HIQA publishes overview of first year of inspections of IPAS centres

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) published a one-year overview on the monitoring and inspection of the International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) centres.

Key findings include:

- 57% of service providers inspected were found to be delivering safe, high-quality services in line with national standards.
- 56% of centres inspected did not have effective governance and management arrangements in place and had poor, or no, reporting systems. These service providers were less likely to know how their staff were performing and did not have a good sense of risk.
- 74% of service providers had limited or no systems in place to identify or monitor risk in their centres.
- 37% of centres inspected by HIQA did not have policies and procedures in place to protect residents from experiencing harm.
- 87% of centres inspected had managers who put initiatives in place to consult with the residents of their centres. 35% of staff across the centres HIQA inspected in 2024 were not appropriately vetted by An Garda Siochana.

HIQA found that many service providers ensured that their centres were of good standard and services delivered by them are safe, of a high quality, and promoted and protected the rights of residents. Most adults, children and young people reported generally positive experiences living in accommodation centres. However, the report also highlights that considerable room for improvement remains across a range of areas including governance and management, risk management and safeguarding and protection.

The inspections throughout 2024 showed that the current system of international protection accommodation is not adequately resourced to meet demand. This has had a notable impact on the quality of accommodation and services that are being provided to some people seeking protection in Ireland.

For example, during inspections HIQA found that not all staff were appropriately vetted, and a significant number had not been vetted by An Garda Siochana.

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HIQA required urgent action on this issue and is currently assured that relevant staff members have now been appropriately vetted. While there are good levels of compliance, very clear challenges remain to ensure that asylum seekers, who are often a vulnerable population, are safe and protected from risk.

Governance and management arrangements need to be strengthened in accommodation centres to ensure that high-quality, safe services are being provided.

Many providers must place a greater focus on recognising and managing risks and putting effective safeguarding and protection procedures in place to ensure safe and person-centered services. HIQA's report highlights overcrowding in the system, where limited access to housing in the community is reducing the availability of beds. The report outlines that 41% of residents living in accommodation centres inspected by HIQA had received refugee status or had valid permission to remain in Ireland but continued to live in accommodation centres due to a lack of alternatives.

Source(s)

- Health Information and Quality Authority | An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis agus Cáilioch Sláinte (5 March, 2025), [Monitoring of international protection accommodation centres in 2024], https://www.hiqa.ie/sites/default/files/2025-03/Monitoring-of-International-Protection-Accommodation-Service-centres-in-2024.pdf

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