

Charities can no longer continue to cover basic needs of residents of emergency accommodation

- Doras calls on Government to take responsibility for provision of basic services & essential supplies -

Media statement: 16th August 2019

Residents of emergency accommodation in Limerick have been dependent on donations from individuals and organisations since their arrival in early July 2019. Basic services, supports and essential supplies have not been adequately provided by the Department of Justice and Equality to date but the dependency on the generosity and goodwill of local individuals and organisations cannot be sustained indefinitely.

Seán McSweeney, CEO of Doras, said:

“Doras has been working with local organisations to ensure that basic laundry services are available to residents for the past 7 weeks but this interim service, which is provided voluntarily by individuals and organisations, cannot continue because of limited resources. Providing such basic services is clearly the responsibility of the State and failure to provide for resident’s basic needs is a breach of Ireland’s EU and international obligations.

The provision of interim laundry services to residents is now being discontinued and we expect the Department of Justice to take responsibility and commence laundry services in the coming days, as they should have done 7 weeks ago.”

McSweeney continued:

“Emergency accommodation, where private contractors are only paid to provide bed and board, is entirely unsuitable and inappropriate, particularly for children and families.

Essential supplies for young babies, such as baby formula, have not been adequately provided by the State, with families relying on donations from our supporters and voluntary groups.

The school term starts in a matter of weeks and families have no information available to them about how long they will be living in these precarious conditions and if parents should try to enroll children in local schools.”

Emergency accommodation has now been in use for 10 months across the country, accommodating more than 1,000 people in over 30 centres.

John Lannon, Chairperson of Doras, said:

“Emergency accommodation can no longer be passed off as a temporary measure by the Department of Justice. The State has an obligation to provide for the basic needs of international protection applicants, under the EU Reception Conditions Directive, regardless of capacity issues. Doras will continue to monitor the situation and we will liaise with the Department of Justice on this until appropriate solutions have been implemented.”

ENDS

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NOTES

- Since 1st July 2019, emergency hotel accommodation has been provided to international protection applicants in Limerick. Individuals and families with babies and young children are being accommodated on a temporary basis due to lack of capacity in Direct Provision accommodation.
- Over 1,000 people are currently accommodated in emergency accommodation around the country, outside of the Direct Provision system.
- Doras has been contacted by residents of emergency accommodation nationwide, many of whom express similar concerns and barriers. Key issues expressed by residents include lack of basic information on how to register for a PPS number, apply for a Temporary Residency Card, or apply for a medical card; Lack of access to schools; Inadequate provision of food and basic supplies; Lack of transport and isolation.
- A GoFundMe page has raised over €5,000 for the Movement of Asylum Seekers Ireland (MASI), who have been coordinating donations and undertaking outreach to emergency accommodation: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/babies-children-direct-provision>