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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
June 2015

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Working Group on the Protection Process including Direct Provision and Supports for Asylum Seekers was established by the Minister for Justice and Equality, Ms Frances Fitzgerald TD and the Minister of State with special responsibility for New Communities, Culture and Equality, Mr Aodhán Ó Ríordáin TD in October 2014 pursuant to a commitment in the Statement of Government Priorities 2014–2016.
2. The terms of reference assigned to the Working Group were as follows:

Having regard to the rights accorded to refugees under the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and bearing in mind the Government’s commitment to legislate to reduce the waiting period for protection applicants through the introduction of a single application procedure, to recommend to the Government what improvements should be made to the State’s existing Direct Provision and protection process and to the various supports provided for protection applicants; and specifically to indicate what actions could be taken in the short and longer term which are directed towards:

 - (i) improving existing arrangements in the processing of protection applications;
 - (ii) showing greater respect for the dignity of persons in the system and improving their quality of life by enhancing the support and services currently available;

ensuring at the same time that, in light of recognised budgetary realities, the overall cost of the protection system to the taxpayer is reduced or remains within or close to current levels and that the existing border controls and immigration procedures are not compromised.
3. Of particular note is that the terms of reference are directed towards the identification of improvements to the existing system rather than the identification of alternatives. Also of particular note is the Government’s commitment to legislate for a single application procedure to reduce the length of time that applicants must wait for a final determination of their claim.
4. The Working Group agreed to approach the task of identifying improvements to the determination process and reception conditions for protection applicants on a thematic basis and established three sub-groups to identify recommendations for consideration by the Plenary as follows:

Receptions conditions

- **Theme 1** To suggest improvements to Direct Provision (i.e. living conditions while in designated centres) aimed at showing greater respect for the dignity of persons in the system and improving their quality of life.

- **Theme 2** To suggest improvements to the supports (e.g. financial, educational, health) for protection applicants aimed at showing greater respect for the dignity of persons in the system and improving their quality of life.

Determination process

- **Theme 3** To suggest improvements to existing arrangements for the processing of protection applications with particular regard to the length of the process.
5. The deliberations of the Working Group were informed by the views of those in the system as shared through the consultation process undertaken by the Working Group, and Members' first-hand reports of the living conditions in Direct Provision accommodation centres. The deliberations were also informed by commentary by national and international bodies, the experience and expertise of the Members and their contributions to the Working Group, written submissions received from interested parties and the views of persons with whom the Working Group met.
 6. The Working Group met on eight occasions between 10 November 2014 and 14 May 2015 while the various sub-groups met on 38 occasions between 10 November 2014 and 12 May 2015.

CHAPTER 1 – OVERVIEW OF THE PROTECTION SYSTEM AND APPLICATION TRENDS

7. This chapter provides a brief overview of the international, European and Irish legal and administrative frameworks governing international protection and synthesises the main strands of commentary on the Irish protection system. Applications trends are also discussed.
8. People who have been forced to flee their country due to persecution or other serious harm and cannot safely return there are entitled to international protection, which obliges the host state to grant them residence and afford them many of the social and economic benefits available to nationals.
9. There are two types of protection status: refugee status and subsidiary protection status. Refugee status derives from the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, to which Ireland is a party. Refugee status is given to persons who demonstrate a fear of persecution in their home country due to certain aspects, imputed or otherwise of their identity, such as their religion or their political opinion. Subsidiary protection status derives from European law, viz. the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and is given to persons who do not qualify as refugees, but who, nevertheless, cannot return home because they risk facing serious harm, such as torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, or generalised violence in a war.
10. For the purposes of this report the term “protection applicant” is used to refer to persons seeking refugee status and/or subsidiary protection status. Those who do not

qualify for protection status have the possibility of being granted leave to remain in the State on other grounds including humanitarian considerations. Failing this permission, a deportation order is issued and the person becomes susceptible to deportation. Throughout the determination process the possibility of access to the Courts exists.

11. Of note in relation to the CEAS is that in accordance with the provision of Protocol No. 21 annexed to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, “on the position of the United Kingdom and Ireland in respect of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice”, Ireland is not bound to participate in EU instruments in this area but may opt-in to any it wishes (subject to approval of both Houses of the Oireachtas). Ireland has exercised its option in relation to some but not all of the CEAS instruments. The implications of this are discussed in chapter 3.
12. While it is being determined whether protection applicants are eligible for international protection, they are entitled to basic housing and subsistence. Direct Provision is the means by which the State seeks to meet its obligations in this regard. Direct Provision is a largely cashless system, with the State assuming responsibility for providing accommodation on a full board basis for protection applicants until such time as they are granted some form of status and move into the community, leave the State voluntarily or are removed. It is predicated on the fact that protection applicants are not entitled to work and at the same time are excluded from most social welfare entitlements. Instead, protection applicants receive assistance-in-kind: their basic subsistence needs are met by way of bed and board in accommodation centres dispersed around the country. The centres are open centres in the sense that the residents are not detained. Close to half of all protection applicants reside in Direct Provision.
13. Residents of the accommodation centres receive a nominal weekly allowance for personal items. Protection applicants are also entitled to a medical card and children have access to pre-school, primary and secondary education and ancillary supports such as school transport on the same basis as Irish citizens.
14. When Direct Provision was introduced in 2000 it was envisaged that protection applicants would live in Direct Provision accommodation centres on a short-term basis of not more than six months while their applications were being processed. This, however, is not how things have turned out, with many protection applicants remaining within the centres for lengthy periods.
15. National and international commentary on the Irish protection system has been focused on the conditions in Direct Provision. It is, however, universally acknowledged that the biggest single issue facing protection applicants is the length of time that they have to wait for a final decision on their claim. This is a result of structural faults in the protection determination process. These faults arise from the State’s two-stage sequential procedure where qualification for refugee status is assessed first, and qualification for subsidiary protection is assessed only when a negative refugee decision has been issued. The introduction of a single application procedure (the norm in all other EU Member States) is long-standing Government policy. The intention of the Government is to legislate for a single procedure by way of the International Protection Bill, the General Scheme of which was published on 25 March 2015.

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16. In 2014 protection applications rose for the first time since 2002. The increase was 53%, to a total of 1,448. It is estimated that Ireland will receive approximately 3,000 applications by the end of 2015. The recent upward trend in Ireland is in line with international trends and may continue.

CHAPTER 2 – VIEWS OF PERSONS IN THE PROTECTION SYSTEM

17. Chapter 2 aims to provide a brief overview of the consultation process undertaken by the Working Group and the main themes that emerged.
18. The Working Group took the view that it was essential to hear directly from those most affected by the system and to see first-hand the living conditions in accommodation centres. With this in mind the Working Group engaged in an extensive consultation process over the course of December 2014 and January and February 2015 to ensure that its deliberations were informed by those in the system.
19. The consultation process involved:
- A call for written submissions from adults and children in Direct Provision accommodation centres – submissions were received from 13 groups of residents, and individually from 58 adults and 31 children,
 - Ten regional consultation sessions with 381 participants and visits to 15 accommodation centres,
 - Consultations with particular groups of persons in the system – victims of torture, victims of trafficking and members of the LGBT community – 35 participants,
 - A representative from each of the regional consultation sessions was invited to make an oral submission to the full Working Group – nine accepted the invitation.
20. The output from the consultation process is referred to throughout the report in order to illustrate the wide-ranging concerns that have been identified. A comprehensive report of the consultation process is contained in Appendix 3.
21. A constant underlying theme is one of intense frustration or despair arising from the lengthy determination process and resulting lengthy residence in centres originally designed for short stays of six months. The length of time issue is at the heart of many of the concerns around Direct Provision and the supports available, and the fears of participants that they may not be capable of independent living when they get a final decision on their claim.

CHAPTER 3 – SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING DETERMINATION PROCESS

22. This chapter focuses on the operation of the system, defined for the purposes of the report as comprising the protection process, the leave to remain stage, the deportation order stage and the judicial review process. It examines the effects and the causes of the length of time issue that has been identified as the key problem with the system by a range of sources, not least the residents of Direct Provision accommodation centres. It identifies a range of solutions. It also examines and makes recommendations for improvements to the quality of the determination procedures. The quality of the procedures is integral to ensuring that persons in need of protection are identified at the earliest opportunity.

Length of time

23. The outcome of the detailed examination conducted by the Working Group of those in the system reveals that of the estimated 7,937 people in the system on 16 February 2015, 55% have been in the system for over five years. Of the 7,937 people in the system:
- 49% are in the protection process. Almost a third of them have been in the protection process for more than five years;
 - 42% are at the leave to remain stage. Three quarters of them have been in the system for more than five years;
 - 9% are at the deportation order stage. 88% of them have been in the system for more than five years;
 - approximately 1,000 people are involved in judicial review proceedings relating to the various stages in the system, of whom 66% have been in the system for more than five years;
 - 21% are children,
 - 45% live in Direct Provision accommodation centres – 41% of whom have been in the system for more than five years. The remaining 55% live outside Direct Provision or have left the State.
24. The Working Group concluded that solutions to the length of time issue were required for those in the system a long time and also for the future to avoid a reoccurrence of the problem.
25. For those in the system a long time, the Working Group's proposed solutions are founded on the principle that no person should be in the system for five years or more. The solutions recommended to give effect to this principle need to address the specific stage within the system that a person is at. For instance, a person eligible for protection requires a positive protection decision which can only be delivered through the protection process, while persons with deportation orders cannot be granted status unless a decision is first taken to revoke the deportation order and so on.

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26. In the case of all persons awaiting a decision at the protection process and leave to remain stages who have been in the system for five years or more, the solution proposed is that they should be granted protection status or leave to remain (subject to certain conditions) as soon as possible and within a maximum of six months from the implementation start date (para. 3.128).
 27. In the case of all persons who have a deportation order and who have been in the system for five years or more the solution proposed, as an exceptional measure, is that they should have their deportation order revoked (subject to certain conditions) as soon as possible and within a maximum period of six months from the implementation start date. Leave to remain should be granted, again as soon as possible and within a maximum of six months, subject to certain conditions (paras. 3.134–3.135).
 28. The Working Group recommends that the implementation start date for these proposed solutions should be set by the authorities as soon as possible. It further recommends that at the close of the six month period the authorities commit to a review of the operation of the solution for those in the system for five years or more and prioritise remaining long stay cases.
 29. These proposed solutions involve a fast-tracking of cases within the existing statutory framework but with some modifications and guidance to expedite processing, including in relation to live legal proceedings. The approach will ensure that the integrity of the protection process is maintained. The Working Group was conscious of the importance of maximising the number of people who would benefit while at the same time ensuring that border controls and immigration procedures were not compromised. For this reason the proposed solutions are pitched at those in the system for five years or more. Their implementation would result in 3,350 people potentially benefiting.
 30. To avoid a reoccurrence of the length of time issue, the Working Group makes a number of recommendations for the future. It recommends the enactment of the International Protection Bill and the implementation of the single application procedure as a matter of urgency (para. 3.163).
 31. When the single procedure is implemented, and assuming that adequate resources are allocated to its operation and the quality measures recommended in this report are implemented, final quality decisions on eligibility for protection or, in the alternative, leave to remain should issue to applicants within a 12 month timeframe. Based on the Working Group's analysis it is reasonable to assume a combined protection and leave to remain recognition rate of around 40% in future years, with approximately 60% of future applicants deemed not to be in need of protection or leave to remain. Solutions are required for this latter group to ensure that they can return home in safety and with dignity. The Working Group makes a series of recommendations to improve the options and solutions available for return home – Assisted Voluntary Return and, where that option is not availed of, deportation (paras. 3.312 and 3.330).
 32. Notwithstanding these proposed solutions to avoid a reoccurrence of the length of time issue and all its ill effects for the individuals concerned and for the process, the Working Group considers that a limit on the length of time that a person may spend in the system is desirable. With this in mind it recommends that, following the

introduction of the single procedure, the principle that no person should be in the system for more than five years should continue to be applied (para. 3.166).

Quality of the determination procedures

33. The Working Group examines the determination procedures in place and identifies some concerns and potential solutions. It makes a range of recommendations in relation to improving the legal framework, including how the best interests of the child principle should be reflected in the forthcoming International Protection Bill (paras. 3.178, 3.192, 3.199, 3.203, 3.210, 3.213, 3.216). In relation to quality measures it notes a range of good practice in the determining bodies including in the areas of training and recruitment and urges their continuation. It identifies a range of recommendations across such areas as providing access to legal advice at an early stage (para. 3.255), implementing mechanisms to identify applicants with vulnerabilities at an early stage (para. 3.299), use of interpreters (3.275), strengthening governance arrangements (para. 3.360) and improving communications with applicants at all stages in the system (para. 3.379).
34. The material financial and human resource implications of these recommendations are identified and quantified in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 4 – SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO LIVING CONDITIONS IN DIRECT PROVISION ACCOMMODATION CENTRES

35. This chapter, together with chapter 5, concerns the reception conditions for those who are seeking the protection of the State. The chapter identifies issues of concern in relation to the conditions in which residents in Direct Provision accommodation centres live, and makes a series of recommendations for practical improvements aimed at showing greater respect for their dignity and improving their quality of life. The implications of the High Court judgment in “CA and TA” delivered on 14 November 2014 (and under appeal) are also considered.
36. The accommodation stock comprises a reception centre in Dublin and 33 centres around the country. The centres are for the most part mixed centres accommodating families and single people. Only three of the centres were purpose built. The majority are buildings that were designed originally for different purposes generally aimed at short-term living, including hotels, boarding schools and holiday homes. The bulk of the bed capacity within the centres is within units that are essentially bedrooms. The majority of families are accommodated in such units with no separate living space. The majority of unrelated adults are accommodated in multi-occupancy rooms. Most residents do not have access to cooking facilities.
37. The length of stay in Direct Provision has been identified by residents and others as the key concern – it causes or exacerbates all other concerns around life in an accommodation centre, including:

- the uncertainty overshadowing their lives,
 - the lack of personal autonomy over the most basic aspects of their lives and daily living – cooking, going to the shops, cleaning,
 - the lack of privacy and the challenges of sharing with strangers,
 - the boredom and isolation,
 - the inability to support themselves or their family and contribute to society in a meaningful way,
 - the impact on children of being born and/or living their formative years in an institutional setting,
 - the impact on parents' capacity to parent to their full potential and on normal family life,
 - the loss of skills and the creation of dependency, and
 - the negative impacts on physical, emotional and mental health.
38. The Working Group considered the question of whether a cap should be placed on the length of stay in Direct Provision. With the length of stay being a direct consequence of the length of time that a person spends in the system awaiting a final resolution of their claim, it concluded that the solution to the length of stay issue lies in the implementation of the recommendations in chapter 3 aimed at reducing long stays in the system now and into the future. While resolving the cause of lengthy stays in Direct Provision will bring tangible benefits to those in the system at present and future applicants, the Working Group's examination has identified a range of concerns around the living conditions relating to the physical conditions, management and operational matters, and safeguards and standards, and makes recommendations to address them.

Physical conditions

39. The Members who visited centres invariably described the accommodation units, in particular those that are in essence bedrooms, as cramped and very cluttered with inadequate storage, and unsuited to the multiple purposes that they are required to serve. The Working Group makes a range of recommendations aimed at ensuring that residents have increased physical space and appropriately furnished rooms (para. 4.58).
40. To address the concern that the physical conditions are an impediment to normal family life and child development, the Working Group recommends that 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. It is recognised that it may take some time to reconfigure existing centres or bring new centres on line that meet this requirement. With this in mind, the end of 2016 is identified as the date by which these recommendations should be fully implemented. Other recommendations are made in relation to play and recreation facilities for children and young people (para. 4.75).

41. To address the concerns around living conditions for single persons, 80% of whom are in shared bedrooms, the Working Group recommends that they should have the possibility of applying for a single room after nine months and be offered one after 15 months. They should also have the option of cooking for themselves (para. 4.87).
42. Recommendations are also made under this heading in relation to the food provision in centres to ensure that it is nutritious etc. (para. 4.102), the location of centres to address social exclusion and other issues associated with the remote location of some centres (para. 4.111), and security arrangements to ensure that they are proportionate to the risks identified (para. 4.122).

Operational and management issues

43. The complaints procedure available to residents in relation to the services provided to them was found to be unlawful by the High Court in “CA and TA”. The Working Group considered the Reception and Integration Agency’s (RIA’s) proposed response to that finding and makes a number of recommendations aimed at enhancing confidence in RIA’s internal complaints procedure. It also recommends the extension of the remit of the Ombudsman and the Ombudsman for Children to include complaints relating to services provided to residents and transfer decisions following a breach of the House Rules (para. 4.135).
44. The mechanisms available to RIA to deal with residents who present a threat to the safety of other residents and staff and the orderly running of the centre are considered, i.e. the involuntary transfer of the resident to another centre or their exclusion from Direct Provision. Recommendations aimed at enhancing the transparency of decisions on involuntary transfers are made (4.146). The pivotal importance of the centre manager in ensuring a positive atmosphere within the centre that is conducive to respect for the dignity of all concerned is identified. Recommendations are made with the aim of identifying the skill set required of a centre manager and ensuring that the provisions in the contract entered into with accommodation providers are enhanced to reflect these requirements (para. 4.155).

Safeguards and standards

45. The Working Group was told of the heightened risks to child welfare and child protection due to the nature of Direct Provision and of the steps taken by RIA and centre management to address it. The Working Group did not have an opportunity to consider in detail the recent Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) inspection report (published on 25 May 2015) in relation to the protection and welfare services provided to children in Direct Provision, but welcomes its findings and the actions proposed by Tusla – the Child and Family Agency and RIA to address those findings. The Working Group makes a number of specific recommendations aimed at addressing concerns around the impact of Direct Provision on child welfare and protection and also recommends that the learnings from the HIQA report should inform the implementation of these recommendations (para. 4.199).

46. The Working Group considered the impact of living in Direct Provision on vulnerable persons including victims of torture, victims of trafficking and others. In order to ensure that those with vulnerabilities are identified and that they are appropriately assisted, it is recommended that the existing HSE health screening service for protection applicants be reviewed and strengthened so as to facilitate a multi-disciplinary needs assessment at an early stage (4.210).
47. A variation in the quality of the physical conditions across the accommodation stock and in the quality of the services provided is clearly evident. The implication of these variations is that the adverse effects of living in Direct Provision for a lengthy period – impacts on privacy; physical, emotional and mental well-being; normal family life; and child development – are amplified for those required to live in centres at the lower end of the spectrum. The Working Group recommends the establishment of a standard-setting committee to reflect Government policy across all areas of service in Direct Provision. In addition, an inspectorate, independent of RIA, should be established to carry out inspections against the newly approved standards (para. 4.226).
48. The material financial and human resource implications of these recommendations are identified and quantified in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5 – SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO SUPPORTS FOR PERSONS IN THE SYSTEM

49. This chapter continues the examination of the reception conditions for those who are seeking the protection of the State. It examines the supports available to those in the system and makes a series of recommendations for practical improvements aimed at showing greater respect for their dignity and improving the quality of their lives. Key areas of concern, as identified by those who participated in the consultation process and others, include: the financial supports available to supplement what is provided by Direct Provision, the prohibition on access to the labour market, barriers to education for adults, and the supports available to those granted status to assist them in moving into the community and getting on with their lives.

Financial supports

50. In relation to the financial supports available to supplement what is provided by Direct Provision, the Working Group considered the weekly allowance payable to those in Direct Provision – €19.10 per adult and €9.60 per child for personal items – which has remained static since it was first introduced in 2000. The Working Group heard that residents spend the allowance on essential items that are not covered by Direct Provision or other supports and that it is wholly inadequate to cover those essential items: prescription charges and other health care costs, clothing including for school-going children, supplementary food, etc.
51. The Working Group concluded that it would be appropriate in the case of adults to recommend an increase that would restore the ratio between the weekly allowance

and the Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) as pertained in 2000. This would increase the adult rate to €38.74. In the case of children, the Working Group was influenced by the fact that the payment of Child Benefit was discontinued in 2004 and concluded that the weekly allowance payable in respect of children should be aligned with the increase for a qualified child currently payable under the SWA in respect of children, i.e. €29.80 (para. 5.30).

Access to the labour market

52. The Working Group was very conscious of the sensitivities around this issue in view of the long-standing Government policy and statutory provision relating to the prohibition on protection applicants seeking or entering employment and the rationale for that policy as explained by officials. The Working Group recognised the significance attached by persons in the system to a right to work and was acutely aware of the expectation that a strong recommendation would be forthcoming in this area. After length of time waiting a final decision, a right to work was the issue of most concern raised by Direct Provision residents in submissions during the consultation process. Many of the human costs associated with the ban on access to employment are similar to the negative impacts of living long term in Direct Provision. These include: boredom, isolation and social exclusion; obsolescence of skills and creation of dependency; and negative impacts on physical, emotional and mental health. The right to work has also been a priority focus of commentators, academics and NGOs, given that Ireland's position is out of line with the policy of the majority of EU Member States on this matter, including the United Kingdom.
53. Having regard to the foregoing, the Working Group recommends that 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 cooperated with the protection process (under the relevant statutory provisions), should be included in the forthcoming International Protection Bill and should be commenced when the single procedure is operating efficiently. This recommendation reflects the minimum standard across other Member States and 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 (para. 5.49).

Access to education

54. The ease with which protection applicants can access education varies considerably depending on the stage they are at in the education cycle. Children are entitled to access pre-school and primary and second-level education in a manner similar to Irish nationals. The major issues of concern identified related to school leavers and other adults.
55. In relation to school leavers, the Working Group recommends the extension of student supports for third-level and Post Leaving Certificate courses to persons who are protection applicants or are at the leave to remain stage, have been in the Irish school system for five years or more, and satisfy the relevant academic and other eligibility

criteria. The Working Group welcomes the public commitment by the Minister for Education and Skills in this regard (para. 5.70).

56. In relation to other adults the Working Group identified financial and other barriers to their accessing further and higher education. The Working Group makes a series of recommendations aimed at lowering those barriers, including a recommendation that the educational institutions consider an initiative to apply the EU/EEA rate of fees payable to persons in the protection process or at the leave to remain stage for five years or more (para. 5.82).

Supports for those granted status

57. Former protection applicants face a range of problems when they are granted status (refugee status, subsidiary protection status or leave to remain) and are free to establish themselves in mainstream living and integrate into society. Those who have been living in Direct Provision generally experience greater difficulties than those who have been living in the community during the course of the determination process. The Working Group heard that in recent times the challenges faced by residents have become particularly acute due to the shortage of accommodation across the State, but particularly in Dublin and other cities. As of 16 February 2015 there were 679 persons with status residing in Direct Provision. In many cases the persons concerned had been granted status several months previously. Once persons are granted status, issues around accessing suitable accommodation, accessing mainstream services and supports, and finding employment greatly affect their capacity to rebuild their lives and integrate through mainstream social inclusion.
58. The Working Group considers that the residents of Direct Provision who may require transitional supports fall into two distinct groups: (i) those processed under the existing procedure who will have spent a lengthy period in Direct Provision (the legacy group) and (ii) future applicants whose applications will be determined under the single procedure. The legacy group includes those residents with status living in Direct Provision, and residents who may benefit from the proposed solutions for those who have been in the system for five years or more. Future applicants who are processed under the single procedure are expected to have a final determination within 12 months. While the two groups face similar challenges, their needs and the barriers to their making a successful transition to mainstream living will differ in significant respects.
59. Due to the breadth of the issues involved, the Working Group did not have sufficient time to address the topic in depth and recommends as a matter of high priority that the Minister of State for New Communities, Culture and Equality convene a taskforce of relevant stakeholders to focus on the issues and devise an appropriate integration plan for the legacy group and also to address the transitional needs of future applicants who will be processed under the proposed single procedure (para. 5.169).

Other supports

60. The Working Group considered the health care supports available to those in the system. It welcomes the HSE initiative to exempt residents of Direct Provision accommodation centres from the prescription charges and recommends that it be implemented as soon as possible (para. 5.100).
61. Other areas that are examined and are the subject of recommendations aimed at showing greater respect for the dignity of those in the system and enhancing their quality of life include supports for members of the LGBT community (5.113), supports for separated children (para. 5.134), improved linkages between accommodation centres and local communities (para. 5.152), and finally diversity and equality training for public servants (5.186).
62. The material financial and human resource implications of these recommendations are identified and quantified in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6 – FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

63. The terms of reference direct the Working Group to “recommend to the Government what improvements should be made to the State’s existing Direct Provision and protection process ... ensuring at the same time that, in light of recognised budgetary realities, the overall cost of the protection system to the taxpayer is reduced or remains within or close to current levels ...”.
64. In light of this requirement the Working Group has identified and quantified the material financial and human resource implications of its recommendations for the protection system as defined for the purposes of this report.
65. The financial modelling exercise undertaken by the Working Group demonstrates that the projected savings yielded from the implementation of the proposed solution for those in the system five years or more and the introduction of the single procedure – €194.5m over five years – are sufficient to fund recommendations which give rise to additional costs of €135.4m over the same period. These additional €135.4m costs are broken down between improvements to the protection process of €14.0m, improvements in living conditions in Direct Provision accommodation centres of €69.1m and improvements in supports to applicants of €52.4m. The human resource requirements to deliver the proposed solutions for those in the system five years or more and the efficient operation of the single procedure in its first year are also identified.
66. The financial model shows significant savings with the anticipated introduction of the single procedure in January 2016 on the assumption that the decision-making bodies are adequately resourced and the proposed solution for those in the system for five years or more has been effectively delivered. In the absence of adequate resources it will not matter how speedily applications will be processed under the single procedure

because with new applications far outstripping current processing capacity at first instance, the result will be the development of a substantial backlog of applications.

67. The financial modelling exercise demonstrates conclusively that investing in decision-making not only yields returns in reducing time spent in the system, but also makes financial sense. Each year that a person remains in the system gives rise to accommodation costs of €10,950 on average per applicant. The cost of decision-making is a fraction of this cost.
68. Overall, the costing exercise demonstrates that efficiencies arising from resolving the situation of those in the system for five years or more and eliminating delays in the determination process will outweigh the costs of implementing the Working Group's recommendations to improve living conditions in Direct Provision and to enhance supports for protection applicants.
69. The Working Group recognises that some of its recommendations will have financial implications for the State beyond the protection system, which will give rise to additional expenditure.

