

The history of international protection in Ireland is relatively short, but this short history has largely been characterised by a culture of distrust and questionable practices. Among these, is a **lack of communication and transparency regarding timelines.**



Currently, the median processing time for a first instance decision from the International Protection Office is **17.6 months**. The median time for a decision on an appeal is **9 months**. As a result of lengthy and uncertain timelines, asylum seekers who are awaiting a decision experience higher levels of psychological distress and face an increased risk of mental illness.

As students of the Irish Centre for Human Rights, we suggest the following changes as necessary steps towards **a fair, accountable, and transparent international protection system.**

1-Anyone who has been in the system for longer than two years (from the date when the time limits are implemented) should be granted permission to remain without prejudice to their ongoing protection application.

2-Ireland should opt-in to the Recast Asylum Procedures Directive, which guides a European Standard for asylum procedures, and ensure its transposition into national legislation in a timely manner.

3-The time limit of 4 months for Phase One Accommodation, as proposed by the White Paper, should be placed on a statutory footing.

4-A statutory time limit of 6 months should be introduced for the first instance decision by the International Protection Office.

5-In the event that an asylum seeker appeals their first instance decision, a statutory time limit of 6 months should be introduced for the decision by the International Protection Appeals Tribunal.

6-A statutory time limit not exceeding one month should be introduced for the granting of the Ministerial Decision after a recommendation has been made by the relevant Tribunal.

7-Asylum seekers should be granted the legal right to request an extension of the time limit for the processing of their application, under extenuating circumstances.

8-An online portal, which includes an interactive timeline in which an asylum seeker can see the progress of their application, and have direct access to relevant information, should be created.

9-An auditing mechanism should be implemented to ensure the quality of decision making in the status determination process.

10-All interpreters working in the status determination procedure should be accredited and receive training specific to the asylum context.

11-Further resourcing and staffing should be supplied to the Legal Aid Board to support asylum seekers from the beginning of the status determination process.

12-Vulnerability assessments should be consistently conducted for all asylum seekers and these assessments should inform special procedural guarantees.

For further details, please see our Submission to the Minister for Justice, entitled "*Introducing Timelines to the Irish International Protection System: A Path Towards Accountability and Transparency.*"