

# Count Me In



## Discrimination in Ennis

[www.ul.ie/doingcommunityresearch](http://www.ul.ie/doingcommunityresearch)



# Discrimination

Surveys undertaken have shown that most people in Ireland believe they live in a tolerant and hospitable society. Opinion polls support the belief that Irish people are mostly friendly to outsiders and welcoming to immigrants, though this is less true today than a few years ago (refer to [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie) )

What about the experiences and perceptions of people who belong to minority groups in Ireland? Do they feel welcome? Do they feel they are treated in the same way as everybody else?

## *What is Discrimination?*

*Discrimination in law is defined as the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been, or would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the nine grounds in the Equal Status Acts which are:*

- **Gender;**
- **Marital Status;**
- **Family Status;**
- **Age;**
- **Disability;**
- **Race;**
- **Sexual Orientation;**
- **Religious Belief;**
- **Membership of the Traveller Community**

*Also refer to the Employment Equality Act  
<http://www.equality.ie>*

# Discrimination in Ennis

## *Research of a cross section of communities showed discrimination is an issue:*

- Many people who belong to minority groups experience discriminatory behaviour.
- Experience of discrimination seems to be most widespread among Travellers and is least common among migrant workers. Yet even within the migrant workers group there is a substantial minority who experience discrimination as part of their daily lives.
- Black people have told us about some of most extreme kinds of verbal abuse but white minorities also experience hostile treatment from local people. For these people unfair treatment is routine.
- Cultural or religious differences don't really explain such prejudice. For example Brazilians, Nigerians and Polish who share their religious faith with Irish people experience discrimination.

## **We spoke to people from three different ethnic backgrounds**

- **Asylum seekers and people who used to be asylum seekers and have now become refugees.**
- **People who have come from other parts of Europe and elsewhere in the world to work in Ireland.**
- **Members of a much older Irish minority, the Travellers**

## **The Question:**

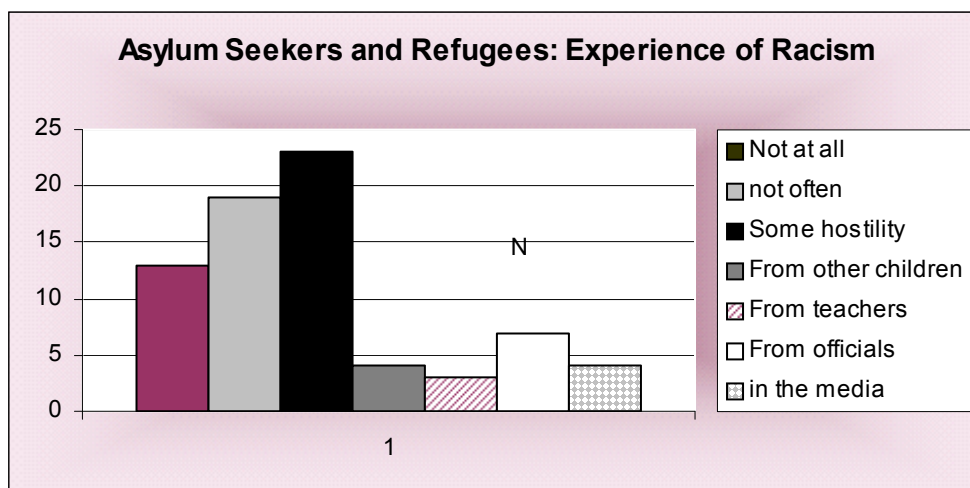
***We asked whether they had ever experienced unfair treatment in employment, education, daily life and accessing services because of who they were or because they belonged to a particular social group?***

We interviewed 75 Asylum Seekers and Refugees about whether they have experienced unfair treatment or social prejudice.

A big majority, 60 of the people we spoke to, told us they had experienced discrimination, though of these 19 said this had happened to them not very often.

The largest group of complaints were about hostility in everyday encounters with local people. 25 of the Asylum seekers and Refugees said this had happened to them.

Seven people felt they had experienced racist treatment from officials.



Most people in the asylum process and those with refugee status believe they have been treated badly because of who they are or because of which social group they belong to.

Sometimes people think they may have been treated unfairly even when that was not the intention. To find out in more detail what kinds of treatment asylum seekers and refugees perceived as discriminatory we asked the people we spoke to describe incidents of racist treatment in detail.

# Impact on Individuals and Society

- 18 of the Asylum Seekers and Refugees had experienced racist verbal abuse. One person who went to report an incident at the police was told to go home and reported that the policeman verbally disrespected his wife.
- 17 said they had been refused entry to pubs.
- 8 said they had been treated like criminal suspects in shops. For example one person we interviewed told us that shop assistants don't seem to think that he or she was a serious customer. Instead shop staff think that they might steal something.
- Refugees believed they had been refused a job for racist reasons.
- Among the asylum seekers and refugees, the largest national group were Nigerian. 10 out of 15 Nigerians said that they had experienced racist treatment.

In general asylum seekers and refugees did not feel their children had experienced prejudiced treatment at school. In fact, their encounters with schools and teachers were for the most part positive. Only a few of the asylum seekers and Refugees said they had experienced hostile treatment from the Gardaí.

About half the people we spoke to said they had made friends with local people in the relatively short time many of them have lived in Ennis.

## Migrants

Four out of every ten migrant workers said they had no experience of discrimination or unfair treatment since their arrival in Ireland,

Four migrant workers recalled being treated with disrespect at work.

9 people told us about being treated in shops suspiciously as if they were likely criminals.

9 said they had been abused verbally with racist or xenophobic language.

The two largest national groups among the migrant workers were 29 Polish and 13 Brazilians.

- *10 of the Polish and 9 of the Brazilians said they had experienced racist treatment.*
- *5 Polish people had been abused verbally. 6 of the Brazilian people had been treated badly in shops.*
- *About 25% said they had experienced some hostility in everyday encounters with local people.*

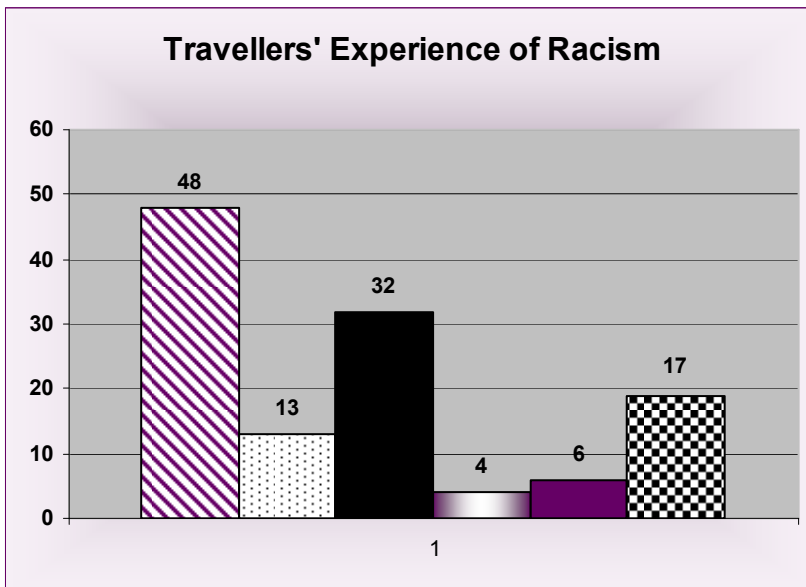
About 50% of migrants have made friends with local people. Similar to other groups making friends is easier if they have children that go to school with Irish children.

On the whole, migrant workers in their dealings with officials and service providers seem to have encountered very little discriminatory behaviour. 13 had found the Gardaí helpful but two people told us that the police had been hostile and intimidating

On the other hand 12 people said they would not report a crime because they believed the police wouldn't bother to investigate an offence committed against someone who was not Irish. However, this may reflect suppositions about the police that migrant workers have brought with them from their own countries.

## Travellers

- 48 out of 50 Travellers told us that they had experienced discrimination, that they had been treated unfairly because they were Travellers.
- 13 said that it hadn't happened very often. For the rest, however, discrimination was part of their everyday life.
- They encountered it in shops.
- Their children, they told us, were treated badly by other children at school.
- A few of the parents said they had experience of prejudice from teachers.



### Travellers' Experience of Racism

50 out of 62 responded to the question

- 48 had experience of racism.
- 13, though, had experienced racism not very often
- 32 had encountered hostility in everyday encounters with local people
- 4 had children who had encountered racism from other children at school
- 6 said they had experience of racist treatment from teachers
- 17 had encountered racist officials

40 Travellers we spoke to said they had formed friendships with people in the settled community in Ennis.

Generally Travellers said they had good experiences with health workers and welfare officers.

About a third of the Travellers we interviewed said that officials had treated them badly too, police officers, and council employees.

About half the people in this group we interviewed said the Gardaí were intimidating or unhelpful and a similar proportion felt the same about Council employees.



**As with the other groups we asked Travellers to tell us about particular examples of unfair treatment.**

- 44 said they had been refused entry to a pub.
- 16 said they had been followed around in shops – and another five reported that they had also been followed around in public places.
- 6 said that their children or they hadn't been told about events at school to which other parents and children had been invited.

We were told about the same kinds of experiences again and again.

In general Travellers experience social discrimination routinely. It is part of their daily lives.

***The research indicates that from the experience of Travellers racism in Ireland is widespread and deep-seated. It is directed at members of their community by officials and by ordinary people.***

***The experience of Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrant Workers is positive in terms of making friends with local people through interaction in the community in particular through the schools.***

***Nevertheless a significant number experience hostility in everyday encounters with local people and in shops through suspicion and verbal abuse.***

**Impact on Individuals and Society**

# Discrimination in Ennis

## *What can I do?*

- **Don't ignore abuse and discrimination. Sometimes it is illegal or against the rules, particular if it is from officials or service providers.**
- **Inform yourself and your family about discrimination and don't stay silent when you witness discrimination.**
- **If you are discriminated against get support and find out how best to deal with the experience.**
- **If you are against discrimination don't stay silent. Find support to help you to talk about it and deal with it.**
- **Speak to your children about racism. Sometimes children discriminate against other children they see as outsiders.**
- **Everybody needs to be more aware of the problem. Discrimination is an issue for all organisations which includes private, public and voluntary. Organisations and businesses need to provide suitable equality training for management & employees.**
- **Get advice on how to report it and to whom you should complain.**

# Discrimination in Ennis

## *Who can I contact?*

### **Ennis CDP**

Elevation Park, Clon Road, Ennis, Co. Clare

Contact Person: Colette Bradley,

Email: [enniscdp@eircom.net](mailto:enniscdp@eircom.net)

Phone: 065 68 69026

### **Clare Immigrant Support Centre**

Unit 13, Carmody Street Business Park, Carmody Street, Ennis, Co. Clare

Contact Person: Orla Ní Eilí

Email: [cisc@eircom.net](mailto:cisc@eircom.net)

Phone: 065 6822026

### **Citizens Information Service**

Bindon Lane, Bank Place, Ennis, Co Clare

Contact Person: Paul Woulfe

Email: [ennis@citinfo.ie](mailto:ennis@citinfo.ie)

Phone: 065 6841221

### **Immigrant Council of Ireland**

2 St. Andrew Street, Dublin 2

Email: [admin@immigrantcouncil.ie](mailto:admin@immigrantcouncil.ie)

Phone: 01 6740202

### **Irish Refugee Council**

2nd Floor, Ballast House, Aston Quay, Dublin 2

Email: [info@irishrefugeecouncil.ie](mailto:info@irishrefugeecouncil.ie)

Phone: 01 7645854

### **Pavee Point**

North Great Charles Street, Dublin 1

Email: [info@pavee.ie](mailto:info@pavee.ie)

Phone 01 8780255

### **Irish Traveller Movement**

4/5 Eustace Street, Dublin 2

Email: [itmtrav@indigo.ie](mailto:itmtrav@indigo.ie)

Phone 01 6796577

### **The Equality Authority**

2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2

Email: [info@equality.ie](mailto:info@equality.ie)

Phone 01 4173336

# Jargon Busters

**Asylum Seeker;** An Asylum-Seeker is a person who has applied for refugee status and is awaiting a decision on their case. A person seeking asylum has very limited rights and does not have the right to work. An asylum seeker is defined, by the UN (Geneva) Convention on Refugees, 1951 as:

*Any person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of her/his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail her/himself of the protection of that country; or (any person) who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of her/his former habitual residence, is unable, or owing to such fear is unwilling to return to it.*

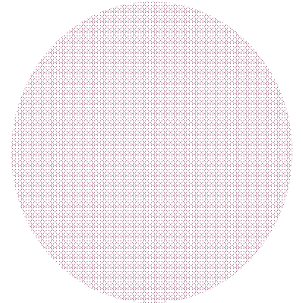
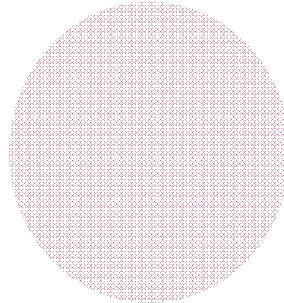
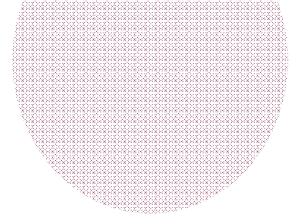
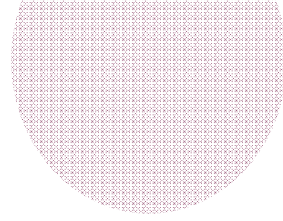
**Migrant worker:** is a person who is working in a state of which s/he is not a national. A migrant worker can be documented and undocumented.

**Non-EU National:** A Non-EU national is a person who is not a citizen of an EU member state. They have fewer rights than EU migrant workers.

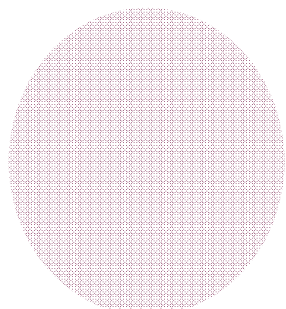
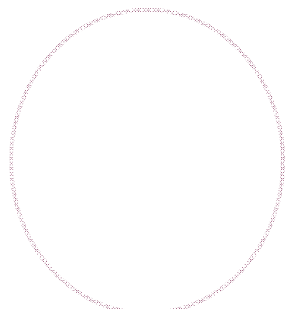
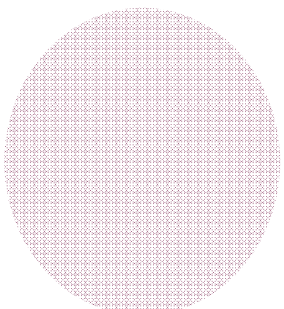
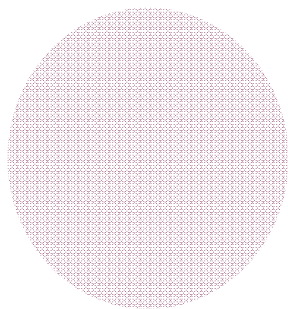
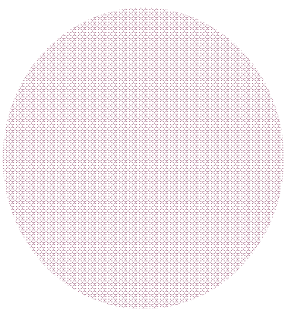
**Refugee:** A Refugee is a person whose application for refugee status has been successful. Refugee status will be given only when there is a well-founded fear that that person will be subjected to persecution if they return to their country. Once a person has refugee status s/he can work without any restrictions.

**Travellers:** Are an indigenous minority who, historical sources confirm, have been part of Irish society for centuries. Travellers long shared history, cultural values, language, customs and traditions make them a self-defined group, and one which is recognisable and distinct. Their culture and way of life, of which nomadism is an important factor, distinguishes them from the sedentary (settled) population.

# Notes



# Notes







**UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK**  
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH



**ISSP**  
Irish Social Sciences Platform  
Léibheann Eolaíochtaí Sóisialta na hÉireann  
Knowledge, Innovation, Society and Space  
Eolas, Nuáil, Póbal agus Spás