



Press statement: 8th May 2015

Doras Luimní welcomes the report of the Oireachtas Committee on Public Oversight and Petitions, who have unanimously recommended an end to the system of Direct Provision.

The Committee's recommendations go far beyond the capacity of the Working Group on Direct Provision and the Protection Process, which has been widely criticised for the limited and narrow terms of reference within which the group must work.

Karen McHugh, Doras Luimní, one of the contributors to the Committee said "The Oireachtas Committee's report reinforces our call for an end to Direct Provision, which many organisations nationwide have been advocating for many years. We appreciate the support the Committee has given to this cause but we must now ensure that real action is taken to consider and implement alternatives to Direct Provision."

McHugh added "Substantial evidence and testimonies by residents' points to the failures of the Direct Provision system. These failures have been well documented in countless reports throughout the past 15 years: what we urgently need is action."

The Committee also recommends the extension of the remit of the Ombudsman for Public Service and the Ombudsman for Children; as well as the inclusion of the Direct Provision system under the remit of the Freedom of Information Act.

Leonie Kerins, Direct Support Manager, Doras Luimní commented "Social services have been alerted to more than 1,500 child protection or welfare concerns about young people living in these centres over the past five years, which is three to four times more than is reported among the general community. There is no question that the remit of the Ombudsman must include residents of Direct Provision, the only question is whether the Minister will act."

Doras Luimní attended the launch of the report on Thursday 7th May and raised the issue of the organisation's continued exclusion from Mount Trenchard Direct Provision centre and the lack of Ministerial response relating to same. In response, the Chairman of the Committee, Padraig McLoughlin, expressed his concerns on the matter and promised to raise the issue with RIA and the Minister of Justice, Frances Fitzgerald TD.

The Committee visited 4 Centres as part of their deliberations, one of which is Mount Trenchard, in Foynes. The report states that Alan Hyde, Director of Barlow Properties, the private contracted company responsible for the management of Mount Trenchard, receives €164.50 per resident per week, in contrast with the weekly allowance granted to residents' of €19.10. The report also claims that the contractor pays €10,000 per month on transport costs to and from the isolated centre which is located over 40km from Limerick city. Doras Luimní questions the "value for money" in this respect.

Leonie Kerins said "The Government regularly employ a financial argument when discussing the issue of Direct Provision and use this as an excuse for prohibiting access to the labour market. The

Contractor of Mount Trenchard, Barlow Properties, had accumulated profits of €2.5 million at the end of 2013. If this money was given directly to asylum seekers and they were allowed to live and work in the community as equals, the Government would likely witness a reduction in overall spending in this sector. While working towards this objective, the Government should clearly be contracting the management of these centres to suitably qualified and skilled organisations and individuals, operating on a not-for-profit basis.”

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.
- Barlow properties is the private contractor responsible for five Direct Provision centres in Ireland, including the controversial centre located in Foynes, Co Limerick, Mount Trenchard.
- Karen McHugh made a presentation to the Oireachtas Committee in October 2014, alongside the Irish Refugee Council, the Core Group of Asylum Seekers and Refugees, SPIRASI and Anti-Deportation Ireland.
- The Oireachtas Committee visited Mount Trenchard in December 2014, as part of its research for the purposes of the report.
- The full report of the Oireachtas Committee is available here:
<http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/DirectProvisionReport07052015.pdf>

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