

Supporting Ukrainians in Ireland:

a preliminary analysis



➡ **Dr Nataliia Boiko & Professor Mary Gilmartin**

May 2026

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Acknowledgements

This research was funded by Taighde Éireann/ Research Ireland under two schemes: the Laureate Award (IRCLA/2023/1941) and the Supplemental Grant for Displaced Researchers (IRCLA/2023/1941 (S1). We gratefully acknowledge this funding.

We also acknowledge the support of Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute (MUSSI) and Maynooth University Department of Geography.

Thank you to all the research participants for their time, engagement, and willingness to share their experiences with us.

Executive Summary

Following the assault on Ukraine by Russia that began in February 2022, and the subsequent adoption of the EU Temporary Protection Directive in March 2022, over 120,000 Ukrainian citizens have moved to and registered in Ireland. Around half arrived between March and October 2022. In response, the Irish state, civil society and volunteers living in Ireland mobilised to provide care and support to new arrivals. Qualitative research with over 50 professionals, volunteers and recent arrivals from Ukraine provides new insights into their experiences, with broader lessons for Irish society. The research shows the importance of providing relevant and appropriate information at different stages to support integration and social cohesion, with efforts co-ordinated between different stakeholders. It highlights the significance of non-material as well as material support for new residents. Additionally, it points to broader structural issues, for example housing, healthcare and transport, that affect the wider population, as well as specific issues that affect Ukrainians in Ireland related to anxieties over the future. Importantly, the research also demonstrates the importance of fostering opportunities to care for and support others for developing solidarity and social cohesion.

The report makes a series of recommendations to enhance integration and social cohesion, drawing from recent experiences in supporting Ukrainian citizens. These include the wider adoption of a “one-stop-shop” model, and the recognition of the need to provide different information at different times. They also include recommendations to support enhanced co-operation between stakeholders; to strengthen the role of civil society organisations through better funding mechanisms; and to develop longer-term evidence-supported planning for both crisis and non-crisis migration situations. The report also acknowledges the role of volunteering in enhancing social cohesion, and recommends enhancing opportunities for volunteering at all levels.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Після повномасштабного нападу на Україну з боку Росії наприкінці лютого 2022 року та подальшого ухвалення Директиви ЄС про тимчасовий захист, у березні 2022 року понад 120 000 громадян України переїхали до Ірландії та зареєструвалися в ній. Приблизно половина з них прибула в країну у період з березня по жовтень 2022 року. У зв'язку з цим ірландська держава, громадянське суспільство та волонтери, які живуть в Ірландії, мобілізувалися, щоб надати допомогу та підтримку новоприбулим. Якісне дослідження за участю понад 50 фахівців, волонтерів та нещодавно прибулих українців дає змогу по-новому поглянути на їх досвід та отримати більш широкі уроки для ірландського суспільства.

Дослідження демонструє важливість надання релевантної та доцільної інформації на різних етапах для підтримки інтеграції та соціальної згуртованості, координуючи зусилля між різними зацікавленими сторонами. Воно підкреслює важливість як нематеріальної, так і матеріальної підтримки новоприбулих. Крім того, воно вказує на ширші структурні питання, наприклад, житло, охорона здоров'я та транспорт, які стосуються широких верств населення, а також

конкретні проблеми, які стосуються українців в Ірландії та пов'язані з тривогою за майбутнє. Дослідження також демонструє важливість сприяння можливостям надання допомоги та підтримки для розвитку солідарності та соціальної єдності. У звіті міститься ряд рекомендацій щодо посилення інтеграції та соціальної згуртованості, які спираються на нещодавній досвід підтримки громадян України. Серед них – ширше впровадження моделі «єдиного вікна» та врахування потреби у різній інформації на різних етапах. Вони містять рекомендації щодо підтримки поглибленої співпраці між зацікавленими сторонами; а також посилити роль організацій громадянського суспільства через покращення механізмів фінансування; розробити довгострокове, підтверджене фактами, планування як для кризових, так і для некризових міграційних ситуацій. У звіті також визнається роль волонтерської діяльності у зміцненні соціальної згуртованості та рекомендується розширити можливості для волонтерської діяльності на всіх рівнях.



1. Introduction

On 24 February 2022, Russia launched an assault on Ukraine, with Russian forces entering Ukraine from Russia, Belarus and Crimea.¹ On 2 March 2022, the *Irish Times* reported that government officials were “making preparations to accommodate thousands of Ukrainian refugees”. While there were suggestions that up to 20,000 Ukrainians would be taken in, it was expected “the first refugees will be friends and family, with upwards of 3,000 Ukrainians already in the State”.²

Two days later, on 4 March 2022, the European Union adopted a Temporary Protection Directive for the first time since it was signed. The Temporary Protection Directive allows Ukrainian citizens and certain Ukrainian residents to move to, live, work and access public services in EU countries on a temporary basis, until the Directive expires. It is currently in place until March 2027.³ By 7 March 2022, Irish government ministers were speculating that up to 100,000 Ukrainian refugees could arrive in Ireland.⁴

In response to the expected arrival of significant numbers of Ukrainian refugees, the Irish state, civil society organisations and residents quickly mobilised. A “one-stop-shop” was set up at Dublin airport to help arrivals register for state services.⁵ The Irish Red Cross opened a pledged accommodation service: by 12 March 2022, they had received 14,500 promises of accommodation to Ukrainian refugees.⁶ The Irish Catholic bishops met in March 2022 to discuss the practical measures parishes and dioceses could put in place to assist new arrivals.⁷ At national and local levels, people made donations, gathered supplies, and made plans to welcome Ukrainians forced to flee the war that began on 24 February 2022, when Russia attacked their country. The most recent statistics from UNHCR show that 3.23 million Ukrainians are now recorded as living in other countries as refugees. Of those, 120,190 were registered in Ireland on 31 December 2025.⁸

1 House of Commons Library, “Conflict in Ukraine - a timeline”. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9847/> [Accessed 22 May 2026].

2 J. Horgan-Jones and P. Leahy, “Government prepares for thousands of refugees; ‘Not possible to be precise’ about numbers expected, says spokesman”. *Irish Times*. 2 March 2022.

3 European Commission, “Temporary protection”. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/asylum-eu/temporary-protection_en [Accessed 20 April 2026].

4 P. Leahy and K. Holland, “Refugee figure could reach up to 100,000; Minister says schools should start preparing to welcome Ukrainian children”. *Irish Times*. 7 March 2022.

5 S. Carswell, “Ireland and UK take strikingly different approaches to Ukraine refugee crisis”. *Irish Times*. 11 March 2022.

6 S. Bowers, “Housing offers pour in for refugees”. *Irish Times*. 12 March 2022.

7 P. McGarry, “Catholic Church prepares for arrival of Ukrainians”. *Irish Times*. 8 March 2022.

8 UNHCR, *Ukraine Refugee Situation* (2026). <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine> [Accessed 22 May 2026].

2. Ukrainians In Ireland

2.1 Ukrainians in Ireland prior to the war

The best record of Ukrainians in Ireland prior to the start of the war comes from the 2016 Census.⁹ At that date, the Census recorded 4,624 people living in Ireland who were born in Ukraine. This was an increase of 12% from the previous Census in 2011, which recorded 4,123 people born in Ukraine. The number of people who identified as Ukrainian nationals decreased from 3,343 in 2011 to 1,785 in 2016. This difference may be related to naturalization.¹⁰

In 2016, 54% of those born in Ukraine and living in Ireland were female. Figure 1 shows the age profile for men and women born in Ukraine, with a particular concentration of women in the 25-44 age category (62.5% of all women). Information from Census 2016 about people born in Ukraine is limited. There is more information about Ukrainian nationals, 44% of whom lived in Dublin.¹¹ After Dublin, around 10% lived in Cork, and around 6% in Kildare, with small numbers in other counties. Levels of completed education among Ukrainian nationals living in Ireland in 2016 were high, with 13.2% having completed a postgraduate degree, compared to 8.4% of the general population.¹² The labour force participation rate for Ukrainian nationals in 2016 was 76.5%, compared to 61.5% for the population as a whole.¹³

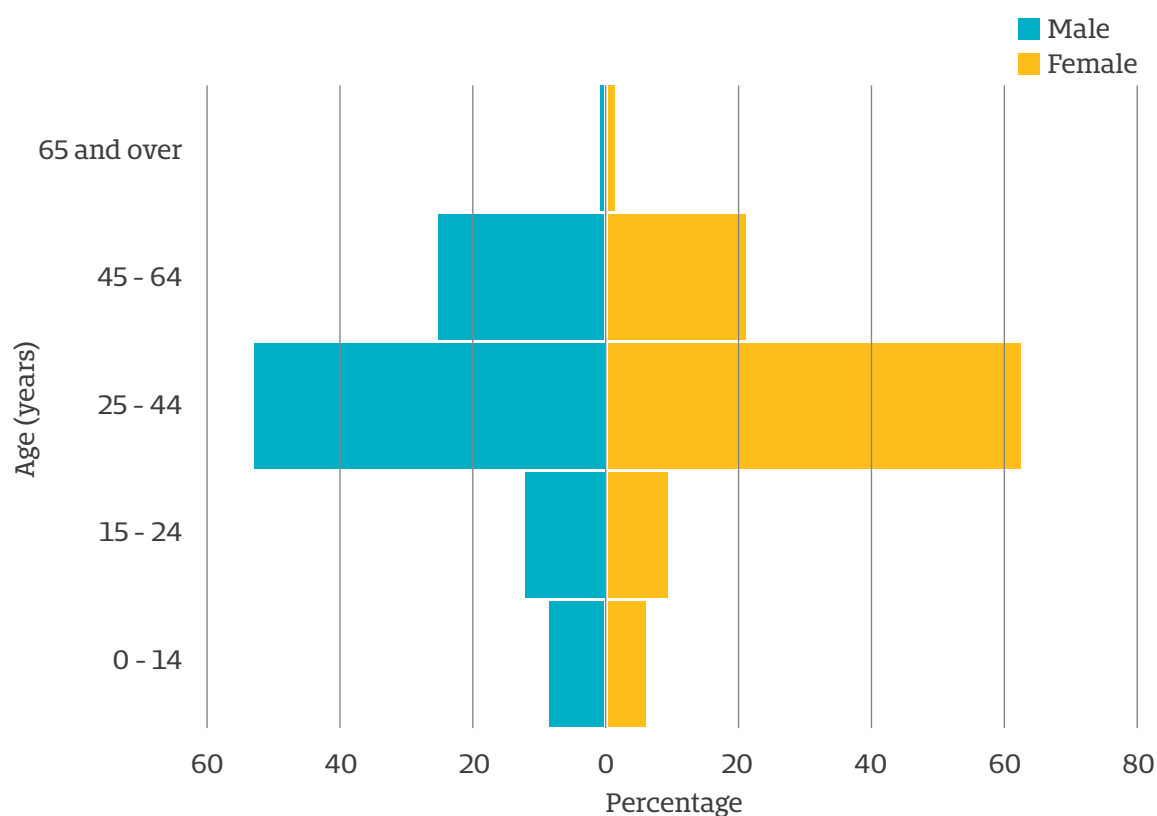
9 Data from the 2016 Census of Population in Ireland is available online, from the Central Statistics Office, at <https://data.cso.ie/>. Table numbers for data will be provided in subsequent footnotes.

10 CSO, *Census 2016*, Table E7053.

11 CSO, *Census 2016*, Table E7002.

12 CSO, *Census 2016*, Table EA004.

13 CSO, *Census 2016*, Table EB005.

Figure 1: Population pyramid of Irish residents born in Ukraine, 2016¹⁴

2.2 Ukrainians moving to Ireland after the war started

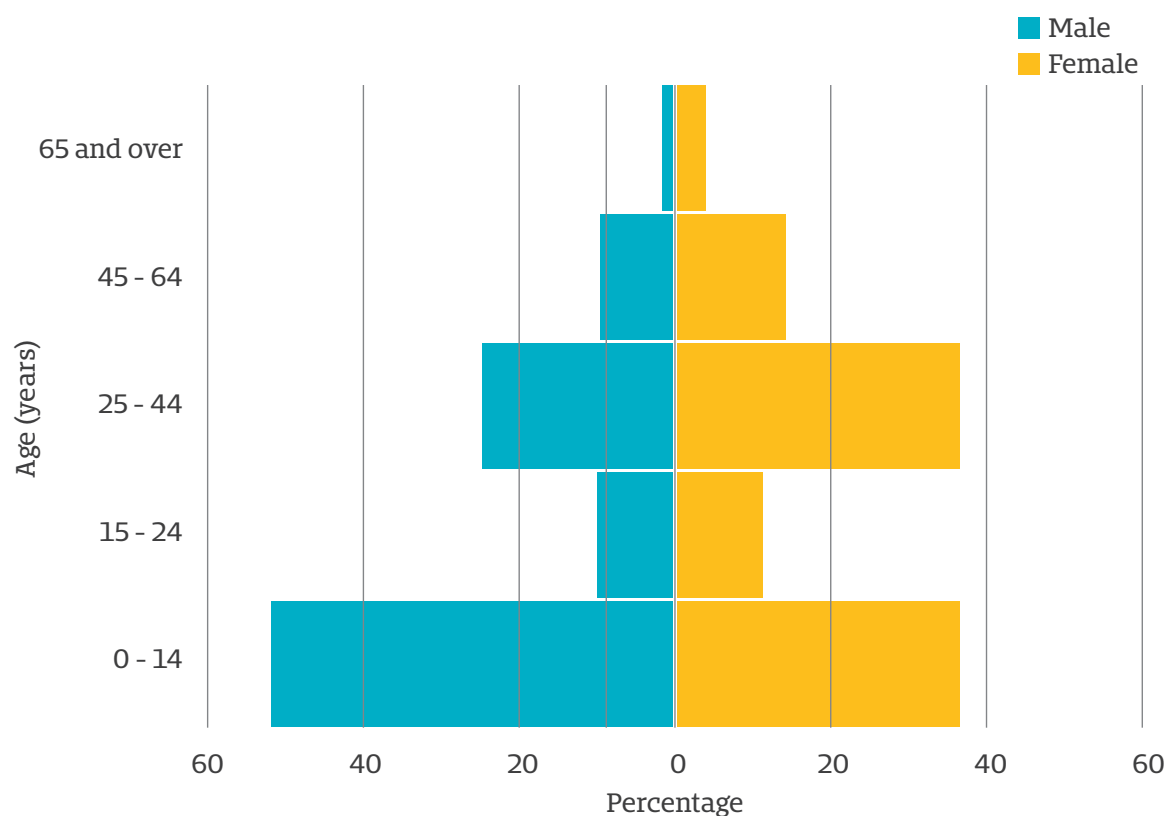
Following the start of the war in February 2022, and the subsequent adoption of the EU Temporary Protection Directive in March 2022, Ukrainian nationals began to move to Ireland in significant numbers. Census 2022, which was held in April 2022, captures the early stage of this movement.¹⁵ By the time of the Census, 11,791 Ukrainian citizens were recorded as living in Ireland, 60.7% of whom were female.¹⁶ Figure 2 shows the age profile for Ukrainian citizens living in Ireland in April 2022, with a particular concentration of males under 15 (52.3% of all males). While Dublin was still an important place of residence, with 43.8% of all Ukrainian citizens living there, the pattern of residence had changed. There were Ukrainian citizens living in every county in Ireland, with high numbers in Clare (8.3% of the total), Cork (6.6% of the total) and Wexford (4.4% of the total).¹⁷

14 Adapted from CSO, *Census 2016*, Table E7054.

15 Data from the 2022 Census of Population in Ireland is available online, from the Central Statistics Office (CSO), at <https://data.cso.ie/>. Table numbers for data will be provided in subsequent footnotes.

16 CSO, *Census 2022*, Table FY017.

17 CSO, *Census 2022*, Table F5002.

Figure 2: Population pyramid of Ukrainian citizens living in Ireland, April 2022¹⁸

From the time of the 2022 Census in April, the numbers of Ukrainian citizens in Ireland continued to rise. By the end of October 2022, almost 60,000 Ukrainian citizens had registered as residents in Ireland since the war began. After that, the number of arrivals began to level off: it took until January 2024 to reach 100,000 registered Ukrainian citizens.¹⁹ By February 2026, the Central Statistics Office reported that a total of 121,048 PPSNs had been issued to Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BoTPs) from Ukraine. Of these, 69% or 84,100 had activity in administrative data after 30 November 2025; 29,060 had recent earnings from employment, and 12,037 were enrolled in further education and training courses.²⁰

18 Adapted from CSO, *Census 2022*, Table FY017.

19 CSO, Table UA07. <https://data.cso.ie/>.

20 CSO, *Arrivals from Ukraine in Ireland Series 18* (2026). <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/fp/p-aui/arrivalsfromukraineinirelandseries18/> [accessed 1 May 2026]

In the broader context of migration to Ireland, the scale of migration from Ukraine is significant. Estimates of migration to Ireland are published annually, and cover the year to April. In the year to April 2023, the estimated number of migrants into Ireland was 141,600. It is likely that around 50,000 of those were Ukrainian (ca. 35%).²¹ In the year to April 2024, perhaps 16% of the estimated number of migrants of 149,200 were Ukrainian.²² Compared to other EU and EFTA countries, Ireland has the fifth highest proportion of Ukrainian refugees per capita, at 20.6 per thousand residents. This follows Czechia (36.4), Latvia (25.9), Slovakia (24.3) and Cyprus (23.4).²³ Prior to the war, Ireland ranked 25th out of 27 EU countries as a preferred destination for Ukrainians.²⁴



21 CSO, *Population and Migration Estimates, April 2023* (2023). <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/population/populationandmigrationestimates/> [Accessed 22 May 2026]; CSO, Table UA07.

22 CSO, *Population and Migration Estimates, April 2024* (2024). <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/population/populationandmigrationestimates/> [Accessed 22 May 2026]; CSO, Table UA07.

23 Statistics Netherlands (2025) “4.7 million refugees from Ukraine across Europe”. <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2025/19/4-7-million-refugees-from-ukraine-across-europe> [Accessed 21 May 2026].

24 M. Elinder et al. “Where Would Ukrainian Refugees Go if They Could Go Anywhere?”, *International Migration Review*, 57, 2 (2023), 587-602: 596.

3. Supports for Ukrainians in Ireland

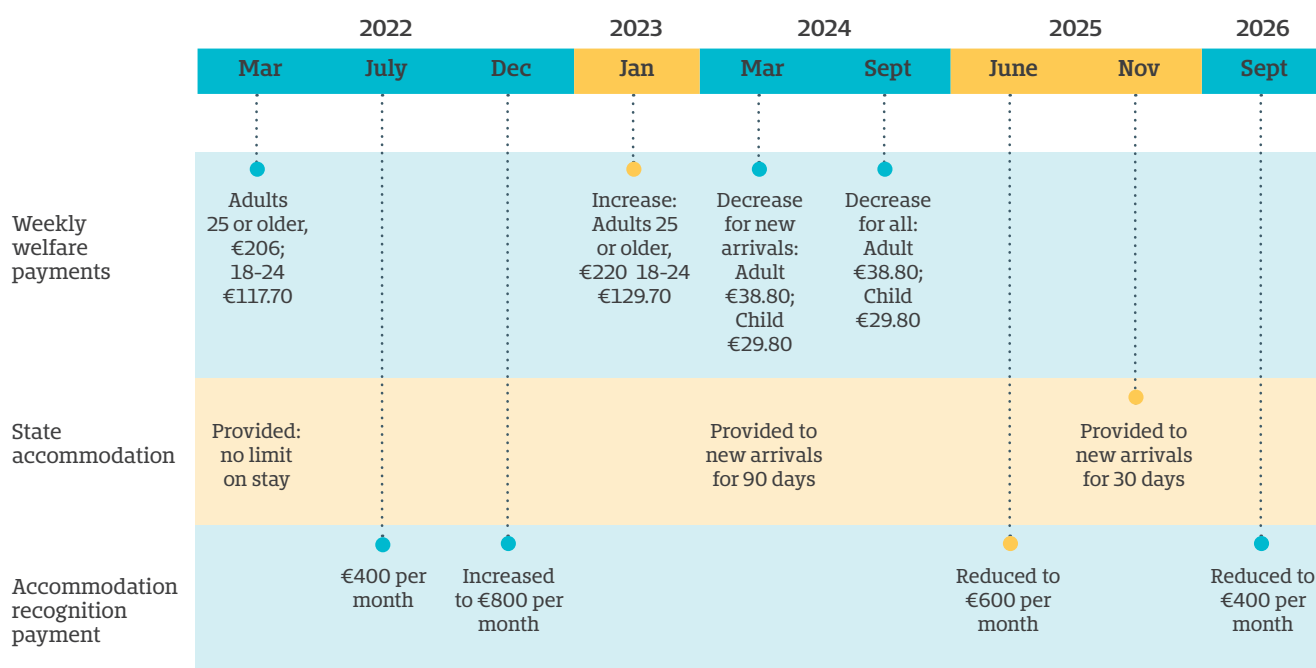
3.1 State Supports

The Irish state moved quickly to provide an infrastructure for newly arrived Ukrainians. At the airport one-stop-shop, they were given a letter by the Department of Justice if they were eligible, confirming that they were Temporary Protection beneficiaries. With this, they were able to get a PPSN, access employment or welfare supports, and helped to find accommodation. Temporary Protection beneficiaries were given supplementary welfare payments: €206 weekly for adults aged 25 or older, €117.70 for adults aged between 18 and 24, and additional payments for adult or child dependents. Child Benefit of €140 was also paid each month, in respect of each child under 16. Temporary Protection beneficiaries are also entitled to a medical card to access healthcare services, and to other social welfare supports²⁵. While most new arrivals were housed in state-provided accommodation, the Accommodation Recognition Payment (ARP) was introduced in July 2022, for hosts providing accommodation in their homes to Ukrainians. Initially, social welfare payments and the ARP increased. Since March 2024, there have been reductions to payments and the provision of accommodation (see Figure 3). Currently, there are plans to withdraw accommodation supports from Ukrainians in Ireland, which will be phased out in a six-month period beginning in August 2026.



.....
 25 Department of Social Protection (n.d.) "Social Welfare supports for those arriving from Ukraine under the EU Temporary Protection Directive". https://corkcountypn.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Leaflet-on-Intro-Centre-Supports-Local-Print-final_Multilingual-SWA-edit.pdf; New Communities Partnership (n.d.) "Ukraine Response". <https://www.newcommunities.ie/resources/ukraine-response/> [Accessed 21 May 2026]

Figure 3: Timeline of Key Changes to State Supports for Ukrainians in Ireland



3.2 Civil Society Supports

Civil society also mobilised in response to the arrival of Ukrainians. The Association of Ukrainians in the Republic of Ireland, which was established in 2008, set up Palyantsta, Ukrainian hubs around the country. A number of new volunteer groups were set up in 2022, including Ukrainian Action in Ireland (UACT), Ukrainian Crisis Centre in Ireland (UCCI), and Ukrainians Helping Ukrainians Galway (UHUG). Churches also worked to support Ukrainians in Ireland. Additionally, a range of local and informal initiatives began at local level, including online communities, for example using Facebook or Telegram.

Mainstream civil society organisations also adapted to respond to Ukrainian arrivals. The Irish Refugee Council set up a Ukrainian response.²⁶ Together Razem, a Cork-based organisation that provides support to migrants from Eastern Europe, established the Together 4 Ukraine hub.²⁷ The Ukrainian Civil Society Forum (UCSF) was established in July 2022. Described as “a short-term, responsive initiative convened by Civil Society”, its aim was to support the emergency settlement of Ukrainians. The UCSF still exists. Its most recent membership list shows 121 members as of May 2025. This includes 42 member organisations, 49 participating organisations, and 30 observing organisations. Members include the larger migrant-supporting civil society organisations, such as Irish Refugee Council, Immigrant Council of Ireland, MRCI, Doras and Nasc; Ukrainian-focused organisations such as UACT, Helping Irish Hosts and Effective Aid Ukraine; and other civil society organisations with broader social remit such as Children’s Rights Alliance and Society

²⁶ Irish Refugee Council, *Ukraine Response* (2025). <https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/get-help/services-support/ukraine-response/> [Accessed 22 May 2026].

²⁷ Together Razem, *Ukraine Hub* (2022). <https://togetherrazem.org/ukrainian-hub/> [Accessed 22 May 2026].

of the St Vincent de Paul.²⁸ Participants and observers also include state-funded entities such as Local Authority Integration Teams. In summary, while state supports were comprehensive, there was “a heavy reliance on the community and voluntary sector to provide supports such as the coordination of accommodation, teaching English, supporting family placements and so on”.²⁹



28 Immigrant Council of Ireland, *Ukraine Civil Society Forum* (2026). <https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/campaign/ukraine-civil-society-forum> [Accessed 22 May 2026].

29 A. Kelly et al, *Migrations in our common home: Responding with care - Ireland's response to the Ukrainian crisis* (Social Justice Ireland, 2022). <https://www.socialjustice.ie/publication/migrations-our-common-homerespoding-care-irelands-response-ukrainian-crisis> [Accessed 1 May 2026], 5.

4. The Research Project: Background and Methodology

In a broader project (*MobiliseCare*), we have been investigating the ways in which individuals, communities and organisations across Ireland respond to migration and migrants, informed by an ethics of care. We define the work carried out by individuals, communities and organisations as care. This broad understanding of care “includes everything we do to maintain, continue and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible”.³⁰

In this research, our aim was to investigate the specific ways in which individuals and organisations have mobilised to provide support and care to recent Ukrainian arrivals to Ireland, and how this support and care was experienced by Ukrainians. The main aims and objectives of the research were as follows:

- To investigate how care providers understand and practice care work
- To illuminate how Ukrainian migrants in Ireland also mobilise and practice care work
- To investigate how migration care work is experienced by Ukrainian migrants in Ireland

When we began the research, we did so against the backdrop of changing sentiment in Ireland towards Ukrainian refugees. The initial response was described as “an outpouring of solidarity”, with Ukrainian refugees seen as more deserving of help than other asylum seekers.³¹ However, as the war continued for an extended period, occasionally tensions arose, such as the temporary closure of a Cork city charity shop set up to cater to Ukrainian refugees,³² or a “campaign of harassment, intimidation and violent attacks” on Ukrainian families in Tipperary.³³ In addition, the gradual reduction of state supports was framed in terms of excessive cost, creating the impression of Ukrainians as a burden on the state. This was evident in a statement by Minister for Justice, Jim O’Callaghan, to a parliamentary committee on Justice, Home Affairs and Migration that “I spent €1 billion last year on Ukrainian accommodation and €1 billion last year on international protection accommodation. I have to get those numbers down”.³⁴ By the time Minister O’Callaghan announced the withdrawal of accommodation support, an opinion poll found that 55% of the public agreed that Ukrainians had made a positive contribution to Irish society, but almost 80% agreed with the plan to end supports.³⁵

30 B. Fisher and J. Tronto, “Towards a feminist theory of caring. In E. K. Abel and M. K. Nelson (eds.), *Circles of care: Work and identity in women’s lives* (State University of New York Press, 1990), 35-63: 40.

31 J. Laurence, F. McGinnity and K. Murphy (2024) *Attitudes towards immigration and refugees in Ireland: Understanding recent trends and drivers*. Dublin: ESRI, 1, 40

32 F. Daly and J. O’Riordan, “Unintended consequences: divisions of care within Ireland’s response to Ukrainian refugees and impacts on asylum seekers”, *Pease Human Rights Governance*, 7, 1 (2023), 23-44: 38.

33 R. Riegel, “Ukrainians in modular home complex ‘face intimidation and threats’”. *Irish Independent*. 22 September 2025, 6.

34 J. O’Callaghan, *Joint Committee on Justice, Home Affairs and Migration*, 23 September 2025. https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/debateRecord/joint_committee_on_justice_home_affairs_and_migration/2025-09-23/debate/mul@/main.pdf [Accessed 22 May 2026].

35 W. O’Connor et al, “ Nearly 80pc back ending supports for Ukrainians, poll reveals”. *Sunday Independent*. 3 May 2026.

Our research, which was carried out between September 2025 and February 2026, sought to capture the views of those who were part of the “outpouring of solidarity”, and those who experienced these acts of solidarity. In particular, we wanted to document how and why people became involved in providing care/support to Ukrainians in Ireland, and what they had learned from their experiences. We also wanted to document how care/support was experienced by Ukrainians in Ireland, and their insights into what worked well and what could be improved. In doing so, we wanted to better understand what worked well, how this knowledge could be applied in other contexts, and how the broader experiences influenced people’s views of migration and Ireland.

4.1 Interviews

To address our research questions, we carried out semi-structured in-depth interviews with people aged 18 and over from two broad groups.³⁶ The first group included people involved in the care/support of Ukrainians in Ireland. This included both individuals and/or members of groups/organisations such as civil society organisations, public sector employees, or informal support networks. We initially identified potential participants through desk research. Potential participants also self-identified, or were identified by migrant participants as providing care/support. In total, we interviewed 21 people from this first group, based in the greater Dublin region, the south, and the north-west.³⁷

The second group included Ukrainian citizens living in Ireland, whether those with temporary protection status who moved to Ireland after 24 February 2022, or those who had other migration statuses and who may have moved to Ireland prior to that date. We identified these participants through snowball sampling. In some instances, Ukrainian citizens - particularly those who had moved to Ireland before the start of the war - were also involved in the provision of care/support to recently arrived Ukrainians. In total, we interviewed 30 people from this group, based in the greater Dublin region, the west, the north-west, the south, the south-west, and the south-east.³⁸

Before the interview, participants were given information about the purpose of the research both in writing (see Appendix 1: Information Leaflet - this was made available in English, Ukrainian and Russian) and orally. Participants also provided written consent (see Appendix 2: Consent form) after they had an opportunity to learn more about the nature and purpose of the research, the potential risks and benefits for participation, and how information provided would be used. Interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient for each participant, and in the language requested by the participant (either English, Ukrainian or Russian). With the consent of each participant, their interview was recorded and later transcribed. If the interview was carried out in Ukrainian or Russian, it was also translated into English. The interview guides for both sets of interviews are provided in Appendix 3.

³⁶ The research was reviewed and approved by Maynooth University Social Research Ethics Sub-Committee on 10 July 2025 (Reference SRESC-2025-40847).

³⁷ In the report, these interviewees are identified with the letter V and a number (e.g. V25)

³⁸ In the report, these interviewees are identified with the letter U and a number (e.g. U40).

5. Findings

5.1 Care providers

In total, we interviewed 21 people who were involved in providing care/support to Ukrainians in Ireland. Of these, 8 worked for care-providing organisations; 9 were collaborating with care-providing organisations; and 4 were involved in the provision of care/support as individuals. Most began their work in February/March 2022, immediately following the start of the war.

The care/support work carried out by interviewees was varied. This included initial care/support on arrival, such as providing information and support, and assisting with documentation. After the initial period of adjustment, interviewees provided practical support in relation to accessing employment, which included help with writing CVs for the Irish context, guidance on finding job vacancies, support with completing LinkedIn profiles, and interview preparation. Support for English language learning was also provided, as was translation support for interactions such as medical appointments and communication with official bodies. Additionally, interviewees provided support for accessing housing. Interviewees also mentioned providing psychological support, support for young people (e.g. summer camps), and including recent arrivals in general activities open to everyone, such as cooking or art or music classes. Some interviewees explained their role as helping to prepare people in Ireland for the arrival of Ukrainian migrants.

Interviewees described their motivations for involvement in the provision of care/support to Ukrainians in two key ways. For some, this was seen as a professional responsibility, connected to their particular role in an organisation. One interviewee responded as follows:

Why did we start providing assistance? We had no choice. Because our mission was to support people, no matter what their reason for coming to [county].... And we were very happy, of course, very glad to do it. (V20)

This combination - of meeting a professional responsibility, but also responding positively to that responsibility - was often expressed in interviews. One interviewee described their experiences in this way:

I work at a community centre, and we provide support to people living in this area, to those who need it. When the Ukrainians arrived, when the war began, we kind of reached out, especially considering there were many Ukrainians living in this area. ... And when people started attending English classes, yoga, and other services we provide, I was able to communicate with them, and requests arose. This made it easier to identify their needs and understand what might be helpful.... [a]nd we were able to expand our services and provide services specifically to Ukrainians. (V18)

The second form of motivation was personal. Some interviewees had strong connections to Ukraine, and wanted to support their compatriots. As one commented, *“At first, I helped myself, because I’m Ukrainian and couldn’t remain indifferent to this tragedy that befell Ukraine”* (V19). Others felt a direct affinity to Ukrainians, such as the interviewee who said *“we have connections with the Russian-Ukrainian-*

speaking community. My wife is Latvian and speaks Russian” (V15). Others still described their motivation in terms of empathy. As one commented, *“...and when I looked at people in Ukraine on TV, they reminded me of my own children. They look just like my own children, and that’s the main reason” (V21).* However, the intersection of personal and professional motivations was also evident in the case of V21, who highlighted that:

I just thought the best role I could fulfill was simply to support the Ukrainian people in navigating foreign systems as refugees now. So, this is basically my calling, and yes, it’s just a professional side. (V21)

Interviewees also commented on how their involvement in providing care/support led to solidarity-building. An interviewee with Ukrainian background talked about acts of solidarity in the local area:

Then I turned to local Irish acquaintances. Then the Irish community rallied and provided us with a parish for that time. ...The women were there, they were always there, too, they took turns bringing cakes to greet us, to show that Ukrainians were welcome. And there was a private priest there; he’d come by, say hello, you know, something small. And then the [local authority] stepped up and allocated some grants.(V19)

The impact of volunteering and providing care/support was captured concisely by one interviewee who responded: *“Why did I start volunteering? It always brings people together” (V5).*

Interviewees were forthcoming on the widespread benefits of their efforts to provide care/support. They spoke about how their efforts resulted in positive emotions for them, such as gratitude and pride and joy (V15, V18). They described making new friends through their work (V15, V17), and of learning life lessons about the importance of giving to others (V16), as well as teaching benevolence (V5). Others spoke about what they had learned, both about other places and people, and about themselves (V11, V12, V17, V18). As one interviewee commented, “it forced me to be more collaborative” (V13), while another said:

It helped me find myself and do what I love. It opened up a new world for me – the outside world. I came out of my bubble of routine and family worries. (V19)

For many interviewees, the benefits of involvement were far-reaching, with broader implications for Irish society, such as creating spaces of solidarity and expanding anti-racist practices (V13). However, interviewees were also mindful of more challenging aspects, such as burnout (V2, V4, V6, V19, V21), with one commenting that *“Volunteer work requires resilience and emotional balance. Need mental health support. It’s important to set boundaries” (V21).*

The challenges identified by interviewees were widespread. The issue of funding was often mentioned, with people raising concerns about the focus on short-term projects and results rather than longer-term investments. Interviewees also pointed out that the emphasis on competition for limited funds created difficulties for meaningful collaboration. Concerns were raised about the motivations of some of those involved in providing care/support, particularly when it was done “as a business”. Others pointed to the difficulties of working according to regulations or protocols, with a corresponding lack of flexibility and inability to respond to rapidly changing

situations. One interviewee described their work as having “... *less bureaucracy with the arrival, we have a different approach, much more direct and faster*” (V15), in contrast to more rigid approaches that they felt were less effective. Despite the challenges, people still considered that being involved in the provision of care/support was a positive experience for them, for the people who they were supporting, and for the wider community. As one interviewee broadly observed, volunteering heals Irish society (V15).

5.2 Ukrainian experiences of care/support services

In total, we interviewed 30 Ukrainian nationals living in Ireland. The majority (27 in total) had arrived in Ireland since February 2022: 19 in 2022, and 8 in 2023. The remaining 3 had all lived in Ireland for at least 20 years. 25 were female, and 5 were male. They ranged in age from 33 (the youngest) to 68 (the oldest). The average age for male interviewees was 63, while the average age for female interviewees was 50. Many of the interviewees (16 in total) had lived in a variety of locations across Ireland, for example moving between Dublin and Donegal, or between Cork and Dublin. Interviews took place in locations chosen by interviewees, which included where people lived or worked, cafes, libraries and community centres.

Those who had arrived in Ireland because of the war remarked on the comprehensive care/support they received on arrival. They noted both material and non-material support, provided directly by the Irish state as well as by local organisations, church organisations, and a range of volunteers. Material support included financial support, housing, access to healthcare and education, and basic necessities such as hygiene products, SIM cards and clothing. Interviewees also highlighted the role of non-material support, such as kindness and empathy. In the interviews, many became very emotional when they spoke about their initial experiences. They talked about



what they had gone through before arriving in Ireland, and their relief and gratitude on arrival in a place of safety. As one interviewee said, highlighting the importance of emotional, psychological and spiritual support:

Ireland welcomed us so well. Oh, it brought me to tears. I was so nervous. It was so nice to have someone waiting for you. I even felt like a child. Honestly, I felt so cared for, like a little child. I practically burst into tears. (U3)

An interviewee who came to Ireland with her daughter after a long and difficult journey across Europe said she wasn't able to remember much of the journey because of how stressful it was. They travelled to Ireland, though they *"had no idea what the conditions were.... And so our expectations were, well, low. But everything turned out differently"* (U12). This sense of not knowing what to expect, and of relief as the reality became clearer, is well expressed by a female interviewee as follows:

At first, I couldn't form an impression of Ireland because I was so stressed. But two days later, from the very first moment the hosts met me at the airport, I realized that we would be helped here. And this was a pleasant discovery for me because I didn't feel alone. I didn't feel abandoned... And honestly, I had no needs at all upon arrival. I didn't go because I needed support. I went because I was hiding from the fighting. (U17)

Interviewees were appreciative of what they perceived as the level of coordination and organisation they experienced on arrival. One said *"I think everything was well thought out"* (U27), while another commented that *"In terms of the adaptation and welcome Ireland provided, I would give it a 10 out of 10"* (U21). Many expected that their arrival in a new country would be difficult, and they had tried to prepare for this. However, they were unprepared for the initial ease of settling in to life in Ireland. This was explained in two ways. The first was how people behaved towards them. As one interviewee commented:

People are very kind. That's what I realized. They're very sympathetic and very understanding. They understand that people are in trouble and they try to help and support them. (U27)

The second was the official provision of access to services and supports, described by another interviewee in this way:

I didn't have to knock on any closed doors. I didn't have to deal with a situation where I didn't understand what I needed to do. (U17)

When people initially arrived, the hope was that the war would not last for a long time. As the war continued, year after year, the expected temporary stays in Ireland stretched on. On reflection, some interviewees noted specific issues in relation to the provision of relevant information. For example, some interviewees suggested that there was insufficient information support at the initial stage, but simultaneously spoke of a certain excess of information. This situation may be related to the stress of war, the increased stress of being in a new country, and to the challenge of dealing with new social realities over an extended period. This may require a clearer and more accessible presentation of information for people on arrival and over time. One interviewee described it in these terms:

It would have been great if they had helped more at the first stage, so that there would have been more information. Although at the time, it was a big

help. It's impossible to cover everything at once. You only learn gradually. ... I would have liked to have known more about certain aspects related to social issues... I had friends here. And they told me more. That is, it was impossible to find a single source that would tell you everything you need to do: check 1, step 2, step 3: If you have children, you do this. If you have elderly relatives, you do this. If you're interested in work, education, and so on. Of course, all of this is available on government websites. But when you first arrive, there's too much information. Too many sources, too many resources to find. You can't remember and process it all at once. So, if it were all collected on one page, with links to follow, it would make life a lot easier. (U15)

Another interviewee described this more concisely: *"Because at first, you still get lost. There's so much information. And so many people around you"* (U21).

The challenges of living in Ireland for an extended period also came to the fore among interviewees. This was described by one person in this way: *"When your stress subsides, when you start living a somewhat normal life, your needs increase"* (U12), while another said *"The state can't take care of us all the time"* (U9). Many of the challenges are faced by all residents of Ireland, both migrants and non-migrants. For example, housing was a key concern, with interviewees commenting on how difficult it is to find and afford decent housing, with one saying *"This is a housing problem for all of Ireland. That's it. Nothing else"* (U4). People also spoke about the delays in accessing health care (U3, U12). Those who were living in remote locations, such as some rural areas, described transportation difficulties: as one person told us, *"Everyone unanimously says that in areas like these, if you don't have a car, it's really hard"* (U29). From these interviews, it appears that the initial forms of care/support were directed towards the moment of arrival, with more limited support to address broader structural issues experienced by Ukrainians and all other residents.

In addition to shared challenges, interviewees also reported specific challenges faced by recent Ukrainian arrivals. Some mentioned language, highlighting the challenges that older people in particular face in learning a new language and engaging with people outside the Ukrainian community (U3). As one commented, *"communication would be helpful, because without communication, it's very difficult at my age"* (U27). These difficulties have led many interviewees to mostly spend time with family and/or with other Ukrainians (U1, U3, U27). Others commented on the uncertainty of their temporary protection status, and how this was having a negative impact on their access to employment. As one noted:

But my legal status here ends in March 2026. It might be extended. But this situation makes me less competitive in the Irish job market. ...Any employer, when they see that your work permit expires in March 2026, starts to doubt it. ... They simply won't give you an offer, and you'll leave empty-handed. (U17)³⁹

.....
39 At the time of the interview, temporary protection was due to expire on 4 March 2026. This was later extended to 4 March 2027, but was not confirmed by the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration until 3 March 2026 (See <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/notice-for-beneficiaries-of-temporary-protection-and-employers/>).

Parents also mentioned school-related issues, with some schools providing less support for Ukrainian children, and some teachers described as *“not particularly willing to help our children adapt. There are many factors at play. There’s bullying from teachers. There’s a lack of understanding of our children. Prejudiced attitudes”* (U4). These problems were localised, with other schools and teachers described as *“very good...very kind”* (U8). However, when children were not supported at school, it had longer term impacts, with some parents removing the students from school to attend Ukrainian school remotely. Importantly, interviewees highlighted ongoing difficulties in accessing information when they moved from state-provided accommodation to private accommodation, and their increasing reliance on personal contacts and voluntary organisations: *“our Ukrainian language, Ukrainian community centres”* (U3). Commenting on the impending closure of a Ukrainian community centre in Dublin, one interviewee told us:

It’s a shame that this Ukrainian centre is closing. It provided support and communication, and this saves many from depression. By the way, when you live separately in ARP, you really miss this kind of support and communication. (U1)



6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The speed and scale of Ukrainian migration to Ireland, and the mobilisation of state, civil society and volunteer responses to this movement of people, was significant and unprecedented in recent Irish society. Given this, the experiences of our interviewees, who included recently arrived Ukrainians, Ukrainians who had been living in Ireland for longer periods, and people involved in providing care/support to Ukrainians, provide important lessons.

For those involved in providing care, in both volunteer and professional capacities, the experience was often positive. People appreciated being able to offer support, show solidarity, and build community. The care and support offered was often described as practical: help with filling out forms, accessing employment, and responding to specific needs. Those who accessed care and support appreciated their efforts. As one interviewee commented, *“personally I didn’t expect such support.... They gave us tremendous moral and financial support” (U9)*. While Ukrainian interviewees often commented on the emotional and moral support they received, these intangible supports were rarely mentioned by interviewees who provided care. However, interviewees were open about the challenges they faced in providing care, which included difficulties in accessing funding, developing meaningful collaborations, and dealing with burnout. They were concerned about their ability to continue providing care, while appreciative of the role and contributions of care beyond the immediate interactions.

For those who had recently arrived in Ireland, there was a concern to express gratitude for what they had received. This needs to be understood in the context of the changes in support to Ukrainians in Ireland that were taking place around the time of the interviews (see Figure 3), as well as in relation to anxieties about an uncertain future. That said, interviewees noted the material and intangible supports they received, and appreciated how they were helped to navigate new and unfamiliar systems. As their stay in Ireland was extended, they began to have more direct experiences of broader structural difficulties related to housing, healthcare and transportation, as well as specific difficulties connected to their temporary protection status, employment, language and communication, and the experiences of children.

The experiences of interviewees in this research project, both recent arrivals and those involved in providing care and support, provide insights into how state and civil society can work towards enhancing social cohesion and integration. Based on these experiences, we make the following recommendations for future policy and practice.

- Draw on the experience of supporting Ukrainian citizens to develop longer-term evidence-supported planning for both crisis and non-crisis migration situations.
- Develop a “one-stop-shop” approach that provides basic information on immediate needs and formal interactions with the state that can be adapted for more general use for all new arrivals in Ireland.

- The response to Ukrainian migration demonstrates the effectiveness of co-ordination of efforts between the state, civil society organisations and volunteers. Using these responses and experiences, encourage the development of a code of best practice for the co-ordination of efforts to minimise duplication and allow resources to be used more effectively.
- A principle of constructive cooperation between the different stakeholders should be established to inform the code of practice. Flexibility is important in order to respond to needs as they emerge but so is the ability to provide the service in a positive and consistent manner.
- Prepare information available to people on the basis that their needs will change over time and that what is being provided to them will also change.
- Structure the opportunities for volunteering at all levels to promote social cohesion, though not as a substitute for state provision of necessary services.
- Recognise and value the role of civil society organisations in providing appropriate care and support. A key part of this is to develop longer-term, multi-annual funding strategies that support co-operation and collaboration.



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Appendix 1: Information Leaflet

‘MobiliseCare’



Information leaflet for participants

Introduction

Our names are Dr. Nataliia Boiko and Professor Mary Gilmartin. We are based in the Department of Geography at Maynooth University. We are both involved in this research project, which is funded by Taighde Ireland/Research Ireland, and which is exploring how care is provided to Ukrainian migrants in Ireland, and how Ukrainian migrants in Ireland experience this care.

What is this research about and why are we doing it?

This research hopes to highlight and assess all the different ways individuals, communities and organisations have tried to support Ukrainian migrants in Ireland. We would like to learn more about these different efforts to support Ukrainian migrants, so that we can contribute to a different understanding of migration in our society.

Who has approved this study?

This study has been reviewed and received ethical approval from Maynooth University Research Ethics Committee. You may have a copy of this approval if you request it.

Why have you been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part because you are a Ukrainian living in Ireland and/or you are involved in the provision of care to Ukrainians living in Ireland. We are interested to learn more about your experiences.

What will participating in this research involve?

If you decide to take part, you will be invited to take part in an interview with one or both of the above researchers, at a time and place that suits you. We will provide some questions in advance of the interview to give you a sense of the types of things we would like to talk about. With your permission, we will record our conversation for our research. The interview will last around 60 minutes.

With your permission, we would like to audio record the interview. The interview will be transcribed and anonymised by the researchers within one month of the interview, and the audio file will then be deleted. If you agree, we will send you a transcript of the interview in case there is anything you would like to change, and you will have one month to suggest changes. We will also send you a copy of the final report from the project.

What information will be collected?

We are interested in learning more about your experiences, so we will record your answers to general questions about your experiences of care-giving and/or care-receiving. The information we aim to collect will be based on your descriptions of this work, and opinions in relation to it.

Do you have to take part in this research?

No, you are under no obligation whatsoever to take part in this research. It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not you would like to take part. If you decide not to take part, you do not have to provide a reason and there are no negative consequences for not participating. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form and be given a copy of this form and this information sheet for your own records. You are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and/or to withdraw your information up until such time as the research findings are anonymised and, if requested, the transcript agreed – up until two months after the interview. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will be fully respected, and will not affect your relationships with Maynooth University or with the individual researchers.

Will your participation in the study be kept confidential?

Yes, all information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept confidential. This means that we will not be telling other people what you have said.

However, we are obliged to state that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.

All hard copy information will be held in a locked cabinet at the researchers' place of work; electronic information will be encrypted and held securely on Maynooth University PC or servers and will be accessed only by the researchers named here.

Your own name will not be used at any time, and information that could identify you will be taken out, so it should not be possible for anyone to know what you have said. This will ensure that your privacy is protected.

At the end of the research, we would like to place an anonymised version of the data on the Irish Qualitative Data Archive (IQDA) [<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/iqda>] so that other researchers may benefit from access to it, if you agree to this. You are under no obligation to agree to this.

No information will be distributed to any other unauthorised individual or third party.

What will happen to the information [data] you give?

If you consent to participate, your data will be used by the researchers named above. We will erase recordings from any portable devices as soon as possible after the interview; we will then store the recordings, and any personal information (such as your name, email address and the name of the organization) in a secure password-

protected Maynooth University computer folder. All personal information (such as your name, email address and the name of the organization) will be deleted one year after the end of the MobiliseCare project (30 November 2028). The recordings will be deleted when we have transcribed them (i.e. typed out the questions and answers) and, if requested, you have agreed the transcript. We will use this transcript to inform outputs related to this research – for example, to create publications, workshops, public presentations or policy briefs. Extracts from the transcript may be directly used in these. If appropriate and if you give your consent to this, the transcript may be archived for sharing or for re-use. However, the transcript will not include your name. Every effort will be made to remove other potentially identifying information also.

If you have concerns about your rights as a participant, you can contact the Maynooth University Data Protection Officer by email at dataprotection@mu.ie. If you are not satisfied with Maynooth University's response or believe we are not processing your personal data in accordance with the law, you can complain to the Irish Data Protection Commission. For more detail see <https://www.dataprotection.ie>

What will happen to the results?

The research may be used for academic and non-academic publications, reports, workshops, conference presentations or creative interventions. A copy of any publications will be made available to you upon request.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part in this research study?

While we will try to keep to the agreed theme of each interview, it is possible that some of the discussions might trigger difficult experiences or emotions for you and you might feel upset as a result. If this happens, you will be able to take a break or stop taking part in the conversation. If you continue to feel upset after the interview and need more support, the following individual / organizations can be contacted:

Samaritans: Phone: [details provided] Email: [details provided]

If you need any further information, or would like to discuss your possible involvement in more detail, you can contact us:

Nataliia Boiko [details provided]

Mary Gilmartin [details provided]

If you agree to take part in the study, please complete and sign the consent form overleaf.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information

Appendix 2: Consent Form

I.....agree to participate in this study, entitled 'MobiliseCare'.

Please delete **YES/NO** for each statement below as appropriate:

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me verbally and in writing. I have been able to ask questions, which were answered satisfactorily.

YES/NO

I am participating voluntarily.

YES/NO

I give permission for my interview with Nataliia Boiko /Mary Gilmartin to be audio-recorded.

YES/NO

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether that is before it starts, while I am participating, or up to two months after the interview.

YES/NO

I would like to receive a copy of my interview transcript to check and amend if necessary

YES/NO

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the interview data right up to data anonymisation and analysis, two months after the interview date. YES/NO

It has been explained to me how my data will be managed and that I may access them on request.

YES/NO

I understand the limits of confidentiality as described in the information sheet.

YES/NO

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview.

YES/NO

I understand that my data, in an anonymized format, may be used in further research projects and any subsequent publications if I give permission below.

YES/NO

I agree for my data to be used for further research projects.

YES/NO

I agree for my data, once anonymized, to be retained indefinitely in the IODA archive.

YES/NO

I would like to receive updates from the research project (e.g. invitations to events or a copy of the project report)

YES/NO

I would like to be contacted if there are future opportunities to contribute to the research project

YES/NO

Signed.....

Date.....

Participant name in block capitals

I the undersigned have taken the time to fully explain to the above participant the nature and purpose of this study in a manner that they could understand. I have explained the risks involved as well as the possible benefits. I have invited them to ask questions on any aspect of the study that concerned them.

Signed.....

Date.....

Researcher name in block capitals

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee at research.ethics@mu.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

For your information the Data Controller for this research project is Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. The Data Protection office is located in Room 17/27, Rye Hall Extension, North Campus, Maynooth University, which can be contacted at dataprotection@mu.ie. Maynooth University Data Privacy policies can be found at <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/data-protection>.

Appendix 3: Interview Guides

Interview guide with care providers: sample questions

Broad area	Sample questions
Motivation	When did you become involved in providing care/support to Ukrainians in Ireland?
	Why did you become involved in providing care/support to Ukrainians in Ireland?
Activities	Could you describe how you provide care/support to Ukrainians in Ireland?
	Are you involved in providing care/support to others? If so, could you describe this work.
	Do you collaborate with other people/organisations in the provision of care/support? If yes, how does that work? If no, why is this the case?
	What resources do you need to provide care/support? How do you access these resources?
	In general, how would you describe the care/support that is offered to Ukrainians in Ireland? How is this similar to/different from the care/support offered to other migrant groups in Ireland?
Challenges	What are the challenges you face/have faced in providing care/support? How did you overcome these challenges (if at all)?
	In the time that you have been involved in providing care/support to Ukrainians in Ireland, have you noticed any changes in attitudes to Ukrainians/other migrants? If yes, could you describe these changes? Why do you think these changes have occurred?
Proposals	If you had to provide care/support to another group of migrants in the future, what would you do differently?
Reflections	What have you learned from your involvement in providing care/support?

Interview guide with Ukrainians: sample questions

Broad area	Sample questions
Moving to Ireland	When did you come to Ireland? What was your first impression of Ireland?
	Where have you lived in Ireland?
Getting help/ support in Ireland: on arrival	What care/support did you receive when you first moved to Ireland (this could be from family/friends, NGOs, government, others)?
	Who provided the care/support?
	How did you learn about the care/support?
	How would you describe the care/support you received?
	Did the care/support you received meet your needs when you first arrived? If not, what additional care/support would have been helpful?
Getting help/ support in Ireland: changes over time	How have your care needs changed over your time in Ireland?
	Has the available care/support met your changing needs over your time in Ireland? If not, what additional care/support do you need?
	If you have lived in different places in Ireland, what similarities/differences have you noticed in the care/support provided in different places?
	Are you involved (now or previously) in providing care/support? Could you describe your role(s)? [see also sample questions for care providers]
Challenges	What are the challenges you have faced in accessing care/support? How did you overcome those challenges (if at all)?
Comparison	[If appropriate] To your knowledge, is the care/support provided in Ireland different to other countries? If so, how?



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