

FAQ - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

INTENDED USE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This “Frequently Asked Questions” information sheet is the first of many which will be updated and re-issued by Head Office to the branches on a regular basis. It aims to provide members with the tools so you can sufficiently respond to questions you are being asked by people in your communities.

If there are questions you are receiving from your community that you require support with, please email them into faq@redcross.ie and we will respond directly to you within 2 working days. We will include the query and response in the next version of this FAQ where appropriate. We will link with the relevant National Directors and Working Groups where appropriate.

The questions in this version are questions that have been asked of various branches.

We are also sharing an organigram of our staff who support National Services. We are mindful of staff change-overs and want to help you direct your support needs/queries to the most appropriate person.

We want your feedback on this information sheet to make it as user-friendly, relevant and helpful to our members as possible: so feel free to pop your thoughts and comments to the email address above.

Thank you for all your work and support

The National Services Team

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Question 1: Why does the Irish Red Cross not help homeless Irish people?

Since our founding in 1939, the Irish Red Cross has been dedicated to serving people in need whether they are here in Ireland or caught up in humanitarian crises in countries and regions throughout the globe. We recognise the plight of the homelessness in Ireland, and the impact of the housing crisis on some of our most vulnerable. However we also acknowledge that there are a huge number of charities and agencies as well as government departments in this space working in a coordinated manner.

Specifically, over 53 state funded homeless agencies are operating in the Republic of Ireland, as well as scores of community-led homeless groups who support the homeless. In addition, there are over 520 Approved Housing Bodies. Approved Housing Bodies provide housing in response to a range of different needs including families on low income households with specific special needs such as older persons, people with disabilities and homeless households.

We are guided by our mission and need to avoid mission creep and leave those with the requisite expertise in homelessness to continue their work.

For support to our members, what follows is some data to help you with signposting community members who might reach out for support:

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's official homelessness statistics are published on a monthly basis and refer to the number of homeless persons accommodated in emergency accommodation

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funded and overseen by housing authorities during a specific count week, typically the last full week of the month. The reports are produced through the Pathway Accommodation & Support System (PASS), collated on a regional basis and compiled and published by the Department. Homelessness reporting commenced in this format in 2014.

The administration of homeless services is organised across nine administrative regions, with one local authority in each of the regions, “the lead authority”, having overall responsibility for the disbursement of Exchequer funding. In each region, a Joint Homelessness Consultative Forum exists which includes representation from the relevant State and non-governmental organisations involved in the delivery of homeless services in a particular region.

See further information on homeless agencies here:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/primarycare/socialinclusion/about-social-inclusion/partnerorganisations/homelessness.html>

Visit Citizens Information to signpost those in your community who need support: <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/losing-your-home-and-homelessness/agencies-for-homeless-people/>

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Question 2: Why does the Irish Red Cross help Ukrainians/migrants/refugees/other group and not Irish people?

The Irish Red Cross helps Irish people and also Ukrainians/migrants / refugees /other groups.

Since our founding in 1939, the Irish Red Cross has been dedicated to serving people in need whether they are here in Ireland or caught up in humanitarian crises in countries and regions throughout the globe.

We support people in Ireland as well as those affected by crisis overseas. In fact the Irish Red Cross maintains an active network of over 3,000 volunteers at 73 branch locations based in large and small communities throughout the Republic of Ireland.

It is through the work of our volunteers in Ireland, that the Irish Red Cross is involved on a daily basis in many aspects of local and regional community life. Through our national network, the Irish Red Cross seeks to be “Always There” for those in need through the following activities. See response to question 3 below on our work in Ireland.

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Question 3: What does the Irish Red Cross do in Ireland?

Since our founding in 1939, the Irish Red Cross has been dedicated to serving people in need. Our goal is to prevent and alleviate human suffering, to protect life and health, and to ensure respect for all.

We have an active network of over 3,000 volunteers at 73 branch locations based in large and small communities throughout the Republic of Ireland. Through this network we are involved on a daily basis in many aspects of local and regional community life, although our activities vary according to our volunteer availability and community needs.

Typical activities include:

- **First aid and ambulance services** - Providing first aid and ambulance services at events and incidents throughout the country, including mountain and lake rescue.
- **Healthy communities** - Providing community-based healthcare and mental wellbeing programmes to communities including prison communities.
- **Community support** - Supporting older people and isolated members of our community – assisting with the delivery of food and medicine and transport for hospital appointments.
- **Youth** - Providing interactive and educational opportunities for our youth members.
- **First-Aid Training** - Delivering first aid and psychological first aid training.
- **Emergency response:** Helping those who are most vulnerable to prepare for, withstand, and recover from emergencies, at home and abroad.

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- **International programmes** - Supporting recovery and longer-term development by providing specialist personnel and delegates or financial assistance in cooperation with Red Cross and Red Crescent partners.
- **International Humanitarian Law** - Disseminating the principles of international humanitarian law to ensure respect for the laws of armed conflict.
- **Restoring Families:** reuniting families who have been separated by war, forced migration, or other circumstances.
- **Migration and Integration supports** - delivering local and national support in Ireland for refugees in need of food, water, shelter and medical assistance, including coordinating Europe's largest hosted-accommodation programme for people displaced by the war in Ukraine.
- **Migration-related support:** Delivering local and national support for refugees in need of food, water, shelter and medical assistance.
- **Humanitarian Diplomacy** – working with stakeholders to promote the seven fundamental principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to inspire policy and attitudinal change.

You can find out more here: <https://www.redcross.ie/about-the-irish-red-cross/>

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Question 4: What does the Irish Red Cross do abroad?

Irish Red Cross supports a number of long-term international development projects, which you can read about here:

<https://www.redcross.ie/international-development-projects/>

Irish Red Cross is a committed member of the global Red Cross Red Crescent Movement – a humanitarian network of 80 million volunteers. The Movement consists of the International Committee of the Red Cross, <https://www.icrc.org/en>, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,, <https://www.ifrc.org>, and the 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The Movement is well placed to act quickly and get help to where it is needed when crises or disasters strike. We prioritise emergency life-saving assistance including the delivery of food and non-food items, clean water and sanitation, medical support, and shelter assistance to people affected who need to most.

Learn more about the International Red Cross Movement:

<https://www.ifrc.org/international-red-cross-and-red-crescent-movement>

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Question 5: Can I volunteer in Ireland with Irish Red Cross?

Yes!

We deliver a wide range of services within communities through our network of local Branches around Ireland. When joining the Irish Red Cross, you will become a member of one of these local Branches, which are all local volunteer-led groups supported by the National Society.

The first step in joining is to contact your local Irish Red Cross Branch. Please see the map here: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?oe=UTF8&ie=UTF8&msa=0&authuser=0&hl=en&mid=z44UD175xNl0.kJUvQBMcklr8> to find the Branch closest to you.

Once you know which Branch you would like to join, please contact the Branch Secretary at the e-mail address listed on the map. They will be able to give you more information about the Branch activities and services they are involved in locally, and the days/times they meet, so you can ensure it will be good fit for you before joining.

Garda Vetting is required for some roles within the Irish Red Cross for people over the age of 16. When you know which role you want to be involved in, we will be able to give you more information about this.

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Question 6: Can I volunteer overseas with Irish Red Cross?

Due to the dangerous nature of working overseas in conflict regions we do not send volunteers overseas. This is the overarching policy of the Red Cross Movement; volunteers are recruited and work at a national level within their own country of residence. However, we do deploy delegates (staff members) internationally for specific positions through our movement partners (IFRC & ICRC).

We are currently building a roster of technical specialists for deployment and open positions will be advertised here:

<https://www.redcross.ie/careers-in-international-aid-or-delegates/>

Also visit if you have technical expertise required: [icrc job vacancies](https://careers.icrc.org/go/All-Jobs/3807301/)<https://careers.icrc.org/go/All-Jobs/3807301/>

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Question 7: Who does the Irish Red Cross help in Ireland?

- Over 900 members of the **public who receive First Aid treatment** at one of the 1800+ events and activities which Irish Red Cross provide support to each year.
- **Older people** and people living remotely who need assistance with the delivery of food and medicine, or transport to attend hospital appointments.
- **Young people**, aged 4-25 who join our youth groups and take part in programmes, activities and events on topics such as health, hygiene, and inclusion and diversity.
- Members of the **public who wish to learn First Aid**, start a Cardiac First Responder (CFR) group or train in Psychological First Aid.
- Communities in Ireland who are **recovering from emergencies**, such as Creeslough
- **Families who have been separated by war**, forced migration or other circumstances can seek support to reunite with their loved ones with the help of Irish Red Cross
- **Refugees and migrants in Ireland** in need of food, water, shelter and medical assistance
- **Inmates** in all 14 Prisons in Ireland who participate in community-based healthcare and mental wellbeing programmes

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Question 8: Why does the Irish Red Cross work with Ukrainians in Ireland?

The Irish Red Cross is tasked under its mandate as an auxiliary to the Irish Government to provide supports to vulnerable groups. Ukrainians in Ireland are among the most vulnerable people in our society. The seismic nature of developments in 2022 has left an indelible but positive mark on Irish society and the Irish Red Cross. The extraordinary and generous response of the Irish people in welcoming people from Ukraine is a guide to who we are as a nation.

Since 2022 the Red Cross has facilitated accommodation and a welcome in Ireland for Ukrainians fleeing the international armed conflict and it raised almost €44 million to assist and support people displaced by the conflict in their home country, on or around its borders, and in Ireland.

Red Cross volunteers who gave endless hours at seaports and airports to welcome and guide new arrivals and by those who followed up with transport and material supports, including funds to enable people who fled Ukraine with very little to survive with some dignity in their early weeks in Ireland.

Our Pledged Accommodation continues to receive offers of accommodation from around the country and continues to place Ukrainians with these hosts. To February 2024, we have facilitated 4,555 hosts to provide accommodation and placed 10,424 Ukrainians. Our volunteers and staff have provided invaluable support to Ukrainians, providing basic information as they settle and find their way.

The role of Irish Red Cross staff and volunteers, with support from many other agencies, including Helping Irish Hosts, the International

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Organisation for Migration, Peter McVerry Trust, ad hoc Facebook groups and Local Authorities, was critical to achieving so many placements. Beyond this, the real heroes are the people and families who have welcomed Ukrainians into their homes, both vacant and shared. This commitment is a mark of how special a society Ireland has become.

We have developed and provided a programme of mental health supports responding to the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder needs of Ukrainians here; provided relief and school supplies, including hygiene and welcome kits; and we have supported the Ukraine Community Centre in Rathmines providing a range of valuable supports, including English classes, employment support, intercultural activities and fostering community connections.

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Question 9: Why does the Irish Red Cross work with migrants and refugees in Ireland?

Between 1945 and 1946, the Irish Red Cross resettled over 1000 child refugees from war-torn countries. This was called Operation Shamrock and we have continually built on this experience in numerous conflicts since that have displaced families.

Currently, the Irish Red Cross has four programmes to assist refugees when they arrive in Ireland.

- **Programme 1:** We have a programme that matches Ukrainian people seeking temporary refuge in Ireland with householders throughout the country. We provide support under this programme for both the newly arrived person and the family hosting them.
- **Programme 2:** We have a similar arrangement for programme refugees invited to Ireland by Government (generally from conflict zones such as Afghanistan) with an additional feature of supporting them in their long-term integration into Irish society.
- **Programme 3:** We participate with other NGOs, in the Community Sponsorship programme which encourages local groups throughout Ireland to take responsibility for refugee families invited by Government to Ireland. This involves the local group supporting the family's accommodation and integration into Irish society with backup from the Irish Red Cross team.
- **Programme 4:** We have a programme that supports people living in life-threatening situations in their own country to travel to Ireland. In many cases, this programme reunites these refugees with family already in Ireland.

The Irish Red Cross manages these programmes via its own staff and volunteers and in partnership with Government Departments, Local Authorities and a Consortium of other NGOs namely Helping Irish Hosts, International Organisation for Migration and Peter McVerry Trust

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Question 10: When I donate to Irish Red Cross, how is my donation used?

Our branches also raise money for their own activities and programmes. If you have supported your local Irish Red Cross branch 100% of your donation has stayed locally with that team.

At a national level, we manage domestic programmes including local community support, ambulance services, emergency training, youth programmes and migrant support. This is in addition to our international humanitarian work and emergency response capability where we raise funds for overseas emergencies.

Every penny we receive in public support is dedicated 100% to the efficient and practical work of the Irish Red Cross. The Irish Red Cross typically allocates 7% of 'restricted income' donations to the good governance, management and running of the organisation to best practice standards.

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Question 11: Can I choose who my donation money goes to/helps?

Donors can indicate which service they would like to support with their donation. In this case we refer to it as a 'restricted funds donation'. This applies to donations at a domestic or international level. For example, if overseas support is given to a specific cause or incident such as the earthquake in Haiti or the crisis in Afghanistan, the Red Cross will dedicate 93% of that donation to its stated purpose. The remaining 7% will be used to cover costs associated with the good governance, management and running of the organisation to best practice standards.

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Question 12: As an Irish Red Cross branch or volunteer can we/I provide a donated/used wheelchair, mobility aids or crutches to those in need of their use?

Despite the best of intentions, the Irish Red Cross cannot accept or distribute any used medical devices. Distributing such devices invites legal liability onto the organisation for which we are not insured. Additionally, the IRC does not have the current expertise or capacity to assess/restore such devices for approved use to mitigate the risk such liability poses. Should the IRC have funding to procure a new medical device for someone in need, the IRC requires documentation from the applicant's medical provider/occupational therapist/physiotherapist specifying the type of device recommended. This documentation ensures the IRC is not providing any device which could exacerbate one's condition.

Please refer to the following organizations that accept donations of used wheelchairs and mobility aids:

Irish Wheelchair Association – accept wheelchairs, scooters and rollators in good condition but do not accept crutches or walkers.

Mobility Aids - Crosscause Charity – accept manual wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, canes, wheelchair parts and trays, wheelchair seat cushions, armpit pads, hand grips, and foot tips.

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Question 13: Can a member of the Irish Red Cross get a reference or letter of support from a Branch Officer?

No, in general we can't give references or letters of support on behalf of the organisation.

We can, of course, provide a statement to a member, indicating how long they've been a member, what branch they're affiliated to, what kind of activities they have been involved in, etc. If any member wishes to get a statement like this, they can contact membership@redcross.ie

There is nothing to prevent Branch Officers from giving personal references. If doing so, it cannot be provided on IRC headed paper, or with the IRC logo and it should be clear that the reference is being given in a personal capacity.

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Question 14: What is Irish Red Cross's strategic vision for the organisation?

Our Strategic Plan 2019-2024 , "Act Today Shape Tomorrow " is viewable here: <https://www.redcross.ie/resource/irish-red-cross-strategic-plan-2019-2024-3/>

We are in the process of listening to the opinions of members, staff funders and other stakeholders on what efforts and activities IRC should prioritise in our next strategic plan 2025 – 2029. The new plan will replace 'Act Today Shape Tomorrow' which ends in December 2024. It will set out IRC's intended direction for the coming years.

If there are questions you are receiving from the community that you require support with, please email them into faq@redcross.ie and we will respond directly to you.

Thanks again.