

# Welcome to Buncrana!



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# Welcome to Buncrana!



Here's a brief guide for your arrival and initial steps as a resident in one of the IPAS (International Protection Accommodation Service) Centres in Buncrana, Co Donegal.

## Meet Centre Manager/Staff at Centre office

The Centre Manager, or staff, will be your primary point of contact upon your arrival. They will

- Escort you to your room and provide bedding and essential supplies.
- Give you a tour of your new home
- Provide you with a welcome pack of food or order food to sustain you until you can go shopping.
- Give you guidance on laundry arrangements. These vary from centre to centre. Some use laundry boxes, others provide residents with access to the laundry room.
- Provide you with a card to be used at local stores for your food shopping and other essential items.
- Point out where notices are displayed for residents, including on transport links. As of Jun 2025, a bus for Sailor's Rest residents travels to Letterkenny for shopping. It leaves Buncrana at 12 noon, and returns from Letterkenny at 4pm.

# On Your First Few Days



- Visit the Intreo Centre F93 CH79
- Forms to Fill at your IPAS Centre
- Complete Medical forms



# What you Must do Within 4 Working Days

## Visit the Intreo Centre F93 CH79

At the Intreo Centre office you can:

### Request your PPS (Personal Public Service) number

You will have received a form for this as part of your first visit to the IPO (International Protection Office) when you arrived. Your PPS is a unique reference number that helps you access social welfare benefits and public services in Ireland.

The required documents for your PPS are:

- evidence of your right to reside in the country - your blue Card.
- proof of address in Buncrana - letter from IPAS centre management confirming your room number.

### Submit your Daily Expense form for €38.80 per week

You may have received a Daily Expense Form at the International Protection Office on your first visit there. If not, you can download it from [www.gov.ie/en/department-of-social-protection/forms/daily-expenses-allowance-applications-form-dea1](http://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-social-protection/forms/daily-expenses-allowance-applications-form-dea1). A few weeks after submitting it at the Intreo Centre, you will receive a letter confirming your payment, and a date to collect it at local post office. Any back payment due should be given with this first payment. You can also apply for a clothing allowance if needed on the DEA form.

# Forms to Fill at your IPAS Centre



## Legal Aid



You have a right to access to a lawyer to support you during your protection application. You need to apply for this as a matter of urgency when you arrive.

### DO:

1. Get the form: Management of your Centre may provide you with a form. If not, you can download from the Legal Aid Board's website: <http://www.legalaidboard.ie/our-legal-aid-service/how-we-can-help-you/international-protection/how-we-can-help-you/international-protection/>
2. Return the form either by:
  - Scanning it and emailing to Law Centre in Seville House in Galway: [lawcentresevillehouse@legalaidboard.ie](mailto:lawcentresevillehouse@legalaidboard.ie), or by
  - Posting to Law Centre Galway (address on form)
3. Arrange payment of €10 fee
  - For emailed forms, you must ring the Law Centre in Galway 1800 502 400 to make payment over the phone.
  - For posted forms get a postal order, at the Post Office. Put your personal reference number from the IPO on the back as a reference.

### DO NOT:

- Send money in the post
- Engage with the Dublin Legal Aid Board office.

IPAs based in Donegal must apply to the Galway Legal Aid Board office.



# Connect with a Doctor

## Complete a medical form

The management of your IPAs Centre will request a visit from the local Public Health Nurse when you arrive. The Public Health Nurse will provide you with a registration form and help to fill the form in. This form is how you register with a G.P. (General Practitioner Doctor who deals with non-emergency medical issues by appointment).

As an International Protection Applicant, you will receive a medical card. This offers free access to GP services, community health services, prescription medicines and hospital care. Please note not all services are covered completely by the medical card, there may be a charge for some tests/ treatments.

Some dental services are also covered by medical card, however it may not be possible to register with a dentist in Buncrana. If this is the case you must travel elsewhere, and the nearest other available dentist is likely to be in Letterkenny.

In case of a medical emergency, you should call 999 or 112. For non-emergency situations, where you need to see a GP doctor outside their normal clinic hours, Call Now Doc on 1850 400 911. The out of hours service for Buncrana is based in Carndonagh F93 EW7T.

**Application for Legal Services**  
International Protection and Permission to Remain

THIS APPLICATION IS FOR:  ACCOMPANIED  UNACCOMPANIED

Medical Card and GP Visit Card Form MC1

**Medical Card and GP Visit Card Application Form** MC1

**Who should use this form?**

Anyone applying for either a Medical Card or a GP Visit Card – you will be assessed for both. Did you know the quickest way to apply for either a Medical Card or GP Visit Card is online? Apply at [www.mymedicalcard.ie](http://www.mymedicalcard.ie)

**How do I apply for a Medical Card or a GP Visit Card?**

Step 1. Understand that this form is long, as we want to get the information we need to process your application as quickly as we can for you. You will have to complete the parts of the form that apply to you. Parts 3 (unless you have dependent children), 4 and 5 do not always apply.

# After Settling in

- Opening a Bank Account
- Accessing Employment:  
Applying for your Work Permit
- In-person support on training and employment
- Language Support



# After Settling In



## Opening a Bank Account

To open a bank account, visit a bank branch in person with the required documents: PPS card, proof of address in Ireland, and possibly a letter from the Department of Justice and Equality confirming your legal status.

### There are 3 banks in Buncrana,

- Bank of Ireland
- Allied Irish Bank,
- Permanent Trustee Savings Bank (Permanent TSB).

The first two are located on the Main Street, and Permanent TSB is just off it.

If you want to open a savings account, the Credit Union is another option.

Please note, **they do not provide current accounts**, only saving accounts.

## Accessing Employment

### Applying for your Work Permit

As an International Protection Applicant, you can apply for Labour Market Access Permission (commonly referred to as a 'work permit') if you have been waiting for at least 5 months for a decision on your application. It may take several further months for your work permit application to be processed.

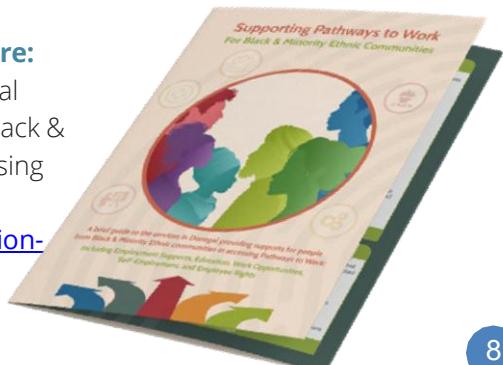
### Guidance on making your application is available from:

JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) [www.welcomejrs.ie/work-permit](http://www.welcomejrs.ie/work-permit)

### BME Supporting pathways brochure:

A brief guide to the services in Donegal providing supports for people from Black & Minority Ethnic communities in accessing Pathways to Work:

[interculturaldonegal.org/bme-inclusion-pathways-to-work/](http://interculturaldonegal.org/bme-inclusion-pathways-to-work/)







## In-Person Supports on Training and Employment

**Inishowen Development Partnership** supports individuals to participate in lifelong learning, to progress into employment/self-employment and to improve their soft skills, skills for work and wellbeing.

### Employment Supports

Our employment support team are qualified adult guidance counsellors, and offer information, advice and support to help seekers on their employment journey. We assist clients to focus on their skills, abilities, explore career pathways and to identify and address any barriers they may have. Supports include;

- **Employment Support Drop-In Clinic:** Held weekly on Thursdays (2:00-4:00 pm), no-appointment necessary, allows individuals to access immediate support from an Employment Support Officer.
- **One-to-One Employment Appointments:** Personalised support covering CV and cover letter writing, job application completion, interview preparation, and tailored career planning. To book an appointment call to our office or telephone 074 936 2218.
- **Employment Skills Workshops:** Delivered regularly throughout the year, these sessions focus on key employability topics including Job Searching & Career Planning, CV and Interview Skills and Preparing for Workplace Success.
- **Job Vacancy Sourcing:** IDP operate a dedicated Facebook Page and Web Page for job vacancies in Inishowen  
[www.facebook.com/idpemploymentservices](http://www.facebook.com/idpemploymentservices)  
[inishowen.ie/jobs](http://inishowen.ie/jobs)

**Training Courses:** IDP offers skills development in digital literacy, workplace skills, health & wellbeing, enterprise development, and community engagement. Course listings are available via the 'What's On' calendar on their website. [inishowen.ie/whats-on](http://inishowen.ie/whats-on)



## People 1st

This organisation offer two programmes, Fáilte and Meas.

- Fáilte is a programme to help migrants who don't yet have a work permit, with English classes, cultural awareness workshops and support in training, education and volunteering.
- Meas is a programme for those migrants with a work permit, which includes support in identifying job opportunities, and gives interview preparation and cv support.

Contact your Fáilte and Meas advisors on 074 9362439 or call in to People First, Dr Denis McLaughlin Rd, Buncrana, F93 NX45.

## Language Support

There are several options for English language courses available through

**The Exchange Inishowen**, [www.facebook.com/TheExchangeInishowen](http://www.facebook.com/TheExchangeInishowen)

**ETB (Education Training Board) Buncrana** both of which offer regular ESOL (English as Second Language) classes.

<http://www.donegaletb.ie/feature/fet-centres/fet-centre-buncrana>

**People1st Buncrana** provide English language classes for clients who need it. [people-1st.co.uk/programmes/roi](http://people-1st.co.uk/programmes/roi)

# Social and Community Integration

- Find Out More About What's on Locally
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Places of Worship
- Local Transport



# Social and Community Integration



Get involved in community activities and events. The following are some of the active groups and organisations in the community who welcome people who have newly arrived:

**The Exchange Inishowen:** As well as English Classes, The Exchange host a wide variety of activities and opportunities to volunteer and connect with others living in the area, including music sessions, meals for the elderly, a food pantry, and much more. They also offer in-person support with IPO interview preparation, including assistance with printing, scanning and emailing documents required for IPO interview process.

[www.facebook.com/TheExchangelnishowen](https://www.facebook.com/TheExchangelnishowen)

**Sanctuary Runners:** Sanctuary Runners is a national organisation that seeks to bring IPAS residents together with other migrants and Irish residents. The Sanctuary Runners Buncrana meet each Saturday morning by the Play Park to participate and/or help out at the local Park Run, a 5km run that happens on a weekly basis.

To find out more contact: [sanctuaryrunners.ie/groups](https://sanctuaryrunners.ie/groups)

## Inishowen Development Partnership Connecting

**Communities Team:** The IDP Connecting Communities Team offer information on lots of different training and social opportunities. To get added to the Buncrana IPA WhatsApp group (there is one for each of the IPAs centres currently), scan the QR Code on the back page

## Buncrana Library

You can apply for membership and join the library to borrow books and access a wide range of online resources. These range from international newspapers, to Driver Theory material, which helps prepare for a theory portion of driving test which many new arrivals must complete to drive legally in Ireland. There are also regular free workshops and events both for adults and children.

# Find Out More About What's on Locally

## Volunteer Opportunities

To access volunteer opportunities, register on the DVC (Donegal Volunteer Centre) website, where you will find a list of available volunteer roles.

[volunteerdonegal.ie](http://volunteerdonegal.ie)

## Local Authority Integration Team (Donegal)

The Integration Team works for support IPAs and others newly arrived in Ireland.. They can provide information on Education Employment, and health services and community involvement. You can also request a 1-1 appointment. Email [integration@donegalcoco.ie](mailto:integration@donegalcoco.ie) or phone Joleen on 074 917 2344 or Gabriel on 074 917 2342

Further volunteering opportunities will occur with other local groups from time to time. Details of newly available local volunteering options, will be made available on our Supporting Integration page:

[inishowen.ie/support/migrant-support](http://inishowen.ie/support/migrant-support)

## Get Outdoors

Explore recreational areas such as the beaches, shore front, and Swan Park.



# Places of Worship

**Mosque** The nearest mosque is in Letterkenny. For more information see [www.islaminletterkenny.com](http://www.islaminletterkenny.com)

**Anglican** Christ Church on Main Street. Services at 10.30am on Sundays

**Presbyterian** Fahan Presbyterian Church [www.fahanchurch.org](http://www.fahanchurch.org)

**Roman Catholic** - St Mary's Parish [www.buncranaparish.com](http://www.buncranaparish.com)

**Safe Haven Christian Community** A church home for Christians of all denominations to worship and serve together in Buncrana. Based in The Exchange building in Castle Avenue. Phone - 087 256 4777

[www.facebook.com/BuncranaSafeHaven](https://www.facebook.com/BuncranaSafeHaven)

## Local Information

### Printed Newspapers:

Inish Times

Inishowen Independent

### Online News:

Inishowen News: [inishowennews.com](http://inishowennews.com)

Donegal Daily: [www.donegaldaily.com](http://www.donegaldaily.com)

### Local Radio

Highland Radio: [highlandradio.com](http://highlandradio.com)



## Local Transport

There is a new local bus service across Inishowen. More information and timetables on local bus routes can be at [locallinkdsl.ie/timetables/](http://locallinkdsl.ie/timetables/)

There is a bus service to \*Dublin daily: [johnmcginley.com/routes-times](http://johnmcginley.com/routes-times)



*\*Please note, however, that this bus passes through Northern Ireland which as part of the UK. As an IPA you are not permitted to enter another country, so travel should only be undertaken on this route only after you have sought permission on doing so from the IPO.*



# Settling Children

- Schools
- Early Years Education
- Parent & Toddler Group
- Caring For Children In Ireland



# Settling Children In

## Schools

Children are obliged in Ireland to go to school from 6 to age 16. In practice, many children start national school at 5, and stay until they are at least 18. National/ Primary school last for 8 years, and is followed by Secondary/ Post-Primary School, which is a further 5 or 6 years. Centre management may be able to assist with getting children a place in a school. If they are unable to find a suitable place a dedicated Regional Education and Language Team within the Donegal Education and Training Board [www.donegaletb.ie](http://www.donegaletb.ie) will be able to help.

## Early Years Education

In addition to school, you also have the right to access registered childcare services for your children who have not yet been to school. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme, offers free or subsidized childcare for eligible children aged 2.5 to 5 years, for a number of hours per week.

## Parent & Toddler group

For parents of children who are not yet going to early years education (i.e. those under 2.5 or 3 years old), there is a parent and toddler session on Wed and Thu mornings in St Mary's Hall, Buncrana, F93 Y652 from 10-12 am.

## Caring for Children in Ireland

Childcare practices in Ireland may differ from your native culture.

For example:

- It is illegal to slap or smack a child in Ireland.
- Children under 14 should not be left alone for prolonged periods of time. Where a parent needs to be away (e.g. at work, or medical appointment), another trusted adult, or childcare provider must be looking after your child.

For further information on settling in as parents newly arrived in Ireland, please see:

**A Tusla short guide:** For parents who are newly arrived in Ireland Tusla - Child and Family Agency.  
<http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/english-guide-for-parents-arriving-in-ireland.pdf>



# Additional Supports

- **Supports for International Protection Process**
- **Mental Health Supports**
- **Community Policing Supports**



# Supports for International Protection Process

**The Exchange Inishowen:** The Exchange offer in-person support with IPO interview preparation, including assistance with printing, scanning and emailing documents required for IPO interview process.

[www.facebook.com/TheExchangeInishowen](https://www.facebook.com/TheExchangeInishowen)

**Jesuit Refugee Service:** Offers a Welcome website [www.welcomejrs.ie](http://www.welcomejrs.ie) that walks through all aspects of the International Protection Application Process. Their staff team provide support to people within IPAS centres around the country. More details available on [www.jrs.ie](http://www.jrs.ie)

## Support is also available from the following organisations:

**Citizens Information:** A trusted source of information for everyone living in Ireland, including those seeking International Protection. They provide information on health, education and training, Irish government, the justice system and much else besides. There is also a Citizens Information Centre in Buncrana on the Main Street, that you can call in to for advice. [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)

**Immigrant Council of Ireland:** A charity offering immigration advice to all immigrants, including International Protection Applicants.  
[www.immigrantcouncil.ie](http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie) Helpline 01 764 5854

**Irish Refugee Council:** A charity that provides advice, education, housing, employment and legal assistance to refugees and International Protection Applicants in Ireland. [www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie](http://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie)

**MASI (Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland):** is a group that provides a platform for asylum-seekers in Ireland to join together in seeking justice, freedom and dignity for all within the International Protection Process.  
[www.masie.ie](http://www.masie.ie)

**UNHCR Ireland:** UN Refugee Agency in Ireland They offer a guide to the International Protection Process in Ireland in 20 languages [www.unhcr.org/ie/guide-international-protection-procedure-20-languages](http://www.unhcr.org/ie/guide-international-protection-procedure-20-languages).

# Mental Health Supports

**Insight Inishowen:** A community counselling service based in Buncrana. They offer in-person counselling, listening ear, signposting to other services. Phone/ Text 087 170 8743 Email [insightinishowen@gmail.com](mailto:insightinishowen@gmail.com). [www.insightinishowen.ie](http://www.insightinishowen.ie).

**Lifeline Inishowen** provide support & counselling for both adults and children affected by domestic abuse, family support, and court accompaniment. P: 074 93 73232 /086 0650 353, E: [support@ldvs.org](mailto:support@ldvs.org). W: [www.ldvs.org](http://www.ldvs.org) Drop-in 10am -1.30pm Mon-Fri at 1 New Park, Carndonagh.

## Online Counselling:

- Irish Red Cross offer 6 free sessions of therapy in range of languages to forced migrants  
<https://www.redcross.ie/uncategorized/mentalhealth>
- Turn2Me [www.turn2me.org](http://www.turn2me.org) offers 6 free sessions to any adult living in Ireland
- My Mind [www.mymind.org](http://www.mymind.org) offers low-cost counselling support

## For a list of further Mental Health Services:

<https://www2.hse.ie/mental-health/services-support/supports-services/>

## Community Policing Support

The Community Policing Unit in Buncrana includes two Gardaí (police officers) and one Sergeant. Their role is to support everyone in the community, especially those facing challenges like racism or discrimination.

A community counselling service who provide support & counselling for anyone who is experiencing, or has experienced, domestic abuse. They provide counselling for adults and children & support for families and court accompaniment.

**To get in touch:** Email [DG.Buncrana.Community@Garda.ie](mailto:DG.Buncrana.Community@Garda.ie) or phone 074 932 0540 and ask for Community Policing Unit

# Getting Around

- Where You Are & Getting Orientated
- Map of Inishowen & Donegal
- Map of Ireland
- Map of Buncrana



# Getting Around

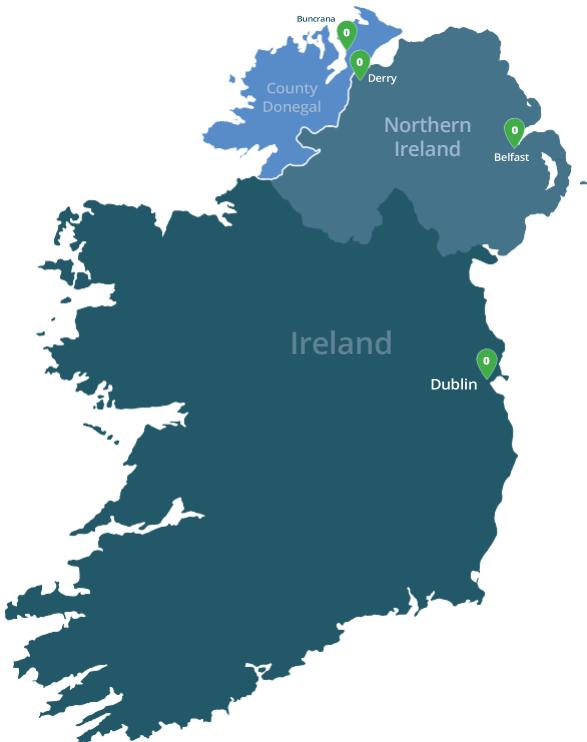
## Where You are & Getting Orientated



**Buncrana** is a town in Inishowen in the north of County Donegal in Ulster, the northern province in Ireland. Its name comes from Buncrana (in Irish Bun Cranncha, meaning 'bottom of the (River) Crana').

The town sits on the eastern shores of Lough Swilly. With a population of 7000, it is the second biggest town in County Donegal, after Letterkenny, and the largest in Inishowen.

**Inishowen** (Irish: Inis Eoghain, meaning 'island of Eoghan') is a peninsula in the north of County Donegal. Inishowen is the largest peninsula on the island of Ireland, and contains Ireland's most northerly point, Malin Head.



**County Donegal** There are 32 counties in Ireland: 26 in the Republic of Ireland, and a further 6 in Northern Ireland. County Donegal is the most northerly of the counties in Republic of Ireland. There is also a town called Donegal, which is in the middle of the county.

**Derry** and **Belfast** are cities within Northern Ireland. Derry is also the name given to one of the 6 counties in Northern Ireland which is a part of the United Kingdom.

***IMPORTANT NOTE: As an IPA you are not permitted to travel into the UK, which means you should not travel to Derry. To do so could threaten your application for international protection in the Republic of Ireland.***



# Finding Your Way Around Buncrana

| <b>IPAS centres</b>   |   |          |
|---|---|----------|
| <b>1</b>  | Sailor's Rest                                 | F93 FH33 |
| <b>2</b>  | Old HSE Building                              | F93 X859 |
| <b>State agencies</b>   |   |          |
| <b>3</b>  | Intreo  | F93 CH79 |
| <b>4</b>  | An Post                                       | F93 T1WD |
| <b>5</b>  | HSE Primary Care Centre                       | F93 E12W |
| <b>6</b>  | Buncrana Library                              | F93 YK68 |
| <b>7</b>  | Garda (Police) Station                        | F93 HE14 |
| <b>Community-led organisations</b>  |   |          |
| <b>8</b>  | IDP (Inishowen Development Partnership)       | F93 EE39 |
| <b>9</b>  | The Exchange                                  | F93 FE09 |
| <b>Education</b>  |   |          |
| <b>Primary (up to 13)</b>   |   |          |
| <b>10</b>   | Scoil Íosagáin                                | F93 CA39 |
| <b>11</b>   | St Mura's National School                     | F93 WD98 |
| <b>Secondary (13 to 18)</b>   |   |          |
| <b>12</b>   | Scoil Mhuire                                  | F93 PN53 |
| <b>13</b>   | Crana College                                 | F93 D568 |
| <b>Further Education (18+)</b>  |   |          |
| <b>14</b>   | ETB (Education & Training Board)              | F93 ND23 |
| <b>Beauty Spots</b>   |   |          |
| <b>15</b>   | Entrance to Swan Park & Start of Coastal Path | F93 WP78 |
| <b>16</b>   | Ladies' Bay*                                  |          |
| <b>17</b>   | Festival Play Park*                           |          |
| <b>18</b>   | Amazing Grace Viewing Point*                  |          |
|  | Pharmacy                                      |          |
|  | Bus Stops                                     |          |

\* Locations available on Google however they have no eircode assigned to them.

For further information Email:  
enquiries [@inishowen.ie](mailto:@inishowen.ie)  
Phone: 074 936 2218  
Connecting Communities Team  
Inishowen Development Partnership  
St Mary's Road,  
Buncrana



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An Roinn Leanai, Comhionannais,  
Michumais, Lánpháirciúchta agus Óige  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth



