



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION OFFICE

**Information Booklet for Unaccompanied Minors/Separated
Children who are Applicants for International Protection**

PLEASE READ ALL OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS BOOKLET

**This Booklet is for the information of children (under 18 years
of age) applying for international protection without a
parent or other custodial guardian.**

Important Notes

**The laws on international protection applications in Ireland are
set out mainly in the International Protection Act 2015. You can
access the 2015 Act in full on the following web site
www.ipo.gov.ie**

**This booklet is for information and guidance only. This leaflet is
not a legal guide to the International Protection Act 2015.**

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1. About this booklet

Hello there! This booklet is for separated children/minors who have arrived without their parents or guardian and have applied through TUSLA - Child and Family Agency for international protection in Ireland provided TUSLA consider it is in a separated minor's best interest to make this application. Should such an application be made, it will be investigated by staff in an office known as the International Protection Office.

Separated children are children under 18 years of age who are outside their country of origin and separated from both parents or their previous legal/customary primary caregiver/guardians.

The booklet will describe what international protection is and the various stages of applying for international protection.

You should read this booklet from the first page to the last and learn what happens once TUSLA has made an application for international protection on your behalf.

You should keep this booklet as it may be helpful to you during your time as an international protection applicant in Ireland. There is also a page for you to store useful phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

You should also read the main Information Booklet for Applicants for International Protection. If you need help understanding anything in it, you should ask your TUSLA representative who may seek further legal advice or assistance.

2. Who will help me?

Because you are under 18 years of age, in Ireland you are not allowed to make certain decisions on your own. You need do this with someone who is responsible for you and will help you make these decisions.

If you come to the International Protection Office or arrive at a Port of Entry to Ireland to seek International Protection and, where you are considered to be a child under the age of 18 years, and not in the custody of an appropriate adult, you will be referred to TUSLA.

The Separated Children's Team in TUSLA are responsible for the care and welfare of persons under the age of 18 years in this country. You will be assigned a TUSLA representative (social worker or aftercare worker) who will help you. A care plan will be developed for you by TUSLA. You can discuss everything relating to your stay in Ireland with this person.

Once you are referred to TUSLA, TUSLA assumes the role of looking after your general welfare. TUSLA may reunite you with other family members in Ireland (if appropriate).

TUSLA will also decide whether it is in your best interests to make an application for international protection. TUSLA will not make this application unless it is satisfied that it is in your best interest to make this application. It is important to be honest with TUSLA about your situation so that they can make a decision based on the best possible information available to them, including legal advice.

3. The initial application process

If TUSLA decide that it is in your best interest to make an international protection application, they will contact the Legal Aid Board which will provide legal advice and assistance regarding your application for international protection and will also assist you throughout the protection process.

TUSLA will also arrange a time and a date with the Reception Unit of the International Protection Office to make your application.

An international protection application must be made in person at the International Protection Office of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, at 79-83 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2. That office will also process your application.



(IPO Main entrance)

You will be accompanied to this office by your TUSLA representative. TUSLA will make the international protection application on your behalf.

If you need an interpreter to help you communicate with us one will be provided for you.

4. What does an interpreter do?

So that you and the staff at the International Protection Office can understand each other, an interpreter will translate what you say. The interpreter can speak English and the language that you speak. The interpreter will usually sit in the same room as you. Through the interpreter, the Reception staff and you can speak to each other. The interpreter will only translate what is said. The interpreter is not allowed to discuss your case or your personal details with anyone, so you can tell your story safely and in confidence.



(Reception entrance)

5. The Preliminary Interview

The Reception Unit in the International Protection Office is responsible for receiving applications from people who are applying for international protection. You will have a preliminary interview in private with the Reception Unit staff where you will answer questions about

- what your name is,
- when and where you were born,
- your family,
- your parents' address and details,
- where you are from,
- which languages you speak,
- how you have travelled to Ireland,
- why you have left your home country.

Your preliminary interview will also explore whether the International Protection Office can take your protection application. This is known as an admissibility process.



(Main Reception area)

The Reception Unit staff will ask you these questions so they can enter you into the International Protection Office's computer database.



(Initial interview room)

It is important for the International Protection Office to know the reasons why you cannot stay in your home country and how you are feeling since your arrival in Ireland.

As mentioned earlier following the Preliminary Interview TUSLA will generally make the application for International Protection on your behalf should it be considered it is in your best interest to do so.

6. Photo and fingerprints

As part of the examination process, you will be required to have your photograph taken. You will also be required to have your fingerprints taken if you are **over 14 years of age**. You will be issued with a Temporary Residence Certificate (TRC). This will include your personal details and will contain your photograph. Although the TRC looks like an ID card, it is not an official identity document. It allows you to remain in Ireland while your application is being examined. You should keep this card safe.

Why does the International Protection Office take fingerprints?

The Office takes fingerprints to check if you have applied for protection already in Ireland or another European country before. If you are over 14, the staff in the Reception Unit will take your fingerprints.

How are fingerprints taken?

Fingerprints are taken when you press your fingers against a machine that reads your fingerprints.



(Fingerprint Machine)

What does the International Protection Office do with the fingerprints?

The fingerprints are sent to several databases. One of these is in Ireland. In this database, the Office can see if you have applied for protection in Ireland before.

The European Union (EU) has another fingerprint database called Eurodac. All of the 28 EU countries plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland have access to and can see this database.

These countries are all part of the 'Dublin' process which is named after an asylum treaty that was signed in Dublin.

If you have applied for protection in any of these countries, it will show up on the Eurodac database.

7. Can I be sent back to another Country?

If you have applied for international protection in another country which participates in the EU Dublin process, that country may be responsible for dealing with your application. In such a case, the International Protection Office in Ireland may not process your application further, and you could be sent back to the country where you first applied for international protection if it is in your best interests to do so.

During this procedure, we will always act in your best interests, and we will not send you to a country where it is established that your human rights could be violated. We may also choose to examine your application in this country, even if by law another country might be responsible. We can do so for humanitarian, family or cultural reasons.

8. The Dublin Regulation

What is the Dublin Regulation?

In the 28 EU countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom) plus Norway, Iceland and Switzerland there are rules about which country is responsible for processing your protection application. The rules say that only one country considers the application.

These rules are called the Dublin Regulation and apply as a law in all of these countries. If you have been in another Dublin country before you came to Ireland, you may have to go back there. This can apply in the following cases

- you have already applied for international protection in another Dublin country,
- your parents/guardian are living legally in another Dublin country,
- you have relatives in another Dublin country that can take care of you in that country.

What happens if another Dublin country is going to consider my international protection application?

Then you and your TUSLA representative will be consulted about this by staff in the International Protection Office. You will receive information on the Dublin Regulation decision on whether another country can become or has become responsible for considering your application. You will also have the opportunity to give any reason you may have not to go to this Dublin country. You can say why you want your application to be considered in Ireland instead. Your TUSLA representative will assist you in this process.

Can I appeal a Dublin decision?

If you are not happy with the International Protection Office's decision, you are entitled to appeal the decision to the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT). **The Tribunal will not consider why you have applied for international protection. It will only decide which country should consider your international protection application. Please also read the separate information booklet on the Dublin process which you have been given.**

9. What is Identity?

Identity is about who you are, what your name is, when you were born, where you are from and who your parents and guardians are.

Why should I prove who I am?

The International Protection Office wants to know who you are and where you are from in order to be able to make the right decision regarding your protection application. It is your responsibility to show what your name is and where you are from. The best way to show your identity is by showing your passport or ID card, for example. If you cannot show who you are it will be harder for the International Protection Office to assess whether you have the right to international protection or not.



10. Age Assessment

Where there is doubt about your age, the International Protection Office may arrange to have an age assessment carried out. The International Protection Office is often guided in this age assessment process by staff of TUSLA.

What is an age assessment?

In this process, an age assessment is an informed opinion of how old a person is. The International Protection Office may estimate your age if you cannot show how old you are and if your age doesn't seem to be correct.

Why is it important that I can show my age?

If you don't have any identification documents and you can't show your age in any other way, and your age doesn't seem to be correct, the Reception Unit staff in the International Protection Office must have a conversation with you about how old you are. This means that a staff member will talk to you to examine how old you are.

11. Age Assessment Interview

The age assessment interview is designed to establish some basic facts around your travel arrangements, the whereabouts of your parents/guardians, your education standard and level of maturity. The staff member in the Reception Unit will then decide whether they consider that you are under the age of 18. If it is decided that you are under 18 you will be referred to TUSLA.

12. After my application has been made, what next?

You should co-operate with the International Protection Office during the protection application process.

The International Protection Office will assess your application on behalf of the Minister for Justice and Equality and decide whether you qualify for international protection or if there are any other reasons for allowing you to remain in Ireland.

This is why the International Protection Office has to examine your identity, nationality, travel route, whether you have stayed in another country and your reasons for applying for international protection in Ireland.

To be able to do this properly, you should give the staff in the International Protection Office all of the documents and papers that will help show who you are and where you come from. Please give us any other documentation relevant to your application that you may have.

It is very important for you to tell the truth while your international protection application is processed. If you withhold information or do not tell the whole truth, you might not be granted international protection or allowed to remain in Ireland.

If you do not co-operate with the examination of your application, then your application may be decided based on the current information held on your file up to that point.

You will also be entitled to legal advice from the Legal Aid Board when you are in the protection process and your TUSLA representative will make arrangements for this service.

13. The Questionnaire

You will be given a questionnaire which you must complete and return to the International Protection Office by a specific date. Your TUSLA representative will help you fill out the questionnaire and will help you return it to the International Protection Office in the pre-paid envelope provided by the Office.

The information you supply in the questionnaire will be considered in assessing your application for international protection and any other reasons why you wish to remain in Ireland. It is important that you provide all your reasons for claiming international protection, and all the reasons why you cannot return home and wish to remain in Ireland in the questionnaire.

Please remember you should answer all questions fully and truthfully so that we have the best possible information available to us.



(Interview Waiting Area)

14. The Main Interview.

The international protection process will generally require that you attend a main interview. You and TUSLA will be notified in writing of a time, a date and a place to attend for your interview in connection with your protection application. The purpose of the interview is to establish the full details of your claim for international protection in Ireland.

A group of experienced interviewers in the International Protection Office have received additional specialised training to assist them in working on cases involving applicants just like you (unaccompanied minors/separated children). Your interviewer will be specifically trained in interviewing children under the age of 18.



(Main Interview Room)

It is important that you tell us everything that has happened to you and why you cannot return home. It is important for the interviewer to know the reasons why you cannot stay in your home country.

A record of your story will be taken. A record is basically the notes about what you have said at interview. You will read through the record with your TUSLA representative and agree the record with your interviewer by signing the bottom of each page.

If there are any mistakes it is important that they are corrected on the day of your interview - otherwise it will be difficult for you to do this later on.

The interview will usually take 2 to 3 hours to complete but do not worry, you will receive regular breaks. If you need a break for any reason or become upset, don't worry, you can tell your interviewer who will give you the time you need.

After your interview is completed, all the information gathered from your application, the questionnaire, your interviews, and any documentation submitted by you or on your behalf will be considered before a report on your application is prepared.

15. The report on the examination of your application

A report will be prepared by the International Protection Office on the results of the examination of your application which will include a recommendation and findings as to whether you are entitled to international protection or whether there are any other reasons for giving you permission to remain in Ireland.

The report will refer to matters relevant to your application including your application form, your questionnaire and any issues that you raised during your interviews. It will also take account of any representations made on your behalf by TUSLA, your legal representative or any other person.

16. The Recommendation

The International Protection Office will examine your application for international protection and make a recommendation as to whether:

- (1) **You are entitled to refugee status;**
- (2) **You are entitled to subsidiary protection;**
- (3) **or if there are other reasons why you should be allowed remain in Ireland.**

(1) **Refugee Status**

A person who may be subjected to persecution if they go back to their home country can stay in Ireland as a refugee. In order to be granted refugee status, an applicant must fear being persecuted for one of five reasons and be so afraid that he or she can't or won't use state protection in his or her home country, for example police protection.

5 reasons

- race (origin), that is national or ethnic origin (for example skin colour).
- nationality, for example linguistic or ethnic group.
- religion.
- political opinion (opinions on how a country should be governed).
- belonging to a certain social group, gender (girl or boy) or sexual orientation (sexual orientation means if a person falls in love with girls, boys or both girls and boys).

Refugee protection applies no matter whether the persecution is by the country's authorities or if the country's authorities can't or won't provide protection to you from persecution.

(2) Persons eligible for subsidiary protection

Persons in need of subsidiary protection are people who are not refugees as defined by the law, but who are still afraid to return to their home country.

There are three main reasons why a person is in need of subsidiary protection and cannot return to their home country. The person -

1. risks either torture or the death penalty there.
2. may face some other inhuman or degrading treatment if he or she returns.
3. needs protection because there is a serious risk that he or she will be injured in a war or other violence in the country.

You become in need of protection if you can't obtain protection and help in your own country from the authorities there.

(3) Permission to Remain.

It is up to you and your TUSLA representative to put forward any reasons in writing for a grant of permission to remain in Ireland when you are completing your International Protection Questionnaire. You must keep the International Protection Office informed of any change in your circumstances in this regard.

The International Protection Office will assess your application on behalf of the Minister, taking into consideration your family and personal circumstances and your right to respect for your private and family life, having due regard to

- the nature of your connection with the State (Ireland), if any,
- humanitarian considerations,
- your character and conduct both within and outside the State (Ireland), (including criminal convictions).
- considerations of national security and public order, and
- any other considerations of the common good.

The Minister will also have regard to any matters raised by you about the prohibition of refoulement.

Refoulement means that the State (Ireland) will not return anyone to a country where their life or freedom may be threatened.

17. What happens if I am granted International Protection?

If you are granted international protection (refugee status or subsidiary protection) or permission to remain you will generally be allowed to remain in Ireland.

If you are granted refugee status or subsidiary protection you will receive a letter providing you with detailed information on what you should do next and also on your entitlements and obligations.

If you are granted permission to remain you will also receive a letter providing you with detailed information on what you should do next and also on your entitlements and obligations.

18. What happens if I am refused International Protection (refugee status or subsidiary protection)?

If the Minister refuses you a refugee or subsidiary protection declaration, you are entitled to appeal that recommendation to the International Protection Appeals Tribunal.

If the Minister refuses you a refugee declaration but decides to grant you a subsidiary protection declaration, you are still entitled to appeal the refusal of refugee status to the International Protection Appeals Tribunal.

Details of the deadlines for lodging an appeal and other relevant information will be included with your International Protection Office recommendation.

Should this situation arise TUSLA and the Legal Aid Board will assist you with the preparation of your appeal. TUSLA and the Legal Aid Board will help you throughout the whole protection process.

If you are refused international protection following an appeal to the International Protection Appeals Tribunal, and the Minister considers that there are no other reasons why you should be allowed remain in Ireland, then you may no longer be allowed to stay in Ireland and will need to discuss your situation with your TUSLA representative and legal advisers.

More information about appeals is available at www.protectionappeals.ie

19. Organisations you will come in contact with

During the international protection application procedure, you will meet people from different organisations. You can read about what these organisations do below.

Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS), Department of Justice and Equality

The INIS is responsible for the administrative functions of the Minister for Justice and Equality in relation to asylum, immigration (including visas) and citizenship matters.

Website: www.inis.gov.ie

International Protection Office (IPO).

The main function of the International Protection Office of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service is to investigate applications and to issue recommendations/decisions on behalf of the Minister for Justice and Equality as to whether an applicant is entitled to international protection in Ireland, or even if an applicant is not so entitled, whether he or she should (for other reasons) be permitted to remain in Ireland. **Contact details at page 24**

Legal Aid Board (LAB).

You have the right to consult a solicitor and can avail of the services of the Legal Aid Board. The Legal Aid Board provides a confidential legal service to persons applying for protection in Ireland. The Legal Aid Board will provide legal assistance and advice in support of your protection application.

They will assist you with the completion of the questionnaire for the application for protection and other reasons for remaining in Ireland. They will also assist you in the preparation for your main interview and they can make written representations to the Minister on your behalf in support of your application.

Website: www.legalaidboard.ie

Phone No: 01-6469600

TUSLA - Child and Family Agency



The Separated Children's Unit looks after children who arrive without a parent or guardian to Ireland. They take care of immediate and ongoing needs of separated children seeking protection. The responsibilities of TUSLA include accommodation, medical and social needs as well as making applications for international protection on the child's behalf.

Website: www.tusla.ie

Phone No: 01-6477000

International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT).

The main function of the International Protection Appeals Tribunal is to consider and decide appeals against the recommendation of the International Protection Office

Website: www.protectionappeals.ie

Phone No: 01-4748400

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

UNHCR provides guidance on refugee and asylum law and policy in Ireland. They don't normally provide representation for individual asylum seekers however, the protection unit may provide assistance to individual cases in which asylum seekers, refugees and stateless people are in need of urgent or specialised assistance, support and advice.

You or your legal representatives can contact this office (UNHCR) if you wish to request assistance.

Address:

102 Pembroke Road,

Ballsbridge,

Dublin 4, Ireland

Email: General information: iredu@unhcr.org

Telephone No: 01-6314510.



20. More Information

If you have any further questions about the protection process, you can ask TUSLA, your legal representative in the Legal Aid Board or you can contact the International Protection Office. You can also ask any questions you may have in person during your interview. You should read the main information leaflet entitled "Information Booklet for Applicants for International Protection".

The International Protection Office can be reached at:

Phone: 01-6028008 - Monday to Friday, 9.15 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

Website: www.ipo.gov.ie

E-mail: info@ipo.gov.ie

Letter: International Protection Office

79 - 83 Lower Mount Street

Dublin 2

If you want to ask any questions about the progress of your application, you should keep the following information on hand:

Your file number

Your full name

Complaints Procedure:

If you wish to make a complaint about delays or poor customer service in the processing of your application, you can contact our

Customer Liaison Officer

International Protection Office

79-83 Lower Mount Street

Dublin 2

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