

Implications for HIQA of the crisis in Ukraine

Background

At the March Board meeting, it was suggested that the EMT should consider if there are any implications for HIQA of the evolving crisis in Ukraine. EMT has considered issues arising for each function and addressed as appropriate.

A summary of the issues raised, the resultant actions and the proposed additional actions where appropriate, was provided to the Board in May for information. The Board has requested an ongoing update on these issues.

Issues raised

Issues which have been raised for consideration are outlined below with any subsequent action already taken and any additional action proposed:

- **Nursing homes**

Issue

One nursing home has used an unregistered part of the home to accommodate people from Ukraine.

Update on actions

An inspection was conducted in the centre over a number of days and preliminary findings indicate that there is no impact on the residents' quality of life or safety or the running of the designated centre as a result of this arrangement.

- **Designated centres for people with disabilities**

No issues identified

- **Children's Services**

Tusla continue to support unaccompanied minors arriving from Ukraine through the range of their services.

No issues identified

International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS)

Issue

The various teams within the Department of Children Equality, Disability Integration and Youth (DECDIY) that either have responsibility for the day-to-day management of the IPAS system, or that are responsible for establishment of the new system of accommodation, are

also impacted by the responsibility of that Department for coordinating the accommodation of Ukrainian refugees. This has impacted on the Department's ability to progress other work inclusive of progression of the new system of accommodation for persons other than people from Ukraine who are seeking International Protection in Ireland.

There is therefore a strong possibility that HIQA may be requested to continue our interim monitoring role against National Standards in IPAS beyond the end of 2024 as was originally requested. However such a formal request has not as yet been received by HIQA. It should also be noted that to date there has been no indication from the Department that they would request that HIQA's role extends to the monitoring of accommodation provided to people from Ukraine.

Action(s) to date

This matter remains a standing item for discussion with DCEDIY as part of HIQA's ongoing routine engagement with the Department in preparation for the originally planned role for HIQA. It has been outlined to HIQA that in policy terms the Department regards the pre-existing plans for the scope of HIQA's role, with its focus on non-Ukrainian IPAS accommodation, to be unchanged.

Potential additional action – dependent upon how this evolves

As the Ukrainian situation looks likely to remain an ongoing challenge for the State for the foreseeable future, and given that the relevant Minister is on record as stating that this has impacted on timelines for implementation of the IPAS White Paper, it may make sense in time for HIQA to formally seek clarity as to expectations relating to the duration of our interim role in this area. However, it is suggested that for now the immediate priority is to establish the role inclusive of ensuring we have the legal remit to assume this responsibility. Work is ongoing with DECDIY to progress same, and HIQA will have all internally required measures in place to do so by September 2022.

- **Healthcare monitoring**

Issue

The additional influx of refugees has resource implications for the health service which is already strained due to underlying capacity deficits and COVID-19. The extra demands result from the gross increase in population numbers, a high proportion of women and children in that cohort meaning that service utilisation in these areas will be impacted, and also the impact of the conflict – especially on children and adolescents (implications for CAMHS in particular).

Proposed action

Healthcare monitoring has the ability to take these factors into account on inspection. With the recent launch of HIQA's new inspection methodology against the *National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare* for inpatient facilities, HIQA has an approach to inspection which may be readily adaptable to any risks that may arise as a consequence of these factors across the health service. However to date, no further specific action has been deemed necessary in response to this evolving situation.

- **Budget implications for the health and social care system**

Issue

The very significant level of government funding required to manage the refugee situation may require funds to be re-directed from within areas of health and social care that HIQA interfaces with. This may begin to emerge through monitoring or regulation.

- **Cyber security**

Issue

HIQA is aware of the increased risk of cyber-attack as a direct consequence of the conflict. HIQA has 24 x 7 cyber security monitoring in place. This contract was extended from mid May 2022 to mid July 2022. A cyber security tender evaluation was prioritised and completed by end of June 2022. A recommendation paper will be tabled for EMT on 5 July and subsequently will be brought to the Board for approval in July.

Action(s) taken to date

We have 24 x 7 cyber security monitoring service which will continue to be in place until the successful tenderer is on-boarded.

Proposed additional action

A new cyber security tender was issued and evaluation completed. The successful tenderer is identified and on boarding the successful tenderer will commence post Board approval to ensure the continuity of the cyber security monitoring service.

- **Regulation IT systems (PRISM and portal)**

Issue

There should be minimum impact on regulation technology systems (PRISM and portal) as both children's services and planned IPAS are currently outside the scope of PRISM.

Proposed action:

Continuing to manage IPAS outside of PRISM may need to be reviewed if the number of IPAS services increases significantly. This is being monitored. The risk to our existing PRISM system will be a major part in the decision making.

- **IT equipment**

Issue

If additional staff are required to regulate an increased number of centres and services, this would result in an increase in technology hardware requirements for new starters.

Action(s) taken to date

We have ordered additional equipment due to the anticipated logistical delivery issues in the market as well as expected new starters for IPAS and other commencements. Some of the ordered equipment has been received to date and this issue is being closely managed.

- **HRB funded placements for researchers**

Issue

HRB has announced a supplemental grant scheme targeted to eligible active grant awards (includes HIQA's CICER and LENS awards) which aims to enable researchers from Ukraine to remain engaged with health and social care research. The Ucrisis 2022 grant scheme will operate on a rolling basis, with an accelerated application review process in place to facilitate timely announcement of outcomes. If HIQA decides to pursue this grant scheme, it will require identification of researchers from Ukraine with suitable skills and development of appropriate research projects that support current research and take consideration of the duration of ongoing awards. HTA researchers in Ukraine are continuing to work with their agency albeit remotely in some cases. Their work is focussed on reorganising access to specialist services as required.

- **Health & Social Care Regulatory Forum**

Issue

Following a discussion at the recent Health and Social Care Regulatory Forum meeting, the Chair wrote to the Secretary General of the Department of Health emphasising its willingness to work with the Department in responding to the Ukraine crisis to reduce the risk to public health, through regulation, promotion of safety and offering the expert knowledge of the constituent organisations. The Department has responded with details of its Ukrainian refugee coordination group.