Depaul

Direct Provision Paper

September 2020

Depaul works with the most vulnerable and most marginalised people and those with complex issues, providing them with supported accommodation, resettlement and tenancy sustainment and a route out of homelessness. We believe that everyone should have a place to call home, and we strive to provide people with quality accommodation and support networks through the most difficult time of their life.

Cosán Nua or *'New Path'* is a cross-county Depaul service which works with people living in Direct Provision who have received legal status to remain in Ireland. Depaul's Case Management Workers provide focused support towards resettlement and community integration. We also act as a referral agent to access specialised supports in the areas of mental health, addiction, education, training, employment and legal supports.

At present Depaul have Case Workers across seven counties in Ireland. We assist Service Users to resettle in any part of the Republic of Ireland. We also provide post settlement support services through our Tenancy Support & Integration Worker.

Following the recent consultation with Ms Catherine Day Depaul would like to submit the follow ares for consideration:

1. **New Direct Provision accommodation model**: We would propose a pilot using 50 own door units which could be secured as part on social housing development across a number of sites in particular regions. These 50 units would be provided on a temporary bases whilst the individual or family go through the process. At the end of the process if the application was successful the family or individual can be provided the accommodation on an annual licence for a period of 3 years while they integrate and secure long term home. At this point another unit would then be sources and brought into the service. If unsuccessful once vacated by the applicant the unit would be open for someone else. The support structure would be based on a floating support/ Housing first type model with a team of case managers insuring support structures needed are put in place. The benefits of such a model:

    a. Provides own door and self sustaining accommodation thus promoting independent living.

    b. Integrates the applicants into communities immediately thus reducing stigma and isolation.

    c. Works on the social housing model so buy in from AHBs/ NGOs could be positive.

    d. Allows for managed growth of the project.

    e. Allows for scalability if the model is deemed successful.

2. **Access to CAS funding for migrant designated units:** Allowing some level of social housing development of social housing units for migrants who have came through the protection process would allow for increase options and move on from direct provision type services more quickly and efficiently. This in turn would ensure that direct provision is available for those who need it, in what ever way this will be developed into the future. Currently there is a backlog of people in DP due to the lack of housing options available.

3. Flexibility on where someone coming through the process can live. Currently the process of accessing Local Authority support or properties varies, and in the Las with more pressure strict rules are implemented in regards to connection to the LA. In the case of someone who comes seeking protection and is offered a DP unit this can be in various places based on the availability of DP units and needs. Clearly the rules for connection to the LA is based on people who have been living in Ireland and have chosen where they want to live previously or have grown up, this approach does not work well for people who have came to the state seeking protection and allocated somewhere whilst the assessment is been completed. With this in mind some flexibility should be developed on how someone may choose where they wish to attach themselves to following their application been successful.

4. Time spent in the application process should be retrospectively accounted for if the application is successful, this would go towards consideration for housing etc.. i.e. someone who applies for protection and is in DP for 6 months once deemed appropriate and successful they would be back allocated 6 months on potential waiting lists for accommodation. Currently there are people who have gone through the process for multiple years have now received their letter and are only then able to be considered for social housing waiting lists.

5. **HAP**: Access to homeless HAP should be automatic for anyone coming through DP. The current application of this is a local issue and is based on interpretation. Some thought should be given to vulnerable status been given to those coming seeking protection and been deemed appropriate in line with the status provided to those who are homeless.

6. Development of more peripatetic support teams to facilitate community integration and social support for the first 6 to 12 months of someone's stay within their new community.