

# **Child Protection Policy for Accommodation Centres**

**Name of Accommodation Centre:**

.....

**Reception and Integration Agency,  
October 2005**

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## **1. Mission Statement:**

The Accommodation Centre is committed to providing safe, quality accommodation for asylum seekers which promotes the well being of all residents.

It is the intention of the Accommodation Centre to safeguard and protect children from abuse by ensuring that appropriate procedures are in place.

## **2. Guiding Principles**

- The safety and well being of the child or young person are paramount;
- A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years who is not, nor has ever been, married;
- Child protection reports will be made without delay, as outlined below;
- Confidentiality will be maintained whereby only those who need to know of a suspicion/allegation or disclosure of abuse are informed, and the numbers that need to know will be kept to a minimum. The Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act must inform decisions regarding the sharing of such information, whilst the best interests of the child remain paramount;
- In the event of an allegation, suspicion or disclosure being made to a member of staff, it is not possible to promise 'not to tell';
- Parents/guardians have responsibility for the welfare of their child(ren). However, all those working in Accommodation Centres have a duty to care for residents.

## **3. Safeguarding**

- This policy relates to all those delivering services to clients in the Accommodation Centre. All staff will sign a declaration stating they have seen, understand and will adhere to this policy, and that there is no reason why they cannot work with children (see Appendix 2);
- Staff will be recruited in line with best practice, as outlined below;
- All external organisations providing a service in the Centre will receive a copy of the child protection policy, and sign a declaration agreeing to adhere to it;
- All visitors should remain only in communal areas of the Centre, and should be accompanied by the person they are visiting at all times;
- This policy is supported by the Code of Practice for persons working in Accommodation Centres, (see Appendix 11) and the booklet on Accommodation Centre Services, Rules and Procedures;
- This policy has been copied to the Reception and Integration Agency, (RIA);
- The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1988 states that any such reports will be taken as based on the best interests of the child unless it can be PROVEN that they were made in malice. "These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to, and including, dismissal", (Children First, 2.4.1);

- A person who makes a report to a Designated Person under this policy is privileged from legal liability unless the report is made for an improper purpose;
- Giving information to others for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality;
- All information regarding a child protection issue will be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis, (See Section 10 re Reporting).

In order to ensure the safety and well-being of all residents, the Accommodation Centre will establish procedures relating to the following:-

- That parents/ guardians inform management who will be responsible for their child in their absence, prior to the event, and when the parent/guardian will return;
- Management will be informed if a child is going to stay somewhere other than the centre overnight, and if with someone other than the parent/ guardian, with whom they will be staying;
- Ensuring that all service providers coming to the centre receive a copy of the child protection policy, and sign a declaration agreeing to adhere to this.

#### **4. Background and Context**

This Child Protection Policy is based on Children First - National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children. These national guidelines were developed by the Department of Health and Children in order to assist people in identifying and reporting child abuse and welfare concerns. In particular, they aim to clarify and promote mutual understanding between organisations and a partnership approach, and to emphasise that the needs of children and families must be central to child care and child protection.

Further information on 'Children First' can be found at:  
[www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/children\\_first.pdf](http://www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/children_first.pdf)

#### **5. Recognising Child Abuse**

The ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on their knowledge and information. There are commonly three stages in the identification of child abuse. These are:

- Considering the possibility.
- Looking out for signs of abuse.
- Recording the information. (Children First: 3.9.1)

**Note:** Child Abuse can often be difficult to identify and may present in many forms. Early detection is important and those working with children should share their concerns about child protection and welfare with colleagues, preferably those in senior line management positions. (Children First 3.8.1)

It is important to stress that no one indicator should be seen as conclusive in itself of abuse; it may indeed indicate conditions other than child abuse. All signs and symptoms must be examined in the total context of the child's situation and family circumstances. However, it is not the responsibility of accommodation staff to investigate or prove abuse. It is their responsibility to document and report issues of concern.

Management will recognise that children living in Accommodation Centres may be particularly vulnerable for a number of reasons including:

- Language difficulties;
- Cultural differences e.g. regarding age of consent and normative practices;
- Dependence on service providers;
- Previous experience of abuse;
- Fear of not being believed;
- Frequent turnover of staff;
- Fear and uncertainty regarding the future.

Procedures and communication with residents, including children, will reflect this awareness.

## **6. Trafficking**

The United Nations defines trafficking as

*'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability....The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child (meaning any person under eighteen years of age) for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered trafficking in persons even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in this article'.*

In the event that a concern is identified in line with the definition outlined above, which relates to the possibility of a child or other resident being trafficked, or a resident being involved in the trafficking of others, a formal report should be faxed to the Chief Superintendent of the Garda National Immigration Bureau, on 01 6669199. This correspondence should be documented on the "Garda Notification Form", (Appendix 8), to include as much as possible of the requested information. This should then be faxed to the local Duty Social Work Team (contact details in Appendix 9). A hard copy should also be sent to this team on yellow paper, and a copy sent to the Director of Child and Family Services, RIA.

## **7. Missing Children**

Residents are obliged to inform management if their child is going to stay somewhere other than the Accommodation Centre overnight. The parent or guardian must inform management in advance who the child will be staying with, where and for how long. (See Accommodation Centre Services, Rules

and Procedures). The Centre will have appropriate recording systems in place to manage this.

In the event that staff are aware that a child is not in the Accommodation Centre overnight, or there are concerns regarding the child's whereabouts at any time, the parent/guardian should be asked for this information. If concerns remain, the local Gardaí should be informed of a potential missing child immediately, using the "Garda Notification Form" (Appendix 8).

## **8. Undocumented Children**

In the event that a child arrives to the Accommodation Centre without a Temporary Residency Certificate Number (TRC/69 No.), and the child is not brought to the Office of the Refugee Applications Commission, (ORAC) at the earliest opportunity, (i.e. the next working day), the Accommodation Centre will inform the HSE Duty Social Work Team. (See standard letter in Appendix 9).

## **9. Designated Persons**

A Designated Person will be identified from within the management team to be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. A Designated Person should be contactable by staff at all times. (This can be by mobile phone). Where possible, both a male and female Designated Person should be identified.

- This child protection policy should include the name(s) of this person(s), and how s/he can be contacted.
- The person designated should ensure that s/he is knowledgeable about child protection and that s/he undertakes any training, considered necessary, to keep updated on new developments.

### **Role**

The role of the designated person is to:

- Establish contact with the senior member of Community Services responsible for child protection in the Centre's catchment area, i.e. Child Care Manager or Principal Social Worker;
- Provide information and advice on child protection within the Centre;
- Ensure that the Centre's child protection policy and procedures are followed and, particularly, to inform Community Services (HSE) of relevant concerns about individual children;
- Ensure appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover;
- Liaise with Community Services/An Garda Síochána and other agencies as appropriate;
- Keep relevant people within the Centre informed, particularly Senior Management;
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the Centre, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome;

- Advise Centre Management of child protection training needs.

## **Responsibility**

The designated person is responsible for:

- Providing a source of advice on child protection matters
- Co-ordinating action within the organisation, and
- Liaising with the HSE, An Garda Síochána and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of child abuse.

The Designated Persons should participate in the HSE 'Keeping Safe' training in relation to child protection where locally available, and need to be fully aware of their role and responsibilities in relation to child protection. It is essential that Designated Persons are regarded as approachable by staff, and that they are comfortable with discussing the issue of child protection.

The Designated Persons for this Accommodation Centre are:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact Phone Number</b>
<b>1</b>	
<b>2</b>	
<b>3</b>	

## **10. Reporting**

Concerns about a child can come from a number of sources:

- A child may make a disclosure to a member of staff;
- A resident may inform a member of staff of concerns or that a child has made a disclosure to them;
- Staff may notice signs of abuse, or be concerned about the child's welfare;
- Staff may be concerned about the behaviour of a member of staff.

Examples of reasonable grounds for concern include the following:

- Specific indication from the child of abuse – i.e. disclosure;
- Account by a person who saw the child being abused;
- Evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- Injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse where an innocent explanation is offered, however, the pattern or nature of injuries is inconsistent with the explanation;



- Consistent indication over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

A suspicion which is not supported by an objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. (Children First: 4.3.3)

In the event that the concern is identified by another organisation or professional (e.g. the Community Welfare Officer, Public Health Nurse, Voluntary support group), it is their responsibility to follow the child protection guidelines of their own organisation, and to make contact with the Health Services Executive. In the event that such concerns are brought to the attention of Accommodation Centre staff, this conversation and any subsequent follow up should be documented by the Designated Person on the Internal Reporting Form (Appendix 3). A copy of this Form should be sent to the HSE Duty Social Work Team, and the Director of Child and Family Services, RIA.

If a member of staff within an Accommodation Centre becomes aware of a concern regarding a child, or an allegation of abuse, they must report this to the Designated Person. It is not the responsibility of the person who initially identified the concern, or the Designated Person, to determine the validity of the concern, or to investigate it. This is the responsibility of the Health Services Executive.

Giving information to others for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality;

It is the responsibility of the designated person to pass on the concern to the HSE and if agreed appropriate, make a formal notification. (Appendix 10)

In the event that, having raised a child protection concern, a staff member is unhappy with the response within the Centre, (i.e. from the Designated Person), or has reason to believe the report will be delayed or blocked, a report should be made directly to the Principal Social Worker, HSE.

## **11. Recording**

The Accommodation Centre will have an agreed recording procedure whereby all concerns or incidents are documented. These records will be kept in a secure location, such as a password protected file on computer, or a locked filing cabinet.

Parents should be informed of any records being kept, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

All reports relating to child protection will be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis. This will usually mean that such reports will be known to the

Designated Person, the Director of Child and Family Services, RIA, and the HSE and/or Gardai.

All incidents, complaints or concerns relating to children will be recorded on the Internal Standard Reporting Form (Appendix 1), and copied and stored as outlined above. This may include:

- Conversations with residents, (including children), staff, other professionals, (Social worker, Gardaí, RIA etc);
- Follow-up phone calls;
- Formal correspondence.

All incidents, complaints or concerns regarding a child will be copied to the Director of Child and Family Services, RIA. This is to enable 'tracking' of any child protection concerns which may arise in relation to children and families who move through Accommodation Centres.

## **12. Confidentiality**

Any information provided to the HSE or An Garda Síochána will remain confidential. The official policy is that those receiving information will only disclose it where the welfare of the child requires it and then only to those with a legitimate 'need to know'. Details will only be passed on to the relevant people within the statutory services with responsibility to take further action.

## **13. Informing Residents**

Residents (including children) will be informed of the child protection policy through a range of means, which may include:

- Through the Reception Centre induction programme;
- Through discussions with Centre staff;
- Through discussions with voluntary support groups and other external organisations providing services in the Centre or externally.

All residents will continue to receive a copy of the 'Services, Rules and Procedures' book, which incorporates the child protection policy, and which is available in a number of languages. Centres are obliged to display this information on an ongoing basis.

Centres will ensure that information is displayed regarding services which are available to residents, including children.

## **14. Complaints Procedure**

Centres will adhere to the Reception and Integration Agency Complaints Procedures, as outlined in the 'Services, Rules and Procedures' book. Centre staff will continue to provide all residents with a copy of this book, (available in several languages), and provide an opportunity for residents to discuss this, and understand it.

The 'Services, Rules and Procedures' book will be widely disseminated to those organisations providing services to the residents.

Centres will have a transparent and accessible complaints procedure for staff. This will complement existing health and safety policies and procedures.

Whilst the safety of the child is paramount, the principle of natural justice should apply, which means that a person is innocent until proven guilty.

In the event that, having raised a child protection concern, staff or others are unhappy with the response within the Centre, (i.e. from the Designated Person), or have reason to believe the report will be delayed or blocked, such staff may make a report directly to the Principal Social Worker, HSE.

## **15. Allegations Against Staff**

In the event of an allegation against a member of staff, the following principles apply:

- \* Action should be guided by the agreed procedures, the applicable employment contract and the rules of natural justice;
- \* Senior Management should be informed immediately;
- \* The first priority will be to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk.

With regard to dealing with the allegation, a two-tiered approach will be taken:

In relation to the child, procedures are as for any other instance of suspected child abuse. In the event that an allegation or concern is raised by another staff member, a resident, the child him/herself, or any other person, the Designated Person will follow the procedures outlined above (Section 10: Reporting). In the event that the concern is raised by an external organisation, they are responsible for making the appropriate contact with the Health Services Executive. However, an Internal Reporting Form should be completed (Appendix 1), and copied as outlined in Section 10.

Senior Management will take responsibility for those issues relating to the member of staff against whom an allegation is made. This process should reflect any existing Company policy relating to disciplinary proceedings, whilst ensuring that the child's best interests remain paramount.

When an employer becomes aware of an allegation of abuse of a child or children, by an employee during the execution of that employee's duties, the employer should privately inform the employee of the following:

- The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her;
- The nature of the allegation.

The employee should be afforded the opportunity to respond. The employer should note the response and pass on this information when making a formal report to the HSE.

## **15. Staff Recruitment**

When recruiting staff, management will:-

- Require three references from potential employees;
- Follow up at least one reference verbally, as per 'Telephone Check List', (Appendix 3);
- A probationary period will be built into the contract;
- A declaration be signed stating that there is no known reason why the potential employee should not work with children and young people, (See Appendix 2);
- When/if Garda vetting is available, all staff will be formally vetted.

The above should all be in place prior to the person commencing employment. In the event of staff being in place prior to the implementation of this policy, management will request that all employees sign the declaration noted above.

## **16. Staff Support**

Centre Management will recognise that child protection issues can be a significant source of stress for employees. It will be recognised that, in the event of a child protection issue arising, stress and anxiety are a legitimate reaction, and not a sign of personal weakness or lack of professionalism.

Steps which can address or alleviate the potential for stress include;

- Acknowledgement of positive achievement;
- Provision of opportunities for professional development such as training;
- Provision of child protection training;
- Development of inter-agency links;
- Review of work load;
- Staff supervision.

Staff safety will be promoted through appropriate means, which may include:

- A system whereby the location of staff is known at all times;
- Adequate protection is in place if a hostile or aggressive encounter is anticipated;
- Appropriate security arrangements;
- While the responsibility for staff safety ultimately rests with the employer, staff themselves must be responsible about bringing a potentially risky situation to the attention of their line manager.

## 17. External Services

Where services are provided to the residents in the Accommodation Centre by an external organisation, this organisation will receive a copy of the child protection policy, and sign a declaration stating that the organisation will adhere to it.

Any contracts entered into by the Management Company, (e.g. transport, security), will include a clause outlining the expectation that the child protection policy will be adhered to.

## 18. Review

The Accommodation Centre will review its child protection policy on an annual basis. Any changes will be notified to the RIA.

This policy was reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) by \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: .....

Name: .....  
(On behalf of the Accommodation Centre)

This policy has been copied to:-

Reception and Integration Agency;.....(name)

Date.....

HSE (Information and Advice Officer):.....(name)

Date.....

## Appendix 1: Internal Recording Form for Child-Related Issues.

Date\_\_\_\_\_ Centre:\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child:\_\_\_\_\_ DOB:\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian Name:\_\_\_\_\_ TRC(69) No:\_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Concern:

Unsupervised	[ ]	Other Neglect	[ ]
Domestic Violence	[ ]	Other Emotional Abuse	[ ]
Sexual Abuse	[ ]	Physical Abuse	[ ]
Missing	[ ]	Other (please state)	[ ]

Further information regarding the concern:

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Any previous related incidents?:

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Please outline steps taken: (tick as appropriate and state name of contact)

	Name	Contact No.	Spoken to (tick)	Written to (tick)
Designated Person				
HSE				
Gardaí				
RIA				
Parent/ Guardian				
Other				

Other action?

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What was the outcome? e.g. action taken

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Signed:\_\_\_\_\_

Name :\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone Number:\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 2: Declaration.**

I the undersigned, state that I have read and understood the child protection policy for..... Accommodation Centre. I agree to adhere to this policy.

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_

Name:\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

**For those providing services to residents in \_\_\_\_\_Accommodation Centre:**

There is no reason why I should not work with children:

Signed: .....

Name: .....

Date: .....

### Appendix 3: Telephone Reference Check List

Applicant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position Applied For \_\_\_\_\_

☐ YES   ☐ NO   Written Permission to Contact on File

Referee \_\_\_\_\_ Position/title \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_ Fax No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of:

☐ Attempts to reach \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Conversation \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Referee Unable/unwilling to provide reference.

- Introduce yourself and purpose of call
- Verify the referee's current and past relationship to the candidate, and the length of time they have known the candidate
- Verify employment information already provided by candidate (e.g. dates of employment, positions, responsibilities, reason for leaving).
- Explain the position
- Ask the specific questions:
  1. Would you comment on candidate's qualifications for this position?
  2. Could describe the primary responsibilities in the position(s) candidate held with your organisation?
  3. On what activities did candidate spend most of her/his time?
  4. What criteria were used to evaluate candidate's performance?
  5. Were you satisfied with the results?
  6. Can you give me an example of how candidate handled unfavourable feedback?
  7. Can you tell me about candidate's strengths/skills?



8. Candidate commented on strengths/accomplishments/awards etc during his/her time at your organisation. Could you comment on/describe (etc) that?
  9. Can you comment on where candidate's skills/ performance could be improved?
  10. Has the candidate ever demonstrated any temperament or personality traits that you believe might cause a problem in the position for which they have applied?
  11. The position being applied for will require the candidate to \_\_\_\_\_  
Please could you respond to some specific questions about candidate's ability to meet those position requirements?
  12. Can you describe the circumstances surrounding candidate leaving your organisation?
  13. Given what we have discussed so far and based on the performance of candidate in his/her position(s) with your organisation, would you recommend this candidate for the position for which they have applied?
  14. Given the opportunity, would you require this individual? ☐ Yes ☐ No. If no, why not?
  15. Are there any other details you might be able to share with me about the candidate's work related characteristics that might help us in our selection decision?
- Thank the referee for her/his time and assistance

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 4: Definitions of Child Abuse (From 'Children First')**

### **3.2 Definition of Neglect**

- 3.2.1** Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care.
- 3.2.2** Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by his/her health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.
- 3.2.3** Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having his or her needs met for supervision and safety. A child whose ongoing failure to gain weight or whose height is significant below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition. A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.
- 3.2.4** Neglect also relates to the incidence of a parent/guardian failing to enrol a child in school within an appropriate timeframe, or failing to ensure their attendance;
- 3.2.5** It is the policy of the Accommodation centre that children under the age of 14 years cannot be left unsupervised. Nor can they be left in charge of younger children. Management will operate discretion regarding the appropriateness of those over 14 years being left supervising younger children. This will be based on age, maturity, numbers of children involved, their ages, length of time being left without an adult, and so on.

### **3.3 Definition of Emotional Abuse**

- 3.3.1** Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a care-giver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. Examples of emotional abuse of children include:
- (i) The imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;

- (ii) Conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions;
- (iii) Emotional unavailability by the child's parent/carer;
- (iv) Unresponsiveness, inconsistent, or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- (v) Premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
- (vi) Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself in a certain way;
- (vii) Under or over-protection of the child;
- (viii) Failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development;
- (ix) Use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures;
- (x) Exposure to domestic violence.

**3.3.2** Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. Examples of these include: 'anxious' attachment, non-organic failure to thrive, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, and oppositional behaviours. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

### **3.4 Definition of Physical Abuse,**

**3.4.1** Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury, which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Examples of physical injury include the following:

- (i) Shaking
- (ii) Use of excessive force in handling
- (iii) Deliberate poisoning
- (iv) Suffocation
- (v) Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy\*

- (vi) Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

### **3.5 Definition of Sexual Abuse**

3.5.1 Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- (i) Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child;
- (ii) Intentionally touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- (iii) Masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;
- (iv) Sexual intercourse with the child whether oral, vaginal, or anal;
- (v) Sexual exploitation of a child includes inciting, encouraging propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of the image by computer or other means, it may also include showing sexually explicit material to children which is often a feature of the “grooming” process by perpetrators of abuse.
- (vi) Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an under-age person. In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that, for the purposes of the criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years. This means, for example, that sexual intercourse between a 16 year-old girl and her 17 year-old boyfriend is illegal, although it might not be regarded as constituting child sexual abuse.

The decision to initiate child protection action in such cases is a matter for professional judgement and each case should be considered individually. The criminal aspects of the case will be dealt with by An Garda Síochána under the relevant legislation.

**It should be noted that the definition of child sexual abuse presented in this section is not a legal definition and is not intended to be a description of the criminal offences of sexual assault.**



**Appendix 5: Standard letter to external organisations re: child protection responsibilities.**

Re: Name/TRC No.....

Date:.....

Dear

Thank you for your letter/phone call of .....(date) regarding the above resident at .....Accommodation Centre.

The Reception and Integration Agency and Accommodation Centre's Child Protection Policy follows the principles of the Children First National guidelines, and we are committed to the best interests of the child as paramount. The details provided by you have been recorded and will be tracked should further incidents occur with this child/resident.

Given the means by which this concern has been identified, it would be inappropriate for the Accommodation Centre or RIA to take the lead in any correspondence with the Health Services Executive, although we will of course provide whatever support we can in the event of any further consideration of this case. It is however, our understanding that any formal or informal notification to the Health Services Executive should be undertaken by your organisation/company.

I would be grateful if you could keep us informed of any further concerns relating to these residents.

Yours,

Signed.....

Name.....

c.c. Reception and Integration Agency.

**Appendix 6: Standard letter to parents re: Children left unsupervised.  
(No HSE Notification)**

Ref: Name/TRC (69) No. ....

Date:.....

Dear.....,

I refer to the incident on \_\_\_\_\_(date) whereby your children were found to be unsupervised.

Please note that, as stated in the Accommodation Centre Services, Rules and Procedures, parents must ensure that their children are supervised at all times. Failure to do so is regarded as a very serious matter.

Please take this letter as a formal warning. It has been copied to the Reception and Integration Agency and will be kept on your file. Any further incidents of your children being left unsupervised may result in additional action.

Yours Sincerely,

Signed.....

Name.....

**Appendix 7: Standard letter to parents re: Children left unsupervised  
(including HSE notification)**

Ref: Name/TRC No. ....

Date: .....

Dear.....,

I refer to the incident on \_\_\_\_\_(date) whereby your child(ren) were found to be unsupervised.

Please note that, as stated in the Accommodation Centre Services, Rules and Procedures, parents must ensure that their children are supervised at all times. Failure to do so is regarded as a very serious matter.

Due to the serious nature of this incident/ the fact that you have been formally warned about this previously, I have now informed the Health Services Executive, which is the Government organisation responsible for child protection. This letter has also been copied to the Reception and Integration Agency, where it will be kept on your file.

Yours Sincerely,

Signed.....

Name.....

c.c. Reception and Integration Agency.  
Health Services Executive – Duty Social Work Team.



## **Appendix 8: Standard letter to parents re: physically abused children**

Ref: Name/TRC No. ....

Date: .....

Dear.....,

I refer to the incident on \_\_\_\_\_(date) whereby your children appeared to have been physically abused.

Please note that, as stated in the Accommodation Centre Services, Rules and Procedures, parents must ensure that their children are not mistreated at any time. Fail to do so is regarded as a very serious matter.

Due to the serious nature of this incident, I have now informed the Health Services Executive, which is the Government organisation responsible for child protection. This letter has also been copied to the Reception and Integration Agency, where it will be kept on your file.

Yours Sincerely,

Signed.....

Name.....

c.c. Reception and Integration Agency  
Health Services Executive: Duty Social Work Team.

## Appendix 9: Standard Letter to HSE re: Undocumented Children

Ref: Name/TRC No. ....

Date: .....

Dear.....,

According to the Reception and Integration Agency's Child Protection Policy for Accommodation Centres, I am writing to inform you that a child is currently residing in this Centre without asylum documentation.

\_\_\_\_\_(child's name) arrived to this centre with\_\_\_\_\_, on \_\_\_\_\_(date). The child's parent/guardian (name: \_\_\_\_\_) was informed of the requirement to take the child to the Office of the Refugee Applications Commission at the earliest opportunity, (i.e. the first working day). This has not yet taken place, and so we are obliged to inform the HSE Duty Social Work Team.

Yours Sincerely,

Signed.....

Name.....

c.c. Reception and Integration Agency  
Health Services Executive: Duty Social Work Team.

## Appendix 10: Standard HSE Notification Form

### PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

STANDARD FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE CONCERNS

In case of emergency or outside Social work hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána. During office hours, this form should go to the Duty Social Work Team in the HSE.

#### 1. Details of Child

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Age/ D.O.B: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1a. Details of Parents

Name of Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Father: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Mother if different to child: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Father if different to child: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### 1c. Household Composition (Note: A separate form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.)

Name	Relationship to child	Date of Birth	Additional Information e.g. School/ Occupation

#### 2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) if known.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### 3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Cont'd.....

#### 4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers: _____	School: _____
_____	_____
Public Health Nurse: _____	Gardaí: _____
_____	_____
G.P.: _____	Pre-School/Crèche/Youth Club: _____
_____	_____
Hospital: _____	Other, Specify e.g. Youth Groups, After School Clubs: _____
_____	_____

**5. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department?**

**Yes:    No:**

If Yes, what is their attitude? \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Details of Person reporting concerns: (Please see Guidance Notes re. Limitations of Confidentiality)**

Name: _____	Occupation: _____
Address: _____	_____
_____	Telephone Number: _____
_____	_____
Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family: _____	
_____	

**7. Details of Person completing form:**

Name: _____	Occupation: _____
Address: _____	_____
_____	Telephone Number: _____
_____	_____
Signed: _____	Date: _____

Guidance Notes:

The HSE has a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. The HSE therefore has an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection.

This reporting form is for use by:

\*HSE Personnel

\*Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the HSE

\*Designated person in a voluntary or community agency

\*Any Professional, individual or group involved in services to children who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. ( Health Board personnel should do this in consultation with their line manager). This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.

Health Boards aim to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Board cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as

\*A Court could order that information be disclosed

\*Under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed.

You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report' you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

If you are unsure if you should report your concerns, please telephone the duty social worker and discuss your concerns with him/her.

## Appendix 11: Standard Garda Notification Form

### PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

STANDARD FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE CONCERNS  
IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY OR OUT OF OFFICE HOURS

#### 1. Details of Child

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age/ D.O.B: \_\_\_\_\_  
School: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1a. Details of Parents

Name of Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Father: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Mother if different to child:

Address of Father if different to child:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### 1c. Household Composition

Name	Relationship to child	Date of Birth	Additional Information e.g. School/ Occupation

#### 2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) if known.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### 3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Gardai? Yes: No:**

If Yes, what is their attitude? \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Details of Person reporting concerns:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Details of Person completing form:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 12: Contact Details for the Health Services Executive Duty Social Work Teams:

NB: In the event of a child protection concern, you should contact the HSE duty social work team. If they are unavailable, or the concern has arisen outside of office hours, (including weekends), and it is considered urgent, you should contact the Gardaí nearest to the Accommodation Centre.

Community Care Area	Address	Phone No.	Fax No.
Area 1	Our Lady's Clinic, Patrick Street, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin	01-2808403	01-2844955
Area 2	Vergemount Hall, Clonskeagh, Dublin 6	01-2680320	01-2680406
Area 10	Glenside Road, Wicklow	0404-68400	0404-69044
Area 6	Rathdown Road, Dublin 7	01-8680444	01-8825153
Area 7 North	Rose Cottage, Convent Avenue off Richmond Road, Fairview, Dublin 3	01-8575432	01-8575449
Area 7 South	22 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1	01-8556871	01-8550589
Area 8	Health Centre, Cromcastle Road, Coolock, Dublin 5	01-8164200	01-8479593
Dublin South City District	15 City Gate, St. Augustine Street, Dublin 8	01-6486650	01-6799303
Dublin South West District	Millbrook Lawns Health Centre, St. Dominick's Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24	01-4520666	01-4520501
Dublin West District	Bridge House, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10	01-6206387	01-6206388
Kildare/ West Wicklow District	Social Work Department, 1A	045-896120	045-896455

	South Main Street, Naas, Co. Kildare		
Longford/ Westmeath	Child and Family Centre, Pettitswood, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath	044-84450	044-84396
Laois/ Offaly	Community Care Office, O' Carroll Street, Tullamore, Co. Offaly	0506-22488	0506-21136
Limerick	Unit 3, St. Camillus's, Shelbourne Road, Limerick	061-483711	061-483757
Clare	River House, Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare	065-6863907 065-6863908	065-6863984
North Tipperary	Social Work Department, Annbrook, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary	067-41934	067-42069
Cavan/ Monaghan	Health Care Unit, Rooskey, Co. Monaghan	047-30460 047-30426 047-30427	047-77908
Louth	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Nurses Residence, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda, Co. Louth.	041-9875282	041-9875244
	Wilton House, Stapleton Place, Dundalk, Co. Louth	042-9392220	042-9392265
Meath	Child and Family Centre, Navan, Co. Meath	046-9078846	046-9071030
Sligo/ Leitrim	Community Services, Markievicz House, Sligo.	071-9155136	071-9155187
Donegal	Garden Centre, St. Conal's Hospital,	074-9123739	074-9129752



	Letterkenny, Co. Donegal		
Carlow/ Kilkenny	SEHB, 11 Patrick Street, Kilkenny	056-7784781	056-7762741
Waterford	Community Care Centre, Cork Road, Waterford	051-8428844	051-842811
Wexford	Ely Hospital, Wexford	053-47718	053-47706
South Tipperary	Yellow House, S. Luke's Hospital, Western Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary	052-77311	052-77301
South Lee	Social Work Department, St. Finbarr's Hospital, Cork	021-4923001	021-4312960
North Lee	Social Work Department, Floor 2 adjacent to Blackpool S/C., Blackpool, Cork	021-4927055	021-4927001 021-4927002
North Cork	Gouldshill House, Mallow, Co. Cork	022-30200	022-30211
West Cork	Community Care, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Cork	028-40580	028-23172
Kerry- Tralee	28 Moyderwell, Tralee, Co. Kerry	066-7184887	066-7184890
Killarney	St. Margaret's Road, Killarney, Co. Kerry	064-36030	064-70714
Galway	Community Care Services, 25 Newcastle Road, Galway	091-546380	091-527601
Mayo	Hill House, Mountainview, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	094-9042283 094-9042284	094-9026110
Roscommon	Abbey Town House, Abbey Street, Roscommon	090-6626732	090-6626776

### Appendix 13: Contact details for HSE – Children First Information and Advice Officers.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Contact Address</b>	<b>Contact Numbers.</b>
Information and Advice Person	<u><b>W.H.B</b></u> <i>Galway</i>	Community Care Services, W.H.B, ALDI, Seamus Quirke Rd, Galway	Phone No: (091) 548440 Fax No: (091) 524226
Information and Advice Person	<u><b>W.H.B</b></u> <i>Roscommon, Mayo</i>	Mayo Community Services St. Mary's Hospital, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	Phone No: (094) 42579 Fax No: (094) 20452
Information and Advice Person	<u><b>M.H.B</b></u> <i>Longford, Westmeath, Laois, Offaly</i>	Child Care Services Training & Development, Market Square, Tullamore, Co. Offaly	Phone No: (0506) 28350 Fax No: (0506) 46226
Information and Advice Person	<u><b>N.W.H.B</b></u> <i>Sligo, Leitrim. Donegal, Cavan</i>	Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo	Phone No: (071) 55181 Fax No: (071)
Information and Advice Person	<u><b>S.H.B.</b></u> <i>North Lee, North Cork, Kerry</i>	Ellis House, Ballyvolane Commercial Park, Ballyvolane, Cork	Phone No: (021) 4529010 Fax No: (021) 4529028
Information and Advice Person	<u><b>S.H.B.</b></u> <i>North Lee, South Lee, West Cork</i>	Ellis House, Ballyvolane Commercial Park, Ballyvolane, Cork.	Phone No: (021) 4529010 Fax No: (021) 4529028
Information and Advice Person	<u><b>M.W.H.B</b></u> <i>Tipperary North</i>	Child Care Manager's Dept, Annbrook, Limerick Road, Nenagh.	Phone No: (067) 38314 Fax No: (067) 38301
Information and Advice Person	<u><b>M.W.H.B</b></u> <i>Clare</i>	River House, Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.	Phone No: (065) 6863919 Fax No: (065) 6863983
Information and Advice Person	<u><b>M.W.H.B</b></u> <i>Limerick</i>	87 O'Connell St., Limerick.	Phone No: (061) 483520 Fax No: (061) None
Information and Advice Person	<u><b>S.E.H.B</b></u> <i>Carlow, Kilkenny. Wexford, Waterford, South Tipperary</i>	Community Care, S.E.H.B, Athy Road, Carlow.	Phone No: (0503) 33797/36520 Fax No: (0503) 36550

Information and Advice Person x 2	<b><u>N.E.H.B - Region</u></b>	Old Rooskey Offices, N.E.H.B, Rooskey, Monaghan.  N.E.H.B., 26 Brew Hill, Navan, Co. Meath.	Phone No: (047) 30470 Fax No: (047) None  Phone No: (046) 73178 Fax No: (046) 27359
Information and Advice Person x 3	<b><u>S.W.A.H.B</u></b> <i>Dublin South City, Dublin South West, Dublin West Kildare, West Wicklow</i>	Children and Families, Training and Development Unit, Unit 4044 City West Business Campus, Saggart, Co. Dublin.	Phone No: (01) 4691720 Fax No: (01) 4691728
Information and Advice Person	<b><u>N.A.H.B</u></b> <i>Community Care Area 6,7,8</i>	Child Care & Development Unit, NAHB 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, Park House, North Circular Road, Dublin 7	Phone No:(01) 8823431 Fax No: (01) 8823491
Information and Advice Person	<b><u>E.C.A.H.B</u></b> <i>Community Care Area 1, 2, 10 ( Wicklow)</i>	Southern Cross House, Southern Cross Business Par, Boghall Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow	Phone No: (01) 2014273 Fax No: (01) 2014288

## **Appendix 14: Reception and Integration Agency Code of Practice for Persons Working in Accommodation Centres**

### **1. What is the Code?**

The Code of Practice for persons working in accommodation centres is a list of statements that describe the standards of professional practice required of persons working in accommodation centres as they go about their daily work.

The Code will:

- affirm the standards required, and
- ensure that workers know what standards of practice employers, colleagues, service users and the public expect of them.

### **2. Objective of the Code:**

The objective of this Code is to provide guidelines for all persons who, working in accommodation centres, come into contact with or become involved with the lives of service users. The guidelines set out the practice expected of any person working in accommodation centres. The guidelines, if followed, will contribute to the protection, safety and welfare of service users and will also reduce the risk of false accusations being made against persons working in the accommodation centres.

### **3. Responsibility:**

It is the responsibility of all persons working in the accommodation centres to ensure that they have read and understood this Code of Practice.

### **4. Need for Awareness:**

Good practice will contribute towards the creation of a healthy and safe environment for persons working in the accommodation centres and for residents. It is important to be aware of the impact of behaviour and language. Behaviour or language of a discriminatory nature on the following grounds is neither appropriate nor acceptable:

- |                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| • Age            | • Political Belief   |
| • Disability     | • Race               |
| • Family Status  | • Religion           |
| • Gender         | • Sexual Orientation |
| • Marital Status | • Social status      |

Some examples of the type of behaviour and language that are unacceptable would include the following:

- Bullying/Harassment
- Derogatory Remarks and Gestures
- Destructive Criticism
- Embarrassment
- Favouritism
- Humiliation
- Name Calling
- Racism
- Sarcasm
- Sexual Innuendo / Sexual Harassment

## **5. General Guidelines for persons working in the accommodation centres:**

Persons working in the accommodation centres must:-

### **5.1 Maintain a high standard of personal practice at all times in the asylum seeker accommodation service.**

*In particular **you must:***

- 1 Ensure the safety of service users and persons working in Accommodation Centres at all times;
- 2 Follow all Health and Safety Policies and Procedures;
- 3 Adhere to the Child Protection Guidelines for Accommodation Centres;
- 4 Minimise the risk of false allegations against staff by establishing safeguards;  
and
- 5 Establish appropriate record keeping mechanisms in line with existing policy in which to document unusual or concerning incidents.

*In particular **you must not:***

- 1 Abuse, neglect or harm service users or colleagues;
- 2 Exploit service users or colleagues in any way;
- 3 Abuse the trust of service users or the access you have to personal information about them or to their property;
- 4 Form inappropriate personal relationships with service users;
- 5 Discriminate unlawfully or unjustifiably against service users or colleagues;
- 6 Condone any unlawful or unjustifiable discrimination by service users or colleagues;
- 7 Put yourself or other people at unnecessary risk;
- 8 Behave in a way, inside or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to work with service users;

- 9      Make comments or jokes which may give offence or which could be construed as inappropriate; or
- 10     Use offensive language and inappropriate behaviour.

## **5.2    Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being and promote the interests of the service users.**

This includes:

1. Treating each service user as an individual;
2. Respecting to the greatest extent possible the individual views and wishes of the service users in your care;
3. Respecting and maintaining the dignity and privacy of service users; and
4. Respecting diversity and different cultures and values.

## **5.3    Strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of the service users.**

This includes:

1. Being honest and trustworthy;
2. Communicating in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way;
3. Respecting confidential information about service users;
4. Being reliable and dependable;
5. Honouring commitments, agreements and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explaining why to service users;
6. Declaring issues that might create conflicts of interest and making sure that they do not influence your judgement or practice; and
7. Adhering to policies and procedures about accepting gifts and money from service users.

## **5.4    Promote the independence of the service users.**

This includes:

1. Bringing to the attention of your employer, and/or the appropriate authority, resource or operational difficulties that might get in the way of the delivery of safe care;

2. Informing your employer, and/or the appropriate authority, where the practice of colleagues may be unsafe or adversely affecting standards of care;
3. Complying with employers' health and safety policies, including those relating to substance abuse;
4. Taking complaints seriously and responding to them or passing them to the appropriate person; and
5. Recognising and using responsibly the power that comes from your work with service users.

### **5.5 Respect the rights of service users while seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people.**

This includes:

1. Following risk assessment policies and procedures to assess whether the behaviour of service users presents a risk of harm to themselves or others;
2. Taking necessary steps to minimise the risks of service users from doing actual or potential harm to themselves or other people; and
3. Ensuring that relevant colleagues and agencies are informed about the outcomes and implications of risk assessments.

### **5.6 Be accountable for the quality of their work.**

This includes:

1. Meeting relevant standards of practice and working in a safe, lawful and effective way;
2. Maintaining clear and accurate records as required by procedures established for your work;
3. Informing your employer or the appropriate authority about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to do your job competently and safely;
4. Seeking assistance from your employer or the appropriate authority if you do not feel able or adequately prepared to carry out any aspect of your work, or you are not sure about how to proceed in a work matter;
5. Working openly and co-operatively with colleagues and treating them with respect;
6. Recognising that you remain responsible for the work that you have delegated to other workers; and

7. Recognising and respecting the roles and expertise of workers from other agencies and working in partnership with them.

## **6. Breaches of Guidelines:**

Where these guidelines are not being observed by persons working in accommodation centres this should be addressed by contacting the management of the centre.