

PRESS RELEASE

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Doras calls on parties negotiating the next programme of government to ensure that the abolition of Direct Provision is prioritised.

The Limerick-based human rights and migrant support organisation Doras has issued a call to all parties negotiating the next programme of government to ensure that the abolition of direct provision is prioritised.

“Direct Provision is one of our most visible forms of institutional racism” said Doras CEO John Lannon. “It robs people of their dignity and self-esteem by segregating and infantilising them in institutional settings. In many cases the centres are in remote locations, the buildings are in poor condition, and the food served on a daily basis is of poor quality. The needs of asylum seekers who have experienced trauma and displacement are not met, and people are left for years waiting for a decision on their application for international protection.”

“Limitations on international protection applicants’ access to employment and education serve to make this an indeterminate amount of time in limbo, where a person’s life is effectively placed on hold” he added.

Doras calls on all parties and independent TDs negotiating the next programme of government to commit to the end of direct provision as soon as possible. Recent media coverage and Black Lives Matter protests have demonstrated a surge in public support for improving the way in which the state treats international protection applicants. Doras believes there is an opportunity for the next government to build on that public support as well as the work of the advisory group headed by Catherine Day, and to move to alternatives that respect the rights and dignity of people seeking protection in Ireland.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has displayed how otherwise lengthy bureaucratic processes can be accelerated in times of crisis,” said John Lannon. “Direct provision has been an ongoing crisis for the thousands of people who have been and currently are stuck in the system, and it needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The incoming government needs to seize this opportunity to affect positive change early on.”

ENDS

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Notes

- The Expert Group on the Provision of Support, including Accommodation, to Persons in the International Protection Process (Asylum Seekers), was established in late 2019 by Ministers Flanagan and Stanton. The group is chaired by Dr Catherine Day, former Secretary General of the European Commission. The other members of the group are Dr Frances Ruane (former Director of the Economic and Social Research Institute), Mr Frank Daly (Former Chair of the Revenue Commissioners), Mr Conn Murray (former CEO of Limerick City and County Council), Ms Niamh O'Donoghue (former Secretary General of the Department of Social Protection); Ms. Fiona Finn (CEO of Nasc, the Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre); Nick Henderson (CEO of Irish Refugee Council) and Mr Bulelani Mfaco (MASI).
- Alternatives to Direct Provision previously put forward by NGOs and community organisations include own-door, self-catering accommodation operated on a not-for-profit basis.