and I have met parents in communities as well who have been very appreciative of the opportunity for their children to avail of the Irish education system. It is a marriage of both. We are not in any way prohibiting students from availing of their own accommodations at home or what is being provided here in Ireland.’

REGISTRATION FOR TEACHERS FROM UKRAINE

46. The Department of Education reported ‘other than the limited exceptions permitted under Ministerial Regulations, Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act prohibits payment from monies provided by the Oireachtas to people employed as teachers in recognised schools unless they are registered with the Teaching Council. Where teachers from Ukraine provide evidence of being a qualified teacher in their home country, they can apply to be admitted to the register of teachers. The Teaching Council is currently developing processes to make reasonable accommodations in order to support the registration and vetting of teachers from Ukraine who have been granted Temporary Protection under the EU Temporary Protection Directive. This information will be published on the

Teaching Council's website shortly. A dedicated email address is available for teachers from Ukraine who wish to apply for registration.¹¹

47. The NAPD welcomed the commitment from the Teaching Council to expeditiously register teachers who have arrived from Ukraine. *'The legalisation underpinning the registration and the garda vetting makes this very difficult. A number of teachers who have arrived from Ukraine are currently volunteering in Irish schools but must be supervised by a registered teacher and not allowed unsupervised access to students in line with Garda vetting requirements. This continues to present a challenge for school leaders filling timetables for the Ukrainian students.'*

48. In its commentary note, the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABSME) suggested *'we have Ukrainian qualified teachers in Ireland now. Can they be employed as Resource teachers/Classroom assistants who can be flexible and work both in a hub (as suggested above) and support children when in their class with Irish classmates?'*

49. In its commentary note, Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) proposed, *'Ukrainian teachers who have been registered or who are awaiting registration should be provided with a summer course in their local Education Centre. This summer course could focus on the structures and norms of the Irish education system and primary/post-primary schools in particular. Such courses would give these teachers confidence entering into the workplace and also save individual schools significant amounts of time informing these teachers about such issues.'*

TEACHER EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

50. The Department of Education advised *'a central repository of information and continuing professional development (CPD) resources for school leaders and teachers to support cultural and linguistic diversity has been developed on the Scoilnet.ie website that schools are familiar with. These supports include those*

¹¹ ukrainianteachers@teachingcouncil.ie

designed by NEPS to help children suffering from trauma and EAL, intercultural and relevant curriculum supports developed by the teacher education supports services including the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), the NCCA and the ETB sector. The teacher education support services are designing and developing additional CPD supports for schools and teachers.'

51. The IPPN noted *'to support school leaders who are managing the enrolment and supports for children arriving from Ukraine in their schools, IPPN's Leadership Support Service, which offers 1-to-1 phone-based confidential advice and support to members, has provided support to a number of school leaders in this regard. IPPN has also prepared a 'Resource Bundle' of materials and support information in relation to this, which is updated regularly.'*

52. NABMSE stated *'the movement of Ukrainian children from place to place due to shortage of accommodation is very destabilising and needs to be urgently addressed. This lack of stability has a traumatising impact on whole families. NABMSE suggests that a [Home School Liaison] HSCL person be appointed to support the families coming into the area, act as a liaison for the families with the school, accommodation centres and the REALT team. They would play an invaluable role in supporting and helping to stabilise life for whole families.'*

CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

53. The Department of Education reported that they are *'working to ensure that the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) will be available to support schools that have children from Ukraine with additional or special educational needs. Local Special Education Needs Organisers (SENOs) will be available to support individual families in accessing education and related supports for their children with special education needs. In this regard the SENOs will link with other relevant state agencies including Education Welfare Services, the HSE and their local REALT.'*

The overarching principle for understanding the additional needs of some of the arriving children and young people will be based on international practice and will

follow the principle of 'Placement for Identification of Need'. This means that most children should have an opportunity to attend a mainstream school as soon as possible, local to their new home, and be educated alongside their siblings, and other peers who speak their mother tongue.

During that period of time, schools will observe and respond to children's needs, and will start to gather information about how the child is responding to intervention. This will allow for longer term identification of need and consideration of where the child may access and participate in their education in the least restrictive and most inclusive environment, longer term. During their period of settling in, psychological assessment is not appropriate for children who may have additional needs, as there is a significant risk that the needs identified could be invalid or inaccurate during this initial period of transition.

For those children with the most complex need (for example with a history of specialist placement) consideration may be given to placement in a special school or special class. However, the same overarching principle of 'Placement for Identification of Need' will apply and a flexible approach to placement in the longer term is advised.'

54. NABMSE made the point *'currently Special Schools do not have access to English as an Additional Language (EAL) support for the children in their care - what help can be given to special schools to help them provide language support? NABMSE was taken aback to be informed at the update meeting on May 5th [2022] that the pupil-teacher ratio was such in special schools that no EAL support would be provided. Many NABMSE schools support children with complex needs in very challenging contexts and are struggling with the current level of staffing. When Ukrainian children with special needs enrol and need time and care from staff who are already stretched, how can special schools give the Ukrainian children the support they urgently need?'*

55. In oral evidence, on 1 June 2022, Ms Josepha Madigan TD, Minister of State for Special Education and Inclusion, stated *'our understanding is that many children*

from Ukraine with very complex needs are being supported in countries very close to Ukraine probably because of the travel and that a country like Ireland is so far away. Officials in the Department of Education are in close contact with the HSE. It has confirmed that the number of adults and children with disabilities arriving here is quite small. My understanding is that only about seven or eight children from Ukraine are in special classes or special schools. That is not to say there will not be more.'

COSTS OF STARTING SCHOOL

56. The ISSU stated *'students fleeing from Ukraine may not have the financial stability to afford what could be considered everyday school supplies such as books and uniforms.'* As such, they recommended the *'Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance be extended to students and families arriving in Ireland from Ukraine.'*

57. The INTO proposed *'Special Education Teachers will play a fundamental role in supporting newly arrived children and collaboration with mainstream class teachers and EAL (English as an Additional Language) teachers will be crucial. Allocation of additional Special Education Teaching (SET) hours would help facilitate this planning in schools which find themselves accommodating significant numbers of Ukrainian pupils. Schools whose populations have increased by more than 10% should be granted extra SET support from September. Where children with complex special educational needs present to schools the Department of Education must respond quickly with the provision of places in special classes and/or special schools as appropriate to meet the additional needs of these pupils.'*

58. In its commentary note, the Joint Managerial Board (JMB) stated *'incoming students will require access to:*

- *School Uniform and PE gear*
- *Books*
- *ICT devices*
- *School meals, where provided*

- *Costs in relation access to extracurricular activities and school outings*
- *Appropriate footwear*
- *Other costs as required, such as insurances*

These costs are currently being borne by schools out of their existing budgets but, as the population of newcomer students increases and redistributes, an enhanced capitation grant in prospect of enrolled students from Ukraine must be put in place to ensure adequate provision to all students.'

RECOMMENDATIONS: EDUCATION PROVISIONS

1. The existing funding structures under the free education scheme should be extended to all displaced Ukrainian students.
2. All Primary and Post Primary Schools should designate one (or an appropriate number based on the size of the student population) member of staff, as a Family Liaison Officer (FLO). Each FLO appointment should be designated a Post of Responsibility (POR) with the commensurate allowance.
3. The Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) Library Project Digital Library Service should be expanded to become a National Digital Library Service for all second-level schools and Youthreach centres, to include a range of resources in Ukrainian and Russian.

CHAPTER 3 – HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION PROVISION

59. In its briefing note, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) reported *‘as of 27 May 2022, there were 33,101 displaced Ukrainian persons in Ireland, approximately two thirds of whom are over the age of 18. More detailed analysis indicates approximately 10% of the total are between the ages of 18 and 25. Based on the location of primary and post primary registration, we can discern a significant concentration of displaced persons in counties Dublin, Cork, Kerry, Clare and Wexford.*

In line with the European Council Decision of 4 March, the Government is applying the rights afforded under the International Protection Act, 2015 to those fleeing the war in Ukraine. The term ‘qualified persons’ is being used to describe those qualified for protection under Section 60 of the International Protection Act 2015. This is a temporary measure for a period of one year, with scope to extend this by two further periods of 6 months. Any decision in this regard will be informed by the status of the conflict, and any subsequent actions recommended by the EU Heads of State.

There are 64 full-time Ukrainian students in Ireland, undertaking studies in Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The Department of Justice has advised those students have the option to either further extend or renew their existing permission (if this is in line with the conditions attached to their particular permission) or they can avail of Temporary Protection for the remainder of the period for which Temporary Protection is available, as determined by the EU Council.

The Department is in contact with 60 Irish students who were attending medical schools in Ukraine; have fled the war and are now seeking to continue their studies in Ireland. Our records show seven were undertaking dentistry courses and 53 undertaking medical studies. Officials have been in contact with these students since March and all students have provided some information to the

Department on their current situation and the stage of completion of their degrees.

Officials last contacted all students on 27 May to update them on progress with the Deans of the Medical Schools regarding their continued study and to ask them to send all necessary documentation to the National Student and Researcher Helpdesk by 17 June for processing of their applications. Once all applications are received, the Deans will then convene a committee to review individual admission applications and develop appropriate pathways for these students.'

60. The Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) reported *'THEA and its members have contributed to the recent establishment of the National Student and Researcher (NSR) Helpdesk, which will act as a single point of contact for students and researchers who come to Ireland in the context of fleeing war in Ukraine.¹² It is noted that the NSR Helpdesk will operate for an initial period of six months, with the possibility to extend for a further period of three months. The department is to be commended for making available the funding that is needed to support the operation of this Helpdesk.*

The Helpdesk's functions also include important language-support services, such as assessing individuals' English-language levels for participation in the higher-education environment and translation of important documents into English.'

61. The UNHCR opined *'there are ongoing challenges faced by refugees wishing to attend third level education in Ireland. People with refugee status or subsidiary protection and those with humanitarian leave to remain are only entitled to free third level (university or college) education if they have been living in Ireland for 3 years or more. Those who have been able to attend have only been able to access university as a result of scholarships.*

¹² This is currently accessed by email at NSRHelpdesk@mu.ie or telephone at +353 (0)1 474 7788.

Investments in higher education for refugees strengthen the national education systems in which they participate, to the benefit of host communities, students and institutions. With higher education that is inclusive of refugees, all students can benefit from a richer academic environment, enhanced social cohesion, and improved academic infrastructure and resources.'

62.Regarding the numbers of students wishing to access higher and further education, in oral evidence on 1 June 2022, Mr Simon Harris TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, noted *'this is a world of anecdote, but I have been in many parts of the country recently and have been talking to people from Ukraine. For many people who have fled a war zone, the priorities are shelter, food, family and safety. Only as people begin to settle more in our country will they begin think about what is next. That is why I indicated in my opening statement that I expect the number to grow and for that to converge more in the weeks and months ahead, especially over the summer period, as we begin the new academic year. We are certainly seeing the number of calls to the central point tick up in a way that suggests that is probably the case.'*

63.In its commentary note, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) stated *'it is estimated that approximately 250 Ukrainian researchers may need support to continue their research career in the Irish research ecosystem. This figure, which is not verified, includes PhD and more senior level researchers and technical staff.'*

64.DFHERIS reported it has *'agreed to fund six people, who have experience in the provision of admission and support processes associated with higher education and research programmes and one native Ukrainian speaker with a knowledge of the Ukraine educational system, to staff the Helpdesk for a period of six months (with a possible three month extension). A Helpdesk Manager and other staff are now in place, following approval of their secondment from HEIs across the country. Staff began trauma informed training week commencing 9 May [2022].'*

65.SFI outlined *‘Scholars at Risk Europe, hosted at Maynooth University, is the European office of the global Scholars at Risk network. Scholars at Risk is an international network of higher education institutions and individuals working to protect threatened scholars and to promote academic freedom. The European office supports and coordinates the activities of Scholars at Risk national sections and partner networks across Europe to strengthen the collective voice at the European level and contribute to informed policymaking for the greater protection of scholars and increased respect for academic freedom worldwide. Given its status as host of Scholars at Risk Europe, Maynooth University will host the Helpdesk.’*

66.In its commentary note, SOLAS stated *‘one of the key developments across ETBs has been the identification of single contact points across the ETBs for people seeking access to FET and associated support. The Adult Education Guidance and Information Service (AEGIS) has been identified as being this first point of contact for Ukrainians with regards to FET in their local area. An interactive map has been developed by the ETBI Digital Library detailing the AEGIS contact details per ETB – this is linked from the DFERHIS page at gov.ie, with further details on employment, childcare and education.’*

67.Minister Harris referenced how *‘many people ask me what is to happen in the case of Ukrainian students who have not yet accessed higher education. I refer here to the equivalent of our leaving certificate students. These students have not done a leaving certificate or the Ukrainian equivalent. It has always been clear to me that Ukraine is very keen to maintain its connection with its student population. The Ukrainian Minister has made that clear to me and to my European counterparts.*

To help maintain this link, Ireland has committed to hosting sessions of this year’s Ukrainian higher education entrance examinations. I am pleased to inform the committee of this. It is quite a significant development.

There will be three exams. There will be one exam for entrance into higher education, the national multi-subject test, and two entrance exams for master's level: the master's test for educational competence for admission into master's degrees and the master's comprehensive test for admission into a speciality subject. The examinations will be taken online in a dedicated testing centre and my officials are working with the IUA and THEA to source the necessary staff, testing centres and equipment. As of 30 May, only a few days ago, my Department has been made aware of 229 students who wish to take the undergraduate test in July.'

HEAR AND DARE PROGRAMMES AND STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND

68. The ISSU proposed the Department of Education utilise the 'extra tuition supports provided through the HEAR programme in Third Level Institutions and examine introducing a model of free extra tuition support for disadvantaged students in the new year. This is badly needed in normal times, but the crisis faced by Ukrainian students highlights the essential need for this provision as currently, extra tuition is mainly available only through grinds, a system which typically excludes low-socioeconomic families.'

69. Minister Harris outlined 'the student assistance fund will also be available for students from Ukraine to draw down if they have specific needs. In the memo that I am bringing to the Cabinet, probably within the next two weeks, there will be specific funding for additional psychological support services for students from Ukraine.'

70. In its commentary note, Union of Students in Ireland (USI) noted 'for Ukrainian students who may have a disability, there are other barriers we must consider ensuring ease of access into Third Level Education. Given the circumstances in which many Ukrainian refugees fled to Ireland, the diagnostic documentation that is often required to access on campus Disability Support Services may not be available to be provided. The USI believes that it is of vital importance that disabled students can access the services that provide accessibility and disability

supports, and that special efforts must be made to ensure that Ukrainian asylum-seeking students are not disadvantaged due to a lack of diagnostic documentation and/or certification from an Irish medical practitioner. It is also important to note that the Fund for Students with Disabilities in Ireland is only available to students who meet specific nationality and residency criteria – which specifies that applicants must be from an EU or an EEA country.'

USE OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

71. The DFHERIS reported *'the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) is leading the Government response on emergency accommodation. They have directly contracted with universities and have additional contracts with private suppliers of student accommodation. These beds are to be used over the summer months only. In total, 4,500 beds have been sourced - 2,000 within the University Sector, while the remaining 2,500 are available through private providers.'*

[The] Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) is leading on the medium to long term provision of accommodation. DFHERIS officials are working with DHLGH to determine whether the higher education sector could play a role in more medium-term solutions.'

COSTS OF THIRD-LEVEL EDUCATION AND ACCESS TO GRANTS

72. The DFHERIS reported *'based on current funding levels, this would be €6,500 per student (current demographic rate of funding allocation). However, it should be noted that the actual figure is largely dependent on the course and the figure referenced may not fully cover the core funding cost of additional places should the scheme be extended for Ukrainian nationals.'*

73. SFI outlined *'in an effort to help tackle the humanitarian and economic loss, SFI is launching a new supplemental grant scheme to encourage and enable holders of existing SFI grants, and their associated Host Institutions, to provide opportunities for displaced STEM researchers from Ukraine to join and collaborate on existing SFI-funded grants in order to integrate swiftly into the Irish*

research system, to enable them to maintain continuity in their research work and to bring added benefit to the SFI grant from their expertise.'

74. Doras noted *'a number of cost-related barriers exist in relation to displaced students access to higher education. The requirement of 3 out of the previous 5 years' residency in Ireland to qualify for the Free Fees Initiative or SUSI will make it difficult for many Ukrainian students to resume or begin their higher education in Ireland for the foreseeable future. Ukrainian students wishing to enrol in higher education courses in 2022 will also be unable to avail of the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) as they will not have spent the required 9 months on social welfare.'* Additionally, *'while the ETBs are supporting Ukrainians in relation to a range of courses, job seeking, and information about further and higher education, their VTOS courses require people to have been on social welfare for 6 months.'*

75. SFI also reported *'SFI seeks to provide an appropriate response which complements the broader Government of Ireland response to support displaced individuals. The agency is developing a rapid response mechanism which will facilitate existing SFI-funded researchers to apply for SFI supplemental grants to their existing awards. These supplemental awards will provide opportunities for displaced researchers and research-related technical staff coming from the Ukraine with TPD status to join existing SFI-funded teams.'*

76. Mr Henderson recommended in the interest of fairness, *'should the three-year [residency] rule be waived for one nationality, it should be waived for all nationalities to be equitable, specifically in relation to SUSI, the Free Fees Initiative, and the Student Support Scheme for people in the International Protection System.'*

ERASMUS FUNDING

77. The DFHERIS reported the *'EU Commission has given guidance to Member States that they can use their national Erasmus Grant to support qualified persons (including staff) to access higher education. The rate of funding has*

been confirmed as €1,150 per month. This only applies to students pursuing full-time study.

Erasmus grants in the Further and Adult Education Sectors are delivered differently as they are organised on the basis of class grouping (with accompanying adults), rather than specific individual model in higher education. Léargas, the National Agency for Erasmus+ in Further Education and Training, has advised that the same flexibility has not been afforded in the use of funds to support their students.'

78. Minister Harris indicated to the Committee *'without getting ahead of the Government decision, I will say that I have been working very intensely at a European level with my colleague, Mr. Ian McKenna here, to try to use the Erasmus scheme to support students because it provides at least the SUSI level of support. If we can register all Ukrainian students at whatever level they are at, be it postgraduate or undergraduate, as Erasmus students, not only here in Ireland but throughout the European Union, we can actually provide them with a significant level of support through that initiative. I commend Commissioner Gabriel on her work on that.'*

Minister Harris continued, *'I should have said that staff are included in the same way as students. The beauty of the Erasmus programme is that it is for staff and students. It is our intention to provide opportunities for any higher education member of staff from Ukraine who is in Ireland to work in our institutions.*

It will be paid for in the same way that an Erasmus+ student is paid. They will be Erasmus+ students for all intents and purposes. Support is paid for through the Erasmus+ office in any given higher education instruction. We have to update the Government and subject to the Government decision; we will make this information available through the helpline. I want students to know - and I want public representatives to know for their own work - that any Ukrainian student at any level in higher education, undergraduate or postgraduate, will qualify to be

registered as an Erasmus+ student. That position is not unique to Ireland. It is a good proposal and it has been agreed at a European level.'

CURRICULUM PROVISION AT THIRD LEVEL

79. The THEA reported *'as of early May 2022, some 27,000 displaced persons had arrived in Ireland, with the recent weekly trend averaging around 200 per day. It is estimated that about 10.5% fall within the 18 to 23 years cohort. It is not currently possible to estimate the number of qualified displaced persons who will seek to pursue higher education in Ireland. Such uncertainties necessitate a decisive, agile, and responsive approach – from government, from the NSR Helpdesk, and from higher education institutions.'*

80. The THEA further noted *'as yet, there is no clarity on the preferred mode of provision of displaced people who may seek to access higher education. Anecdotally, based on initial contacts and queries, some applicants may seek flexible provision, reflecting their desire to maintain engagement with their home institution through online provision, supplemented by access to libraries and other key higher education supports in Ireland and/or participation in certain modules delivered in Irish higher education institutions. As above, Ireland's support for the continuation of higher education institutions' work must be encouraged insofar as possible. As regards those who are not connected to a home institution in Ukraine, it is predictable that there will be interest in part-time programmes. Once the NSR Helpdesk is fully operational, it will be important for these and other trends to be monitored closely to further inform institutional and governmental responses. It is to be welcomed that the NSR Helpdesk's functions include the provision of data and statistics.'*

81. In its commentary note, the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) stated work needs to be done to identify *'the comparable programmes that students were undertaking at the various stages of their degrees'* and to *'identify what recognition of prior learning can be offered under Quality and Qualifications Ireland in terms of material already studied.'*

82. The TUI opined *‘for students who have completed years 1 or 2, a system needs to be provided for RPL and in certain specialisms - in many we imagine - some assessment of the modules undertaken to date will be required. While there has been some mapping of qualifications from Ukraine to the EQF, it doesn't necessarily mean that the same, or similar modules have been undertaken, which would make direct advanced entry simple. There is also a conversion process proposing metrics for conversion of Ukrainian grades to ECTS credits - however many students are unlikely to have transcripts or evidence of prior learning available due to the current circumstances.’*

83. Doras proposed *‘online or blended education in the form of mobile apps, open educational resources, and open online courses such as MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) offer flexible language and other learning opportunities for displaced Ukrainians. Access to the formal education system may not be viable for many people, because of where they are located, lack of childcare, cost, or other reasons. In this case, curated collections of teaching resources offer relevant, high quality material that can be used in structured programmes of study or for self directed study.’*

The SaorEd platform provided by Doras in partnership with New Horizon and Dignity Partnership provides MOOC-based course clusters for refugees and asylum seekers. It offers credit recognition for completed courses, and work is under way to use this to open pathways to university admission in Ireland.’

84. The USI welcomed *‘the work of the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) who have provided guidance on its online foreign qualifications recognition services (NARIC), allowing Ukrainian students to compare their qualifications and area of study to that of the Irish Framework of Qualifications.’*

85. The USI further proposed *‘academic exchanges, work placement opportunities, traineeships and apprenticeships must also be made available to Ukrainian students. Erasmus+ funding, mobility opportunities and the online language support platform, which is to be launched this summer, made available by the*

European Commission, must be publicised and readily available for students to apply for.'

86. Mr Henderson stated they would like to see *'temporary protection holders have access to VTOS [Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme] without requiring six months on an eligible social welfare payment for courses commencing September 2022.'*

87. Minister Harris explained *'we have to recognise that every student is going to be in a different scenario. That is the beauty - if I can call it that - of this national line and contact point. Students can come in have a conversation, say that they were a third-year engineering student, to take a random example, and ask where they fit in the education system, what their options are and what are the local colleges. Crucially, they may want to continue their link with their Ukrainian university online but use a given university's library and attend some tutorials or lectures there. We are very much in the business of facilitating that. At the start, Ukrainian students and ourselves, when we got individual queries, would have to navigate the higher education system and go to the local university. We are now trying to put in place a bespoke plan for each individual student as to what is best for him or her. It is more straightforward with some programmes than with others. Where people are with their medical studies in Ukraine may be very different from where medical students would be at the same stage in Ireland. We are very eager to provide any support for Ukrainian students, including those who are learning online. They may wish to become full-time students in an Irish university, and that is no problem. They may wish to continue to study with their Ukrainian universities but to access some lectures, tutorials or facilities. That is also facilitated.'*

RESEARCH ACTIVITY

88. The DFHERIS reported *'there is limited R&I activity between Ireland and Ukraine, facilitated mainly through funding agencies such as Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Irish Research Council (IRC). Projects include a collaboration*

between Institute of Art Design and Technology and two Ukrainian HEIs through Horizon 2020.

Science Foundation Ireland has five collaborations with Ukraine through their Research Outputs collaborations - four academic collaborations and one non-academic. They are self-reported by the researchers funded by SFI and typically do not involve any exchange of funds. The range of interaction can vary significantly from occasional communication to ongoing co-authored publications. The academic collaborations are all within Kyiv.'

EU RESPONSE

89. The DFHERIS, referring to EU Funding, noted *'the European Commission is preparing a €25 million direct aid package of Marie Skłodowska-Curie (MSCA) grants to fund MSCA4Ukraine, which will provide fellowships to support displaced academics from Ukraine. An experienced consortium of ten research organisations, including the European University Association, which 10 Irish Universities are members will implement the scheme.*

Researchers who will receive support through this scheme will be able to continue their work in academic or non-academic organisations in EU member states and countries associated to Horizon Europe. The scheme will also allow them to re-establish themselves in Ukraine when it will be possible to rebuild the country's research and innovation capacity.

The ERA4Ukraine portal has also been established. ERA4Ukraine is a one-stop-shop for information and support services to Ukraine-based researchers and researchers fleeing Ukraine. The portal brings together initiatives at the EU level, per country and from non-governmental groups as well. The portal provide research, displaced person internships, part-time and full-time jobs, access to a European research community, as well as a complete range of information and support services on working and living in Europe. The IUA is responsible for updating initiatives in Ireland on the database.'

NATIONAL RESPONSE

90. The DFHERIS explained *‘the IUA has been liaising closely with partners to support researchers looking to continue their research in Ireland. Principal Investigators (PIs) are keen to support researchers coming from Ukraine. The Health Research Board and Science Foundation Ireland have launched their call for PIs looking to take on researchers from Ukraine. The Irish Research Council is also in final stages of launching its call.*

The number of researchers looking to come to Ireland is believed to be quite small. The Helpdesk is working with IUA to finalise the script and table of questions for these researchers. This will allow the Helpdesk to act as a matchmaking service. The IUA is working with the Directors of Research to identify a single point of contact for the Helpdesk. The Royal Irish Academy has set up a mentoring service to connect displaced academics to appropriate contacts within the Irish higher education system and is working closely with the higher education sector and other relevant bodies to assist displaced academics arriving in Ireland to the best of the Academy's ability. IUA has been in touch with VP and Deans of Research on preparing a national Commentary note proposal to access Marie Curie funding.

DFHERIS has also received a proposal from Maynooth University and the Irish Research Council in partnership with Scholars at Risk (SAR) for funding to support displaced Ukrainian researchers.’

RECOMMENDATIONS: HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION PROVISION

4. All Further and Higher Education Institutions must put in place clear arrangements to facilitate displaced Ukrainian students completing placements and/or assignments as part of their coursework. Provisions must be put in place regarding written assessments and previous credits acquired. Allowances should be considered for students who must repeat their

placements/assignments. The arrangements should be provided in writing in Ukrainian and Russian to ensure absolute clarity.

CHAPTER 4 – ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUPPORTS

91. The IRC noted *‘language barriers present a huge challenge for any new arrival in the country. The first step in meeting the challenges presented by language barriers must be to properly assess each person’s individual language abilities in order to determine the level of additional support they may need. We propose that, as part of the one-stop-shop process for people fleeing Ukraine, each person complete an English language assessment at the earliest possible stage.*

An assessment will identify the likely level at which a person will be able to participate in existing education courses. For example, an individual who is fluent in English may be able to participate fully in a degree course, while someone with less English language proficiency may find that further education is a better choice.’ Once an assessment has been completed, *‘a strategic language support plan, tailored at an appropriate level, should be provided.’*

92. The INTO noted *‘language plays a critical role in allowing children to interpret experiences, explore ideas and emotions and gain an understanding of the world around them and therefore language constitutes the first barrier to the integration and socialisation of Ukrainian children in Irish primary schools.’*

93. ETBI explained it *‘supports the integration of Ukrainian refugees into existing classrooms. Many schools have developed a level of expertise in responding to the needs of students with English as an Additional Language (EAL). However, ETBI also recognises that many schools who are now enrolling Ukrainian students do not have any such expertise. Many Ukrainian students arrive in Irish classroom settings with a limited proficiency in the English language. This makes it extremely difficult for these students to access the curriculum in any meaningful way. Schools are required to provide intensive EAL/English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) supports to enable these students to overcome this significant barrier to learning. ESOL panels are being expanded in each ETB to support all schools in this area. Schools can avail of tutors through these panels. ESOL panels will also support ‘Family Learning’ in ESOL for Ukrainian refugees. ETBI*

also welcomes the work of the NCCA in compiling in one place existing EAL resources.¹³

94.ETBI further noted *‘schools have identified the need for a more systemic approach to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in English as an Additional Language (EAL). ETBI has indicated to the Department of Education that Dublin and Dunlaoghaire ETB (DDLETB) is in a position to support efforts to provide CPD for teachers in English as an Additional Language (EAL).’*

95.The ISSU also opined this language barrier may not be restricted to students. Their *‘parents/guardians arriving in Ireland may not have fluency in English and may not be able to provide the necessary support to their children without additional support.’* To alleviate this, the ISSU suggested *‘important documents such as permission slips, information slips etc. are translated into Russian and Ukrainian in order to maintain accessibility.’*

96.In oral evidence, on 14 June 2022, Ms Meg Ryan, Migrant Case Worker, Irish Red Cross, noted *‘access to additional language support and English lessons will ease much of the tension felt by students who have been thrown into a new learning environment in a foreign language but it would be my recommendation to extend these supports within schools to include parents also.’*

97.Ms Ward, OCO, cautioned *‘in relation to the English additional language support. We believe that they should be adequately resourced, but we would be concerned that children don’t become the conduit for speaking on behalf of their parents. So, we think that there has to be additional support for parents to learn English. I know the ETBs, as Nick referenced, are doing a lot of work in regional areas, but we also think that should be supplemented possibly with interpretive services so that parents can make informed descisions and choices about their children’s education.’*

¹³ <https://ncca.ie/en/primary/primary-developments/english-as-an-additional-language-in-primary-schools/>

98. While it is imperative to provide adequate language supports to help Ukrainian students to become proficient in English, it is important for schools to acknowledge and display material in Ukrainian. The INTO noted *‘on a whole-school level, creating a learning environment that supports inclusion is crucial. When children experience their language being acknowledged it encourages a sense of belonging and can also have a positive impact on their readiness to learn.’*

99. The INTO stressed the importance of having *‘communication with pupils’ families facilitated in a language that they can understand. For many children with EAL, partnerships between the primary school and their homes are critical for planning for and supporting their language learning. The INTO emphasises the importance of ensuring that translators are available to schools who require such services to avoid the unacceptable practice of asking pupils or other children in the school with the language to provide translation. Parents of children must feel valued and empowered.’*

100. The JMB commented *‘school authorities are currently doing whatever they can to access translation services, professional or otherwise, from dual language speakers. Again, if student contact is involved, even if supervised by a teacher, all such persons must be vetted.’*

101. The INTO also stated *‘communication with parents/guardians may be a role for Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Teacher. In their interactions with parents/guardians, the HSCL teacher must be informed and mindful of the needs of EAL learners and their families.’*

Where schools do not have a HSCL teacher, there is merit in assigning responsibility for liaising with families to a member of staff with whom they can establish a trusting relationship.

Schools have shared their experience of assigning a liaison role to one EAL teacher who would be a point of contact for parents/families. Where this is deemed an appropriate response in a particular context, these teachers should receive targeted training in this area (including managing challenging and sensitive conversations as mentioned above).'

102. *The USI stressed ‘the importance of tailoring these English language courses to focus on specific areas of study within education. Modules of the language courses should place emphasis on terminology that can be used within course-specific modules. For example, providing English Language courses specifically for Medicine, Law, Science or Dentistry.’*

103. *The Department of Education reported ‘the allocation of specialist resources to schools takes account of the needs of pupils in the school, including, where appropriate, English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs. As schools with available capacity accept Ukrainian children, they may be eligible for additional EAL resources. Schools have been advised that they may apply for EAL resources and these will be processed as a matter of priority.*

Language resources in respect of Ukrainian are quite limited in Ireland. Post Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI) has also been requested to source mother tongue speakers to assist in orientation and support, but the numbers available are likely to be small.’

104. *The Department of Education further stated ‘to supplement the work of schools and teachers, the Department is considering in close consultation with other relevant bodies and departments, how best to support intensive English language learning for post-primary age children who may have very low levels of English proficiency so that they can be supported in fully accessing appropriate educational experiences. Progress is being made, with DFHERIS, on planning for the creation of panels of language instructors and tutors who could supplement the education providing by schools.*

Resources have been published by the NCCA and a range of support services to support learners with EAL across early childhood, primary and post-primary settings. Schools are also being encouraged to use the significant investment that has been made in ICT resources in recent years to assist with language development, translation etc.'

105. The UNHCR opined *'language teaching for refugee children should start as soon as possible after arrival in order to limit time out of school and to maximize the prospects of refugee children integrating in the local education system, and to facilitate their integration into the host community. UNHCR's own research among resettled refugees in Ireland has found that most refugees felt that learning English was the biggest and most important challenge to their integration in Ireland. Refugees said that people with a good level of English feel more autonomous and independent than others.¹⁴ Moreover, learning the language of instruction soon after arrival will increase academic performance and chances of obtaining degrees or certificates at a later stage.'*

106. The NAPD noted *'most schools have students enrolled before this crisis that require English language support to access the curriculum. These schools, as part of their learning support plan, have support structures for tuition in English to Speakers of Other Languages, ESOL, and would potentially have one or more teachers trained and experienced in this area. Timetabling arrangements for these students would generally be at the time the other students are studying Irish and the small groups of students would receive intensive English language instruction and support to help them access the curriculum.'*

With the influx of Ukrainian students, where an English language deficit exists, existing structures have been stretched. School leaders are reporting that the ESOL teachers are going beyond what is expected of them to support these students, they are giving up lunch times, after school activities, untimetabled periods of their own time to help these students. It is very difficult to recruit any

¹⁴ Report of UNHCR's Participatory Assessments with Syrian Refugees, December 2016, page 14 <https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/5d7f63734.pdf>

new teachers to schools at this time and particularly those with an English language qualification. It is equally difficult to upskill existing teachers at such short notice.

As time progresses, with appropriate resourcing, availability of professional development for teachers and immersion in the English language the Ukrainian students will grow and develop as previous experience has proved with other newcomer students who have joined our schools with an English language deficit.'

107. The IRC pointed out *'although evidence is, as yet, anecdotal, it has been noted amongst the staff of the Irish Refugee Council that English language skills tend to be higher in those aged under forty. While language provision may be easier to organise in the context of existing educational settings, access to English language classes must also be made available to older people arriving from Ukraine. Language barriers can reduce autonomy and independence, putting people in a position of vulnerability where they become very reliant on the support and assistance of others. As a result, it is important that access to language classes is not limited to those in full time education.'*

108. The ACCS commended the Department of Education on *'acting quickly to ensure that EAL supports are available to schools, if and when required.'* The ACCS also noted that *'some schools with Adult Education provision have reached out to the parents and adults who have arrived from Ukraine offering free English classes.'*

109. Minister Foley stated *'in terms of the provision within our own schools, we have had more than 918 schools, specifically when you mention language, have requested additional support around English as an additional language or additional teaching hours and that has been granted. Equally so we have looked at, and it is currently live, the ESOL tutors. This is for again those who don't have English as a first language. That tutor programme is being made available to families and also to post-primary students because the recognition being that it's*

almost like a whole community approach being taken to language as you specifically reference it. Right throughout the summer there will be those tutor supports available to families and available to adults within those families.'

110. Minister Harris described how *'one of the biggest challenges we are facing in my Department is the issue of English language supports. English language supports are, obviously, essential to people arriving from Ukraine. The 16 ETBs are offering ESOL courses right across the country in response to demand presenting locally. I am happy to share with this committee details of each ETB contact person. Again, there is a specific contact point within each ETB for the provision of English language courses. Ukrainians wishing to learn English or to improve their English, can contact their local ETB for an assessment of their English language competency in reading, writing, speaking and listening. The ETBs will identify appropriate language and additional learning supports. Of course, this service is free of charge. In some ETBs such as in Kerry, Limerick and Clare, ESOL provision is delivered on an outreach basis in the centres and in the accommodation facilities where Ukrainians are living. This has the benefit of enabling their participation around childcare in a familiar setting but also has the function of providing information and orientation, not only in terms of their education and training options but also in accessing local services.'*

RECOMMENDATIONS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUPPORTS

5. An English language assessment must be carried out on all students at the earliest possible stage in their enrolment in education to assess what (if any) language supports they required. *A Language Support Plan*, tailored at an appropriate level, should then be provided.
6. The Department of Education must ensure that translators and interpreters are available to schools. These professionals should receive targeted training in advance, to include translating challenging and sensitive conversations. In

addition, all Schools, Further Education Institutions (FEI)s and Higher Education Institutions (HEI)s must be equipped with translation services to ensure important documents are provided in Russian and Ukrainian.

7. Signs, posters and other written material should be displayed in Ukrainian and Russian as well as in English and Irish where possible to help foster an environment of inclusion and belonging. The Department of Education should liaise with the Library Association of Ireland (LAI) Schools Library Group (SLG) with a view to providing suitable material through the Digital Library Service.

CHAPTER 5 – PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORTS

111. The UNHCR noted *‘refugees face harsh conditions that put their mental health under significant stress. While many of them show remarkable resilience, some need extra support to rebuild their lives. Moreover, stress and trauma can interfere with displaced learners’ learning abilities. Some may require professional help, ideally in their native language, to overcome some of these challenges and return to effective learning in their new environment.’*

As is the case with provision of language learning services, the major challenge with regard to the Ukrainian refugee emergency will be to scale up available school or community psycho-social services to cater to some of the psycho-social needs Ukrainian children may have. This will also require the mobilization of adequate interpretation services to facilitate delivery of these services.’

112. The Department of Education reported the *‘National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) has published:*

- i. Guidance on supporting all children who may be experiencing distress in relation to current events – Supporting Children and Young People in a time of war.*
- ii. Guidance for primary and post-primary schools in relation to supporting the wellbeing of children and young people from Ukraine at this time.*

NEPS is delivering a series of wellbeing webinars via the Education Support Centres of Ireland, commencing March 2022, to further support schools, and will develop further advice and resources as needs emerge.

In addition, NEPS psychologists are available on the ground to consult with schools and provide support as needed. Contact details for the NEPS regional office structure can be found here.

In line with research on best practice, guidance from NEPS, the HSE and the Psychological Society of Ireland, the Department is taking a Psychological First

Aid approach to supporting wellbeing in our schools at this time. Instead, these children/young people and their families need to be given time to adapt and adjust to their new environment, new home, new school, and to be given access to practical supports, clear information and assistance to settle in and make friends.

NEPS has developed guidance for schools on how best to welcome children and support their wellbeing at this time. This guidance is based on the provision of a psycho-social response of promoting a sense of safety, calm, connectedness, efficacy and hope. These are key evidence-based principles known to help people regain a sense of normalcy and wellbeing in the aftermath of emergencies/traumatic events. Schools are familiar with these principles of support, as they formed the basis of the Department's response to supporting wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic.'

113. The ISSU commented *'the school environment may be overwhelming for students fleeing from war for a variety of reasons.'* They call for the *'National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) to be trained in trauma informed care and are deployed to schools to help Ukrainian students.'* It also asks *'that a sensory room and/or designated calm area is made accessible and available at all times, and that readily available resources and information on external mental health supports, such as Jigsaw, are made accessible and available to these students.'*

114. The ISSU further stated it recognised *'the importance of community spirit and making new friends in a new and strange environment for students arriving to Ireland from Ukraine.'* The ISSU stated that *'information on extra-curricular activities available in the school environment and local community groups in the surrounding area, such as sporting groups and clubs, are readily accessible and available to students.'* It also asked for schools to be *'encouraged and supported to establish extra curricular groups and activities with the purpose of integrating Ukrainian students into the school community.'*

115.The JMB welcomed *‘the publication by NEPS of guidance documents on ‘Supporting Children and Young People in a time of war’ and on ‘Supporting the wellbeing of Ukrainian children/young people at this time’. There is no substitute, however, for in-person professional support and, in our view, NEPS psychologist are best placed to provide such support. In light of the potential long-term needs of schools and students (i.e., years, not months), JMB urges an immediate expansion in terms of recruitment to the service.’*

116.The ACCS noted *‘schools have reported that students who arrived at the initial stages of the conflict experienced little of the conflict itself. Students following the settling in process have on occasion ‘broken down’ in school overwhelmed by the enormity of the changes in their lives and that of their families. The school care teams support the students following the guidance provided by NEPS focusing on promoting resilience and recovery.’*

117.The ACCS continued *‘while this guidance is greatly appreciated, in reality there are not enough Educational Psychologists to provide services to schools in normal circumstances not to mind where there is an escalated need created by a crisis such as the Ukrainian crisis. Psychologists are needed on the ground in schools supporting students as required.*

In more recent times schools are reporting students coming from the eastern part of Ukraine including Mariupol and the Dondas region. They have graphically depicted what they have lived through. It is reported the students are showing considerable resilience and engaging positively in school. Staff members have indicated that the accounts students have shared with them have considerably impacted on the members of staff themselves and they need somewhere to process these experiences.’

118.In its commentary note, Plan International noted *‘teachers will need support on how to discuss the war, and how to provide cultural and psychosocial support to incoming students. The psychological impact of an acute crisis such as the war in Ukraine can limit children’s and youth’s ability to learn; therefore, it is*

recommended that psychosocial support and Socio Emotional Learning (SEL) activities be incorporated into formal and non-formal education.'

119. Plan International further stated *'interventions for young children may include Mother and Baby groups, infant stimulation and feeding programmes, and various early childhood development activities.'*

120. Ms Clodagh Carroll, Assistant Director of Children's Services, Barnardos, noted *'many Ukrainian children who have come to Ireland over the past few months may have faced considerable trauma over the past few months, including fleeing war, death of a family member or parent, being forced to leave their homes and families, enduring a challenging journey and entering a new country without speaking the language. It is important that agencies working with these children, be it for housing, health or education, take into account the trauma they have been through and considers it when designing the help that they intend to provide. As children and families settle in Ireland and the immediate requirements are met, such as housing, adequate attention should be given towards their wider needs, such as psychological wellbeing.'*

121. Ms Carroll continued, *'where schools identify children who are particularly struggling, they should be able to refer them to family support agencies, such as Barnardos. We can work with families and schools to provide them with the support needed to address school refusal or behavioural problems and build structure and routines again, helping children to find it easier to integrate into schools and adapt to their rules and systems.'*

122. Ms Ryan, Irish Red Cross noted *'the Provision of Psychological Supports for Ukrainian Students in Ireland requires either appropriate language support for translation or a system whereby Ukrainian health care professionals in Ireland are given the means to practice in the State.'*

123. On the importance of clear and timely communication with Ukrainian school children and their families, Ms Carroll stated *'you've touched on a very important*

topic there, and it is something that can have a significant impact on children, especially children that have experienced trauma, and that is a sudden change. A sudden change without information, a sudden change without choice, without control...

...I can refer to a situation in Dublin where we were reaching out to a group that were housed in one of our regions and we were trying to provide our Breath, Body, Mind programme, but overnight, I think it was up to 150 people were moved quite suddenly, within a day or two. Children who have experienced trauma would need safety, security, certainty. They need stability. They need to know what's happening next, and they need to be made aware of it before it happens.

From our point of view, when you are in a situation like that, a traumatic situation, control and choice are very important. That overcomes the sense of powerlessness that comes with trauma. From Barnardos point of view, early information, certainty, security, safety, knowing what's going to happen next. Being aware of when, from the first point of contact, this is what's happening today, this is what's likely to happen next week, this is what's likely to happen in a few weeks time. It's an absolute necessity for these children. Sudden changes, being taken out of schools and then arriving at another centre to go to another school is re-traumatising and re-triggering for a child.'

124.Regarding families being moved, Minister Foley told the Committee *'I appreciate the point the Deputy has made about children settling in a school and families settling in an area only to be moved on. Even with the best will in the world, there are significant challenges relating to the availability of accommodation from the point of view of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. This is an emergency. It is a remarkable achievement that 30,000 people who have arrived into the country in recent weeks are being accommodated with respect not only to accommodation but also in wider society, including our schools. There is unprecedented demand but all of society is stepping up in response. It means some accommodation is available on a more short-term basis*

than others. We are liaising clearly with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. We know where we have more or less capacity. The priority of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is to provide accommodation first. That is its primary consideration. Up to this point, the Department of Education has been able to provide for education in areas in which the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth has found accommodation. It is a challenge and there is no doubt about that but we liaise closely with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.'

125. Minister Foley continued *'it would be very helpful if we could match accommodation with our capacity. It is very hard at this point to be clear on the enrolments that might be required throughout the summer. We know that families are continuing to come. Enrolments will continue over the summer and REALT will be operating. We have roughly 20,000 places at primary school level and approximately 25,000 places at post-primary level. We are currently finalising a survey of primary schools but our geographic information system and data tell us we have in and around 25,000 places. We may well have in excess of that. We are confident we can meet the challenges, notwithstanding these are challenges faced every day by schools on the ground. I also acknowledge that schools on the ground have always been accommodating of students coming from other places and other countries. The difficulty and greater challenge this time is that it is in such significant numbers and at such high volume. I again acknowledge the schools are generously meeting that challenge on the ground.'*

RECOMMENDATIONS: PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORTS

8. Ringfenced funding should be provided by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Science and Innovation for Trauma Counselling and other mental health supports in all Further and Higher Education Institutions.

9. The National Educational and Psychological Service (NEPS) must be expanded to include therapeutic (including trauma) supports for schools on site to enable them to support displaced Ukrainian students as well as for existing students.

10. The Department of Education should issue a Circular to all School Principals mandating them to provide a Sanctuary Room and/or designated calm space in all schools for the displaced students. School Libraries could also be used for this purpose. The inclusion of this room should be included in all Whole School Evaluations (WSE)s by the Department of Education Inspectorate.

11. The Department of Education, in liaison with the Health Service Executive (HSE), should provide appropriate support and care for teachers who are providing support to distressed students.

12. The Department of Education Inspectorate should issue a Memorandum to all School Principals on establishing suitable extra-curricular groups and activities with the purpose of integrating Ukrainian students into the school community.

CHAPTER 6 – OTHER ISSUES

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

126. The Department of Education reported, that in consultation with Bus Éireann, it is *‘putting in place a new process to facilitate the provision of School Transport Scheme Services for children arriving to Ireland from Ukraine. When set up, there will be link to a form (which will also be available in Ukrainian and Russian) for families/host families to complete in order to apply for school transport. This form will be available on Gov.ie and further information will be circulated shortly. Children will be accommodated quickly on existing services where there is capacity. Children will not be charged for their ticket and normal eligibility criteria will be waived. If there is no service or capacity, a remote area grant¹⁵ can be offered to the family as appropriate.’*

DIGITAL DEVICES

127. The ISSU made the point *‘since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, many schools have moved to using softwares such as Microsoft Teams or Google Classroom as an everyday part of their teaching and learning. Students arriving in Ireland from Ukraine may not have access to devices to run such software and families may also not have access to a stable internet connection to run these devices.’* The ISSU called for adequate broadband connection and digital devices such as *‘laptops or iPads [to be] provided to students arriving in Ireland from Ukraine to ensure they can continue their schooling.’*

128. The NABSME proposed *‘for many students with special educational needs, the use of symbols and images/pictures are often very useful. NABMSE experience suggests that the use of IT, such as iPad or tablets are very effective in helping students learn new words through pictures and sound. For example, ‘Snap+Core’ and ‘Go Talk’ can both be used on an iPad. The use of technology in language learning and development is very engaging for students and promotes friendships with classmates.’*

¹⁵ <https://assets.gov.ie/120197/515bd5ef-f845-4230-977f-fe1a25fba400.pdf>

SUMMER PROGRAMME

129. The JMB reported *'in terms of the proposed Summer Programmes for students from Ukraine and others, and which are most welcome, these existing arrangements suffered from low rates of remuneration and a shortage of staff to implement them in recent years, so these issues must be considered, as well as the possibility of engaging teachers currently on secondment to school support services if necessary.'*
130. Minister Madigan stated *'the National Council for Special Education, NCSE, has already translated 56 different summer programme documents which should help. There is an inclusion programme at primary level and at post-primary level for mainstream pupils with complex needs and those at greatest risk of disadvantage and that would include children from Ukraine. As I said earlier, for children who are coming here, particularly younger children, an activity-based approach to learning the language is better than more intensive instruction, which would be done at a later age. There is already support available for migrant children and that has been integrated into the summer programme. By the time the summer provision is over we should have a fair idea as to how many Ukrainian children have participated in it. At the moment, they are in the process of enrolling and registering to do it.'*
131. Minister Foley added *'we have also made other provisions in terms of accessibility for the schools. Rather than responsibility for summer provision being undertaken by school principals, there will now be an overseer role as well, which means another individual can take responsibility for it. There will be, for the first time, an online payment made available for staff working on the summer provision programme. Our absolute aim, as the Minister of State has said, is that the maximum number of children and young people are facilitated to avail of the programme.'*
132. Ms Carroll stressed the importance of the trauma informed perspective *'in terms of including that in the Summer Programme; body-based interventions for trauma-informed care would be an important inclusion. Releasing trauma from*

the body through breathing, through sensory input, and also outdoor activities, allowing children to engage in physical activities to reduce the impact of trauma and to release trauma from their bodies is an important perspective.'

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

133. The Department of Education noted 'on 3 March, a Statement on Students, Young People and Education Community was issued by Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth. On 16 March, European Education Ministers, in the presence of Commissioner Gabriel, attended a video conference chaired by the French Minister for National Education, Jean-Michel Blanquerr to exchange views on how the European Union can provide concrete assistance to students from Ukraine, teachers and education staff.¹⁶

The European Commission provided a paper on policy guidance to Member States outlining key principles and practices, which could help integration of children and young people from Ukraine in schools, based on previous experience. The Commission suggested consideration not only for the learning needs but also the social and emotional needs as part of the integration of children and young people from Ukraine into education. The paper also outlined the immediate priorities and a comprehensive approach to ensure children feel secure and can access education, together with addressing psychological trauma and language barriers.

The Erasmus+ programme is playing a key role with a number of funding opportunities including Education and Training institutions welcoming students from Ukraine and involving them in Erasmus+ cooperation projects, with flexible use of project funding. In addition, teachers and trainers from Ukraine can receive financial support to facilitate their integration and qualified staff may be sent, on a temporary basis, to regions where people from Ukraine are accommodated. Institutions benefiting from ongoing Erasmus+ projects in areas such as inclusion,

¹⁶ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/eycs/2022/03/16/>

diversity and integration may, on a voluntary basis, reallocate part of their funds in support of activities for people from Ukraine.'

RECOGNITION OF UKRAINIAN SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

134. The DFHERIS reported *'the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) Ireland hosted by Quality and Qualifications Ireland, provides advice, free of charge, for the recognition of qualifications. Operating under the Council of Europe Lisbon Recognition Convention, it provides advice on the academic recognition of a foreign qualification by comparing it to a major award type and level on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), which sets these qualifications in an Irish context.*

The NARIC service helps to inform employers to determine if an applicant holds the academic qualifications necessary for a particular job or employment opportunity. Where the profession is unregulated, there is no formal barrier to continuing to practice this profession in Ireland.

However, where a profession is regulated, such as the professions of doctor, nurse or teacher for example, an individual wishing to continue to practice their profession in Ireland must engage with the relevant Irish competent authority or professional regulator in order to seek the recognition of their qualifications. DFHERIS is supporting the work of these Competent Authorities by sharing best practice material supplied by the European Commission and other Member States in this space, alongside the recently published Commission Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications for people fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This is in addition to advising these Authorities on relevant information available to them via NARIC Ireland. A list of all of the regulated professions in Ireland, their corresponding competent authority and the relevant contact information for each authority is published on the Department's website.'

135. SOLAS noted *'Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) has recognised 18 Ukrainian qualifications that are comparable to Irish awards from Levels 3-10 on*

the National Framework of Qualifications. These qualifications can therefore now be deployed by those seeking to work or study while resident in Ireland. On construction, SOLAS applies recognition of prior qualification (RPQ) processes to applicants from Ukraine as they arise, noting they are essentially being treated as EU citizens for all government supports. On apprenticeship, recognition of prior learning (RPL) approaches are being adopted.'

136. The DFHERIS further reported '*SOLAS operates a system whereby individuals coming to Ireland with foreign FET qualifications can apply to SOLAS to have these qualifications assessed for equivalency. Officials are liaising with SOLAS to consider how to handle Ukrainian applicants who arrive without papers, the translation of Safe Pass material and how the CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) and QSCS (Quarries Skills Certification Scheme) programmes can be adapted.'*

137. Minister Foley noted the Department has '*reached out to those who have teaching qualifications and teaching backgrounds. We have invited them to register with the Teaching Council. A number have already done so. The numbers are small at this point, which is understandable, for a variety of reasons. Some 48 or 49 people have currently registered with the Teaching Council. That is being progressed by that body, which will be a great addition in future.'*

138. Regarding the progress made so far in allowing Ukrainian refugees in Ireland to use their qualifications, Minister Harris told the Committee '*SOLAS has scheduled the first of two Ukrainian language Safe Pass programmes with an approved Ukrainian interpreter used to help with delivery. Fourteen people from Ukraine have been granted the Safe Pass to date. As members will know, the pass is required for people who wish to work on a construction site. We have made sure that training is provided in a wide range of languages used by people from Ukraine.'*

RECOMMENDATIONS: OTHER ISSUES

13. The Department of Education must ensure that appropriate school transport is in place for the new term in September 2022.

14. The Department of Education should establish a *Digital Support Fund* so that Senior Cycle students can complete their examinations as per the Ukrainian curriculum. These students should be provided with adequate broadband connection and appropriate digital devices such as laptops or iPads.

15. The Department of Education should issue a circular stating that all School Staff participating in the Summer Schools Programme will receive a Fixed Rate Special Allowance from 2022 onwards.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF COMMENTARY NOTES

Commentary notes were received from the following organisations and individuals.

All notes are available [here](#):

- Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS)
- Department of Education
- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- Doras
- Education Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)
- Irish Federation University Teachers (IFUT)
- Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO)
- Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN)
- Irish Refugee Council (IRC)
- Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU)
- Joint Managerial Body (JMB)
- Library Association of Ireland, School Libraries Group (LAI SLG)
- National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD)
- National Parents Council (NPC)
- Plan International Ireland
- Science Foundation Ireland (SFI)
- SOLAS
- Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI)
- Technological Higher Education Association (THEA)
- The National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABSME)
- Tusla
- Union of Students in Ireland (USI)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR)

APPENDIX 2: ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS

On 1 June 2022, the Committee held an engagement with Ms. Norma Foley TD, Minister for Education and Mr. Simon Harris TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

The debate can be accessed [here](#)

On 14 June 2022, the Committee held a roundtable discussion with, Ms. Meg Ryan, Migrant Case Worker, Irish Red Cross; Ms Nuala Ward, Director of Investigations, Office of the Ombudsman for Children; Ms Clodagh Carroll, Assistant Director of Children's Services, Barnardos; Mr. Nick Henderson, CEO, Irish Refugee Council and Ms. Kathleen Moran, Chairperson, Irish Library Association (ILA) School Libraries Group (SLG).

The debate can be accessed [here](#)

APPENDIX 3: SCHOOL LIBRARY SUPPORTS FOR DISPLACED STUDENTS

139. The Library Association of Ireland (LAI) (School Libraries Group) (SLG) outlined a number of resources that they have available to schools that may help provide resources for teachers and families working with Ukrainian and indeed other, displaced students. Existing school libraries, in particular JCSP libraries, currently provide a range of literacy/reading/wellbeing support programmes that can be tailored to meet the specific needs of Ukrainian and other displaced students. These programmes can provide support in the following areas:

CURRICULUM PROVISION

- Rapid Plus Reading, aimed at EAL students, is a series of levelled books and software for English Language learners.
- TTRS (Touch Type Read and Spell) supports development of basic literacy skills by, for example, allowing students to pronounce target words and phrases alongside audio supporting development of basic literacy skills.
- IXL is an online Maths and English practice tool for students and their families that works well with EAL students.
- Accelerated Reader is a computer-based program used to monitor reading practice and progress. School Librarians can use this to guide Ukrainian and other displaced students to books at their reading level
- JCSP Library Project Digital Library Service (as outlined below) currently provides free access to students and staff in all DEIS schools
- Providing Comprehension boxes for all levels.
- Twinkl has a range of English-Ukrainian dual-language resources and provides access to lesson plans, schemes of work, assessment, interactive activities, resource packs, PowerPoints, teaching ideas.

LANGUAGE PROVISION

- A bespoke collection of International books that can include additional appropriate titles in Ukrainian and Russian languages through for example, the Post Primary Languages Ireland School Library Home

Languages Scheme and the JCSP Library Project Digital Library Service.

- Accessible and super readable novels and books from organisations like Barrington Stokes.
- Library tablets or devices for translation tools.
- A wide range of supports for students who have little or no English - including Cambridge testing, assessment welcome packs in Russian or Ukrainian, language dictionaries, etc.
- A safe and welcoming place for EAL sessions that might be more suitable than a classroom setting.
- One on one or group sessions and/or help guides on how to use assistive technology such as Microsoft: Translate, read aloud and dictation.
- Language support material that can be uploaded to the Digital Library Service. Examples might include school/student publications, teacher developed resources etc.

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