

Beyond McMahon

Implementing McMahon recommendations

Reception & Integration Agency

Department of Justice & Equality

The Direct Provision System

- Direct Provision is the system whereby State services are offered and directly provided to protection applicants through the relevant Government Department or Agency, hence the name 'Direct Provision'.

RIA functions

- To provide accommodation and related services to persons who are
 - In, or have been in, the protection process
 - Potential or suspected victims of trafficking
 - Destitute EU nationals while flights are arranged home
 - Other persons in certain particular circumstances
 - Persons relocated under EU relocation or UN resettlement programmes
- Operate on an administrative basis and in compliance with humanitarian principles
- Not an agency

Some statistics

- 35 accommodation centres + 4 EROCs (outside the scope of this discussion)
- 5,664 capacity on 27th May 2018
- 5,375 residents on 27th May 2018
- 219 applications in May 2018
- >80% take up rate
- Churn is important – movement in and out

Contraction & Expansion

- Closed three centres in 2015/2016/2017 due to falling numbers, lack of standards and fire safety.
- Closed (or closing) 2 in 2018 due to other commercial opportunities available to contractors
- In 2017 / 2018 we re-opened 2 of the three that we closed in 2015/2016
- Have recently opened in Lisdoonvarna (115 persons) and in Moate (81 persons).
- Managing the space is a challenge

Specific issues

- Catering
 - By the end of May 2018, over 1,500 residents have access to a food hall and catering facilities in either their own accommodation or in a communal space
 - An additional, 1,100 residents have access to a communal catering facility where food is provided by management or by the resident themselves.
- Accommodation
 - No family is sharing living or bedroom space with another family
 - Single persons continue to share living and bedroom space
 - Every person or family has their own secure storage for personal or bulky items

Specific issues

- Friends of the Centre groups have been established in all centres
- Residents Committees are in operation in all centres
- Consultations take place with local authority and Oireachtas members at the time of opening of centres
- High level group with other State agencies

Standards

- Standards are almost finalised.
- Being developed in full consultation with NGO community
- Working groups covering all aspects
- Based on HIQA standards development process
- To be circulated for views before being settled
- Expect to be completed by end of July

Specific issues

- Complaints
 - Remit of Ombudsman and Ombudsman for Children now covers residents
 - We liaise quarterly with both offices
- Child Protection
 - Children First Act 2015 applies as does Children First National Guidance 2017
 - “Relevant organisations” within the meaning of the Act
 - Child Safeguarding statement on web site
 - eVetting prior to employment
 - DGSBV policy in place

Other issues

- Nutrition audit & Security audit have been carried out – results will inform future RFT
- Close links with
 - INIS
 - DEASP
 - DES
 - HSE
 - Other State agencies / NGOs
- Governance
 - Standards – 100% independent inspection process to replace existing mixed inspection process
 - Data protection – we are controllers of data in accommodation centres

Challenges

- Difficulties in moving out
 - >500 with status and over 100 with DOs
 - Formally engaging with Housing Agencies to assist those with status to move into a permanent home
 - Working with INIS on those with DOs
 - Assistance (airfare) offered to comply with order
- Reception Conditions Directive
 - Moving from an administrative basis to a legal basis
 - Provisions of Directive applies to persons in the protection process
 - Directive not just about access to the labour market, includes other provisions

The future.....

- RFT for RIA accommodation will be McMahon proofed
- Allows us to build a framework of accommodation capacity so that we can quickly respond to increased demands
- But..... how do we respond to a rapidly falling demand? C & AG needs to be happy with our expenditure!

- Impact of Reception Conditions Directive will have to be assessed
 - Vulnerability assessment and its impact on accommodation
 - In-House Staffing requirements in accommodation centres

- Closer engagement with housing bodies, agencies, local authorities to assist those with status to move into communities