

Buan-Mhisean na hÉireann chuig na Náisiún Aontaithe agus
Eagraíoch idirnáisúnta eile | An Ghinéiv
Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations and
Other International Organisations | Geneva
Mission Permanente de l'Irlande auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies et
des autres organisations internationales | Genève



TPN/027/2021

The Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (High Commissioner for Human Rights) and refers to the communication OL IRL 1/2021.

With reference to the aforementioned communication, enclosed please find a response from Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Simon Coveney T.D.

The Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (High Commissioner for Human Rights) the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 12 May 2021

Women

Women passing through the international protection process will be entitled to avail of the same healthcare supports as Irish nationals, including reproductive care, antenatal, birth and postnatal care, cervical checks. Breast screening will be available for all applicants aged over 50. It is crucial that information relating to these services is conveyed in an accessible and culturally sensitive manner. Information on the range of healthcare supports will be provided at the earliest point of contact on arrival in a Reception and Integration Centre.

Mental health needs will be identified as part of the general Health Assessment carried out at the Reception and Integration Centre, and further informed by the Vulnerability Assessments. Where applicants have mental health needs, including trauma, they will be referred to healthcare professionals with relevant experience, and this will be done in a culturally sensitive manner with appropriate interpretation services. Once this assessment has been carried out, appropriate community-based care will be initiated and all relevant information will be communicated to mental health services in a timely manner.

As applicants commence the move to Phase Two accommodation, their mental health support and treatment requirements will be factored into the type and location of their accommodation, to ensure both continuity of treatment and living arrangements that are appropriate for their needs.

In the enhanced model of community healthcare, community healthcare teams will develop a comprehensive and efficient model of care for applicants for international protection. The teams will include General Practitioner (GP) services, nursing and health worker services, interpretation and NGO supports, and specialisms such as dentistry, psychology, and referral to mental health services based on assessment

International protection applicants will have the right to pursue a grievance or complaint about any aspect of the services they receive through the accommodation process. Complaints will be handled sensitively, appropriately and promptly.

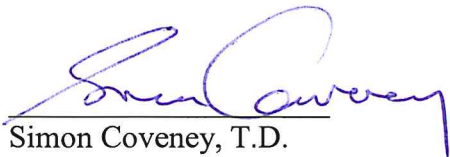
Transition to the new model of accommodation and supports

The Government is working to complete the transition to the new model by December 2024. A detailed implementation plan is now being developed which will drive forward significant changes for each year between now and 2024. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth will lead this process. The implementation of the new model will be overseen by a Programme Board which will include representatives of relevant Government Departments and agencies, NGOs, at least one person who has transited through the Direct Provision system and relevant experts. The Programme Board will be chaired by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth will report to the Cabinet Committee on Social Affairs and Equality on progress in the establishment of the new model.

An external advisory group of three independent persons will be appointed by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to advise on the implementation of the new model. This group will publish reports periodically on the progress of the reforms and to highlight any concerns arising.

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is also overseeing the ongoing reform of the International Protection Accommodation Service and the current system of Direct Provision, pending its replacement by the new International protection Support Service. Ongoing reforms include the implementation of recommendations from the Expert Advisory Group Report (2020) as well as the previous McMahon Report (2015)⁴. The introduction of Vulnerability Assessments on a pilot basis from December 2020 forms part of this programme of reform.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Coveney, T.D.
Minister for Foreign Affairs and
Minister for Defence

⁴ *Working Group on the Protection Process including Direct Provision and Supports for Asylum Seekers* chaired by Judge Bryan McMahon, published its report 2015.