



Press Release

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Doras concerns about ongoing safety and wellbeing of residents in

Direct Provision during Covid-19 Pandemic

Limerick-based migrant and refugee support organisation Doras has highlighted renewed concerns about safety and wellbeing of residents in Direct Provision, in light of recurring clusters of Covid-19 in IPAS accommodation in recent weeks.

“Since March, Doras and many other bodies have been calling for an effective response to the threat of Covid-19 in Direct Provision”, said John Lannon, Doras CEO. “Today, Direct Provision centres remain one of the commonly reported locations for clusters, with no clear response planned beyond testing.”

Doras has also raised concerns about the effectiveness of proposed fortnightly Covid-19 testing in centres.

“In various parts of society, including education, commerce and public services, the way in which people operate has been changed to respond to Covid-19. But by and large Direct Provision has not changed”, said Lannon.

“The International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) are introducing regular testing, which may have some positive effects. But we need preventative measures like the reduction of people living in congregated settings, not just detection. To routinely test people that already have to endure Direct Provision serves to treat international protection applicants as the source of the problem, instead of acknowledging that Direct Provision is the problem.”

The lack of clarity relating to transfers and people returning to Direct Provision centres is also a cause for concern for Doras.

“IPAS continue to transfers some people between centres, while others that are seeking transfers are not being accommodated. This is contributing to the sense of fear and trepidation highlighted in a recent Irish Refugee Council report of people’s experiences of Direct Provision during the pandemic. People’s employment or their ability to obtain employment is also at risk because of the failure to ensure people can social distance in Direct Provision centres.”

“There are ongoing concerns about how the Department of Justice is responding to Covid-19 in Direct Provision. We welcome some of the long-overdue changes made in recent weeks, but urge the Department to do more to ensure the safety of people seeking International Protection in Ireland.”

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