



Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection
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Operational Protocol between the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Social Protection regarding referrals to the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme

23rd September 2015

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) recognises the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and its contribution to the National Employment Activation Plan and Pathways to Work. SICAP aims to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration. Its vision is to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalised in society, living in poverty or in unemployment through community development approaches, targeted supports and interagency collaboration.

This is an informal and voluntary operational protocol which has been prepared in order to specifically state a need for collaboration and cooperation at the national, regional and local levels between DSP staff and SICAP Programme Implementers (PIs) in order to ensure that SICAP can complement current activation service provision and ensure it adds value. At its core is the need for clarity on information sharing between DSP local case officers and PIs. This protocol is presented in a spirit of relationship building and to ensure improved joined up thinking and approaches to activating people locally and playing a developmental role. This is within the landscape of local management and decision making around SICAP by Local Community Development Committees which are the contract holders for SICAP.

The operational protocol is in place until October 2016, subject to review by both Departments, in conjunction with Pobal and an ILDN representative. The protocol is a flexible commitment and can be terminated at any stage by either party (with sufficient notice given) if it is deemed to be unhelpful by either party. It sets out below proposed responsibilities under this agreement which primarily relate to information sharing.

Responsibilities under the Operational Protocol

Under this protocol, DSP case officers undertake to inform Intreo clients of relevant options and services available to them under SICAP. It is at the discretion of the case officer, depending on local priorities and Intreo clients, as to whom is referred as long as the individual meets the programme eligibility criteria as set out in the SICAP Programme Requirements. However, the expectation is that DSP case officers will prioritise at this point in time the following target groups: youth, lone parents; people with disabilities; new communities. This may be reviewed depending on local, emerging needs. Those referred may or may not be on the Live Register.

Intreo case officers will contact their local SICAP PI informing them that an individual/individuals has been referred as being suitable for a SICAP intervention and has been informed of same, sharing the appropriate details with the PI.

This operational protocol recognises that there is no conditionality tied to a SICAP support. However it is fully accepted that SICAP must support, and be viewed as supporting, the DSP Intreo intervention in the case of a Job Seekers Allowance/Benefit client. This does not detract from the fact that SICAP is a voluntary, additional support service with a community development ethos which should complement statutory DSP services.

The SICAP Programme Implementers agree to provide the relevant DSP case officer with an update on the progress of the individual referred. They will provide details as to whether they presented at the PI for a SICAP intervention, whether they were registered, and their status in terms of active or inactive within SICAP (following PI data control and data consent protocols). The frequency of this update will be decided locally at the discretion of the case officer and PI SICAP officer.

At a national level, Pobal will provide the DSP national office with nationally aggregated (anonymised) data on the number of individuals who were referred *and* registered with the service and their status (active or inactive), as recorded on the IRIS monitoring system. This information will be provided on a quarterly basis to DSP. Likewise, it is intended that referrals to SICAP from DSP will be recorded by DSP on its reporting system (ACM). When this functionality is in place, and when an individual is referred to SICAP by a DSP case officer, the case officer will record this on the system. This information will be used as fact checking against the data entered on IRIS to ensure accurate reporting on referrals and can also be used to assess the numbers of individuals referred but who did not present.

More generally, SICAP Programme Implementers (PIs) will undertake to raise awareness among Intreo case officers regarding the suite of options available locally within SICAP which may be of benefit to Intreo clients. This will be done by means of presentation sessions locally. In parallel, DSP will contact its members on Local and Community Development Committees and advise them of the need to be supportive to the roll out of the programme locally and to encourage other bodies, such as the ETBs, with an interest in supporting the unemployed or other clients

DSP, DECLG, Pobal and ILDN will meet regularly (next meeting due to be held in 6 weeks) to manage the process and to review progress.