



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# **Rosslare Harbour Accommodation Centre**

## Information for communities

## Contents

<b>About the new centre:</b>	<b>3</b>
Rosslare Harbour Accommodation Centre	3
Becoming part of the community	4
Training opportunities	4
<b>About the Direct Provision system</b>	<b>5</b>
What is the Direct Provision system?	5
What are accommodation centres?	5
Why is an accommodation centre opening in Rosslare Harbour?	6
Will local services be impacted?	6
Do centres have a positive impact on local communities?	6
Are particular locations chosen for accommodation centres?	7
How are asylum applications assessed?	7
Can asylum seekers work?	7

## About the new centre:

### Rosslare Harbour Accommodation Centre

The former Rosslare Port Lodge Hotel will open as an accommodation centre for people in the International Protection process (also known as asylum seekers) in March 2020. This will introduce new arrangements for the accommodation of asylum seekers in Rosslare Harbour.

Asylum seekers who have been living in Hotel Rosslare will be transferred to the new centre in the coming weeks once work renovations and upgrading work on the former Rosslare Port Lodge hotel are complete.

The Rosslare Harbour accommodation centre will provide independent living for residents in line with new standards for direct provision being rolled out across the state. This means that all residents will have access to cooking facilities and an in-house food hall where they can get their groceries using a cashless system.

The centre also features a dining area, recreational spaces and an onsite laundry facility.

Residents will be made up of small families and single people. Residents will move into the centre on a phased basis while their claims for international protection are being examined. The maximum capacity of the centre will be around 100 people.

The centre will include dedicated spaces for families and singles to ensure additional privacy and comfort for all residents.

Following an Expressions of Interest process, which was advertised by the Department last year, the former Rosslare Port Lodge Hotel was offered to the Department of Justice and Equality by Codelix Ltd., and has a 12-month contract.

The new accommodation centre will employ up to 10 locally based staff, who will oversee the management, reception, catering, housekeeping and general maintenance of the centre. The Centre has committed to sourcing all supplies from within the locality, wherever possible.

## Becoming part of the community

Integration has hugely positive effects for both centres and communities alike by increasing friendships and understanding.

A Friends of the Centre group will be established in the centre. This initiative aims to bring residents, community and voluntary groups together with a view to increasing integration opportunities and providing for the development of greater community linkages with the residents and the centre.

In accommodation centres across the country, Friends of the Centre groups have proved hugely successful in helping the centre and its residents to integrate into and contribute towards the local community.

If you or anyone else in the community would like to get involved in the Friends of the Centre group, please contact [gm@rosslarecenter.com](mailto:gm@rosslarecenter.com).

In addition, a dedicated Activities Co-ordinator will develop strong collaborative working relationships with sporting, cultural and community projects and groups in the area that can cater for the recreational needs of all of residents. All residents in the Rosslare Harbour Accommodation Centre will be informed about the various integration and recreational activities at the centre and within the community.

The Activities Co-ordinator will also help residents to find suitable employment (if they have been granted permission to access the labour market), access further education, volunteering and sporting opportunities, etc. The centre manager will also be responsible for establishing a Friends of the Centre group with the local community.

## Training opportunities

To facilitate training and employment opportunities for residents, a number of in-house training workshops will be made available to residents of the Rosslare Harbour Accommodation Centre. These will be practical courses, designed to enhance the life skills of residents and to support their new independent living arrangements where residents will cook for themselves and their families.

The Community Cookery Programme in the centre will offer a diverse range of courses, which will allow residents to work with an array of different ingredients and cookery skills. Courses will also be provided for children and teenagers during school holidays. Places on courses may also be made available to local residents, to support integration opportunities between centre residents and locals, subject to demand.

---

## About the Direct Provision system

### What is the Direct Provision system?

Under EU and international law, Ireland, like other countries, is obliged to examine the claim of any person who comes here and claims international protection (“asylum”) under defined grounds. These grounds relate to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, nationality, religion, political opinions or membership of a particular social group or where the person would be at risk of suffering serious harm if returned to their home country.

The term ‘Direct Provision’ refers to a suite of services and supports that are offered to people who are seeking the protection of the State. These services and supports are directly provided by a number of Government Departments and Agencies.

For example:

- The Department of Justice and Equality provides accommodation, food, utilities and the Minister for Justice and Equality grants labour market access permission to eligible applicants.
- The Department of Health and the HSE provide healthcare services
- The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection provides relevant allowances including the weekly payment for residents (which is currently €38.80 for adults and €29.80 for children).
- The Department of Education and Skills provides school places for children.

Over the last twenty years, more than 65,000 people have been supported by the system.

### What are accommodation centres?

Accommodation centres provide a safe and supportive environment for people who have sought the protection of the State where they can live and socialise while their protection applications are being determined. There is no obligation on any asylum seeker to accept the offer of accommodation and some choose to live with friends or family already living in the wider community or to source and provide for their own accommodation if they have independent means.

#### Improved Standards

Significant improvements have been made to living standards across centres in recent years. This includes the introduction of cooking facilities and independent living (like residents in Rosslare Harbour will have) and residents also now have access to the services of the Ombudsman and Ombudsman for Children.

In August 2019, new National Standards were published for all accommodation centres and service providers. The Standards form part of any new contracts issued to accommodation providers and current providers will be granted a two-year window in which to bring accommodation in line with the National Standards.

These Standards were developed with the support of UNHCR Ireland and NGOs working with asylum seekers. You can access the full standards [here](#).

## **Why is an accommodation centre opening in Rosslare Harbour?**

The Department of Justice and Equality needs to find new accommodation centres because the number of people arriving to seek international protection in the State continues to rise (40% increase in 2019 compared to 2018).

Due to a sharp rise in the number of applicants in 2019, we currently have over 1,600 people accommodated in hotels and guest houses nationwide on an emergency basis.

To meet that demand - and to comply with our international legal and humanitarian obligations - the Department of Justice and Equality has been seeking expressions of interest for the provision of accommodation centres. The former Rosslare Port Lodge Hotel was offered to the Department under an Expressions of Interest process, which was advertised by the Department last year, and has a 12-month contract.

The first residents in the centre will be people who have already been accommodated for a number of months in temporary accommodation in Hotel Rosslare. The opening of this accommodation centre means that the Department will no longer accommodate anyone in Hotel Rosslare.

## **Will local services be impacted?**

Once it is confirmed that an accommodation centre is opening, the Department of Justice and Equality links in with the other service providers to ensure that the necessary supports are put in place.

In terms of access to healthcare, where GP lists are full, the HSE will arrange for access to GPs who have availability in the surrounding area.

Residents will be linked in with English language classes run by the local Education and Training Board.

## **Do centres have a positive impact on local communities?**

Local communities across Ireland have helped to create a warm and welcoming environment for people who have come to Ireland seeking our protection.

As of 2 March 2020, there are 39 accommodation centres and one Reception Centre located in 19 counties across the country and there are positive relationships between residents and local communities in all cases.

Each centre has a 'Friends of the Centre' group. This initiative brings residents, community and voluntary groups together to increase integration opportunities and provide for the development of greater community linkages with the residents and the centre.

Integration has hugely positive effects for both centres and local communities by fostering friendships and understanding. This results in increased cultural awareness and helps build a more inclusive environment.

## **Are particular locations chosen for accommodation centres?**

The Department of Justice and Equality does not select any particular areas as locations for centres. Premises are offered to the Department via an open procurement process or an Expressions of Interest process, which was advertised nationally seeking expressions of interest from accommodation providers for suitable accommodation.

Services provided to the Department of Justice and Equality are sourced through competitive tenders and expressions of interest. This ensures value for money for the taxpayer while also providing residents with a place to stay while their application is assessed.

## **How are asylum applications assessed?**

The asylum system operates to allow us to identify, at the earliest stage possible, those who need our protection and those who can safely return to their home country.

Each application is assessed individually on its own merits by the International Protection Office (IPO).

## **Can asylum seekers work?**

After nine months, asylum seekers are eligible to work if they have not received a first instance decision on their application.

Permissions are granted by the Minister for Justice and Equality with no cost to the applicant. Applications are generally processed in 2-3 working days.

Applicants granted a labour market access permission have access to all sectors of employment, with the exception of the Civil and Public Service, An Garda Síochána, the Irish Defence Forces and Embassies or consulates accredited to the State.

There is no minimum or maximum salary threshold, no language requirement/assessment, and no evidence of a job offer is required before a permission is granted. There are no restrictions relating to temporary or permanent jobs, or to full-time or part-time work. They can also become self-employed.

Over 3,870 permissions have been granted to date, including over 2,860 permissions to residents in accommodation centres.

