



Doras Welcomes Joint Oireachtas Committee Report, Notes Omissions and Calls for Vulnerability Assessments to be Implemented Immediately

Media Statement: 20th December 2019

Doras welcomes last week's Oireachtas report and its recommendations, completed by the Joint Committee on Justice and Equality, which echo concerns voiced by many dedicated independent organisations in this space for a long time. The report clearly highlighted many shortcomings in the current system of International Protection in Ireland, and the forty three recommendations presented can be seen as a call to action for the Department of Justice and the International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS).

"We particularly welcome recommendation 16, which calls for "the urgent implementation of Vulnerability Assessments, to be conducted by appropriately trained and qualified professionals." Placing vulnerable children; victims of trafficking; victims of torture; people persecuted due to their sexual orientation, and any vulnerable people in Direct Provision is not and never has been suitable, therefore, we hope that this recommendation is prioritised," said John Lannon, Doras Director.

"We were, however, disappointed to see that some areas of concern were not adequately addressed. The following insights are drawn from our experience of working in this area for close to 20 years, and the challenges people we work with face each day."

Emergency Accommodation

- The report rightly stated that Emergency Accommodation is not fit for purpose, and should cease as soon as possible, which is welcome. It didn't, however, adequately address what may happen if emergency accommodation continues to be in place, as it appears to be. Reference was simply made to 'comprehensive protocols and good governance procedures'. The National Standards for Direct Provision Centres should be implemented in all accommodation centres, whether they are identified as emergency settings or not. Many people we have worked with have been staying in emergency accommodation settings for well over six months, and there appears to be no indication that this system of accommodation will change.

Children in Direct Provision

- While the inclusion of a number of recommendations on children in Direct Provision was welcome, we believe that the current institutional system of Direct Provision is not a place for children. Children and families especially should be in 'own door' accommodation, as mentioned relating to proposed alternatives to the current system of accommodation in recommendation number two.

Third Level Education

- No reference was made to third-level education for people in Direct Provision. The current Post Leaving-Certificate (PLC) Grant Scheme excludes people who have been in the education system in Ireland for less than three years, meaning that 16 or 17 year-olds who enter secondary school are not eligible to continue on to third level.

- Another concern is that people who hold the right to work are not eligible for PLC Grant Schemes, and must pay full non-EU fees to attend third-level education. This is unnecessarily prohibitive, and does not take into account that a work permit holder may not be able to easily find employment, or may be in a low-wage job, meaning that third level education would be beyond their means.

"We thank the Joint Committee on Justice and Equality, as well as the community/non-governmental organisations which contributed, for completing this timely report, and look forward to working together to see its recommendations implemented." – John Lannon.

End.