



**PRESS RELEASE**

**22<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

**“DORAS REITERATES CALL FOR CLOSURE OF CAHIRSIVEEN CENTRE AND PROVISION OF OWN-DOOR ACCOMMODATION FOR RESIDENTS”**

Doras has written to Minister Flanagan seeking answers to a list of questions relating to the overcrowded conditions in which residents of Direct Provision are required to live, making it impossible for people to follow HSE COVID-19 guidelines on social distancing. This is most notably illustrated in the Skellig Star Direct Provision centre in Cahirsiveen.

Doras calls for the Skellig Star Direct Provision centre in Cahirsiveen to be closed with immediate effect, and for residents to be moved to appropriate own-door accommodation. We also call on the Minister to apologise to residents of the centre and to clarify details such as when residents might expect the central heating system to be fixed and if alternative accommodation will be sourced.

John Lannon, Director of Doras, said:

“Minister Flanagan has acknowledged some of the shortcomings and problems relating to the accommodation provided in Cahirsiveen. He has also apologised to the local community and businesses in the area regarding same. Doras feels that it would be appropriate for the Minister to extend an apology to the residents of the Skellig Star DP centre, the people most affected, and we urge him to do so without further delay”.

Lannon added:

“Own-door accommodation options, such as vacant student accommodation, should be explored and sourced as a short-term solution for residents of Direct Provision as a matter of urgency. People should not be expected to share a room with strangers, particularly when Government guidelines for the rest of the population advise otherwise.”

Doras has also requested updates on the long-term preventative strategies being developed by the Department of Justice and Equality with regard to COVID-19 and residents of Direct Provision.

Lannon concluded:

“Ireland cannot continue to stand over the system of Direct Provision. Doras has long maintained that living in Direct Provision has a negative impact on people’s physical and mental health. These issues have never been more clearly evident than during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. What has happened in Caherciveen and other direct provision centres demonstrates the urgent need for an alternative non-profit system to be developed.”

**ENDS**

For further media information please contact Brian Vandamme | [b.vandamme@doras.org](mailto:b.vandamme@doras.org) |