

**Report of the Working Group to Report to Government on
Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and
Supports for Asylum Seekers**

**3rd and Final Progress Report on the
Implementation of the Report's Recommendations
June 2017**

Implemented at February 2017	121
Implemented since February 2017	12
Total Implemented	133
In Progress/Partially Implemented	36
Total Implemented/In progress	169 (98%)

Legal Framework

Recommendation No: 3.178	Status: In progress
Recommendation: The State to opt-in to all instruments of the Common European Asylum System, unless clear and objectively justifiable reasons can be advanced not to.	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality	
Current Position: On 7th April 2016 the European Commission issued a communication outlining its plans for reforming the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and ensuring and enhancing safe and legal migration routes. The document outlines how the large-scale, uncontrolled arrival of migrants and asylum seekers in 2015 has put a strain not only on many Member States' asylum systems but also on the CEAS as a whole. The Commission has issued two packages of reform proposals, which aim to address structural shortcomings in the design and implementation of the CEAS and of the "Dublin" arrangements in particular. The process of negotiating the files is ongoing at EU-level. Ireland is actively involved in these discussions. A decision to opt-in to any of the measures under discussion will be made post-their adoption by the EU Council.	

Recruitment

Recommendation No: 3.233	Status: Implemented *
Recommendation: Adequate human resources to be provided to the protection determination bodies.	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality	
<p>Current Position: Additional resources have been assigned to the protection determination bodies and the resource requirement in respect of protection related functions are constantly kept under review but are at times subject to the wider HR demands across the Immigration Service generally and the Department of Justice and Equality as a whole.</p> <p>*The recommendation is implemented in the context of a demand led service affected by highly variable asylum and immigration trends.</p>	

Use of interpreters

Recommendation No: 3.275	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: A coordinated system of reforms to be implemented on a phased basis to move to a system where all interpreters in the protection process have appropriately accredited qualifications.	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality, HSE	
<p>Current Position: A procurement competition for these services has recently been conducted. However, the outcome of the competition is the subject of a legal challenge by an unsuccessful tenderer. Pending a resolution of the challenge, INIS is not in a position to enter into the new contract with the successful tenderer.</p> <p>It should be noted, however, that a specific condition (as a minimum requirement) of the procurement procedure was that the educational and professional qualifications of all interpreters must be provided. In addition, the immigration service reserved the right to require that the successful service provider would undergo training in the specific business of the immigration service.</p> <p>It was envisaged that once the procurement process had been completed and the contract for the provision of the services had been awarded, formal procedures would be introduced to monitor the training provided and a register compiled of appropriately trained interpreters.</p> <p>At this point it is not possible to give a timeframe as to when the legal issues surrounding this procurement will be resolved.</p> <p>In addition to the above, the HSE, in collaboration with University of Limerick Primary Care, are working to develop a model around interpreting provision.</p>	

Aspects of training of interpreters and associated accreditation will form part of this project.

Recommendation No: 3.275	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: A system of accreditation to be established and maintained.	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Education and Skills, HSE, Department of Justice and Equality	
Current Position: See update provided in previous recommendation.	

Identification of Vulnerable Applicants

Recommendation No: 3.299	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: Public awareness and training programs should be developed as part of such procedures to include legal representatives (to be involved from the earliest stages possible), health professionals, NGO staff and other frontline workers so that they will be aware of the type of vulnerabilities frequently found in the protection- seeking population and what they can do to refer them to the appropriate services.	
Department/Agency Responsible: HSE	
Current Position: As part of the HSE National Operation Plan 2017 in respect of intercultural training for staff, work has commenced on the development of an Intercultural Health training and Education Framework. The framework will provide a template for the provision of training and support to staff in work towards delivery of a responsive, culturally competent health service. Key stakeholders are currently being consulted.	

Recommendation No: 3.299	Status: Partially implemented
Recommendation: That sufficient resources be made available at the earliest possible stage, both to relevant NGOs and state agencies, particularly under the proposed more truncated single procedure in order to facilitate early identification.	
Department/Agency Responsible: HSE	
Current Position: The HSE already funds some NGO's to support vulnerable groups. No specific funding has been allocated to services for asylum seekers in HSE funding allocation for 2017 so no additional resources will be available to further this recommendation in the medium term. Representations around additional funding will be made in the Estimates process for 2018.	

Data Collection and Policy Analysis

Recommendation No: 3.340	Status: Implemented
<p>Recommendation: Unified data collection systems to be developed which can produce up-to-date data on the operation of the system as a whole and all of its constituent parts on an on-going basis. The system should include built in indicators capable of identifying stresses in the system so that measures to addresses those stresses can be put in places at the earliest opportunity.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality</p> <p>Current Position: INIS operates a Reporting and Analysis Unit which produces up to date data and analysis on the operation of the system on an ongoing basis. Further development of this Unit is subject to resource availability.</p> <p>Identification of stresses in the system is also carried out routinely as part of the risk analysis function.</p> <p>The introduction of the new single application procedure system under the provisions of the International Protection Act, 2015, which will streamline the application and appeal processes, will greatly assist in the analysis of international protection processing data in future.</p> <p>Prior to the commencement of the Act, a number of changes were required to INIS' ICT system to support the introduction of the single application procedure. This project commenced in Q1 2016. The main changes to the ICT system were completed by end 2016 in time for the commencement of the Act on 31 December 2016.</p>	

Physical Conditions – Physical space for exclusive occupation by residents

Recommendation No: 4.58	Status: Implemented *
<p>Recommendation: In the short term RIA should identify spare capacity within accommodation centres and, subject to contractual obligations, seek to bring it on stream so that the situation of those sharing in cramped conditions can be alleviated.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: RIA</p> <p>Current Position: This is an ongoing project within RIA and will continue to be so. It is subject to variations based on demand at any given time.</p> <p>The accommodation centres are all different and feasibility and solutions will differ accordingly. There remain technical challenges in some instances, including planning, fire safety and insurance restrictions, which need to be identified and overcome. The review process is an ongoing feature.</p> <p>*The recommendation is implemented in the context of a demand led service.</p>	

Recommendation No: 4.58

Status: In progress

Recommendation: RIA should without delay develop a set of criteria for assessing the bed capacity of accommodation units that takes account of the considerations identified in the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Guidelines, viz:

- each room should facilitate the range of activities likely to be carried out in that room,
- adequate floor areas and room sizes,
- spaces should be well proportioned in terms of floor shapes and ceiling heights so as to provide good- quality living environments for occupants,
- space provision should be adequate to accommodate appropriate furniture and equipment while allowing free circulation within that area.

Department/Agency Responsible: RIA

Current Position: It must be noted that the criteria set out in the Guidelines referred to above are the minimum requirements and in many cases existing accommodation exceeds those guidelines. RIA continues to engage with commercial property contractors as part of contract reviews to develop plans for the re-structuring and development of solutions at family accommodation centres across the portfolio. Bed space allocations within centres have been the subject of adjustment over the past 2 years with room capacities being reduced in order to allow extra living space within rooms. A number of centres have installed adjoining rooms where feasible to complement the downward adjustment of room bed space capacities. Additional kitchenettes and communal rooms have also be designated at a number of centres, including RIA's main Reception Centre at Baleskin.

The State-Owned centres at Knockalisheen and Kinsale Road have undergone works over the same period to allow for greater accommodation flexibility in the family units with apartment-style solutions including kitchenettes and living space being applied to the layouts.

RIA is working to have this recommendation included in proposals for new contracts and associated service delivery models.

RIA will continue to work with contractors, including the OPW in respect of further developments in this area across the Commercial and State-Owned portfolio. This includes assessment of technical issues in respect of costs, planning legislation, fire safety, health & safety and insurance.

RIA is developing the criteria for assessing bed capacity, taking into account the variability that exists within its accommodation portfolio.

Recommendation No: 4.58	Status: In progress
<p>Recommendation: Once the revised set of criteria has been developed, RIA should conduct a review of accommodation units with a view to ensuring that their capacity is aligned with the revised criteria in so far as contractual obligations permit.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: RIA</p> <p>Current Position: RIA is engaging with commercial property contractors as part of contract reviews to develop plans for the re-structuring and development of solutions at family accommodation centres across the portfolio. Bed space allocations within centres have been the subject of adjustment over the past 2 years with room capacities being reduced in order to allow extra living space within rooms. A number of centres have installed adjoining rooms where feasible to complement the downward adjustment of room bed space capacities. Additional kitchenettes and communal rooms have also be designated at a number of centres, including RIA’s main Reception Centre at Baleskin.</p> <p>The State-Owned centres at Knockalisheen and Kinsale Road have undergone works over the same period to allow for greater accommodation flexibility in the family units with apartment-style solutions including kitchenettes and living space being applied to the layouts.</p> <p>RIA will continue to work with contractors, including the OPW in respect of further developments in this area across the Commercial and State-Owned portfolio. This includes assessment of technical issues in respect of costs, planning legislation, fire safety, health & safety and insurance.</p> <p>Structural changes in any centre will by definition take time to implement. RIA has also ensured that existing family type accommodation eg Mosney, Athlone, etc., is maximised to the largest extent possible by families.</p>	

Recommendation No: 4.58	Status: Implemented *
<p>Recommendation: RIA should without delay review the minimum requirements in terms of furniture for such multipurpose rooms so that they include furniture suited to sleeping and living, e.g. chair, desk, and adequate storage.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: RIA</p> <p>Current Position: RIA is undertaking a review of the minimum requirements. RIA has also been working on logistical solutions in respect of existing portfolio accommodations which will be rolled out across the accommodation in due course. RIA has started a process of liaison with the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) on how best to approach a future tender in this area.</p> <p>*The recommendation is implemented in the context of a demand led service.</p>	

Recommendation No: 4.58	Status: Implemented *
Recommendation: The revised set of criteria developed for assessing bed capacity should be incorporated in requests for tender for accommodation centres.	
Department/Agency Responsible: RIA	
Current Position: RIA is working with commercial contractors on proposals to move away from a primarily bed space cost structure to an accommodation package structure. This principle is being applied to contract negotiations and to engagement on future accommodation solutions in line with recommendations on additional living space and catering solutions in particular.	
RIA procures its services by way of calls for expressions of interest. The next call for expressions of interest will be published later in 2017 and will include specifics in relation to accommodation to reflect this recommendation.	
*The recommendation is implemented in the context of a demand led service.	

Family Life and Children

Recommendation No: 4.75	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: All families should have access to cooking facilities (whether in a self-contained unit or through use of a communal kitchen) and their own private living space in so far as practicable. In order to achieve this:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Existing centres comprising units with cooking facilities should implement, in so far as practicable and subject to any contractual obligations, arrangements to facilitate residents cooking for themselves within 12 months of the completion of the final report of the Working Group. ○ Where residents have the option of cooking for themselves, arrangements must be implemented by centre management, in consultation with residents, for the provision of supplies. The option to cook for themselves should run in parallel with a catering option, as not all residents may wish to cater for themselves. ○ Existing centres which do not have units with cooking facilities should implement arrangements within 6 months of the final report, subject to any contractual obligations, to facilitate parents in making their children's school lunches or to allow older children to make their own – this could be done by setting up a sandwich-making facility and providing a selection of yoghurts, juices and fruit etc. at breakfast time in the canteen as is done in some centres. ○ A sufficient number of centres should be reconfigured to allow all families use of communal kitchens by end 2016 in so far as practicable, having regard to contractual obligations. ○ A sufficient number of centres should be reconfigured to allow all families use of their own private living space by end 2016 in so far as practicable having regard to contractual obligations. 	

All requests for tender should specify the requirement for self-contained units (with cooking facilities) and/or family quarters together with communal kitchens.

Department/Agency Responsible: RIA

Current Position: 15 of 33 accommodation centres currently under contract already have some form of personal catering. These range from entirely self-catering options in Watergate and Carroll Village to fully fitted kitchens in Athlone etc., for reheating food and preparing breakfast to communal cooking stations in Great Western in Galway and St Patrick's in Monaghan. Fresh food is made available by contractors in areas where communal catering is provided.

RIA continues to work with Contractors at a number of centres (both State owned and commercial) to commence pilot projects for full independent living for residents. This will include home cooking within the family accommodation units in some instances and access to communal cooking stations for residents in others.

Full independent living has been introduced in Mosney with the introduction of an on-site food hall from where residents may acquire fresh and ethnically appropriate products. Residents are now able to cook and prepare meals for their families in their own accommodation in Mosney. The same system has also been introduced in Old Convent in Ballyhaunis. A similar system will be installed in Athlone over the coming months and new communal kitchens have been introduced and are operational in Clonakilty and in Kinsale Road.

These projects will be reviewed over a number of months and refined with a view to their application across the accommodation portfolio where feasible in 2017.

Recommendation No: 4.75

Status: In progress

Recommendation: Notwithstanding references to "as far as practicable" in the above, the facilities must be in line with the standards to be agreed under the recommendations at para. 4.226.

Department/Agency Responsible: RIA

Current Position: A standards development group has been established and, with the support of HIQA, will develop a set of suitable and appropriate standards applicable to all accommodation centres.

This group will also look at recommendation 4.58 and identify any aspects of that recommendation that may be appropriate for consideration by the group.

Living conditions for single people

Recommendation No: 4.87	Status: In Progress
<p>Recommendation: Existing centres for single people should be reconfigured to provide communal kitchens by end 2016 in so far as practicable, having regard to contractual obligations. The option to cook for themselves should run in parallel with a catering option, as not all residents may wish to cater for themselves. Single people in mixed centres should have the same opportunities as families to cook for themselves.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: RIA</p> <p>Current Position: 15 of 33 accommodation centres currently under contract already have some form of personal catering. These range from entirely self-catering options in Watergate and Carroll Village to fully fitted kitchens in Athlone etc for reheating food and preparing breakfast to communal cooking stations in Great Western in Galway and Mount Trenchard in Limerick and St Patrick's in Monaghan. Fresh food is made available by contractors in areas where communal catering is provided.</p> <p>RIA is also working with Contractors at a number of centres (both State owned and commercial) to commence pilot projects for full independent living for residents. This will include home cooking within the family accommodation units in some instances and access to communal cooking stations for residents in others.</p> <p>Full independent living has been introduced in Mosney with the introduction of an on-site food hall from where residents may acquire fresh and ethnically appropriate products. Residents are now able to cook and prepare meals for their families in their own accommodation in Mosney. The same system has also been introduced in Old Convent in Ballyhaunis. A similar system will be installed in Athlone over the coming months and new communal kitchens have been introduced and are operational in Clonakilty and in Kinsale Road.</p> <p>These projects continue to be reviewed and refined with a view to their application across the accommodation portfolio where feasible in 2017.</p>	

Food

Recommendation No: 4.102	Status: In Progress
<p>Recommendation: RIA should engage a suitably qualified person to conduct a nutrition audit to ensure that the food served meets the required standards including for children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and the needs of those with medical conditions affected by food, such as diabetes.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: RIA, HSE</p> <p>Current Position: RIA has been in contact with the HSE to progress this matter across all centres.</p>	

A procurement process has been completed and it is expected that this matter will be progressed in the third quarter of 2017.

Where communal, independent or self-catering is provided in a centre, it will remain the responsibility of parents as the primary carers of their children to ensure that a balanced nutritional diet is provided.

Location of some accommodation centres

Recommendation No: 4.111	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: Compliance with these contractual obligations should be monitored as part of an expanded inspection process referred to at para. 4.226.	
Department/Agency Responsible: RIA	
Current Position: The standards development group referred to in 4.226 has recently been established and will examine the setting up of an expanded inspection process. In the meantime, RIA includes compliance monitoring in its own Inspections and will also request that it be covered by any independent inspections put in place in the future.	

Security Arrangements

Recommendation No: 4.122	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: RIA to conduct a review of the security arrangements across the accommodation stock to ensure that the arrangements (including physical barriers and gates, use of security guards, use of CCTV) are proportionate to the security risks that have been identified.	
Department/Agency Responsible: RIA	
Current Position: In association with OGP, RIA is developing a tender to carry out this work.	

Recommendation No: 4.122	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: Include in all new contracts an obligation to ensure that security arrangements (including CCTV, security barriers and gates, use of security guards) are proportionate to the security risks that have been identified.	
Department/Agency Responsible: RIA	
Current Position: Will be implemented in light of the review to be carried out as part of previous recommendation. RIA is also in consultation with the Data Protection Commissioner on this issue.	

Recommendation No: 4.122	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: Include within new contracts an obligation that security personnel must have undergone awareness training in equality and diversity issues before they come on-site.	
Department/Agency Responsible: RIA	
Current Position: A procurement process has been completed and RIA are in the process of notifying the successful and unsuccessful bidders of the result of the competition.	
RIA expects the work to begin in the coming months.	

Recommendation No: 4.122	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: Compliance with these contractual obligations should be monitored as part of an expanded inspection process referred to at para. 4.226.	
Department/Agency Responsible: RIA	
Current Position: While the process referred to has not yet been established, RIA includes compliance monitoring in its own inspections and will also request that it be covered by independent inspections in the future.	

Operation and Management Issues – Complaints procedure including implications of “CA and TA” High Court judgment

Recommendation No: 4.135	Status: Implemented
Recommendation: In relation to its internal complaint procedure, RIA should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ appoint a designated officer who is not involved in operational matters to handle complaints that are referred to it or are submitted to it directly, ○ review the complaints procedure to ensure that it is accessible to residents including children and young people, ○ engage in renewed efforts to build confidence and trust in the complaints procedures, including by ensuring that residents understand the House Rules, are aware of the complaints procedures and how to use it, and understand that it is impartial and that they will not be adversely affected by making a complaint, ○ engage in efforts to ensure that centre management buy into the importance of ensuring an open culture that is conducive to residents making complaints. 	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality	
Current Position: This recommendation has been implemented. RIA has amended its House Rules and these rules now include reference to the relevant Ombudsman. The relevant Ombudsperson will be the final appeals person in any instance.	

Management Role and Culture

Recommendation No: 4.155	Status: In Progress
<p>Recommendation: the contract with providers should include additional requirements in relation to the qualities required of a centre manager. The Working Group considers that ideally a manager should have: substantial experience of working cross-culturally and working with protection applicants and refugees; have an understanding of basic mental health issues, medical and social welfare systems; have strong communication skills, and have a compassionate and empathetic style. To inform further work on the qualities required by a centre manager, RIA should commission a short piece of academic research to identify best practice by centre managers. That work should also feed into the development of standards for accommodation centres as recommended at para. 4.226.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: RIA</p> <p>Current Position: Subject to legal advice, requirements in relation to qualities required of a Centre Manager will be included in all future contracts.</p> <p>The piece of academic research referred to in the recommendation has not been undertaken to date but will be considered as part of the work of the Standards group, which has recently been established.</p>	

Vulnerable Residents

Recommendation No: 4.210	Status: Partially Implemented
<p>Recommendation: The existing voluntary health screening service provided by the HSE at the Baleskin Reception Centre should be reviewed and strengthened so as to facilitate a multi-disciplinary assessment (including medical, psychological and social needs) of all protection applicants within 30 days of the lodging of an application for protection to identify and appropriately assist vulnerable applicants. <i>*Please see recommendation 3.299*</i></p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: HSE</p> <p>Current Position: Additional health staff now augment team at Baleskin. However, the HSE have not been in a position to provide the level of significant resourcing necessary to facilitate the 30-day timeframe mentioned in recommendation.</p> <p>Commitment in draft HSE Service Plan for 2017 to develop a “Vulnerability Assessment” in collaboration with Mental Health colleagues will be progressed accordingly. A business case currently being progressed in respect of additional resourcing for Baleskin to enable full implementation of this action.</p>	

Recommendation No: 4.210	Status: Implemented
Recommendation: The outcome of the assessment should be taken into account in the protection determination process.	
Department/Agency Responsible: HSE, IPO, IPAT	
Current Position: See previous recommendation. Any material submitted (including reports of this nature) in respect of an applicant's claim (before a recommendation issues) is examined and considered by both the IPO and the IPAT.	

Recommendation No: 4.210	Status: In progress
Recommendation: Follow-up and monitoring of persons who fall into the category of "vulnerable" should occur on an on-going and regular basis until such time as the applicant exits the protection system.	
Department/Agency Responsible: HSE	
Current Position: When asylum seekers arrive they are encouraged to avail of the full health assessment in Baleskin. Persons identified as vulnerable are referred to the appropriate services such as Spirasi, in the case of torture victims. As medical card holders, vulnerable applicants may access the supports that are available on the same basis as all other medical card holders in the State.	

Recommendation No: 4.210	Status: Implemented
Recommendation: Efforts should be made by RIA, HSE, centre management and others to take steps to encourage applicants to avail of the assessment.	
Department/Agency Responsible: HSE	
Current Position: When asylum seekers arrive they are encouraged to avail of the full health assessment in Baleskin and are supported in applying for Medical Cards in order that they may access medical services. The HSE participates in regular high level meetings with RIA officials around these issues pertaining to asylum seeker needs, emerging issues etc. these meetings are the forum for such discussions. The HSE participates in interagency groups and promotes the availability of various supports to residents.	

Oversight and Standards

Recommendation No: 4.226	Status: Partially implemented
<p>Recommendation: The Minister for Justice and Equality should establish an inspectorate (or identify an existing body), independent of RIA, to carry out inspections in Direct Provision centres against the newly approved standards. As is the case with RIA's existing practice, inspection reports should be written in such a manner that there is no impediment to their being made available to the public.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality</p>	
<p>Current Position: Awaiting outcome of work of Standard Setting Committee i.e. when a set of suitable and appropriate standards have been developed. It should be noted however that a contract is already in place with an independent company. This company carries out unannounced inspections as do officers from RIA on all accommodation centres. The results of these inspections are published.</p>	

Recommendation No: 4.226	Status: Partially Implemented
<p>Recommendation: The Inspectorate, based on its overall findings, should separately make regular reports to the Minister on general matters relating to the welfare of residents in Direct Provision centres.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality</p>	
<p>Current Position: Awaiting outcome of work of Standard Setting Committee. See previous recommendation.</p>	

Financial Supports

Recommendation No: 5.30	Status: Partially Implemented
<p>Recommendation: The Direct Provision weekly allowance should be increased from €19.10 to €38.74 for adults and from €9.60 to €29.80 for children.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality, Department of Social Protection</p>	
<p>Current Position: On 13 June 2017, it was announced that the DP Allowance for children would be raised from €15:60 to €21:60 per week, and from €19:10 to €21:60 for adults. This is the second increase in the Direct Provision payment for children in the past 18 months and represents a significant improvement on €9:60. These increases are in line with commitments in the programme for government to reform Direct Provision with a particular focus on families and children. At the time the working group report was published one parent and two children would have received €38.30 per week whereas now they will receive €64.80 per week.</p>	

Recommendation No: 5.30	Status: Implemented*
Recommendation: The Department of Social Protection should reinstate on-site Community Welfare Service to residents in Direct Provision accommodation centres.	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Social Protection	
<p>Current Position: The Department of Social Protection is providing the necessary income supports to persons in the asylum process and those under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme through the payment of Direct Provision Allowance, Exceptional Needs Payments (ENPs), Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance and other social welfare payments as appropriate. Community Welfare Services clinics are provided on-site in some Direct Provision accommodation centres and are generally provided at Intreo Centres and some 180 other locations throughout the country. If a person is unable to travel to a clinic, for example due to illness, alternative arrangements are in place including arranging a visit to the Direct Provision accommodation centre if necessary.</p> <p>DSP continues to review its service provision to ensure that the necessary income supports continue to be provided to persons in the asylum process and those arriving under the Irish Refugee protection Programme.</p> <p>* In instances where the Community Welfare Service is not on-site, arrangements are made to facilitate direct contact with residents and no impediment exists in accessing this service.</p>	

Access to the Labour Market

Recommendation No: 5.49	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: Provision for access to the labour market for protection applicants who are awaiting a first instance decision for nine months or more and who have co-operated with the protection process (under the relevant statutory provisions), should be included in the International Protection Bill and should be commenced when the single procedure is operating efficiently. This recommendation takes account of the fact that, under the current statutory arrangements, first instance decisions in respect of refugee status and subsidiary protection do not (in the normal course) issue within nine months at present.	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality	
<p>Current Position:</p> <p>The Supreme Court Decision in N.V.H v The Minister for Justice & Equality is being examined by the Department in conjunction with the Attorney General and in consultation with other relevant Departments. Proposals will be brought to Government in the coming period to give effect to the Judgement.</p>	

Recommendation No: 5.49	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: Any permission given to access the labour market should continue until the final determination of the protection claim.	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality	
Current Position: See previous recommendation.	

Recommendation No: 5.49	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: A protection applicant who has the right to access the labour market and is successful in finding employment, and who wishes to remain in Direct Provision, should be subject to a means test to determine an appropriate contribution to his/her accommodation and the other services provided to him/her.	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality	
Current Position: See previous recommendation.	

Access to Education – School-Going Children

Recommendation No: 5.63	Status: Implemented
Recommendation: An awareness initiative should be rolled out to ensure that Boards of Management and school principals are familiar with the financial and other challenges facing children in Direct Provision and their families.	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Education and Skills	
<p>Current Position: RIA has for over 10 years been hosting Interagency Meetings for State Service Providers. These meetings are now held twice a year in Sept/Oct and in Feb/March. It is not feasible for RIA to hold these meetings in every centre so centres are clustered for the purposes of the meetings.</p> <p>Representatives from Schools are invited to attend these meetings. A range of items come up for discussion and these meetings gives all attendees an insight into the challenges facing children and families who are living in centres under contract to RIA. These meetings lead to, inter alia, networking with attendees outside of these meetings and school representatives make regular contact with RIA on issues of concern.</p> <p>The Department of Education and Skills has seconded an officer to RIA and that Officer links in with local schools and accommodation centres as appropriate and necessary.</p>	

Access to Education – Adults – New Arrivals

Recommendation No: 5.74	Status: In progress
<p>Recommendation: Orientation classes, e.g. about life in Ireland, should be available to all protection applicants within the first month after lodging their application. These could be provided by a non-profit organisation based at the initial reception centre and form part of an early assessment of vulnerability. For those who are dispersed without having an opportunity to take up such classes, classes should be provided in accommodation centres as required.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: RIA</p> <p>Current Position: An initiative will be implemented to provide orientation classes to Direct Provision residents. Subject to available resources, it is hoped to commence this initiative in the second half of 2017.</p>	

Adults – Access to Higher and Further Education

Recommendation No: 5.82	Status: In Progress
<p>Recommendation: Persons who are in the system for two years or more and who are protection applicants or who are at the leave to remain stage should be eligible to apply for access to further education and vocational training courses where they satisfy the relevant course entry requirements.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Education and Skills</p> <p>Current Position: The Supreme Court Decision in N.V.H v The Minister for Justice & Equality is being examined by the Department in conjunction with the Attorney General and in consultation with other relevant Departments. This ruling may also impact on 3rd level courses that have a work experience element to them. Proposals will be brought to Government in the coming period to give effect to the Judgement. The implementation of this recommendation is linked to the applicant's access to the labour market.</p>	

Recommendation No: 5.82	Status: In Progress
<p>Recommendation: Remuneration received during a work placement undertaken as part of a further or higher education course of study should be allowed for the duration of the placement in lieu of the Direct Provision Allowance, or alternatively a proportion could be returned as a contribution towards the accommodation and subsistence, for the temporary duration of the placement. It could also be used to support residents placed on courses in locations away from their centre. In other circumstances the stipend could be deemed not applicable</p>	

to residents in order to allow them access to work placements as a result of academic study.
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality
Current Position: See recommendation above.

Recommendation No: 5.82	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: A forum or fora of professional recognition bodies and trade associations, trade unions and the community and voluntary sector should be convened to devise a scheme to allow access to internships, apprenticeships and professional development opportunities for protection applicants or persons at the leave to remain stage.	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Education and Skills, Department of Justice and Equality	
Current Position: See recommendation above.	

Healthcare Supports

Recommendation No: 5.100	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: Recommends that an adequately trained and resourced interpreting service be put in place where demand exists. Interpreters dealing with persons in the system should be sensitivity trained, especially when interpreting the disclosure of needs, experiences and values of vulnerable groups. General Practitioners should be encouraged to offer interpreting services to this client group. <i>*Please also see recommendation 3.275*</i>	
Department/Agency Responsible: HSE	
Current Position: Interpreting provision remains a key issue - and is one where a coherent coordinated approach is required - together with core resourcing. The HSE, continue to be engaged in improving elements of interpreting provision - a number of general actions targeted at interpreting for all migrants have been undertaken, with a group currently in place to explore and progress aspects of this. A key action here includes work in collaboration with University of Limerick Primary Care to develop a model around interpreting provision – aspects of training interpreters and associated accreditation form part of this project.	
See also response to recommendation 3.275.	

Recommendation No: 5.100	Status: In Progress
<p>Recommendation: Notes the actions identified in the HSE’s Mental Health Division’s Operational Plan. To address the overriding need to provide health-related targeted education and training to staff working in Direct Provision accommodation centres, all centre staff should be provided with mental health awareness training by the HSE or designated NGOs. This training should cater for recognition of mental health issues and assist staff in alerting appropriate services, while ensuring the safety and well-being of the individual and all those who work and live in the centre.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: HSE</p> <p>Current Position: Work has commenced on the development of a Social Inclusion Intercultural Health Education and Training Framework. This framework will provide a template for the provision of training and support to staff in working towards the delivery of a responsive, culturally competent health service. Mental health awareness will form part of this framework. Consultation with key stakeholders will commence shortly. The HSE Social Inclusion Service CHO 5 (Southeast) have developed a model of training on a Train the Trainer basis in Intercultural Awareness and Practice. This training programme has been approved for national roll out through the Intercultural Health Governance Group.</p>	

Recommendation No: 5.100	Status: In Progress
<p>Recommendation: Recommends that sensitivity training on issues that impact on vulnerable groups should be provided to all relevant Direct Provision staff. Each centre should have a strong visible presence of a safety, dignity and free from harassment statement, reminding both residents and staff of their requirement to ensure a safe and respectful living environment. Such visible messages may facilitate disclosure by vulnerable groups, which must result in immediate contact with relevant services.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: RIA</p> <p>Current Position: This recommendation will be included in all future contracts and will be included as part of future training and information seminars. In respect of staff in accommodation centres, RIA are in the process of placing contractual requirements on contractors to ensure that all their staff are appropriately trained as recommended. This will happen over a period of time as new contracts are agreed.</p>	

Supports for Persons who are LGBT

Recommendation No: 5.113	Status: In Progress
<p>Recommendation: Recommends that organisations that provide services relevant to persons in the system should consider training staff in LGBT issues to sensitively deal with queries and build trust so as to encourage disclosure. Where possible, a trained staff member should be identified as a point of contact and their details made available in centres. This is important to ensure that appropriate services are extended to members of the LGBT community in the system.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: HSE</p> <p>Current Position: The HSE Primary Care Division National Operational Plan for 2016 contains an action 'Provide LGBT training for health service staff across 3 community Health organisations'. This action currently being progressed.</p> <p>The HSE National Social Inclusion Office funds a development worker position in TENI; part of this remit is provision of training to staff and service providers in respect of ensuring sensitive service delivery to persons who are transgender. This training is delivered in a phased manner across the health system e.g. 3 outreach/health advocate staff who work with the 5 Reception centres in the South East completed Transgender Health training.</p> <p>Work is ongoing in this area. Resource developed for GPs working with transgender service users, Advisory Forum established around LGBTI issues will include consideration of LGBTI Asylum seekers.</p>	

Linkages with Local Communities

Recommendation No: 5.152	Status: In Progress
<p>Recommendation: Every Direct Provision centre should be contractually obliged to encourage and facilitate linkages with the local community. The centre management should facilitate the setting up a "Friends of the Centre" Group consisting of residents, local statutory services and community/voluntary groups. The centre management should be required to report to RIA every six months on activities in this regard.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: RIA</p> <p>Current Position: Centres have made contacts in their local communities and outcomes will be analysed and used to improve linkages across the portfolio. Friends of the Centre groups have been and will continue to be established in all centres in 2017. This recommendation will be fully implemented in 2017.</p>	

Recommendation No: 5.152	Status: In Progress
<p>Recommendation: Work to develop community linkages should include a focus on developing reciprocal linkages with residents participating in activities in the local community and vice versa. The centre management should consider making facilities in the centre, e.g. meeting rooms and grounds available for meetings and other activities to create and should strengthen two-way links between residents and the local community.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: RIA</p> <p>Current Position: See update provided in relation to the previous recommendation. This recommendation will be implemented in 2017.</p>	

Recommendation No: 5.152	Status: Implemented
<p>Recommendation: The Government give consideration to including persons awaiting a decision on their protection or leave to remain case in its national integration strategy or co-ordinated plan for the integration of migrants.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality</p> <p>Current Position: The new Migrant Integration Strategy was published on 7 February 2017. The Strategy covers all EEA and non-EEA nationals and will run from 2017 until 2020.</p>	

Recommendation No: 5.152	Status: Implemented
<p>Recommendation: Relevant Government Departments should make funding available to assist the integration of persons awaiting a decision on their protection or leave to remain case; in particular, the funding to facilitate the implementation of local integration strategies should be restored and existing community grant schemes should specifically encourage applications from those involved in developing linkages with protection applicants.</p>	
<p>Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality</p> <p>Current Position: Following the publication of the Migrant Integration Strategy in February 2017, the Communities Integration Fund was launched. €500,000 has been made available in 2017 to 129 local groups to promote integration in communities by local community-based groups. To complement this Fund, an additional funding stream of National Funding to Promote the Integration of Immigrants was launched with available funding of €1.8 million over a three-year period. This funding has been awarded to 14 projects led by public bodies and NGOs. In addition, €4.5 million has been awarded to projects over three-years under the EU Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).</p>	

Training for organisations/persons

Recommendation No: 5.186	Status: In Progress
Recommendation: Recommends that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Persons who provide health and other services to persons in the system should receive on-going training in cultural competency and sensitivity;○ Training should be provided for accredited interpreters and for staff working with interpreters, who provide interpreting services either in person or over the phone;○ Training should include skill development for dealing with people who do not have English as a first language;○ These programmes should be evaluated to ensure relevance and effectiveness.	

Department/Agency Responsible:

HSE, Department of Social Protection, Department of Education and Skills, RIA

Current Position:

HSE: Some intercultural health training continues to be provided across the health system with a number of staff, service providers, Community knowledge workers and Roma health advocates trained in this regard. Currently all training in this area is being reviewed with a view to agreeing a model of intercultural health training that can be used consistently across the HSE.

A second HSE National Intercultural Health Strategy is expected to be launched towards the end of Q2 – this will contain reference to ongoing actions in respect of training, education, awareness raising etc. The HSE has produced a number of resources to support service providers around working with service users from diverse ethnic and cultural groups – these include mobile APPs, an Intercultural Guide etc.

Tusla: Regarding the Child Welfare and Protection services and Alternative Care services under the remit of Tusla a number of courses were organised by Tusla in 2015. These were locally based involving Tusla Training and Development officers or externally commissioned personnel.

During 2015 Tusla commissioned the development of a standardised programme entitled 'Diversity in modern Ireland'. The programme is currently being established and training of social work staff is due to begin in the coming months. It is expected that the training will be delivered to Tusla staff initially and there is a specific piece on the Roma Child Care Case from October 2013 and Roma Culture.

DSP: DSP's Customer charter and Action Plan sets out the Department's commitments to providing a professional, efficient and courteous service to all customers. Specific commitments are included relating to the provision of interpretive and translation services and the provision of information in alternative formats such as Braille or Audio. The following services are provided to customers where required:

- A translation service for documents required to process acclaim
- A language interpretive service provided by 3 way phone conversation
- A face to face service where an accredited language interpreter attends in person, to facilitate customer/staff interaction
- A sign language interpreter to facilitate customer/staff interaction
- Written information or application forms in Braille, Audio, or large print

Department staff will assist customers in accessing the required service.

DES: Persons providing educational services receive on-going cultural training through CPD (Continuing Professional Development).

RIA: In the process of placing contractual requirements on contractors to ensure that all their staff are appropriately trained as recommended. This will happen over a period of time as new contracts are agreed.

Recommendations not being progressed because they are either superseded by/not accepted on the basis of Government Policy or cannot currently be progressed due to Resource Dependency

Recording of interviews/hearings

Recommendation No: 3.286	Status: Not Being Progressed
Recommendation: An expert group to consider the issue in more detail in order to fully explore the implications and costs concerned and to come to a conclusion on whether or not recording of interviews / hearings should be implemented at first instance and/or appeal.	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality	
Current Position: Recording of interviews is not provided for in the International Protection Act, 2015 and is not currently under consideration.	

Advisory and Governance Arrangements

Recommendation No: 3.360	Status: Not Being Progressed
Recommendation: An advisory body be established, following and further developing the general scheme of the Refugee Advisory Board.	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality	
Current Position: No such body is provided for in the International Protection Act, 2015.	

Recommendation No: 3.360	Status: Not Being Progressed
Recommendation: Any such independent advisory body established be given the necessary flexibility to consider all matters related and relevant to the operation of the system.	
Department/Agency Responsible: Department of Justice and Equality	
Current Position: See previous Recommendation.	

Recommendations that are Resource Dependent

Identification of Vulnerable Applicants

Recommendation No: 3.299	Status: Resource Dependent
Recommendation: The introduction of vulnerability screening for all applicants beyond the scope of the current public health screening available to residents of Direct Provision accommodation. This should be made equally accessible to applicants who chose not to live in Direct Provision accommodation and should be performed no later than 30 days after an initial application has been made.	
Department/Agency Responsible: HSE	
Current Position: A desirable objective but carries significant resource implications. This recommendation is unlikely to be fully implemented in medium term.	