



Doras highlight prevalence and complexities of refugee mental health issues on World Mental Health Day

8th October 2021

Refugees and people seeking asylum are up to fifteen times more likely to experience PTSD and depression, and are five times more likely to be diagnosed with a psychiatric condition. On World Mental Health Day, Doras highlights the prevalence and complexities of refugee mental health issues and calls for better access to services and specialised supports.

In an infographic published by Doras to mark World Mental Health Day, issues impacting on refugee mental health are highlighted including delays in the asylum application system and barriers to services.

John Lannon, CEO of Doras said:

“Mainstream suicide prevention and mental health services are out of reach for many of the people we support. Language and cultural barriers remain problematic, while mental health professionals have expressed frustration that they don’t have the time or resources to appropriately respond to the complexities of refugee mental health issues.”

The infographic highlights that both children and adults in direct provision report mental health difficulties due to trauma experienced before coming to Ireland, on the journey to Ireland and after arrival. Parental mental health can have a huge impact on children and on the whole family unit. Single adults living in direct provision may have had to leave their family at home. Family separation causes grief, anxiety and fear for their safety.

Lannon added:

“The prevalence of mental health issues among people seeking asylum is devastating and widely reported. People experience ongoing trauma while living in Direct Provision and awaiting a decision on their asylum application. Plans to end to direct provision are very welcome but we can’t lose sight of the men, women and children that continue to be impacted by the system every day. Better access to services and specialised supports must be prioritised.”

“The development of a national policy to address refugee mental health and the establishment of specialised mental health care teams would go some way towards addressing these issues, which we urge the Government to consider as part of the implementation of the White Paper to end direct provision.”

ENDS