



FIXING A BROKEN SYSTEM

Proposals for an
Immigration
Management
Agency

Sinn Féin's approach to migration is informed by our Republican values and principles - equality, economic and social justice, sovereignty, anti-racism and anti-colonialism.

Implementing the proposals contained in our policy document on International Protection A Fair System That Works, would deliver a system that safeguards the cohesion of society for all who call Ireland home, ensures fairness for local communities, decency, common sense, the protection of human rights and that also commands public support. It also recognises both the needs of those seeking international protection and the pressures that many communities are under.

Sinn Féin believes that immigration must be managed having regard to the needs of the economy, public services and our capacity to accommodate and integrate additional people.

Every state must be able to control its borders. Therefore, co-operation and robust bi-lateral arrangements with Britain are necessary in order to protect free movement of citizens across the land border on our island while simultaneously managing immigration.

Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and the Green Party have overseen a chaotic mismanagement of international protection and their lack of engagement with local communities has failed, undermining cohesion and public confidence.

Sinn Féin's plan involves a system that works well, works quickly, where rules are applied, where fairness is paramount, and where people are treated with dignity and local communities are treated with respect.

ESTABLISH A NEW IMMIGRATION MANAGEMENT AGENCY

For too long, the different bodies and government departments involved in our migration system have been acting independently of one another. This causes fragmented decision making, which along with a significantly under resourced and under pressure system leads to significant delays and bad planning and outcomes.

Sinn Féin would set up a new Immigration Management Agency, under the Department of Justice and Home Affairs, which would have responsibility for processing of applicants, enforcement of rules, registration of individuals and accommodation. This would bring together personnel from the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB), Border Management Unit (BMU), Immigration Service Delivery (ISD), International Protection Office (IPO), International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) and those involved in relevant functions at the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) under one department rather than multiple departments. This would ensure cohesion in planning, sharing of information and speedy decision making. We would increase staff and properly resource the new agency to ensure it positively improves our migration system.

The agency's responsibilities would include:

- Proper planning of our migration system
- Processing of IP applicants in a fair and efficient manner
- Accommodating IP applicants in decent accommodation
- Engaging with communities being considered as locations for IPAS centres
- Returning immigrants who are not entitled to be here to their countries of origin including enforcement of deportation and other orders and investigating illegal immigration

The Department of Integration would continue to have responsibility for supporting IP applicants who receive asylum status so that they can integrate fully into society and working closely with communities to ensure services and resources are provided. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment would continue to process employment permits as normal for the many workers who are playing a valuable role in our economy, including in our health services and in our Tech sector.

Various EU member states require all EU, EEA and Swiss citizens (or their tourist accommodation provider on their behalf) to register their presence within a reasonable time period of arrival. Ireland does not. In government, Sinn Féin would examine the registration requirements and models in operation in other EU countries and how a system of registration could enable the authorities to be more fully aware of population movements in the state for the purposes of service planning and law enforcement.

A PLANNED END TO TEMPORARY PROTECTION DIRECTIVE

The special status of Ukrainians under the Temporary Protection Directive should come to an end no later than March 2026. We believe that continually extending temporary measures is not a sustainable solution and is problematic for everyone.

The government failure to produce a roadmap, leaves many Ukrainians with huge uncertainty about their future in Ireland and the longer this goes on, the more likely a chaotic, crisis-driven unwinding of Temporary Protection, something nobody wants to see.

Sinn Féin has signalled clearly that the temporary short-term approach must conclude and after that a return to ordinary, permanent immigration rules which apply to all other states. If a beneficiary of Temporary Protection is from a part of Ukraine that is safe then, save for exceptional cases, return should be assisted. Beneficiaries who are from unsafe parts of the Ukraine can apply for International Protection and others who wish to continue to stay here can also apply for work-based permits to reside here.

Sinn Féin priorities include:

- Setting up a new Immigration Management Agency with responsibility for processing enforcement, registration and accommodation at an additional cost of €5.5m
- Ensuring new IPAS centres are not placed in working class communities already under severe pressure. Criteria such as the availability of services and levels of economic and social disadvantage should be used to determine the selection of locations. This means that new IPAS centres would only be put in more affluent areas which have the capacity and services exist to support them
- Transitioning our IP accommodation system to greater use of purpose-built state-owned beds while reducing reliance on profit-driven commercial providers which are often of poor quality and in unsuitable locations and have allowed a small number of individuals to become multi-millionaires
- Creating a standard, transparent and consistent approach to community consultation, including opportunities for submissions
- Trebling staffing across the system at a cost of €82m to allow fast and fair decisions to be made and ensuring greater follow-up on to ensure that those found not to be eligible for international protection actually leave and those who are eligible receive asylum status quickly and be supported to fully integrate
- Greater implementation of legal provisions for fines on airlines and other carriers transporting passengers with no documents and for prosecutions of individuals
- Agreeing revised bilateral arrangements with Britain, including management of immigration at airports and ports, to ensure those IP applicants who should be processed in Britain are returned there
- Ending the two-tier system so that all those seeking international protection are treated equally irrespective of where they come from
- Ending the Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party's Accommodation Recognition Payment scheme for Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection, so that new applicants cannot join the scheme, as it places other families and people seeking to rent private accommodation at a severe disadvantage
- Inviting the Children's Ombudsman and HIQA to periodically report on the standards of all International Protection accommodation. It is unacceptable that so many migrants are in poor quality and in many instances tented accommodation
- Exploring the introduction of registration requirements for EU/EEA Swiss citizens
- An orderly conclusion to the status of Ukraine under the Temporary Protection Directive