



International Protection Accommodation Services

Vulnerability Assessment Pilot Programme Policy

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. What is a vulnerability assessment?	3
3. How is a vulnerability assessment conducted?	3
4. Whose vulnerability does IPAS assess?	3
5. What kinds of vulnerabilities does IPAS assess?	3
6. When does the vulnerability assessment take place?	4
7. Where does the vulnerability assessment take place?	4
8. What does IPAS do with the information provided by the applicant at the assessment?.....	4
9. What happens after the vulnerability assessment?.....	5
10. How does IPAS address special reception needs identified by vulnerability assessments?	5
11. Frequently Asked Questions.....	6
Appendix I – Vulnerability Assessment Questionnaire	9
Appendix II – Vulnerability Assessment Third Party Referral Form	12

1. Introduction

Under S.I. No. 230/2018 - European Communities (Reception Conditions) Regulations 2018 the International Protection and Accommodation Services (IPAS¹) the Minister—

(a) shall within 30 working days of the recipient giving an indication referred to in paragraph (a), (b) or (c) of section 13(1) of the Act of 2015, and

(b) may at any stage after the expiry of the period referred to in subparagraph (a), where he or she considers it necessary to do so, assess—

(i) whether a recipient is a recipient with special reception needs, and

(ii) if so, the nature of his or her special reception needs.

In accordance with these obligations, a vulnerability assessment pilot programme is currently in operation, overseen by a dedicated Resident Welfare Team within IPAS.

2. What is a vulnerability assessment?

A vulnerability assessment is a process carried out by the IPAS to determine if, by virtue of a particular category of vulnerability, an applicant is deemed to have any special reception needs, what those needs are and what actions are required by IPAS to address those needs.

The process is voluntary, and applicants must consent to participate.

3. How is a vulnerability assessment conducted?

The assessment consists of a questionnaire (Appendix I) that the applicant can choose to complete and submit to the Resident Welfare Team by freepost or by email. It is then reviewed by an Assessment Officer from the Resident Welfare Team in IPAS to determine if the recipient has any special reception needs, within the meaning of the law governing vulnerability assessments.

In some cases, where the assessment indicates that the recipient has one or more vulnerabilities within the meaning of this law, the Assessment Officer may refer the person for further assessment(s) with an IPAS Social Worker.

Referrals for assessments may also be made by a third party on behalf of an applicant. A referral form (Appendix II) is available on the IPAS website and may be submitted to the Resident Welfare Team via email, providing the applicant has given their consent to the third party to do so.

4. Whose vulnerability does IPAS assess?

IPAS assess the vulnerability of all persons who:

- (i) Make an application for international protection to the International Protection Office (IPO).
- (ii) Consent to participate in an assessment of their vulnerability.
- (iii) Return their completed questionnaire.
- (iv) Are referred to the Resident Welfare Team by a third party acting on behalf of the applicant.

Where an application relates to a minor, IPAS assess their vulnerability with the consent of the parent or guardian of the minor.

5. What kinds of vulnerabilities does IPAS assess?

Under EU and Irish law, a person is deemed vulnerable where they fall into one or more of the following categories:

¹ IPAS is a part of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. It is responsible for accommodation services for international protection applicants.

- a minor
- an unaccompanied minor
- a person with a disability
- an elderly person
- a pregnant woman
- a single parent of a minor
- a victim of human trafficking
- a person with a serious illness
- a person with a mental disorder
- a person who has been subjected to torture, rape or other form of serious psychological, physical or sexual violence

If IPAS determine that an applicant belongs to one or more of these categories, their reception needs will then be considered in the light of the vulnerabilities identified.

It should be noted that vulnerabilities may be identified that do not correspond to any of these categories. In such cases, the applicant's reception needs will be considered in the same manner as above.

6. When does the vulnerability assessment take place?

Vulnerability assessment questionnaires are available to all persons who make an application for international protection to the International Protection Office (IPO). IPAS request that they are returned within 30 working days of the person making their application in the IPO; however, questionnaires and referrals can be submitted to the Resident Welfare Team at any time during a person's application process, until such a time as a person ceases to be an applicant under the International Protection Act, 2015.

7. Where does the vulnerability assessment take place?

Signed and completed questionnaires may be returned to the Resident Welfare Team by email to residentwelfareteam@equality.gov.ie or by freepost to:

Resident Welfare Team,
International Protection Accommodation Services,
PO Box 11487,
Dublin 2.

Third party referrals can be submitted by email to residentwelfareteam@equality.gov.ie.

Assessment Officers from the Resident Welfare Team then review each questionnaire and, where the assessment indicates that the person has one or more vulnerabilities within the meaning of the law governing vulnerability assessments, may contact them to discuss their vulnerabilities further.

In some cases, where an assessment indicates high levels of vulnerabilities, the Assessment Officer may refer the person for further assessment(s) with an IPAS Social Worker.

These assessments will take place in the applicant's accommodation centre or remotely using video conferencing, as appropriate.

8. What does IPAS do with the information provided by the applicant at the assessment?

IPAS use the information provided to make a determination of the applicant's vulnerability status, and whether there may be special reception needs arising from any vulnerabilities identified.

All personal and sensitive information supplied is subject to data protection laws at all times. Full details of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Privacy Notice,

setting out how the Department uses personal data as well as information regarding a person's rights as a data subject are available on the Department's website www.gov.ie/dcediy.

IPAS store all information provided to us securely and do not give this information to any third party without the consent of the applicant. Consent is obtained on the vulnerability assessment questionnaire and the referral form prior to submitting it to IPAS.

Where consent is given, IPAS may provide public bodies and their agents, such as the Health Service Executive and Tusla – the Child and Family Agency, with information to enable them to carry out their functions, and to inform accommodation providers of any special accommodation needs.

Vulnerability assessments will not affect a person's international protection application. The information supplied is used solely for the purpose of determining a person's vulnerability status and to enable IPAS to accommodate any special reception needs that may arise from such status.

Applicants will be invited by the Department of Justice to discuss asylum claims separately, and no information will be shared by IPAS in this regard.

9. What happens after the vulnerability assessment?

Based on the Assessment Officer's determination, each person will be assigned an appropriate level of intervention to respond to identified vulnerabilities:

- (i) Low – Vulnerability identified, but the individual's risk of harm appears low and manageable by current resilience factors.
- (ii) Medium – Significant vulnerability could develop without support measures. Follow-up by Assessment Officer/IPAS Social worker, and vulnerability status monitored.
- (iii) High – Significant vulnerability is evident. Case assigned to IPAS Social Worker to determine specific care plan.

The person's reception needs will then be considered in the light of the vulnerabilities identified and level of vulnerability assigned.

10. How does IPAS address special reception needs identified by vulnerability assessments?

The Resident Welfare Team work closely with residents to provide information and support to all vulnerable applicants.

In most cases, special reception needs can be addressed through the provision of advice and support, and by signposting applicants to relevant information and services.

Services for all international protection applicants are mainstreamed, and applicants access them through the same referral pathways as Irish citizens. For health services, including referrals to disability and mental health services, this is through primary care, GP referral and emergency services.

Education is also fully mainstreamed, and children have the same access to supports as Irish nationals.

The Resident Welfare Team hold regular Vulnerability Assessment Clinics in which residents can speak to an Assessment Officer regarding any issues or concerns they may have.

Where appropriate, the Resident Welfare Team will engage with the centre managers and NGOs on-site to ensure that an applicant's reception needs can be addressed within their current accommodation centre.

In some cases, the Resident Welfare Team may refer a person to the Resident Mobility Team in IPAS to address specific accommodation recommendations or requirements. The Resident Mobility Team will then identify the most suitable accommodation for the applicant based on this information.

This is done within the overall constraints of the accommodation available, which means that it is not always possible for IPAS to address all identified vulnerabilities optimally when allocating accommodation. However, where possible, IPAS will improve the alignment between

accommodation and vulnerabilities where accommodation that is more appropriate becomes available.

Where a person has high-level vulnerabilities, the IPAS Social Worker may develop a specific care plan and make onward referrals to services as appropriate.

The vulnerability assessment process will not affect or expedite:

- International Protection applications or TRC renewals
- PPSN or social welfare applications
- Medical referrals or medical card applications
- School or college placements
- Transfer requests
- Re-accommodation requests
- Family reunification requests
- Labour market access requests or
- Any other requests, applications or access to services outside of the remit of the Resident Welfare Team.

It should also be noted that not every vulnerability requires special intervention – for example, every child or pregnant woman is identified by default as vulnerable under the Regulations, but their needs are routinely met in IPAS accommodation.

11. Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who is responsible for processing my International Protection application?

A: The Department of Justice are responsible for processing all International Protection applications through the International Protection Office (IPO).

Further information is the International Protection Office is available at www.ipo.gov.ie.

Q: What is the International Protection Accommodation Services?

A: The International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) provide accommodation and related services to people in the International Protection (asylum) process. It is part of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth.

IPAS provides accommodation to all International Protection applicants who wish to accept the offer of accommodation from the Irish State. This includes all meals and utilities. Full access to public medical services is provided, and a weekly personal allowance is paid to each person (€38.80 for adults and €29.80 for children).

Some International Protection applicants may choose not to accept accommodation from IPAS. They may choose to live with family or friends already living in the community, or source and provide for their own accommodation instead. If you decide not to accept accommodation from IPAS, you will not get any state assistance (for example, social welfare or help with housing costs).

IPAS has no role in the processing of International Protection applications, or in the application decision-making process.

Q: What is a vulnerability assessment?

A: A vulnerability assessment is a process used by the International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) to determine if you have any special reception needs, within the meaning of the law governing vulnerability assessments.

Q: What is the law that governs vulnerability assessments?

A: The law that governs this process is contained within the European Communities (Reception Conditions) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 230 of 2018). Regulation 8 of this law requires the Minister for

Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to assess whether an applicant for International Protection is vulnerable and has special reception needs and, if so, what these needs are.

Q: What is the purpose of my vulnerability assessment?

A: The purpose of your assessment is to establish whether you have any particular needs in relation to the accommodation or services that IPAS provide.

It helps IPAS to support your accommodation needs and ensure that you can get access to any services that are available and might be helpful for you.

The assessment is not part of your International Protection application, and will have no impact on your asylum application.

Q: Do I have to take part in a vulnerability assessment?

A: No. Participation in a vulnerability assessment is voluntary for all International Protection applicants.

Q: How do I take part in a vulnerability assessment?

A: You will need to complete a vulnerability assessment questionnaire and give it to the Resident Welfare Team.

Questionnaires are available online at www.gov.ie/ipas or from your centre manager.

You can send your signed and completed questionnaire to the Resident Welfare Team by email to residentwelfareteam@equality.gov.ie or by freepost to:

Resident Welfare Team,
International Protection Accommodation Services,
PO Box 11487,
Dublin 2.

If you are working with a service provider or support worker, you can ask them to fill in a referral form on your behalf and email it to residentwelfareteam@equality.gov.ie.

Once we have received your questionnaire, a member of the Resident Welfare Team will review the information and contact you if we need to.

You can also speak to the Resident Welfare Team directly at one of the Vulnerability Assessment Clinics in your centre. Notices for upcoming clinics will be displayed in the reception area of your accommodation centre.

Q: What is the definition of a vulnerable person?

A: The Directive defines a vulnerable person as being one or more of the following:

- a minor
- an unaccompanied minor
- an elderly person
- a person with a disability
- a single parent of a minor
- a pregnant woman
- a victim of human trafficking
- a person with a serious illness
- a person with a mental disorder
- a person who has been subjected to torture, rape or other form of serious psychological, physical or sexual violence

Vulnerabilities may also be identified that do not correspond to any of these categories.

Q: What happens after a vulnerability assessment?

A: The assessment officer will use the information you have provided to make a determination of your vulnerability status.

If you are deemed vulnerable following your assessment, the Assessment Officer may contact you to discuss your vulnerabilities further, or refer you for a follow up assessment with an IPAS Social Worker.

IPAS may also consider any identified vulnerabilities when allocating your accommodation, within the overall constraints of the accommodation available.

This means that it is not always possible for IPAS to address all identified vulnerabilities optimally when allocating accommodation. Where possible, IPAS will improve the alignment between accommodation and vulnerabilities as accommodation that is more appropriate becomes available.

Q: Will the vulnerability assessment help with my International Protection application?

A: No. The vulnerability assessment process will not affect or expedite:

- International Protection applications or TRC renewals
- PPSN or social welfare applications
- Medical referrals or medical card applications
- School or college placements
- Transfer requests
- Re-accommodation requests
- Family reunification requests
- Labour market access requests or
- Any other requests, applications or access to services outside of the remit of the Resident Welfare Team.

Appendix I – Vulnerability Assessment Questionnaire

An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

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FOR USE BY RESIDENT WELFARE TEAM ONLY



Vulnerability Assessment Questionnaire

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

Applicant Name: _____

Person ID: _____

Name of parent/guardian if applicant is under 18 years of age: _____

Person ID of parent/guardian if applicant under 18 years of age: _____

Date of birth: _____ Age: _____

Nationality: _____

Gender: _____

Accommodation Centre: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Spoken language: _____

Can you read and write in your spoken language? Yes: _____ No: _____

SEIRBHÍ Sí CÓIRÍOCHTA um CHOSAINN IDIRNÁISIÚNTA, BOSCA O. P. 11487, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION ACCOMMODATION SERVICES, P.O. BOX 11487, DUBLIN 2
T +353 1 4183200
E: residentwelfareteam@equality.gov.ie
Department's Privacy Notice: www.gov.ie/dcediy



This vulnerability assessment will help the International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) to assess your **accommodation and reception needs**.

The assessment is voluntary and **will not affect your international protection application**. You will be invited by the Department of Justice to discuss your claim for asylum separately.

The information you provide will be treated as **private and confidential** by the Resident Welfare Team in IPAS.

We will not share your information with any third party without your consent. We ask for this consent so that we can provide any public bodies and their agents, such as the Health Service Executive and Tusla – the Child and Family Agency, with information to enable them to carry out their functions, and so that we can inform accommodation providers of any special accommodation needs, where necessary.

You can read the full Vulnerability Assessment Policy on the IPAS website www.gov.ie/ipas.

Consent Declaration

I give consent to the International Protection and Accommodation Services (IPAS) to:

- Participate in an assessment of vulnerability for me/my child.
- Disclose any information received from me/my child, act on my/my child's behalf and/or share my/my child's personal information and data in accordance with the law, to any public bodies or services in the State (Ireland) which may be engaged with me/my child.

I declare that all the information I supply is true to the best of my knowledge.

I understand that this assessment is **separate to my/my child's asylum application and that the information I disclose will not affect my/my child's asylum application**.

Signature: _____

Person ID: _____

Date: _____

Signed and completed questionnaires should be returned to the Resident Welfare Team by email to residentwelfareteam@equality.gov.ie or by freepost to:

Resident Welfare Team,
International Protection Accommodation Services,
PO Box 11487,
Dublin 2.

A member of the Resident Welfare Team will review your questionnaire and contact you if any further action is required.



Please answer <u>all</u> questions	Yes	No
Do you speak English?		
Are you blind/going blind or deaf/going deaf?		
Are you unable to walk or climb steps?		
Are you unable to care for yourself, for example wash or dress yourself?		
Are you currently pregnant or have you recently given birth?		
Are you providing care for one or more children under the age of 18 here in Ireland?		
Do you have a partner, spouse or any other family here to help you?		
Are you: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex?		
Have you experienced any violence or trauma, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), rape, domestic violence, torture, imprisonment or LGBTQI persecution?		
Do you have any serious health problems that require prescription medication and/or ongoing treatment by a doctor, for example HIV, cancer, diabetes, heart disease or hepatitis?		
Do you have any serious mental health problems, such as clinical depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, <u>post-traumatic stress disorder</u> or memory loss?		
Were you forced or tricked to come to Ireland against your will, for example for unpaid labour or sex work?		
Do you consent to being contacted by a member of the Resident Welfare Team about any of your answers to these questions?		

Signature: _____ Person ID _____ Date: _____

Appendix II – Vulnerability Assessment Third Party Referral Form

An Roinn Leanai, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

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Vulnerability Assessment Referral Form

If you wish to refer your client to the Resident Welfare Team for a vulnerability assessment, please complete the following referral form. Any additional information or supporting documents can also be attached and submitted to residentwelfareteam@equality.gov.ie. Please ensure that the client has consented to a referral and signed the completed questionnaire before submitting.

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS	
Applicant Name:	_____
Person ID:	_____
Name of parent/guardian if applicant is under 18 years of age:	_____
Person ID of parent/guardian if applicant under 18 years of age:	_____
Date of birth:	_____ Age: _____
Nationality:	_____
Gender:	_____
Accommodation Centre:	_____
Client Email Address:	_____
Client Phone Number:	_____
Spoken language:	_____
Referred by:	_____

Full Vulnerability Assessment Policy is available at www.gov.ie/ipas

SEIRBHÍSÍ CÓIRÍOCHTA um CHOSAINT IDIRNÁISIÚNTA, BOSCA O. P. 11487, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION ACCOMMODATION SERVICES, P.O. BOX 11487, DUBLIN 2
T +353 1 4183200
E: residentwelfareteam@equality.gov.ie



Please answer <u>all</u> questions.	Yes	No
Is the client literate?		
Does the client speak English?		
Does the client have a physical disability, for example mobility issues, blind, deaf?		
Does the client have an intellectual disability, for example unable to provide self-care?		
Is the client currently pregnant or has the client recently given birth?		
Is the client providing care for one or more children under the age of 18 here in Ireland?		
Does the client have a partner, spouse or any other family living with them?		
Does the client identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex?		
Has the client experienced violence or trauma, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), rape, domestic violence, torture, imprisonment or LGBTQI persecution?		
Does the client have any diagnosed health conditions that require prescription medication and/or ongoing treatment by a doctor, such as HIV, cancer, diabetes, heart disease or hepatitis?		
Does the client have any diagnosed mental health problems, such as clinical depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia or post-traumatic stress disorder?		
Was the client trafficked to Ireland?		

I hereby confirm that I have instructed [Service Provider Name] _____
 to act on my behalf and give permission to share my personal information and data.

Client Signature: _____ Person ID: _____ Date: _____