An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt,
Gnóthaí Baile agus Imirce
Department of Justice,
Home Affairs and Migration

IPAS Code of Practice for Persons Working in Accommodation Centres

A guidance document for IPAS Centre Staff

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gov.ie

IPAS Code of Practice for Persons Working in Accommodation Centres

About this guide

This guide was initially developed by the International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS - formally known as Reception and Integration Agency) in 2005, to set out the standards expected of all staff who were working in IPAS Accommodation Centres. Given the passage of time and the significant changes which have come into effect surrounding the provision of services to Protection Applicants, as well as the grounding in legislation of those services through the European Communities (Reception Conditions) Regulations 2018, this code is being revised and updated for circulation to all Centre Staff who are working with IPAS Residents.

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is the Code?

The Code of Practice for persons working in Accommodation Centres, which provide for the accommodation needs of Protection Applicants on behalf of IPAS, is a list of statements that describe the standards of professional practice required of persons working in Accommodation Centres as they go about their daily work.

The Code will:

- Affirm the standards required, and
- Ensure that workers know what standards of practice employers, colleagues, Service Users and the public expect of them.

2 Objectives of the Code

The objective of this Code is to provide guidelines for all persons who, working in all IPAS Accommodation Centres, both permanent and contracted temporary locations, come into contact with or become involved with the lives of Service Users. A service user is any person who is allocated accommodation in an IPAS Accommodation location. The guidelines set out the practice expected of any person working in Accommodation Centres. The guidelines, if followed, will contribute to the protection, safety and welfare of Service Users and people working in the Accommodation Centres.

3 Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all persons working in the Accommodation Centres to ensure that they have read and understood this Code of Practice. All staff will be required to sign and submit the enclosed form to confirm that they have read and understand the code, and all centre managers must confirm that they have advised their staff of the code. Appendix A.

4 Need for Awareness

Good practice will contribute towards the creation of a healthy and safe environment for persons working in Accommodation Centres and for residents. It is important to be aware of

the impact of behaviour and language. Behaviour or language of a discriminatory nature on the following grounds is neither appropriate nor acceptable:

- Age
- Disability
- Family Status
- Gender
- Marital Status
- Political Belief
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Social status
- Country of Origin

Some examples of the type of behaviour and language that are unacceptable would include the following:

- Bullying/Harassment
- Derogatory Remarks and Gestures
- Destructive Criticism
- Embarrassment
- Favouritism
- Humiliation
- Name Calling
- Racism
- Sarcasm
- Sexual Innuendo / Sexual Harassment
- Violence or threat of violence of any kind

5 General Guidelines for Persons Working in Accommodation Centre

5.1 Persons working in Accommodation Centres must:

Maintain a high standard of personal practice at all times, both in work and outside work when dealing with residents and other Service Users of IPAS accommodation.

In particular, you must:

1. Ensure the safety of Service Users and persons working in Accommodation Centres at all times.

2. Follow all Health and Safety Policies and Procedures.

3. Adhere to the Child Protection Legislation and Guidelines for Accommodation Centres.

4. Adhere to all Data Protection Guidelines for Accommodation Centres.

5. Establish safeguarding standards that promote a safe environment for both Service Users and staff.

6. Establish appropriate record keeping mechanisms in line with existing IPAS policy in which to document unusual or concerning incidents.

7. Notify your Manager, and or, IPAS of all concerning incidents in line with IPAS reporting policy.

In particular, you must not:

1. Abuse, neglect or harm Service Users or colleagues.

2. Exploit Service Users or colleagues in any way.

3. Abuse the trust of Service Users or the access you have to personal information about them or to their property.

4. Form inappropriate personal relationships with Service Users.

5. Discriminate unlawfully or unjustifiably against Service Users or colleagues.

6. Condone any unlawful or unjustifiable discrimination by Service Users or colleagues.

7. Put yourself or other people at unnecessary risk.

8. Behave in a way, inside or outside work, or on your personal social media accounts, which would call into question your suitability to work with Service Users.

9. Make comments or jokes which may give offence, or which could be construed as inappropriate.

10. Use offensive language or behave inappropriately.

5.2 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being and promote the interests of the Service Users

This includes:

1. The rights set out by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) as a common standard to be attained.

2. Treating each Service User as an individual.

2. Respecting to the greatest extent possible the individual views and wishes of the Service Users in your care.

3. Respecting and maintaining the dignity and privacy of Service Users; and

4. Respecting diversity and different cultures and values.

5. The right to equal treatment.

5.3 Strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of the Service Users

This includes:

1. Being honest and trustworthy.

2. Communicating in an appropriate, open, accurate, sensitive, and straightforward way.

3. Respecting confidential information about Service Users.

4. Being reliable and dependable.

5. Honouring commitments, agreements and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explaining why to Service Users.

6. Declaring issues that might create conflicts of interest and making sure that they do not influence your judgement or practice; and

7. Adhering to policies and procedures about accepting gifts and money from Service Users.

5.4 Promote the independence of the Service Users

This includes:

1. Bringing to the attention of your employer, and/or the appropriate authority, resource or operational difficulties that might get in the way of the delivery of safe care.

2. Informing your employer, and/or the appropriate authority, where the practice of colleagues may be unsafe or adversely affecting standards of care.

3. Complying with Health and Safety legislation as well as employers' policies.

4. Follow the complaints procedure, taking complaints seriously, recording and responding to them or passing them to the appropriate person.

5. Recognising and using the power that comes from your work with Service Users in a responsible manner at all times.

5.5 Respect the rights of Service Users while seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people

This includes:

1. Following risk assessment policies and procedures to assess whether the behaviour of

Service Users presents a risk of harm to themselves or others.

2. Taking necessary steps to minimise the risks of Service Users from doing actual or potential harm to themselves or other people; and

3. Ensuring that relevant colleagues and agencies are informed about the outcomes and implications of risk assessments.

4. Ensure that all relevant documentation is provided to IPAS as soon as practicable.

5.6 Be accountable for the quality of their work

This includes:

1. Meeting relevant standards of practice and working in a safe, lawful and effective way.

2. Maintaining clear and accurate records as required by legislation, procedures and guidelines established for your work.

3. Informing your employer or the appropriate authority about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to do your job competently and safely.

6 Appendix 1: Compliance Form

I confirm that I have read and understand the code of standards:

Centre Name:_____

Staff Member Name: _____**Signature:** _____

I confirm that I have instructed above on the contents of Code of standards:

Managers Name: _____ **Signature**_____

Date Code of Practice supplied: _____

Note: To be completed and returned to IPAS as soon as practicable.