



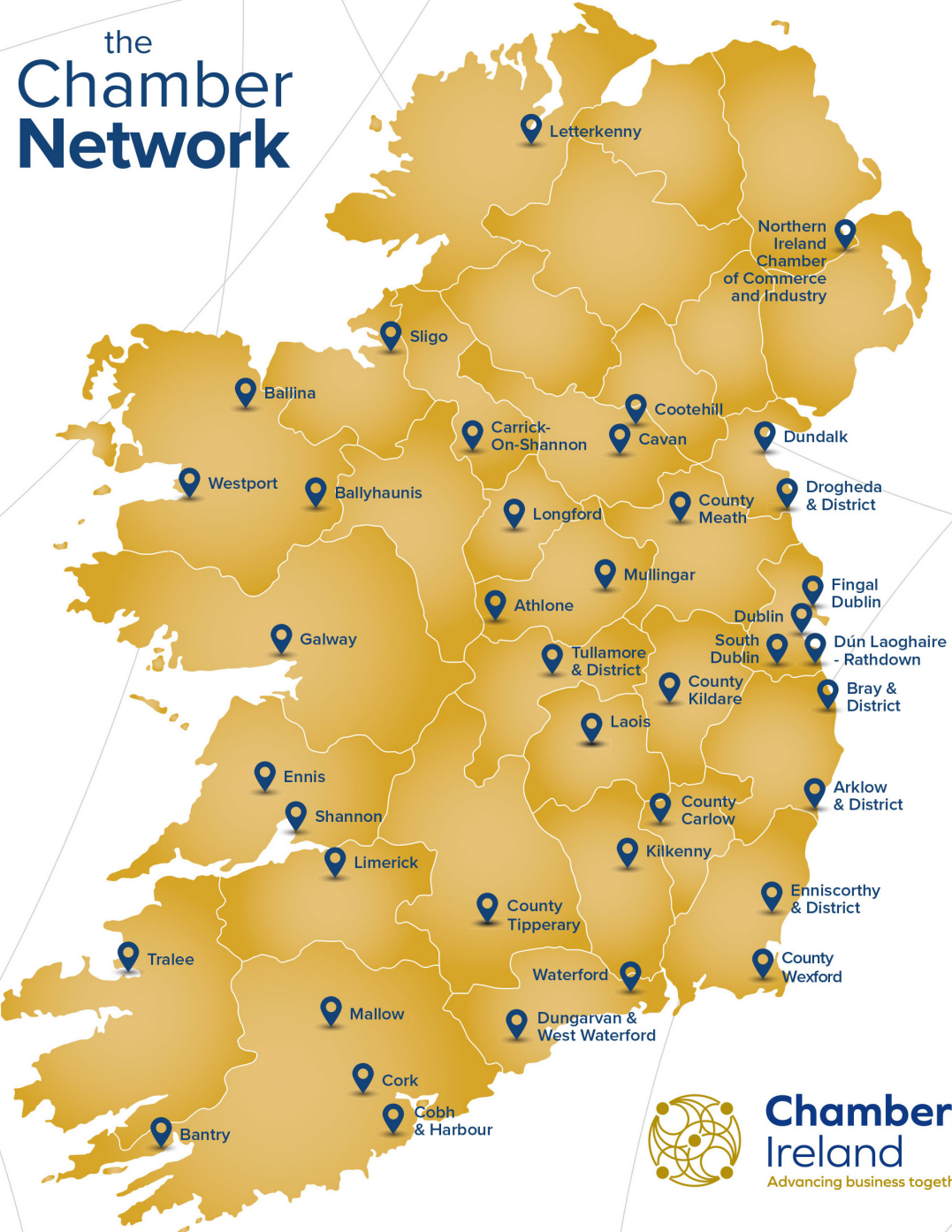
Closing Skill Gaps:

Intensive Language Training



**Chambers
Ireland**
Advancing business together

the Chamber Network



Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry



Chambers Ireland
Advancing business together

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Introduction

Our country has faced multiple challenges in recent years. At the time, the Great Financial Crisis felt like it would be the economic shock that would define an era.

Since then we have had to endure Brexit shocks, the Covid pandemic, the broader impacts of Russia's aggressive war in Ukraine including an energy shock, large-scale migration, Russia's attempts to disrupt domestic politics within the EU to create divisions within the bloc. All of this is set against the backdrop of the Climate Crisis, housing constraints, and a rise in anti-immigration sentiment.

Within Europe, Ireland is uniquely well placed to benefit from many of these 2024 events. As a small open economy Ireland with a skilled workforce and a young population, we have proven that we can adapt quickly to circumstances - a fact that is demonstrated by our long spell of economic growth, in spite of the negative headwinds.

The biggest issue that our members are experiencing today is a lack of available staff. Finding talent continues to be a challenge for businesses; of the 95,000 people joining the labour market last year 89,700 are in work. In the history of our state, there have never been more people working in Ireland, and more still could be working.

Given our economic circumstances, we should be investing in all the people that are available to work here, but there is an enormous gap apparent when we consider the people who are seeking international protection in Ireland.

Tens of thousands of people who are here under our protection could be working and contributing even more to our country, but they lack the necessary language skills to do so. At the same time employers are contributing €1.5 Billion to the National Training Fund with hundreds of millions each year going unspent. We lock people seeking international protection into long-term dependency because we will not help them develop the skills they need to thrive while they are here.

Chambers Ireland calls on government to use a small share of that National Training Fund surplus to invest in the people that are here so that the businesses that have made this contribution to the State can have some of their burden reduced, even as we support some of the most vulnerable people living here.

Chambers Ireland is arguing that government should take a practical and pragmatic approach towards people who are seeking international protection in Ireland.

It is a simple fact that an order of magnitude more people are seeking protection in Ireland today than ever before. This must prompt a rethink of how we act.

We know that wherever they have been tried, intensive language lessons for people seeking international protection raise employment rates and raise earnings. This has a huge impact on the exchequer, the greatest part of which is helping people to become independent means that they are less reliant on social supports.

Where intensive language classes have been delivered employment rates increase by 25% and incomes increase by 33% - the cost benefit ratios for these actions range from 1:15 to 1:40.

Moreover, if we are to finance this through using the excess from the National Training Fund then this will have a huge impact for the exchequer while not imposing costs on the State. This is because the National Training Fund receipts are specifically ring-fenced for training and skills development.

Recommendations:

- Immediately initiate a variety of Intensive Language courses to assess their effectiveness in the Irish context
- Fund these programmes through using the surplus from the National Training Fund employers' levy which is unspent in 2024
- Training should be to at least C1 level
- Training plans should be developed for each participant to ensure that language training is compatible with their existing skillset
- To ensure continuity of training, participants should not be moved to another Local Authority area during the period of training

Context

Access to employment stands as a key indicator of successful integration. At this time of full employment in Ireland, English language at a standard of proficiency required for employment is the biggest barrier. This paper sets out how we can address this barrier and bring more people into employment, meeting the needs of business and community. Ukrainian people constitute the vast majority of those seeking international protection in Ireland and the statistics that are available for this population are of a higher standard than for the balance that population.

Census data show a continuing sharp increase in the percentage of the population born outside Ireland. The proportion of the population which is non-Irish rose from 5.6% in 2002 to almost 12% in 2022. As of [February 2024](#)¹, a total of 76,126 Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSNs) were issued to adult arrivals from Ukraine under the Temporary Protection Directive. Of them, 57,672 have remained active (77%). Additionally, in 2023, [13,217 international protection applications](#)² were filed in Ireland, representing an increase of 3% decrease compared to 2022.

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) [reports an unemployment rate of 4.2% in Q4 2023](#)³, below what the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment considers to be [full employment](#)⁴. This trend is remarkable given that the number of people in the labour force increased by 95,000 in 2023 and the numbers in employment expanded by 89,700 leading to the labour force participation rate increasing to 74%.

[According to CPL](#)⁵, the 2023 talent market was again dominated by talent shortages, especially for high-demand jobs like accountants, financial analysts, multilingual sales agents, HR generalists, engineers, project managers, and others. While we in Chambers Ireland, [found that among our SME members](#)⁶, the overwhelming majority of businesses were experiencing skills gaps arising from the inability to find staff with the required skills.

As of February 2023, at least 17,702 of those who have arrived from Ukraine had earnings from employment (31% of all Ukrainian adults in Ireland) . Over 40,000 arrivals from Ukraine have attended Intreo events and almost 25,000 were assessed to have a barrier to engaging with the workforce, 97% of whom were impeded by their English language skills. Childcare and access to transport were the next biggest obstacles to work .

1 Arrivals from Ukraine in Ireland Series 12, [Table 3]

<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ftp/p-ai/arrivalsfromukraineinirelandseries12/>

2 Key figures on international protection in EU+ countries 2023, <https://euaa.europa.eu/node/23615>

3 Labour Force Survey Quarter 4 2023,

<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-lfs/labourforcesurveyquarter42023/>

4 DETE Statement of Strategy 2023-2025,

<https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/publications/publication-files/statement-of-strategy-2023-2025.pdf>

5 The most in-demand jobs | 2023, <https://www.cpl.com/blog/2023/03/the-most-in-demand-jobs-2023>

6 SMEs struggle to find talent with skills gaps across many operational areas,

<https://chambers.ie/press-releases/smes-struggle-to-find-talent-with-skills-gaps-across-many-operational-areas/>

In Ireland, all third-country nationals and EU citizens have the right to access ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes provided by the Education and Training Boards (ETBs). [According to Solas](#)⁷, €3.1 million was spent by the ETBs on the provision of ESOL courses in 2022. [These courses were offered to 29,354 learners in 2022](#)⁸. In 2024, [DFHERIS has budgeted €15m](#)⁹ for the provision of English language training to Ukrainian people in Ireland. This increase is welcome but it is far below the levels that are necessary to provide effective training, with suitable intensity, to those seeking international protection in Ireland.

Challenges

1) Quality Standards:

Currently there are no national policies or standardised protocols related to ESOL provision, although some ETBs developed their own guidelines. Given that the Educational and Training Boards are organised locally (rather than co-ordinated nationally) there is a significant variation in the quality of the English Language Training that is being provided to Ukrainian people across the different regions, which variation is compounded by the unevenness with which this population has been distributed.

[Research from Solas](#)¹⁰ concludes that teacher expertise is the most important resource for effective ESOL practice. While the majority of ESOL staff hold appropriate qualifications, there is no overall staffing structure or guidelines on coordination. Staff highlighted the need for a national policy in relation to coordination structures for ESOL provision and a specific professional development strategy for ESOL practitioners.

The absence of a national standard particularly in the context of people being moved from one area to another, often at short notice, and leads to a lack of continuity in English Language training (where it is available) which is compounded by the inconsistent quality of the training that is available.

2) Levels of English Language:

Reported language competency levels vary considerably between ETBs. On average, 63% of all learners in 2015 were at beginner level (A1 – A2), 24% at intermediate level (B1 – B2) and only 6% at advanced level (C1 – C2)¹¹. The lack of high standard English (B2 – C2) for migrants and refugees is the main obstacle they face to access employment for which they are qualified.

7 Annual Accounts and Annual Report 2022, https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/0ba8eca526/solas_annual_report.pdf

8 This is FET Facts and Figures 2022, https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/a570e2890f/solas_facts_report_2022.pdf

9 Parliamentary Questions, <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-10-19/383/>

10 English language provision and language assessment for low-skilled and unemployed migrants, <https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/7a61ee6ee9/english-language-provision-and-language-assessment.pdf>

11 English language provision and language assessment for low-skilled and unemployed migrants, <https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/7a61ee6ee9/english-language-provision-and-language-assessment.pdf>

As has been noted by the CSO¹², 85% of Ukrainians in Ireland who have a work history, have experience as professionals, managers, sales staff, service operators, technicians, or skilled trades people – all areas where there is an existing shortage within the Irish economy.

The population of adults from Ukraine who are seeking international protection in Ireland, are extremely well educated with 61% having a third level qualification¹³ (far in excess of the Irish, 2019, average of 47%)¹⁴.

3) Lack of Intensity of Provision:

Courses provided by the ETBs often do not provide the rapid language progression required for migrants and refugees to engage confidently in the Irish job market. Most ESOL courses offer only a few hours of learning per week and no employment-specific support.

4) Capacity:

The ETB sector suffers from a shortage of qualified ESOL teachers, exacerbated by the current recruitment process and working conditions. Simultaneously, there is a thriving private sector in intensive English language provision which is targeted at business English which could be marshaled to help people who are seeking international protection in Ireland gain a stronger command of the English language.

As a result of the challenges mentioned above, migrants and refugees take longer to enter the employment market than people of an equivalent level of education and ability. They are having to rely on the State to support them for extended periods (primarily because of their lack of English language skills) and once employed, many people take on jobs in areas that are outside their professional expertise which both wastes their talent and leads to them to deskilling in their area of competence. The lack of access to the formal labour market leads people with poor language skills to rely on the informal economy for opportunities, often resulting in exploitation and unsafe working conditions.

12 Arrivals from Ukraine in Ireland Series 12 [Table 9]
<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-aii/arrivalsfromukraineinirelandseries12/>

13 Arrivals from Ukraine in Ireland Series 12 [Table 11]
<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-aii/arrivalsfromukraineinirelandseries12/>

14 Ireland's UN SDGs 2019 - Report on Indicators for Goal 4 Quality Education [Table 2.19]
<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-sdg4/irelandsunsdgs2019-reportonindicatorsforgoal4qualityeducation/adulteducation/>

Peer Country Programmes

It is essential that Ireland introduces a National Integration Programme that mirrors successful models implemented in other EU countries. These examples deal with much more heterogeneous populations of people seeking international protection. Regardless of this, their experiences involving different languages and different countries of origin are largely coherent and ought to be a reasonable baseline against which similar Irish programmes can be benchmarked against.

Germany:

Germany introduced its nation-wide Integration Programme in 2010, with the main goal of standardising the large number of co-existing integration measures in the country. The result is a need-based orientation programme and greater coordination between integration offers. The programme is mandatory for all non-EU nationals and includes 100 hours of orientation and 400 - 600 hours of language courses with the intention of reaching B1 level. Since 2016, B2 and C1 courses (which have a stronger focus on the proficiencies demanded within the work environment) have also been offered. Lang¹⁵ has determined that intensive language training in Germany increases the likelihood of a migrant being employed by 38% and increase the likelihood of someone being in skilled employment by 45%. Also significant is that early intensive language training has a greater than average effect on employment status while delaying the introduction of intensive language courses results in “small and insignificant results” indicating that the “early provision of language programs benefits the labo[u]r market integration of migrants”.

Finland:

Finland offers personalised integration plans, which usually include basic information about Finland, integration support for education and employment, language studies and introduction to Finnish society, culture, and working life. Sarvimäki and Hämäläinen¹⁶ found that in the education reform which focused “on improving the match quality between immigrants’ pre-existing skills and the training offered” saw a 47% increase in the cumulative earnings of migrants and a 13% decrease in the total amount of social benefits claimed (without increasing the resources needed for training).

15 Employment effects of language training for unemployed immigrants, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00148-021-00832-7>

16 Integrating Immigrants: The Impact of Restructuring Active Labor Market Programs, <http://aalto-econ.fi/sarvimaki/integrationJOLE.pdf>

Sweden:

In Sweden, Andersson, Joonas and Nekby¹⁷, found that tailoring resources to the needs of migrants was especially effective and enabled labour force participation. The Swedish policy saw immigrants paired with case workers who were dedicated exclusively towards immigrants (and whom had only 20% of the typical number of clients) and the increase in labour force participation meant that these extra resources were recouped within two years of the commencement of training. Meanwhile Dahlberg et al. found that intensive language classes combined with skills specific coaching resulted in migrants being twice as likely to be in employment within 10 months, compared to those that a less intensive (10 hours) of language training week.

Denmark:

Denmark offers 540 hours of language learning in the first three years after arrival, which resulted in higher employment rates, considerable increase in earnings in the medium and long run, and higher mobility towards communication-intensive jobs that are better paid. The cost benefit ratio for the extended language training in the Danish case was 15.4, that is, the \$2,600 investment in language skills saw a total (Net Present Value) increase in income of \$40,100¹⁸, individuals that had experienced the intensive training were 23% less likely to be unemployed (relative to the baseline case) and had earnings that were 34% higher than the baseline case.

France:

Lochmann et al.¹⁹ found that an extra 100 hours of language training increased labour force participation among migrants in France by between 14.5% - 26.6%. Importantly this effect was strongest amongst the cohort of people who had a higher level of education.

17 Intensive coaching of new immigrants, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1467-9442.2011.01692.x>

18 Language Training and Refugees' Integration" <https://www.nber.org/papers/w26834>

19 The effect of language training on immigrants' economic integration: Empirical evidence from France <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0014292119300200>

Economic Benefits

Integration Programmes such as those that have been introduced in peer nations not only enhance refugees' language proficiency but also bolster their ability to communicate effectively, navigate job interviews, and comprehend various communication styles and cultural norms. Integration programmes that include intensive English courses, coupled with dedicated career support, can empower individuals to overcome language barriers more swiftly, enabling them to participate more actively in the labour market.

Effective programmes have well-defined characteristics. Firstly, there is a tailored plan that helps the individual maximise the benefit of their existing skillset. Complementing this is a language course which takes into consideration the sector specific terms that the individual will need to use within the workplace. Thirdly, language courses which are intensive and sustained are effective at increasing the likelihood that an individual participates in the workforce while less intensive courses are relatively ineffective. Furthermore, intensive language courses are strongly associated with both higher skilled and higher income employment. Finally, there is a strong association between the education level of a migrant and the benefits which they gain from intensive language courses.

Delivering effective and well-resourced intensive language courses, combined with tailored workplace engagement programmes delivered by caseworkers who are focused on immigrants typically has two major effects. They increase the share of migrants that are in the workforce and they increase the income of those that are working.

Given the unique circumstances that we are experiencing as a result of the displacement of Ukrainians, Ireland has a great opportunity to not only help the people who are seeking international protection here, but also to help ourselves. At a time when our labour market is constrained and where businesses across the country are struggling to expand their workforces to meet customer demand, we have welcomed a sudden influx of a generally young, and very highly educated, potential cohort of workers. At least 24,000 of these are willing to work but have been recognised as facing significant language barriers.

The cost of an intensive language courses for 1,000 Ukrainians will likely cost circa €3m if it results in a 30% rate of employment, which suggests that as people transition from Social Protection supports (such as Jobseekers Allowance) this policy is likely to be cost neutral within a year of the cohort completing their intensive language training. Should Ireland's experience align with other, peer, European nations, then this policy is likely to recoup costs within eight months and will also see a much larger share of Ukrainians accessing higher skilled parts of the workforce, easing the pressures within the workforce, and also bringing them into the tax net. Given the numbers of Ukrainians that are seeking International Protection, the associated large costs to the exchequer, and the diminishing likelihood that this population will be returning to Ukraine within the next two years we ought to be doing all that we can to help them achieve economic independence as soon as possible. The average cost per Ukrainian household is circa €30,000 per annum at present which suggests that only a relatively small percentage of households need to transition away from the social protection system for a policy of skills-orientated intensive English language training to be revenue positive for the state.

While it is easier to model what the expected returns might be for such an intensive language training programme amongst this Ukrainian cohort of international protection seekers, this is because we have better data for this population. In the international comparator cases the cost/benefit analyses demonstrated the utility of intensive language courses regardless of the country of origin or the language that was being learnt.

That the benefits may be easier to model for the Ukrainian population in Ireland is not an argument that such training should be disproportionately directed towards them.

It is well-demonstrated that this training is valuable across all populations and offers the exchequer a positive return on investment.

Funding Model

The National Training Fund has accumulated a surplus of €1.5 Billion as of the end of 2023²⁰. Upskilling people who are seeking international protection is an ideal use to which the excess funding can be put. As has become generally recognised, including from Chambers Ireland research²¹, skill gaps are prevalent across all sectors of the economy.

Simultaneously we have received a large inward migration of a highly educated population. As noted by the Public Employment Service²², 62% of Ukrainian adults that have engaged with Intreo have a third level education. However, of the 17,702 people who have earnings from employment 50% were working in Wholesale, Transport and Accommodation, and mean earnings were €446²³. This would suggest that those who have found employment are working at minimum wage levels, and are also working outside of their primary areas of competence.

Instituting intensive English language training is likely to have the dual effect of increasing the labour force participation of those who are seeking international protection and it will also expand the earnings of those who have already entered the workplace (as it will allow people to work in areas that they have experience).

Aside from having a deflationary effect within the workforce as a result of increasing the number of skilled people available for employment such a programme will also increase the income tax which is accruing to the exchequer for those that are in the workforce. The average Ukrainian worker in Ireland has an income of circa €23,000 per annum, should such a programme as we are proposing mirror the typical peer nation intensive language classes experience, then their average income would be expected to rise to circa €30,000. This would increase the income tax take per worker from €1,200 p.a. to €2,600 p.a.. Without targeting the intensive language training, and given the base participation rate the average income tax receipts across 1,000 Ukrainians who receive this training will increase from €360,000 to €780,000 per annum (immediately offsetting 14% of the likely costs of carrying out the intensive language course).

20 An Overview of the National Training Fund (NTF)
https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/parliamentaryBudgetOffice/2023/2023-06-20_an-overview-of-the-national-training-fund-ntf_en.pdf

21 SMEs struggle to find talent with skills gaps across many operational areas
<https://chambers.ie/press-releases/smes-struggle-to-find-talent-with-skills-gaps-across-many-operational-areas/>

22 Arrivals from Ukraine in Ireland Series 12 [Table 9]
<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ftp/p-ai/arrivalsfromukraineinirelandseries12/>

23 Arrivals from Ukraine in Ireland Series 12 [Table 7]
<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ftp/p-ai/arrivalsfromukraineinirelandseries12/>

There are also gains to be made from increasing the labour force participation rate of those who engage in such programmes (which typically range between 15-35%). Conservatively, this would result in an additional 5-10 percent of those seeking international protection being in the workforce. Should these people only earn minimum wage, then this suggest that an additional increase in income tax receipts €60,000 - €120,000. If they earn average that their peers are earning however this is likely to range from €130,000-260,000.

This suggests that at the low end the increase in income tax receipts for carrying out such a programme is likely to be €480,000 for each 1,000 Ukrainian adults that receive intensive language classes. However, if we are to be as successful with this programme as our European peers are, then the increase in income tax receipts per 1,000 Ukrainian adults, it would be closer to €680,000.

The real gains however are to be made by helping people who are seeking international protection here to become independent of the social support systems. It is very unlikely that people without a local social network will be able to become independent while working at minimum wage in Ireland. However, shifting average earnings to €30,000 p.a. will do that. The typical Ukrainian household in Ireland receives circa €30,000 p.a. in direct supports. If only 30% of those who are currently in work become independent of the social protection services (and given that the average earnings would be expected to be circa €30,000 this is a very conservative element) then the funding of such an intensive language programme would be a net positive for the exchequer within 12 months of the first course's completion.

Ireland has a unique situation where we have received an influx of relatively young, highly educated, and highly skilled individuals and we are missing out on a massive opportunity by badly mismanaging this.

We have funding available which should be applied to up-skilling these people immediately. The cost of delivering intensive language training to all 24,000 people who have engaged with Intreo and have a recognised difficulty with their English language skills would be less than €75m. Simultaneously, we are expecting that there will be a transfer to the National Training Fund (which is already in surplus) of in excess of €200m in 2024. Given the pace at which our employment figures have been growing it is reasonable to suggest that our economy could absorb these additional 24,000 workers within 2024 alone, and that such a programme will be a net positive for the exchequer by 2025. However, it does not need to be so effective to be net positive for the exchequer. It is very likely that Russia's war on Ukraine will extend for a number of years yet and therefore there will be a large multiplier effect on any deductions in social protection costs associated with hosting these people.

Delivering at Scale

1) ETBs

ETBs are rooted well in the community, not just in cities and towns, with a wide reach in rural locations. By developing a standardised syllabus for ESOL courses as part of a National Integration Programme, ETBs would be the best suited to address this pressing need. There needs to be a higher level of ambition however for the levels of training that is to be provided in this setting. It is not sufficient to continue to have a 'bare bones' level of training if we are to be able to help these people become independent at the earliest opportunity.

This training also needs to be tailored to the sectors within which these learners have skills so that they will be able to maximise their employability.

2) Independent Language Schools

Independent Language Schools have the capacity and motivation to address this challenge in the short and medium term. The infrastructure is already in place to scale classes across the country and the sector already has the capacity to deliver online courses when appropriate.

These schools are particularly suited to offer Business English and specialised vocabulary courses focused on in-demand industries such as Healthcare, Hospitality, Engineering, and Social Care.

The cost to provide intensive classes (26h/week) over 6 months is between €100 and €150 per week per learner. The equivalent level of training to the Danish case study would cost between €2,000-€3,000, per individual.

3) NGOs

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) already assume a crucial role in facilitating labour market integration for refugees and migrants in Ireland. Several NGOs engage in localised, small-scale initiatives, while others operate on a national scale.

Business-focused NGOs are in a strategic position to provide career guidance and cultural awareness training, encompassing aspects of Irish work culture, labour market guidelines, and communication styles. NGOs, in partnership with businesses, can provide CV guidance, mock interviews, coaching and mentorship as an optional part of the National Integration

Programme.

Training Case Studies:

1) Carlow and Kilkenny ETB

The Kilkenny and Carlow Education Training Board (KCETB) piloted an intensive English language programme, running four days a week, four hours a day (a total of 16 hours weekly). This course included an additional two hours per week dedicated to career guidance for adults, covering essential aspects such as career preparation, crafting effective CVs, and practicing for job interviews. In contrast, their conventional English courses ran for a total of six hours per week. The impact of the intensive course was remarkable, with higher engagement and superior outcomes observed. Evidently, there was substantial demand for these intensive sessions, as evidenced by over 250 applications from prospective students, despite the limited availability of just 30 spots.

Commencing in October 2022 and concluding in June 2023, two intensive courses, along with an additional programme running from January to June, enrolled approximately 12 students each, all from Ukraine. The in-person delivery format, located within a college setting, not only facilitated an immersive learning experience but also fostered a sense of commitment among participants. The outcomes of these intensive courses were notably positive:

- Among students commencing at an A1 proficiency level, 45% advanced to A2, while 55% reached the B1 level.
- For those initially at the A2 level, a remarkable 82% progressed to B1, with 18% maintaining their A2 proficiency.
- These intensive courses significantly bolstered participants' self-confidence and enabled many to secure employment either during or after program completion.

Comparatively, four classes of conventional English courses offered by KCETB had the following results:

- Students commencing at an A1 level primarily remained at the same proficiency level, with none progressing to A2.
- For those starting at A2, 50% advanced to B1, with the remaining 50% retaining their A2 proficiency.
- No students starting at B1 achieved a progression to B2.

Drawing on the insights gleaned from these cohorts, KCETB has adapted its approach by introducing 12-hour weekly courses along with 1.5 hours of career guidance. This enriched programme is now open to participants of all nationalities. Recognising the diverse needs of individuals already engaged in employment, the institution also offers evening and online courses with a less intensive structure, ensuring accessibility for a broader spectrum of learners.

2. Open Doors Initiative and AllTalk Training

The Open Doors Initiative (ODI) has provided Business English training to over 90 refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in partnership with AllTalk Training. The course is open to those who have an upper-intermediate level of English, at a minimum. It is delivered online via live sessions (26 hours in total) for small groups of up to eight learners, and offers access to the Professional English Toolkit (PET), a self-paced course with eight modules.

The course includes:

- General introductions
- Living and working in Ireland
- Small talk and role plays
- Introducing yourself as a professional
- Numbers and figures
- Workplace etiquette, body language, acronyms, useful vocabulary
- Clarifying information
- Communicating clearly
- Direct x Indirect communication
- Phone and video calls, in person meetings
- Emails
- Negotiating
- Asking questions
- Presentations
- Irish culture

From over 90 students that completed the Business English course, 91% rated the course 5 out of 5. The overall rating for the course was 4.64 out of 5. Other key results include:

- 100% of all participants strongly agree that the course has helped them better integrate in Ireland
- 100% strongly agree that the course has helped them or will help them communicate better with others at work
- 73% strongly agree that the course has helped them or will help them find work in Ireland, while the other 27% somewhat agree with the statement

Feedback from previous students include:

“I’m truly impressed with the English lessons provided by All Talk Training. The instructors are highly knowledgeable and skilled, which has greatly enhanced my English proficiency. Thanks to their support, my confidence in speaking and comprehending English has grown remarkably.”

“This course helped me to understand better Irish office culture and to improve my communication skills.”

“This course helped me to improve my communication with colleagues, learn the basics of negotiation, business meetings and business writing. The course also helped me to learn about Irish culture, the correct reading of Irish names and titles.”

“I really appreciate Open Doors initiative and All Talk Training. I found out lots of different ways to speak at work, write emails and speak via phone on jobs purposes.”



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Chambers Ireland and the Sustainable Development Goals

Chambers Ireland has been appointed as a national Sustainable Development Goals Champion as part of the 2023-2024 SDG Champions Programme. The programme has been developed by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications to raise public awareness of the SDGs and to demonstrate that everyone in society can make a contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Chambers Ireland is the only business representative organisation appointed to be a champion and, in this capacity, our role is to act as an advocate and promoter of the SDGs and to help businesses realise the opportunities these Goals create. By showcasing the opportunities, we hope to instill confidence in businesses to integrate the SDGs into their work and activities in order to achieve meaningful results.

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



We promote how the Goals positively impact businesses, communities, and livelihoods. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



Chambers Ireland and ICC Ireland, together with our nationwide network of affiliated Chambers have unanimously pledged to support the Goals. We have worked with our Network and our Sustainable Business Council to help to educate the 9,000 businesses we represent about the Goals.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



All of our policy outputs, are aligned with our selected Sustainable Development Goals and seek to help our members address the challenges of an increasingly 'shock prone' world. Chambers Ireland focuses on five key SDGs, which we feel we can contribute directly towards and champion through our work.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



13 CLIMATE
ACTION





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Call to Action

- Provide Intensive Language Training for all people seeking International Protection in Ireland
- A €3000 investment in Intensive Language Training is exchequer neutral within 12 months
- In excess of €200m of 2024's National Training Fund receipts will go unspent
- At least 24,000 people seeking international protection in Ireland are disadvantaged because of their language skills
- Intensive Language training raises employment rates by 25%
- Intensive Language training raises income for those in work by 33%

Recommendations:

- Immediately initiate a variety of Intensive Language courses to assess their effectiveness in the Irish context
- Fund these programmes through using the surplus from the National Training Fund employers' levy which is unspent in 2024
- Training should be to at least C1 level
- Training plans should be developed for each participant to ensure that language training is compatible with their existing skillset
- To ensure continuity of training, participants should not be moved to another Local Authority area during the period of training