

**RIA Policy and Practice Document on
safeguarding RIA residents against Domestic,
Sexual and Gender-based Violence &
Harassment**

April 2014

Table of Contents

	PAGE
<u>RIA Policy Document</u>	
Chapter 1: Introduction	3
Chapter 2: RIA Statement on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence & Harassment	4
Chapter 3: Definitions	6
<u>RIA Practice Document</u>	
Chapter 4: Reporting Structures	8
Chapter 5: Reporting Procedures	10
Chapter 6: Record Keeping	18
Appendix A: Reporting Template	19

RIA POLICY DOCUMENT

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) is responsible for the accommodation of asylum seekers under the Government policy of direct provision and dispersal which was introduced in 1999. It is a functional unit of the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of the Department of Justice and Equality.

Direct Provision means that the State, through RIA, assumes responsibility for providing suitable accommodation and certain other services for asylum seekers on a full board basis. Services including health, welfare and education are provided by the appropriate Departments on a mainstreamed basis.

Personnel in centres are employees or sub-contractors of the proprietor of the centre concerned with whom RIA has a contract. Nonetheless, it is a condition of the contract that policies such as this apply to all staff and residents.

This policy and practice document deals with safeguarding RIA residents against domestic, sexual and gender-based violence and harassment. RIA will review this policy regularly and will initiate measures to improve the prevention of and response to domestic, sexual and gender based violence and harassments in its reception / accommodation centres. This policy complements other existing RIA protection policies, viz:

➤ **Child Protection Policy.**

Since 2006 RIA has had a comprehensive Child Protection Policy in place based on the HSE's Children First - National Guidelines for the protection and welfare of children. A Child and Family Services unit, in RIA, is well established and its role is to manage, deliver, coordinate, monitor and plan all matters relating to child and family services for all persons residing in RIA accommodation centres and to act as a conduit between RIA and the HSE.

➤ **Garda Vetting Policy.**

Since 2009, all staff in centres under contract to RIA are Garda vetted.

➤ **Complaints Policy.**

Complaints by centre residents are dealt with in accordance with the procedures outlined in RIA's House Rules, a copy of which is provided to all residents and sets out, inter alia, the obligations placed both on the centre manager and the resident. The complaints procedure explains how one party can seek to have breaches of the obligations by the other party resolved.

*Copies of all of these policy documents are on RIA's website –
www.ria.gov.ie*

Chapter 2

RIA Statement on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence & Harassment

We, the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA), and all accommodation centres under contract to it, are committed to establishing safeguards to help protect residents from domestic, sexual and gender-based violence and harassment. We will not tolerate victimisation or harassment of residents or staff in direct provision accommodation centres and the safety and well being of all residents is our paramount concern.

This Policy applies to all persons who are resident in accommodation centres under contract to RIA. It also applies to centre and RIA staff as well.

The key to preventing domestic, sexual and gender based violence & harassment is to promote the message that it is not acceptable behaviour; it will not be tolerated; the perpetrator is the person to blame, not the victim; and that where such behaviours might constitute criminal behaviour they will be reported to An Garda Síochána and prosecutions may follow. Perpetrators must be held to account for their decisions and actions. Positive actions to reinforce this message include an awareness campaign for residents of RIA centres by way of posters, leaflets and information meetings; the implementation of this Policy and the roll out of a training programme for staff.

This Policy recognises that RIA and the centres under contract to it have a duty of care to all residents. This duty requires us to provide safe accommodation which promotes the well being of all of its residents.

To make this Policy work, we will implement an integrated and coordinated response to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence & harassment within our network of reception / accommodation centres and in cooperation with the network of support services around these centres in order to:

- a) Assist in the prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence & Harassment.
- b) Ensure that those who inform management or staff of incidents of domestic, sexual or gender based violence & harassment are given the information and assistance required to allow them to report the matter to An Garda Síochána and that the incident is notified to RIA.
- c) Ensure that any incidents of domestic, sexual and gender based violence & harassment that are witnessed by management or staff are reported to An Garda Síochána if appropriate and notified to RIA.
- d) Ensure that residents who may be experiencing or are at risk of domestic, sexual or gender-based violence & harassment receive information as to how to access the range of supports available from the HSE and community service providers.
- e) Ensure that alleged incidences of domestic, sexual and gender based violence & harassment which are reported directly to RIA staff are brought to the attention

of An Garda Síochána, if appropriate, and notified to manager. In the case of a complaint against centre staff, this should be brought to the attention of An Garda Síochána, if appropriate and the centre manager and contractor.

- f) Ensure that records are kept of incidents and referrals under the scope of this Policy.

Chapter 3

Definitions

Below are definitions of:

- Domestic violence
- Sexual violence
- Gender based violence
- Harassment

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is the use of physical or emotional force or the threat of physical force, including sexual violence in close adult relationships. It can also involve:

- emotional abuse
- the destruction of property
- isolation from friends, family and other potential sources of support
- threats to others, including children
- stalking
- control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone.

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is any sexual act that is forced against someone's will. Sexual violence occurs if a person is forced to participate in a sexual act without their consent. It may include rape or other types of sexual assault. The force involved may take the form of threats, coercion or physical violence. Sexual assault is an act of violence. It is an invasion of physical and personal integrity

Gender Based Violence

The term gender-based violence is used to distinguish common violence from violence that targets individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender. It is violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender or sex. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. While both males and females can be victims of gender-based violence, women and girls are the main victims.

Gender-based violence shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to the following:

- a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including beating, verbal abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse of children in the household, dowry-related violence, rape, female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation. This includes threats of such behaviour.

- b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking and forced prostitution.

Harassment

Harassment, including sexual harassment, is any form of unwanted conduct relating to any of the nine discriminatory grounds listed hereunder which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

- gender,
- marital / civil status,
- family status,
- sexual orientation,
- religious belief,
- age,
- disability,
- race or membership of the traveller community

Many forms of behaviour may constitute harassment. It can take the form of a verbal, physical or psychological attack, and can be openly aggressive or subtly hidden. Sometimes harassment can involve repeated and persistent behaviour. A single incident may constitute harassment. Unwanted conduct can take the form of actions, gestures, spoken or written words, pictures etc. It can involve text messages, e-mail, phone calls or other electronic or social media communication.

Sexual harassment can also include offering preferential treatment in exchange for sexual favours.

RIA PRACTICE DOCUMENT

Chapter 4

Reporting Structures under RIA Domestic, Sexual and Gender based Violence and Harassment Policy

Reporting Officers

In order to implement the RIA Policy as laid out in this document, we are adapting some of the structures already in place to implement RIA's Child Protection Policy. Under that Policy, each family centre has a Designated Liaison Officer who is responsible for ensuring that child protection issues are reported to the HSE and to RIA. Similarly, under this domestic, sexual and gender based violence and harassment Policy, a Reporting Officer will be designated in each centre to deal with incidences and complaints that fall under the scope of this policy. In large centres, it will be necessary to designate more than one Reporting Officer. Where possible and practical, the Reporting Officer will be female, and where more than one Reporting Office is appointed in a centre, attention will be paid to gender balance.

In addition, it will be necessary to designate a number of Reporting Officers in RIA to whom alleged incidents must be notified. Given the operational nature of this issue, it is appropriate that this role will be carried out by the RIA Operations Manager and the Higher Executive Officers in his/her area. This designation will ensure that there will always be someone available to receive reports on a 24 hour basis. These Operations staff will have a role analogous to that of RIA's Child & Family Service in respect of RIA's Child Protection Policy.

Role of Centre Reporting Officers

The Reporting Officers in centres are not expected to be counsellors. It will be their responsibility to:

- speak to the alleged victim and seek to ascertain whether they want an incident reported to An Garda Síochána and RIA
- report the incident witnessed by staff to An Garda Síochána and notify RIA, where there is clear evidence of a criminal act having been committed
- where staff are informed of an incident, the reporting officer will advise the alleged victim that they may wish to report the incident to An Garda Síochána and provide assistance to do so if necessary
- provide alleged victims with information on the variety of support services available locally and nationally and how they can access them
- keep the alleged victim informed about developments concerning the complaint

Role of RIA Reporting Officers

It will be the responsibility of RIA Reporting Officers to:

1. Receive referrals from centres under this Policy.
2. Log all referrals and cross check with files of person against whom a complaint is made and the complainant to see if there have been any previous referrals.
3. Notify RIA Child and Family Services Unit of the incident to enable them to identify whether there may be any children at risk either related to the person against whom the complaint is made or the complainant.
4. Discuss any referrals with the RIA Operations Manager to determine what, if any, action is to be taken on foot of the referral.
5. Direct the incident upwards, in the event that the referral relates to a centre staff member, to the RIA Operations Manager and to the Principal Officer who will liaise with centre Manager, Contractor and An Garda Síochána (in the event of a possible criminal act) to determine any action to be taken to ensure the safety of residents and to investigate the alleged incident.
6. Direct the incident upwards, in the event that the referral relates to a RIA staff member, to the Principal Officer who will liaise with Department of Justice Human Resources Unit and An Garda Síochána (in the event of a possible criminal act) to determine any action to be taken to ensure the safety of the residents and to investigate the alleged incident.
7. Report back to Centre Reporting Officers with action, if any, to be taken.

The reporting procedures to be followed by centre Reporting Officers are as set out in the following chapter. These procedures must be followed carefully to ensure the success of this Policy and to engender trust in the policy and procedures by both staff and residents.

Chapter 5

Reporting Procedures

There are a number of scenarios in which accommodation centre staff and / or RIA may become aware of incidences or alleged incidences under this Policy, viz:

1. Staff witness an incident against a resident by another resident, non-resident, service provider, staff member or RIA staff member.
2. Resident tells staff member of alleged incident involving another resident, non-resident, service provider, staff member or RIA staff member.
3. Other person / organisation (e.g. other resident / NGO) advises staff of an alleged incident against a resident(s).
4. Staff identify a possible risk of domestic, sexual or gender based violence or harassment.
5. Resident or person / organisation acting on his/her behalf makes complaint to RIA involving other resident, non-resident, service provider, staff member or RIA staff member.

The steps to be followed in respect of each of these scenarios are set out further below.

Each of the scenarios outlined above require that the response be tailored to the specifics of the complaint / incident. It is important that the alleged victim be kept fully informed and updated as to what is happening with their complaint / incident. The primary assistance that a staff member can give is to provide the resident with details of local and national support services and to ensure that the reporting procedures outlined herein are followed.

It needs to be stressed that while staff should provide a listening ear, they are not counsellors or legal experts and they should not attempt to counsel the resident or to provide advice on the nature of the incident. However, staff should be clear that domestic, sexual and gender based violence and harassment can constitute a crime and should be treated as such and that victims have rights. Consultation and interaction with victims should be respectful of privacy and confidentiality. Staff should also adopt a supportive non-judgemental approach when discussing the events with residents as they may be fearful, distressed and / or traumatised by what they have witnessed or experienced.

It is critical that it is understood that a person against whom a complaint is made under this Policy has rights under natural justice and these rights must be upheld.

Vindicating an accused person's right to natural justice generally means that they should be informed of the allegations made against them, they have the right to representation if they so wish, they should be given the right to reply to the allegations and judgements must only be informed after all the facts disclosed have been considered.

Centre management in cooperation with RIA and where necessary, in consultation with An Garda Síochána, must decide how best to uphold the accused person's rights while at the same time ensuring the safety of the alleged victim and other residents in the centre.

See www.cosc.ie for further information on domestic, sexual and gender based violence and how to seek help

Steps to be followed in scenarios

Scenario 1: Staff witness an incident under this policy against a resident by another resident, non-resident, service provider, staff member or RIA staff member

- Step 1: Security should ensure that no-one is in immediate physical danger. If appropriate, the alleged perpetrator should be asked to leave the centre at least temporarily. Emergency medical assistance should be arranged for resident if required.
- Step 2: In the event of children being involved, either directly or as part of the family, the RIA child protection procedures should be invoked.
- Step 3: Incident must be reported to centre Reporting Officer. (In the event that the Reporting Officer is the alleged perpetrator, the staff member must inform the manager of the centre / general manager of the company).
- Step 4: The centre Reporting Officer must speak to the alleged victim, advise them that such behaviour may constitute a criminal act and that they do not have to put up with it. The Reporting Officer should consult with the alleged victim to ascertain whether they want the matter reported to An Garda Síochána. In addition, the Reporting Officer, in cooperation and consultation with the alleged victim, should seek to identify any practical measures that can be put in place by the centre to reduce the risk of further incidents.

The wishes of the alleged victim must be respected unless there is clear evidence of a criminal act having been committed in which case the incident **must** be reported to the Garda Síochána.

If there is uncertainty regarding whether the particular act constitutes a criminal act, contact should be made with RIA to discuss and decide on course of action. The alleged victim should also be informed of any action that will be taken such as reporting the incident to An Garda Síochána.

(In the event that the Reporting Officer is not available, the staff member must contact An Garda Síochána if appropriate and notify RIA).

- Step 5: RIA must be notified of the incident using the Reporting Template at Appendix A.
- Step 6: Centre Reporting Officer should ensure that victim is given details of local and national support services and how to access them.

- Step 7: If the alleged perpetrator is a resident, action may need to be taken against alleged perpetrator in consultation with An Garda Síochána, if appropriate, and RIA to ensure they are not a danger to the victim.
- Step 8: If the alleged perpetrator is a non-resident / service provider, management should ensure, as far as is possible, that the alleged perpetrator is not permitted on-site pending the outcome of any Garda investigation.
- Step 9: If the alleged perpetrator is a member of staff, contractor must liaise with An Garda Síochána and RIA in relation to arrangements to ensure resident safety pending the outcome of any Garda investigation.
- Step 10: If the alleged perpetrator is a RIA staff member, the centre manager should report the matter to the head of RIA who will make a judgement on whether the matter should be reported to the Garda Síochána and/or Department of Justice Human Resources Unit and whether the officer concerned will be allowed return to the centre pending the outcome of any consequent investigation.
- Step 11: Victim should be kept informed at all times of actions taken in relation to the incident

Scenario 2: Resident tells staff member of alleged incident involving other resident, non-resident, service provider, other staff member or RIA staff member.

- Step 1: Staff member will advise resident that they (the staff member) must inform Reporting Officer.
- Step 2: Emergency medical assistance should be arranged for the resident if required.
- Step 3: In the event of children being involved, either directly or as part of the family, the RIA child protection procedures should be invoked.
- Step 4: Incident must be reported to Reporting Officer. (In the event that the Reporting Officer is the alleged perpetrator, the staff member must inform the manager of the centre / general manager of the company).
- Step 5: Reporting Officer should discreetly speak to the alleged victim to confirm the incident and get the details of same. Reporting Officer should advise them that such behaviour may constitute a criminal act and that they do not have to put up with it. They

should inform them that they have the right to make a complaint to An Garda Síochána and assist them in making a complaint if they so wish. In addition, the Reporting Officer, in cooperation and consultation with the alleged victim, should seek to identify any practical measures that can be put in place to reduce the risk of further incidents.

- Step 6: Reporting Officer must notify RIA of allegation using Reporting Template at Appendix A.
- Step 7: Centre Reporting Officer must ensure that victim is given details of local and national support services and how to access them.
- Step 8: In the event that the alleged perpetrator is another resident, the Reporting Officer must discuss the issue with RIA to determine what action (if any) should be taken against alleged perpetrator in relation to situation. If a report has been made to An Garda Síochána and an investigation is ongoing, the Gardaí may need to be consulted on any action to be taken such as transfers etc. pending conclusion of any investigation by An Garda Síochána.
- Step 9: If the alleged perpetrator is a non-resident or a service provider, Reporting Officer must discuss issue with RIA to decide whether they can or should be allowed on site. If a report has been made to An Garda Síochána and an investigation is ongoing, the Gardaí may need to be consulted on any action to be taken such as transfers etc. pending conclusion of any investigation by An Garda Síochána.
- Step 10: If the alleged perpetrator is another member of staff, the Reporting Officer must inform the Contractor who must discuss with RIA any steps to be taken to ensure the safety of residents pending any investigation by An Garda Síochána and the company itself. RIA may choose to carry out its own investigations into the allegation in tandem with any other investigations.
- Step 11: If the alleged perpetrator is a RIA staff member, the centre manager should report the matter to the head of RIA who will make a judgement on whether the matter should be reported to the Garda Síochána and/or Department of Justice Human Resources Unit and whether the officer concerned will be allowed return to the centre pending the outcome of any consequent investigation.
- Step 12: Victim should be kept informed at all times of actions taken in relation to the incident

Scenario 3: Other person / organisation acting on the residents behalf, informs staff of alleged incident

- Step 1: Staff member will inform Reporting Officer of the allegations made.
- Step 2: Emergency medical assistance should be arranged for the resident if required.
- Step 3: In the event of children being involved, either directly or as part of the family, the child protection procedures should be invoked.
- Step 4: Reporting Officer should discreetly speak to the alleged victim to confirm the incident and get the details of same. Reporting Officer should advise them that such behaviour may constitute a criminal act and that they do not have to put up with it. They should inform them that they have the right to make a complaint to An Garda Síochána and assist them in making a complaint if they so wish. In addition, the Reporting Officer, in cooperation and consultation with the alleged victim, should seek to identify any practical measures that can be put in place by the centre to reduce the risk of further incidents.
- Step 5: Reporting Officer must notify RIA of allegation using Reporting Template at Appendix A.
- Step 6: Centre Reporting Officer must ensure that victim is given details of local and national support services and how to access them.
- Step 7: In the event that the alleged perpetrator is another resident, the Reporting Officer must discuss the issue with RIA to determine what action (if any) should be taken against alleged perpetrator in relation to situation. If a report has been made to An Garda Síochána and an investigation is ongoing, the Gardaí may need to be consulted on any action to be taken such as transfers etc. pending conclusion of any investigation by An Garda Síochána.
- Step 8: If the alleged perpetrator is a non-resident or a service provider, Reporting Officer must discuss issue with RIA to decide whether they can or should be allowed on site. If a report has been made to An Garda Síochána and an investigation is ongoing, the Gardaí may need to be consulted on any action to be taken such as transfers etc. pending conclusion of any investigation by An Garda Síochána.
- Step 9: If the alleged perpetrator is another member of staff, the Reporting Officer must inform the Contractor who must discuss

with RIA any steps to be taken to ensure the safety of residents pending any investigation by An Garda Síochána and the company itself. RIA may choose to carry out its own investigations into the allegation in tandem with any other investigations.

- Step 10: If the alleged perpetrator is a RIA staff member, the centre manager should report the matter to the head of RIA who will make a judgement on whether the matter should be reported to the Garda Síochána and/or Department of Justice Human Resources Unit and whether the officer concerned will be allowed return to the centre pending the outcome of any consequent investigation.
- Step 11: Victim should be kept informed at all times of actions taken in relation to the incident

Scenario 4: Staff identify a possible risk of domestic, sexual or gender based violence or harassment. (For example, in the case of domestic violence, a staff member may have concerns because a resident is regularly seen with unexplained injuries).

- Step 1: Staff member will inform Reporting Officer of their concerns.
- Step 2: Emergency medical assistance should be arranged for the resident if required.
- Step 3: In the event of children being involved, either directly or as part of the family, the child protection procedures should be invoked.
- Step 4: Reporting Officer should discreetly speak to the alleged victim to ascertain whether an incident has occurred and get the details of same. Reporting Officer should advise them that such behaviour may constitute a criminal act and that they do not have to put up with it. They should inform them that they have the right to make a complaint to An Garda Síochána and assist them in making a complaint if they so wish. In addition, the Reporting Officer, in cooperation and consultation with the alleged victim, should seek to identify any practical measures that can be put in place by the centre to reduce the risk of further incidents.
- Step 5: The Reporting Officer must notify RIA of concerns using Reporting Template at Appendix A.

- Step 6: Centre Reporting Officer must ensure that victim is given details of local and national support services and how to access them.
- Step 7: In the event that the alleged perpetrator is another resident, the Reporting Officer must discuss the issue with RIA to determine what action (if any) should be taken against alleged perpetrator in relation to situation. If a report has been made to An Garda Síochána and an investigation is ongoing, the Gardaí may need to be consulted on any action to be taken such as transfers etc. pending conclusion of any investigation by An Garda Síochána.
- Step 8: If the alleged perpetrator is a non-resident or a service provider, Reporting Officer must discuss issue with RIA to decide whether they can or should be allowed on site. If a report has been made to An Garda Síochána and an investigation is ongoing, the Gardaí may need to be consulted on any action to be taken such as transfers etc. pending conclusion of any investigation by An Garda Síochána.
- Step 9: If the alleged perpetrator is another member of staff, the Reporting Officer must inform the Contractor who must discuss with RIA any steps to be taken to ensure the safety of residents pending any investigation by An Garda Síochána and the company itself. RIA may choose to carry out its own investigations into the allegation in tandem with any other investigations.
- Step 10: If the alleged perpetrator is a RIA staff member, the centre manager should report the matter to the head of RIA who will make a judgement on whether the matter should be reported to the Garda Síochána and/or Department of Justice Human Resources Unit and whether the officer concerned will be allowed return to the centre pending the outcome of any consequent investigation.
- Step 11: Victim should be kept informed at all times of actions taken in relation to the incident

Scenario 5: Resident makes a complaint against a resident, non-resident, service provider, other staff member or RIA staff member in complaint to RIA

- Step 1: RIA Staff Member informs RIA Operations Manager that complaint has been made. In the event that the Operations Manager is the person against whom the complaint was made, the staff member should inform the Principal Officer.

- Step 2: RIA Reporting Officer advises resident that RIA is obliged to inform An Garda Síochána (if they believe that a criminal act may have been committed).
- Step 3: RIA Reporting Officer informs RIA Principal Officer and RIA Child & Family Services Manager (as appropriate).
- Step 4: RIA informs An Garda Síochána of allegations if a criminal act is believed to have taken place.
- Step 5: RIA to liaise with Reporting Officer, contractor and / or manager in relation to arrangements to ensure residents safety pending outcome of any Garda investigation. The centre Reporting Officer, in cooperation and consultation with the alleged victim, should seek to identify any practical measures that can be put in place to reduce the risk of further incidents.
- Step 6: RIA must ensure that victim is given details of local and national support services and how to access them.
- Step 7: If the alleged perpetrator is a RIA staff member, the head of RIA will make a judgement on whether the matter should be reported to the Garda Síochána and/or Department of Justice Human Resources Unit and whether the officer concerned will be allowed return to the centre pending the outcome of any consequent investigation.
- Step 8: Victim should be kept informed at all times of actions taken in relation to the incident

Chapter 6

Reporting Templates and Record keeping

- The Reporting Officer in each centre will be required to complete a Reporting Template (see Appendix A) in order to report an incident or alleged incident of domestic, sexual and gender based violence & harassment to RIA.
- For data protection reasons, the Reporting Template should be emailed to the Reporting Officer(s) in RIA.
- A copy of this completed incident report must be kept by the centre.
- A record will be kept by RIA of the investigations that took place into each incident, whether carried out by RIA, centre management, the contractor or An Garda Síochána. The outcome of the investigations (if known) and any actions taken as a result will also be recorded.
- RIA will maintain a list of all reported incidents broken down into categories i.e. domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence etc.
- Records of incidents that fall under the scope of this Policy will be kept in a secure place, accessible only to Reporting Officers. The determining factor will be on a need to know basis.
- In the case of a centre closure, all records that fall under the scope of this Policy must be returned to the Reception and Integration Agency.
- In the event of a person to whom records relate is transferred to another centre, these records must be forwarded to RIA which will determine whether the receiving centre should be given information relating to those records.

Appendix A

Reporting of (alleged) incidences of Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence & Harassment

Centre: _____

Name of Complainant: _____

Is the complainant the alleged victim? Yes No

Person ID Number: _____

Name of person against whom complaint is made: _____

Person ID Number: (if a resident) _____

Details of incident including date, time, witnesses, injuries, medical assistance required etc.:

Are children involved either as part of complainant's family or the person against whom complaint has been made? YES NO

If yes, please ensure a referral is made to Duty Social Work Team and RIA Child and Family Services Unit

Did any adults witness the incident? YES NO

If yes, please give details e.g. persons name, id number, company etc:

Did any children witness the incident? YES NO

If yes, please give details below and ensure a referral is made to Duty Social Work Team and RIA Child and Family Services Unit

Has information on support services been given to alleged victim YES NO

If no, please give details of services available as soon as possible

Have An Garda Síochána been advised of complaint? YES NO

If no, please give reason:

Has complainant been advised that referral has been made to An Garda Síochána and RIA? YES NO

If no, please ensure that complainant is made aware of status of complaint without delay.

For RIA use only

Upon examination, this incident is deemed by RIA to fall into one of the following categories below:

Category:	Please tick one
<u>Domestic Violence</u>	
<u>Sexual Violence</u>	
<u>Gender Based Violence</u>	
<u>Harassment</u>	

<u>Age of alleged victim</u>	<u>Gender of alleged victim</u>	<u>Relationship of alleged perpetrator to alleged victim (please choose from list below*)</u>

*

- A Spouse / Partner
- B Other family member
- C- Other resident
- D Centre staff member
- E RIA staff member
- F Non-resident

Agreed Report of Working Group on safeguarding RIA residents against domestic, sexual and gender based violence

This Working Group, the membership of which is at appendix (i), met on 5 occasions, the first of which was on 26th November 2012 and the last on 16th October 2013. Its terms of reference are appendix (ii).

At its final meeting the Working Group agreed the following:

Policy Document

1. The RIA Policy and Practice Document on safeguarding RIA residents against Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence & Harassment). This will be translated into four languages – French, Arabic, Russian and Farsi (as well as being available in English) – and copies distributed to all RIA accommodation centres. This policy, as well as this Agreed Report and the awareness poster referenced below, will be published on the RIA website – www.ria.gov.ie. This policy will come into force upon completion of the training programme for RIA and centre staff outlined below.

Posters

2. The awareness poster at appendix (iii) which has been distributed and placed on public display in all RIA centres. This has also been translated into four languages – French, Arabic, Russian and Farsi as well as being available in English.

Training

3. RIA will, subject to appropriate tendering procedures, arrange for the training in the following sequence for the following:
 - a. Centre Reporting officers
 - b. RIA Reporting officers
 - c. Centre staff
 - d. Residents (awareness training)

The purpose of this training will to ensure that policy document as agreed is understood and implemented in a comprehensive fashion.

Data

4. All data garnered arising from the implementation of this policy will be collected solely for the purpose of improving protection standards in centres and will not be made publicly available, through Freedom of Information requests or otherwise.

Women only centres

5. RIA has undertaken, subject to no unanticipated changes in the structures or working of the Direct Provision system, that the Park Lodge centre in Killarney, Co. Kerry will be considered as a 'pilot' women-only centre following its refurbishment in 2014. The profile of the centre – i.e. whether it is used only for suspected trafficking victims, whether teenage male children could reside with their mothers there, and so on – will be determined by RIA in due course.

Independent Complaints Procedure

6. RIA has undertaken that, in those very rare cases where the seriousness and the nature of the complaint warrants it, it will seek to co-opt an independent person to assist and overview the investigation. The intention is that RIA will seek to draw from the Panel of External Investigators used by the Irish Prison Service to investigate particularly serious complaints made by prisoners.

Review

7. RIA will review this policy regularly and will initiate measures to improve the prevention of and response to domestic, sexual and gender based violence and harassment in its reception / accommodation centres. The first review of this policy will take place in May 2015.

Signed:

Noel Dowling

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Niamh Wilson

NIAMH WILSON
Domestic Violence Advocacy Service

Sue Conlan

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Irish Refugee Council

Sophie Magennis

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Appendix (i)
Membership of Working Group

Noel Dowling	RIA
Linda Keating	RIA
Ultan Ryan	RIA
Judy Howard	RIA
Ann Gill	RIA
Stephen Walsh	RIA
Paula Connolly	Cosc
Salome Mbugua	AKIDWA
Ejide Dhala	AKIDWA
Laura McGonigle	AKIDWA
	Ruhama
Jane Baird	DRCC
Leonie O'Dowd	DRCC
Niamh Wilson	DVAS
Sharon Waters	IRC
Sophie Magennis	UNHCR
Enda O'Neill	UNHCR

Terms of Reference

This working group will:

1. Examine how awareness can be raised amongst the residents of direct provision centres of the issues of sexual harassment and gender based violence. This may include the creation of a policy / guidance document for the centres and / or pamphlets and posters.
2. Based on the above, examine how training for centre managers and staff in the area of sexual harassment and gender based violence can be established or improved.
3. Examine the existing gender profiles in RIA accommodation to see if a reconfiguration is desirable or practicable.

SAY NO TO VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT



WHO CAN I TALK TO?

Centre Manager

Family Doctor

An Garda Síochána (Irish Police)

National Sexual Violence Helpline (for men & women)
1800 77 8888

National Domestic Violence Helpline (for women)
1800 341 900

AMEN (men experiencing domestic violence)
046 9023718

BeLonG To
(supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender young people)
01 6706233
www.belongto.org

More information and a list of national and local support services is available on
www.cosc.ie



www.cosc.ie

In an emergency, always call 112 or 999