



Press statement: 26 September 2014

Limerick Football Club join campaign to end Direct Provision

Limerick Football Club are the latest organisation to pledge support for the call to end Direct Provision, the failed system of accommodating asylum seekers in Ireland.

The system of Direct Provision has been the centre of increased media attention in recent weeks, with repeated calls for its abolition coming from asylum-seeking residents and NGOs nationwide. The past month has seen protests in Direct Provision centres across the country, including a public day of action in Limerick city centre in August which saw over 200 people support the call to end the system of Direct Provision and close Mount Trenchard, a centre which has been described as one of the worst of the 34 centres nationwide.

Following the overwhelming support received from the general public to call for an end to the system, Limerick Football Club contacted Doras Luimní, a human rights and migrant support organisation in Limerick, to pledge the Clubs support for the cause.

Pat O'Sullivan, Chairman of Limerick Football Club, said "Limerick FC are fully supportive of the work carried out by Doras Luimní and particularly their call for an end to Direct Provision. Football is the truly global sport and we, as the regions only professional club are committed to using the sport as a tool to break down barriers on and off the pitch. We fully believe that Direct Provision in its current form runs against our club ethos of inclusion and acceptance for all, and the sooner an alternative solution for these families is found the better. Having had our home in Knockalisheen up to very recently, we made some great friends from within the community and we are delighted to be welcoming residents of Direct Provision centres in Limerick as guests to our game against Athlone Town".

Karen McHugh, CEO Doras Luimní, added "We are very grateful to have the support of Limerick FC, who are a very influential voice in Limerick and will be a great help in raising awareness on this issue among the general public. We are hoping that other organisations and businesses will follow their lead and join us in the call to finally bring an end the system of Direct Provision."

McHugh continued to say "Thousands of men, women and children are suffering as a result of the Government's policy of Direct Provision. Many have been living in these deplorable conditions for as long as ten years. Children have been born and raised in these centres, here in Limerick and nationwide. Now is the time for us to stand together and send a clear message to the decision-makers that enough is enough, this system has failed. There can be no more excuses."

A number of interested individuals, organisations and residents of Direct Provision centres in Limerick have recently come together to form an action group - Limerick Against Direct Provision - to further progress the campaign to end Direct Provision and close Mount Trenchard centre in Foynes.

The Limerick Against Direct Provision group are seeking support from organisations and businesses in Limerick who may be in a position to assist with the campaign and publicly pledge their support for the call to end the system of Direct Provision.

ENDS

Notes

- Doras Luimní is an NGO based in Limerick which has worked to support the rights of asylum seekers since the introduction of the direct provision system 14 years ago. During this time, Doras Luimní has witnessed the detrimental impact of this system on men, women and children's lives.
- Mount Trenchard Direct Provision centre is located 5 km from Foynes village and has been described by many as the worst of the 34 centres nationwide. Three residents were removed from Mount Trenchard by the armed Garda response unit for acting as spokespersons during a peaceful protest held on Thursday 14th August.
- Public call for action was held in Limerick city centre on 22nd August following the incident at Mount Trenchard centre.
- There are a total of 4 Direct Provision centres in the Limerick region, that accommodate close to 400 asylum seekers including approximately 50 children.
- Limerick Against Direct provision group is coordinated by Doras Luimní and comprises individuals and organisation from Limerick who support the call to close Mount Trenchard and end Direct Provision.

The failures of the direct provision system have been well documented and criticism has come from international bodies as well as experts in Ireland:

- Dr Geoffrey Shannon, Special Rapporteur on Child Protection, has raised concerns year on year in his Annual Reports about the risk and reality of child welfare and protection issues in the Direct Provision system. In his [2011 report](#) he stated: "The system of support for those claiming asylum in Ireland, known as Direct Provision, gives rise to profound concerns about the detrimental effect on children growing up in a form of institutionalised poverty with parents unable to adequately care for their children."
- Retired Supreme Court judge, Catherine McGuinness, warned the previous Minister for Justice, Alan Shatter, about the current treatment of asylum seekers, "I would be very concerned that in the future we find ourselves with another huge thing to apologise for, for people who have been kept in institutions for many years with very little supervision and no recourse from the Ombudsman or the Ombudsman for Children and no outside direction on what's happening with them."
- [Former Ombudsman for Children, Emily Logan](#): "We have become quite adept at apologising for the sins of earlier generations. We recognise that Ireland, from the 1920s to the 1970s, was a cold place for some minorities and the marginalised. We are only slowly beginning to face the possibility that we ourselves may not be much better than our predecessors. We have an image of ourselves as a modern, liberal democracy with a commitment to the rule of law and the protection of human rights. To some extent, this image may be justified. But there may also be significant blind spots in our self-appraisal as a society. I suggest that our treatment of asylum seekers over the past decade or so represents one such blind spot."

Contact

- **Karen McHugh**, CEO, Doras Luimní
Telephone: 061 310 328 Email: k.mchugh@dorasluimni.org
- **Aideen Roche**, Communications Officer, Doras Luimní.
Telephone: 061 310 328 Email: a.roche@dorasluimni.org