

**Press statement: 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

**“Challenges faced by successful asylum seekers transitioning from Direct Provision”**

**-New Service established by Doras Luimní-**

Recent reports have highlighted the difficulties facing successful asylum seekers, who have received status to remain in Ireland, in leaving Direct Provision centres and entering the private rental market.

In Limerick, Doras Luimní have been alerted to a number of cases whereby recently recognised refugees have been left with no choice other than to continue to live in Direct Provision for up to six months while trying to secure suitable independent accommodation.

Asylum seekers, who have spent up to 10 years living in institutions in Limerick and across the country, surviving on a weekly allowance of €19.10, face a multitude of challenges in their attempts to access private rented accommodation.

In response to the challenge of transitioning from Direct Provision in Limerick, Doras Luimní now have a dedicated volunteer-led service working with and assisting individuals and families with the transition from Direct Provision into Irish society, in particular, by aiding and advising them on their housing options. Six individuals and one family have successfully been accommodated through this service in 2015 already.

Direct Provision is the controversial system of accommodating asylum seekers in residential institutions throughout the country. There are four Direct Provision centres in the Limerick region, accommodating over 400 asylum seekers. Currently, there is no specialised State support in place for those leaving the system.

Doras Luimní’s dedicated volunteer-led service aims to fill the gap where State-funded support services are not being provided. The service includes information provision, advice and guidance on the housing options available to migrants in Limerick.

Karen McHugh, CEO Doras Luimní said “The State has yet to meaningfully respond to the detrimental impact that the Direct Provision system has on asylum seekers in Ireland. The Direct Provision system creates further barriers for migrants who are trying to integrate into Irish society, following lengthy periods of institutionalisation, and support services are desperately needed in order to assist with the transition process. The Direct Provision system has failed and we reiterate our call on the Minister to address the needs of those who have been trapped in this system for so many years.”

The organisation claims that while some of these issues are common to many vulnerable groups, such as the lack of social housing and increases in private rented accommodation, there are specific challenges faced by migrants that need to be recognised and addressed by the Government.

McHugh stated “Asylum seekers, many of whom have been forced to live in institutions in Limerick and across the country for up to 10 years, find it impossible to provide housing references to prospective landlords. Asylum seekers are not allowed to work but many landlords prefer their tenants to be employed, which creates a further barrier to securing accommodation. With a weekly allowance of €19.10, and no entitlement to social welfare assistance until they have been granted status and have a permanent address, securing a deposit and advance rent is yet another challenge.”

Doras Luimní operates a drop-in centre on Monday; Tuesday and Friday mornings at their office in Limerick City Centre. For more information, visit [www.dorasluimni.org](http://www.dorasluimni.org).

## ENDS

### Notes

- ≡ Doras Luimní is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Limerick. Our mission is to promote and uphold the human rights and wellbeing of migrants through personal advocacy, integration development and collaborative advocacy campaigns at the local and national level.
- ≡ [Irish Times article](#) (9<sup>th</sup> March 2015) claims 600 asylum seekers are currently unable to leave Direct Provision, despite having received status, due to housing issues.
- ≡ Recent [UNHCR report](#) claims Direct Provision system impacts negatively on refugee integration into Irish society.
- ≡ Recent announcement by Minister of State, Aodhain O’ Riordain (19<sup>th</sup> February), stated that the Government intends to bring forward amendments to the Equal Status Acts to prohibit discrimination towards tenants, or prospective tenants, on the basis that they receive rent supplements or social welfare payments.
- ≡ Limerick rental prices have jumped by 7% in the last year alone and there is currently a considerable shortfall of accommodation in the city under the current rent allowance limit, particularly for individuals in search of single units.
- ≡ The housing website Daft recently removed the ‘rent allowance not accepted’ filter as requested by the Department of Social Protection. In practice however, many landlords do not accept people in receipt of social welfare or rent supplements.

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