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Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

International Protection and Integration Unit

International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) and Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP)

Child Safeguarding Statement

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Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children was first published in 1999 and was fully revised and updated in 2017. The guidance seeks to assist people to recognise where a child is being abused or neglected, and to report reasonable concerns about abuse or neglect to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. Children First Act, 2015 defines harm to a child as assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development and welfare, or sexual abuse of a child.

The guidance also assists organisations working with children with information about best practice in child safeguarding. The most recent version of the Children First Guidance in 2017 also incorporates information on the Children First Act 2015 and in particular, sets out the specific child protection statutory obligations imposed on certain categories of persons and organisations under that Act.The Children First Act 2015 requires organisations that are providers of relevant services to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement. This is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principals and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as is practicable, that any child availing of the service is safe from harm.

Overview of International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS)

As a division of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) is responsible for the provision of accommodation and related services to people in the International Protection process.

Under EU and International Law, Ireland is obliged to examine the claim of any person who arrives into the country and claims International Protection. While that claim is being examined by the Department of Justice, IPAS offers accommodation and related services to International Protection applicants who wish to accept the offer of accommodation from the Irish State.

Reception services for International Protection applicants refers to a range of services offered to persons who have applied for an International Protection status (refugee or subsidiary protection) or for a permission to remain in the country. These services, including accommodation provision, are offered to persons who do not have the means to provide for themselves and are provided by a range of government departments and agencies.

Overview of Irish Refugee Protection Service (IRPP)

The Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) was established by Government Decision on 10 September 2015 as a direct response to the humanitarian crisis that developed in Southern Europe as a consequence of mass migration from areas of conflict in the Middle East and Africa. The Irish Government has pledged to accommodate programme refugees under the UNHCR-led refugee resettlement programme currently focussed on resettling refugees from Lebanon, Jordan and Humanitarian Admissions from Afghanistan.

Structure of IPAS/Teams

Intake and Reception Team are responsible for accommodating all new International Applicants (IPA) seeking Asylum in Ireland. All IPA seeking asylum are required to present to the International Protection office, this includes single applicants and families and children. The team will review the documentation and source IPAS accommodation.

Resident Mobility Team are responsible for Overall Management of Residents movements across IPAS accommodation and Disperse IP Applicants from National Reception Centre and to manage the movement of people between centres.

Customer Service Team are responsible for managing for monitoring and screening all queries that are received through the IPAS inbox e-mail from residents, external agencies etc. Customer service team ensure that queries are screened and sent on to the relevant team in IPAS for follow up. Customer service team are also responsible for complaints, feedback and providing clinics in IPAS accommodation to IPA's by providing information on supports and services.

Centre Management team are responsible for overseeing the working relationship between IPAS and centre management. Centre management team are also responsible for ensuring compliance from centre managers with IPAS policies & procedures.

The Resident Welfare Team was established to support IPAS to meet its obligations under the European Communities (Reception Conditions) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 230 of 2018). It is a multi-disciplinary team including social workers, that encompasses a number of work streams relating to supporting IPA's in IPAS accommodation centres. The work includes carrying out vulnerability assessments, responding to welfare queries regarding residents in IPAS accommodation, signposting

services and supports for residents in accommodation, liaising with external agencies, carrying out clinics in accommodation centres.

The transition team to Egress to community for those residents who have status in Ireland. The team are responsible for supporting those residents who have been granted status and wish to avail of the support to transition from IPAS accommodation to community housing, supports and services.

The governance and information management team are responsible for Management of information across the team in IPAS, Collation, management and reporting on data and statistic, Establishing and managing GDPR, data retention, subject access requests, archiving. Co-ordinating FOI requests. Co-ordinating business planning and risk management.

IPAS is headed by 2 Principal Officers/ Head of Unit or Principal Equivalent. The head of operations is responsible for the Intake team, mobility team, transition team and governance and information management team. The head of welfare and compliance is responsible for resident welfare team, centre management team and customer service team.

Nature of service of Irish Refugee Protection Programme Team:

IRPP conduct mission to host countries such as Lebanon and Jordan to interview refugees, working alongside UNHCR and AGS this involved meeting with families and children.

IRPP has oversite for the arrival of programme refugee families to Ireland and the placement of families in one of three Reception and Orientation Centres (ROC) in Ireland.

Monthly clinics are held at each ROC and a designated IRPP official is available to meet with resident families in the assigned accommodation to discuss issues that may arise and provide information to residents.

IRPP oversees the resettlement of families into Local Authority housing/long term homes in collaboration with Local services and resources in the location.

IRPP consists of one team and is headed by a Principal Officer.

In accordance with Children First Act, 2015, IPAS and IRPP have statutory responsibilities and are defined as a relevant service under the Act as stipulated in Appendix 1 (g) ***a reception centre or accommodation centre which provides accommodation services to applicants for asylum under contract to the Department of Justice and Equality where children may be accommodated.***

Principles to safeguard children

- The best interests of the child should always be of paramount concern when responding and planning around any risk to a child
- IPAS/IRPP have a responsibility to ensure measures are in place in accommodation centres to safeguard children and respond accordingly to concerns
- All children will be equally protected from harm regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or ability
- Information should be made available to all children and young people in IPAS/IRPP accommodation regarding their rights and the measures and procedures in place to safeguard children
- Children and young people in IPAS/IRPP accommodation should be made aware of the procedures in place to ensure they are safeguarded, this information should be child friendly
- Children and young people in IPAS/IRPP accommodation should have access to information regarding the children's complaints procedures
- Children and young people in IPAS/IRPP should be made aware of who to contact if they are being harmed in any way, this should be easily accessible
- All staff in IPAS/IRPP are required to have completed Children First training and continue to be compliant in this regard
- All staff in IPAS/IRPP who come in contact with children must be alert to the possibility that children they are in contact with may be at risk or may have been harmed as defined by the categories of abuse in Children First Act, 2015 and are familiar with the contents of the Act
- All staff in IPAS/IRPP must adhere to the reporting structure and follow the guidelines when there are reasonable grounds to be concerned regarding a child and if in doubt staff should consult with the local Tusla Dedicated Contact Point Team (DCP) for advise
- A designated liaison person (DLP) and Mandated persons in IPAS should be identified and all staff should be made aware of this contact and be provided with the DLP and mandated contact details
- All referrals to Tusla should be completed in a timely manner and ensure compliance with GDPR requirements and confidentiality and all reports are recorded on IPAS/IRPP system in line with data protection requirements
- All IPAS/IRPP accommodation are required to appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the centres Child Safeguarding statement

- All IPAS/IRPP accommodation are required to appoint a Designated Liaison Person who is responsible for ensuring that staff follow reporting procedures when they have a child protection concern and is responsible in ensuring all concerns are recorded
- All IPAS/IRPP accommodation need to ensure that all staff have contact details for the DLP and staff are made clear about the DLP remit and responsibilities
- All staff in IPAS/IRPP accommodation should inform parents if they are making a child protection referral report unless if to so would put a child in further risk of being harmed and should consult with Tusla in this regard
- All IPAS/IRPP accommodation centres are required to have their Child Safeguarding Statement clearly visible on display for staff and residents to view
- All IPAS/IRPP accommodation centres are required to review their Child Safeguarding statements every two years
- All IPAS/IRPP accommodation staff should engage in IPAS training and briefings regarding Children First as an ongoing requirement
- All staff in IPAS/IRPP accommodation should be aware of the policies and procedures in place with regard to any staff member who is the subject of any investigation involving a child in the accommodation
- Centre manager should be aware of the policies and procedures in place with regard to any staff member who is subject to allegations of abuse regarding a child and follow these procedures accordingly

Risk Assessment

Under Children First Act 2015, all relevant services must complete a risk assessment. The assessment will consider potential harm to all children while they are in any organisations care. The risk that is relevant here is risk of abuse/harm to children. When considering a risk assessment, a relevant service must try and identify potential risks to children and out measures in place to mitigate this risk. All relevant services are required to have written policies and procedures in place to try and minimise these risks. IPAS/IRPP need to consider who might harm a child/children, make sure that children, families and staff are involved in the process and prioritise the risks in terms of low, medium and high to guide staff. IPAS/IRPP are required to identify those measures that are in place manage the risk and these measures need to be reviewed and monitored on going.

(a) Below will outline IPAS/IRPP as the relevant service risk assessment to include these factors.

IPAS/IRPP Risk Assessment:

Risk Identified	Response/ management of risk
1. A Child may be subject to harm perpetrated by an adult non family member in accommodation	• Staff should follow the Child Protection Policies and procedures in place to ensure the welfare and safety of the child. • Adherence to ensuring children/ young people are aware of how to report abuse/harm should be monitored/reviewed on going by IPAS/IRPP • Staff should assess if there is an immediate risk to the child and if this is determined staff need to call An Garda Síochána in the first instance • Staff should make a referral to Tusla without delay and include all relevant information to ensure Tusla can carry out an informed assessment • Staff should engage with Tusla as is deemed necessary this may include following Tusla Safety plan for the child • Staff should advise the child's parents that a referral is being made to Tusla and encourage the parent to take measures to protect the child from further harm • The DLP should not delay in sending on concern to IPAS/IRPP and record accordingly on their system • Staff to ensure no contact between the child and the person subject to

	allegations of abuse (PSAA) and put measures in place regarding this person's contact with any children in the accommodation • Staff in IPAS/IRPP to liaise with Tusla regarding their assessment and follow any recommendation which may include the removal of the PSAA
2. A Child may be subject to abuse or harm perpetrated by the parent/legal Guardian	• Staff should follow the Accommodations Child Protection Policies and procedures in place to ensure the welfare and safety of the child. • Adherence to ensuring children/ young people are aware of how to report abuse/harm should be monitored/reviewed on going by IPAS/IRPP • Staff should assess if there is an immediate risk to the child and if this is determined staff need to call An Garda Síochána in the first instance • Staff should make a referral to Tusla without delay and include all relevant information to ensure Tusla can carry out an informed assessment • Staff should advise the child's parents that a referral is being made to Tusla and encourage the parent to take measures to protect the child from further harm • Staff should be guided by Tusla recommendation regarding their assessment and follow any recommendations made by Tusla

	• The DLP should not delay in sending on concern to IPAS/IRPP and record accordingly on their system
3. A child may be subject to harm perpetrated by a staff member	• Staff to follow up with the child protection policies and procedures • Adherence to ensuring children/ young people are aware of how to report abuse/harm should be monitored/reviewed on going by IPAS/IRPP • If any immediate concerns regarding a risk to the child An Garda Síochána should be called to assist • The centre manager should follow code of conduct policy and noncompliance procedures and put these in place immediately • All IPAS/IRPP accommodation should ensure compliance with all staff members in relation to Garda vetting requirements and updated accordingly • Staff member who is subject to allegations of abuse should be fully informed of their rights and the policies and procedures that are being implemented in relation to the allegations

	• Referral to be made to Tusla in a timely manner and follow any guidance by Tusla on the matter • Staff in IPAS/IRPP to liaise with Tusla regarding their assessment and be guided by their recommendations regarding any change to accommodation etc.
4. A Child may be subject to harm perpetrated by an adult visitor or volunteer	• Staff should follow the Child Protection Policies and procedures in place to ensure the welfare and safety of the child. • Adherence to ensuring children/ young people are aware of how to report abuse/harm should be monitored/reviewed on going by IPAS/IRPP • Staff should assess if there is an immediate risk to the child and if this is determined staff need to call An Garda Síochána in the first instance • Staff should make a referral to Tusla without delay and include all relevant information to ensure Tusla can carry out an informed assessment • Staff should advise the child's parents that a referral is being made to Tusla and encourage the parent to take measures to

	protect the child from further harm • Staff should be guided by Tusla recommendation regarding their assessment and follow any recommendations made by Tusla • The DLP should not delay in sending on concern to IPAS/IRPP and record accordingly on their system • Staff in IPAS/IRPP to liaise with Tusla regarding their assessment and Follow up accordingly
5. A parent/parents may be unsure or worried about reporting a child protection concern	• All parents should be made aware of child protection policies and procedures in place in the accommodation and to be made aware of the centres Child Safeguarding statement • Centre managers should ensure that there are visible documents on display advising on how to report child protection concerns • All material should be available in all languages • IPAS/IRPP should liaise with NGO working in the accommodation to assist with educational work for residents in the accommodation • Information should continue to be made available on the IPAS/IRPP website for parents in different languages

6. A child may be subject to Bullying/ inappropriate sexualised behaviours or other forms of harm from other children	• Staff to follow child protection policies and procedures in place • If staff deem that there is an immediate risk to a child, then An Garda Síochána should be called for assistance • Centre manager to seek advice from IPAS resident welfare team as to what measures need to be put in place • Staff to send referral to Tusla and follow any recommendation Tusla advise • Accommodation should have clear rules in place regarding supervision of children in IPAS/IRPP accommodation
7. A child may be witness to an incident of domestic violence in the form of physical/emotional abuse perpetrated by one parent on the other which causes emotional distress to the child and subsequent harm	• Staff to follow child protection policies and procedures • If staff deem there is an immediate risk to the child, then An Garda Síochána should be called for assistance • All efforts should be made to remove the child from the situation • A referral should be made to Tusla where there are children residing with the parents and/ or if a mother is pregnant • Staff should comply with any recommendation from Tusla • An incident report should be submitted to IPAS/IRPP for review • Accommodation should have a clear "House Rules" on display to ensure residents are clear on rules at all times • IPAS/IRPP will work with Tusla and An Garda Síochána and any other external agencies in the best interest of the child.

8. A Child may be subject to unauthorised photography through internet use/ social media	• Staff to follow child protection policies and procedures • Staff to assist family as is required to safeguard the child • If staff deem that there is an immediate risk to a child, then An Garda Síochána should be called for assistance • Staff to make referral to Tusla and follow any recommendation from Tusla with regard to the safety of the child
9. A Child may be exposed to harm due to lack of adequate supervision by a parent/legal guardian	• Accommodation are required to have a clear rule regarding supervision of children and this must be displayed for residents • It is all Parents/Legal Guardian responsibility to ensure adequate supervision of their child/children in all IPAS/IRPP accommodation • Parents are required that appropriate to the child's age that a measure is in place for their children to be supervised if necessary, in IPAS/IRPP accommodation • Staff are to be compliant with Children First training to ensure awareness of reasonable grounds for concern of harm to a child/children and if deemed to be harmful are obliged to report to Tusla • If referral has been submitted to Tusla, Staff are required to follow up an instruction from Tusla in ensuring child is safeguarded

	• IPAS social workers to ensure ongoing training for staff in centres regarding Children First Act , 2015

(b) In respect of any member of staff who is subject of an investigation of a child availing of IPAS/IRPP accommodation/services

The Department has in place a process for dealing with a member of staff who maybe be subject to of any investigation described in respect of the act, omission or circumstance in respect of any child engaging with the work of the unit. The procedure is available on request

(c) For the selection/recruitment of any person as a member of staff of the provider with regard to that person's suitability to work with children

The public appointments service is the central agency for recruiting into the civil service. At induction staff will be provided with a copy of DCEDIY Child Safeguarding Statement and will as a safeguard, be required to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the content of the document.

(d) For the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training to members of staff of the provider in relation to the identification of the occurrence of harm.

Units where risks are identified are required to undertake Tusla Children First e-learning training module. The departments intranet includes a dedicated Children First site, where all staff have access to all relevant guidance, publications and child protection reporting procedure for staff to report concerns. All staff have access to the Tusla Children First e-learning via the Tusla website. IPAS resident welfare team consists of professionally qualified social workers seconded from Tusla who's role includes consultation on all child protection matters and queries and this is available to all teams in IPAS.

(e) For reporting to the Agency by the provider or a member of staff of the provider (whether a mandated person or otherwise) in accordance with the Act or guidelines issued by the minister under section 6 of the Act

IPAS has developed a child protection policies and procedures which includes reporting structure for all IPAS staff in assisting with reporting child protection concerns. This is available to all IPAS staff on the E-docs system in place.

(f) For maintaining a list of the persons in the relevant service who are mandated persons

IPAS Resident Welfare Team consists of professionally qualified social workers who are seconded from Tusla and HSE and are deemed to be Mandated person as follows; ***As per Children First Act, 2015, Appendix 2, (9) Social Worker who practices as such and who is***

eligible for registration in accordance with Part 4 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 in the register of that profession

(g) For appointing a relevant person for the purpose of this part.

The relevant person in IPAS for the purposes of the Act is the Principal Officer of the unit, Ms Kate Gillen, International Protection Accommodation Service, P.O. Box 11478, Dublin 2, Ireland kate.gillen@equality.gov.ie

Review and Monitoring of Child Safeguarding statement

IPAS/IRPP recognise that implementation and review is an ongoing process. IPAS/IRPP are committed to the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Statement and ensuring that the procedures and supports are in place to ensure full implementation. IPAS/IRPP are committed to ensuring that the Child Safeguarding statement is a clear document for staff to easily understand and adhere to as part of their role in IPAS/IRPP. All necessary training will continue to be provided to all staff employed by IPAS/IRPP in ensuring the unit endeavours to always safeguard children in its accommodation.

In line with Children First Act, 2015, Section 4, This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if there has been a materiel change in any of the issues to which if refers to.

The date of review for IPAS Child Safeguarding statement is September 2025

Signed:

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Ciara Doyle

Principal Social Worker/Assistant Principal Officer

For queries relating to this Child Safeguarding Statement Contact Principal Officer, International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS), Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)

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