31 March 2020

For the attention of: An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, TD; the Minister for Justice and Equality, Charles Flanagan, TD; the Minister for Health, Simon Harris, TD; the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Eoghan Murphy, TD; the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty; the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Katherine Zappone; the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe, TD; the Minister of State with responsibility for equality, immigration and integration, David Stanton, TD; the Minister of State with special responsibility for disability issues, Finian McGrath; Dr Tony Holohan, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health; Paul Reid, Chief Executive Officer, Health Services Executive.

URGENT RE: SOCIAL DISTANCING AND DIRECT PROVISION

Dear Government representatives and State officials,

We are specialists spanning fields of health systems, public health, social policy, law, human rights, migration and racism.

We write to express our utmost concern that the State is continuing at this time to require large numbers of people seeking international protection to live in shared bedrooms, and to share sanitary and eating facilities, within the direct provision system. This has prevented many people from socially distancing according to Government advice, with the aim of avoiding contracting COVID-19 and avoiding passing the virus on to others while they may be asymptomatic.

Many direct provision centres are in rural locations. An outbreak of COVID-19 within a centre, where people have not been in a position to socially distance themselves from one another, could spread rapidly and create a cluster of cases which the local health system in any given location may be unable to manage. It is also important to note that a number of people living in direct provision centres work as care providers for others in the community.

In every region of Ireland at present there are unprecedented numbers of empty hotel rooms, student accommodation units and self-catering holiday accommodation units. We implore you to act now, to provide own-door accommodation and individualised access to sanitation and eating facilities to every family unit and single person in the international protection system, given that such action is practicable at this time. This matter is urgent, given that several cases of COVID-19 in direct provision centres have already been reported.

The small financial allowance provided to people seeking international protection (€29.80 per week for a child, and €38.80 per week for an adult) does not enable those living within the direct provision system to find alternative, private accommodation in order to socially distance themselves from others. On the other hand, in light of the scale of the emergency
socio-economic measures which the Government is putting in place for the rest of the Irish population at this time, it is reasonable to expect the Government also to invest in ensuring the safety of international protection applicants to the greatest extent practicable.

We note that the Government decided in the past few weeks to remove international protection applicants from emergency accommodation (which may have included hotels) into new direct provision centres. The rationale for this, according to the Minister for Justice and Equality, is that it is easier to communicate HSE advice to people when they are gathered together in direct provision centres. However, in our view, it is eminently possible to find ways to communicate with people while also ensuring that they are enabled to self-isolate in own-door accommodation.

The Minister for Justice and Equality has further stated that his Department has instructed each direct provision centre to create self-isolation facilities for use by those suspected to have COVID-19, and that the Department of Justice and Equality will pilot ‘off-site self-isolation’ for people suspected of having COVID-19.

There are two major flaws to this approach:

First, as per the HSE’s Guidance and the Government’s current instructions to the rest of the national population, social distancing from others before a person shows signs of infection with COVID-19 is necessary in order to prevent the spread of the virus - since COVID-19 can be transmitted by individuals who are not demonstrating or reporting symptoms.

Second, reports from residents suggest that at least some direct provision centres are creating self-isolation facilities which are manifestly inappropriate, in that they do not allow for physical distancing and provide no privacy for the patient in their illness or recovery.

We further note that the Deputy Secretary General of the Department of Justice and Equality wrote in the past few days to people living in direct provision centres to assure them that the Department is ‘actively sourcing new accommodation to reduce the numbers in some settings’. We urge the Government immediately to find as many private rooms as necessary to ensure that every family unit and every single person currently within the international protection system is able to socially distance from others. As mentioned above, the accommodation is available and this matter is now urgent.

The Government’s recently published guidance on ensuring an ethical approach to managing the crisis, An Ethical Framework for Decision-Making in a Pandemic, stresses that the implementation of public health measures should protect the interests of vulnerable populations and ensure that measures taken do not result in increased health inequalities. In other words, in a pandemic, public health measures must apply to all; every person must be able to benefit from public health support, with the assistance of the State if necessary.
We remind the Government that Article 2 and Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights continue to apply at this time. We are concerned that if the State does not take steps which are clearly practicable to ensure own-door accommodation for all single persons and family units in the international protection system, in order to allow them to socially distance from others in the same way as the national population generally is being instructed to do, it may find itself falling foul of these legal requirements. The threat to life from Coronavirus is known. The Government’s position, based on public health expertise, is that social distancing (including of those who are not displaying symptoms of COVID-19) is necessary to reduce insofar as is possible the rate of transmission of the virus. Failing to act to enable international protection applicants, an extremely vulnerable group, to follow this public health advice may lead to unnecessary deaths. It is clear to us that the powerlessness of many people in direct provision to socially distance as per the Government’s advice to the general population is already causing feelings of intense anxiety, humiliation and distress.

We acknowledge the enormous efforts that the Government and front line workers, including civil servants, have made in seeking to respond effectively to this global crisis within a limited timeframe. We hope that this letter will encourage further action to ensure that individuals living within direct provision are equally included within the Government’s approach to safeguarding public health at this worrying time.

Yours sincerely,

1. Dr Éidin Ní Shé, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, University College Dublin
2. Dr Lucy Michael, Independent Researcher and Consultant
3. Dr Maeve O’Rourke, Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway
4. Dr Liam Thornton, School of Law, University College Dublin
5. Dr Fergus Ryan, Department of Law, Maynooth University
6. Evgeny Shtom, Researcher and Policy Analyst
7. Dr Mark Murphy MB BCh BAO MICGP MRCP PhD; GP in Dublin City and Lecturer in General Practice, RCSI
8. Mairead Enright, Birmingham Law School
9. Dr Muireann Ní Raghallaigh, School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin
10. Dr Clodhna Murphy, Department of Law, Maynooth University
11. Dr Richard Collins, Sutherland School of Law, University College Dublin
12. Prof Thilo Kroll, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, University College Dublin
13. Dr. Graham Finlay, School of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin
14. Dr Aoife De Brún, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, University College Dublin
15. Dr Rachel Crowley, School of Medicine, University College Dublin
16. Dr Steve Macdonald, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, University College Dublin
17. Edel Murphy, Public and Patient Involvement advocate, NUI Galway
18. Dr Charles O’Sullivan, School of Law, Ulster University
19. Wendy Lyon, Solicitor, Abbey Law
20. Dr Karl Kitching, Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, University College Cork
21. Dr Dug Cubie, School of Law, University College Cork
22. Dr Suja Somanadhan, Lecturer in Children’s Nursing & Researcher, UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, University College Dublin
23. Dr Fiona Donson, Director Centre for Criminal Justice and Human Rights, UCC
24. Aideen Collard, Barrister
25. Dr Anne Mulhall, School of English, Drama, Film & Creative Writing, University College Dublin
26. Dr Claire Magner, Lecturer in Children’s Nursing, University College Dublin
27. Dr. Chris Noone, School of Psychology, NUI Galway
28. Anne McShane, Solicitor, Anne McShane Solicitors
29. Dr Brona Fullen, School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science, University College Dublin
30. Dr. Brynne Gilmore, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, University College Dublin
31. Prof Anne MacFarlane, Graduate Entry Medical School, University of Limerick
32. Dr Mark Cullinane, School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork
33. Dr. Deirdre McGillicuddy, UCD School of Education
34. Katie Mannion, Solicitor, Irish Refugee Council
35. Professor Mary Gilmartin, Department of Geography, Maynooth University
36. Dr. Katharina Swirak, Department of Sociology and Criminology, University College Cork
37. Dr Jon Salsberg, Graduate Entry Medical School, University of Limerick
38. Dr Sarah Donnelly, Co-director of Professional Masters in Social Work, School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin
39. Samantha Morgan-Williams, Lecturer, School of Law, University College Cork.
40. Carol Sinnott Solicitor, Sinnott Solicitors
41. Dr Barra O'Donnabhain, Department of Archaeology, University College Cork
42. Dr Jon Salsberg, Graduate Entry Medical School, University of Limerick
43. Alison Hough BL, Law Lecturer, Athlone Institute of Technology
44. Aoife Finnerty, School of Law, University College Cork
45. Dr Eoin O'Mahony, School of Geography, UCD.
46. Dr. Matthew Donoghue, School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin
47. Dr. Ian Marder, Lecturer in Criminology, Maynooth University Department of Law
48. Mary Henderson, Solicitor, Immigrant Council of Ireland
49. Dr Joe Garrity, Department of Law, Maynooth University
50. Dr Ruth Fletcher, Senior Lecturer in Medical Law, Queen Mary University of London
51. Elizabeth Mitrow, Solicitor, Abbey Law.
52. Deirdre Kelleher, School of Law, UCC
53. Dr Lynsey Black, Department of Law, Maynooth University
54. Dr Aoife Neary, School of Education, University of Limerick
55. Róisín Costello, Assistant Lecturer, Maynooth University
56. Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley, Lecturer in History, National University of Ireland Galway.
57. Dr Purity Mwendwa, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, University College Dublin
58. Dr Amina Adanan, Lecturer in Law, Maynooth University Law Department
59. Prof Jim Campbell, School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin
60. Professor Eilish McAuliffe, School of Nursing, Midwifery & Health Systems, University College Dublin
61. Dr. Aoife McMahon, Barrister
62. Dr. Sharae Deckard, School of English, Drama, Film & Creative Writing, University College Dublin
63. Dr Sinéad Kennedy, Department of English, Maynooth University.
64. Dr Gabriela Martínez Sainz, School of Education, University College Dublin
65. Dr Mary McAuliffe, Gender Studies, UCD
66. Maeve Foreman, Adjunct Asst Professor, School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College, Dublin
67. Karl Quinn, Barrister
68. Dr Laura Kelly, Centre for the Social History of Health and Healthcare, University of Strathclyde
69. Professor Siobhán Mulally, Director, Irish Centre for Human Rights School of Law, NUI Galway
70. Dr Rebecca Anne Barr, Faculty of English, University of Cambridge
71. Rónán Kennedy, School of Law, NUI Galway
72. Dr Eugenia Siapera, School of Information and Communication Studies, University College Dublin
73. Dr. Caroline Forde, Global Women's Studies Centre, NUI Galway
74. Prof. Gerardine Meaney, Centre for Cultural Analytics, University College Dublin
75. Professor Donncha O'Connell, School of Law, NUI Galway
76. Dr Niamh Howlin, Sutherland School of Law, UCD
77. Dr Edel Hughes, School of Law, NUI Galway
78. Dr John Reynolds, Department of Law, Maynooth University
79. Dr Áine O'Brien, Co-Director - Counterpoints Arts
80. Dr Padraic Kenna, School of Law, National University of Ireland, Galway.
81. Aengus Carroll, human rights law researcher
82. Dr. Alexander Kondakov, UCD School of Sociology
83. Elizabeth O'Brien, School of Education, UCD
84. Prof. Fiona Kearney, Director, the Glucksman, University College Cork
85. Dr. Marie Moran, Asst. Prof in Equality Studies, UCD
86. Prof Fionnuala Ní Áinle, Mater & Rotunda Hospitals, Dublin; School of Medicine, University College Dublin
87. Dr Alan Grossman, TU Dublin
88. Cathal Malone BL
89. Dr. Zoë O'Reilly, School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin
90. Aidan Harte, Coordinator, NUI Galway University of Sanctuary Initiative
91. Aileen Gittens, solicitor, McGrath McGrane solicitors
92. Dr Regina Joye
93. Ms. Mamobo Ogoro, Sanctuary PhD Fellow, University of Limerick
94. Siobhan Clabby, Legal Executive, Abbey Law
95. Dr Conrad Brunstrom, Dept of English, Maynooth University
96. Brian Collins, Solicitor, Irish Refugee Council Independent Law Centre
97. Dr. Ciara Bracken-Roche, Department of Law, NUI Maynooth
98. Dr Deirdre Curran, University of Sanctuary Committee, NUI Galway
99. Dr Joseph Mooney, School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin
100. Hannah Grene, Barncat Consulting
101. Dr. Ciara Bracken-Roche, Department of Law, NUI Maynooth
102. Dr Rita Sakr, Department of English, Maynooth University
103. Dr. Mathew Creighton, School of Sociology, University College Dublin
104. John Noonan BL
105. Alphonse Basogomba, Diversity and Inclusion Consultant.
106. Dr Samantha Arnold, Adjunct Assistant Professor (Refugee Law), School of Law, Trinity College Dublin
107. Dr Cliona Kelly, Sutherland School of Law, UCD
108. Stephen Kirwan, Solicitor KOD Lyons Solicitors
109. Dr Declan Fahie, School of Education, UCD
110. Professor Karen Till, Director MA in Spatial Justice, Department of Geography, Maynooth University
111. Dr Catherine Gander, Dept. of English, Maynooth University
112. Dr Tanya Lokot, School of Communications, Dublin City University
113. Professor Sinisa Malesevic, School of Sociology, UCD
114. Claudia Fracchiolla, UCD
115. Rachel Mullen, Values Lab
116. Dr Mark Coen, Sutherland School of Law, UCD
117. Dr Frances Murphy, Institute of Education, DCU
118. Dr John Connolly, School of History and Geography, DCU
119. Dr Ken McDonagh, School of Law and Government, DCU
120. Prof. Delia Ferri, Department of Law, Maynooth University
121. Dr David Fennelly, School of Law, Trinity College Dublin
122. Heidi Holden, Caseworker, Irish Refugee Council Independent Law Centre
123. Prof. Catherine Blake, School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sport Science, University College Dublin
124. James Gallen, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
125. Prof Pat Palmer, Department of English, Maynooth University
126. Noeleen Healy, Barrister
127. Sheila Mc Govern, Solicitor
128. Dr Yvonne Daly, School of Law and Government, DCU
129. Dr Frances McCormack, National University of Ireland Galway
130. Marian Jennings, Law Lecturer, TU Dublin
131. Professor Dymphna Devine, School of Education, UCD
132. Dr Maria Stuart, School of English, Drama and Film, UCD
133. Dr Jennifer Martyn, School of Applied Languages and Intercultural Studies, DCU
134. Anna Louise Hinds, Law School, NUI Galway
135. Paola Rivetti, School of Law and Government, DCU
136. Dr Connie Healy, School of Law, NUI Galway
137. Dr Michael G Cronin, Department of English, Maynooth University
138. Dr Valesca Lima, Department of Sociology, Maynooth University
139. Dr Fionnuala Dillane, School of English, Drama and Film, UCD
140. Kit Fryatt, School of English, Dublin City University
141. Dr Caitriona Cunningham, School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science, University College Dublin
142. Dr Jennifer Schwegge, School of Law, University of Limerick
143. Dr Jacqui O'Riordan, Lecturer, School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork
144. Dr Beatrice Scutaru, School of History & Geography, Dublin City University
145. Dr Sinéad Hynes, School of Health Sciences, NUI Galway
146. Dr Rose Galvin, School of Allied Health, University of Limerick
147. Professor Kate Kenny, JE Cairnes School, NUI Galway
148. Mr Mike FitzGibbon, Lecturer, International Development, Department of Food Business and Development, University College Cork
149. John Dennehy, Director NASC
150. Dr Jonathan Lewis, Institute of Ethics, DCU
151. Dr Caitriona Ni Chléirchín, Fiontar agus Scoil na Gaeilge, DCU
152. Dr Chandana Mathur, Dept of Anthropology, Maynooth University
153. Dr Sara O'Sullivan, School of Sociology, University College Dublin.
154. Juliet George, Legal Executive KOD Lyons Solicitors
155. Prof. Nicholas Daly, English Drama and Film, UCD
156. Dr. Chris McDermott, Athlone Institute of Technology
157. Trevor Keppel, DUC School of Applied Languages and Intercultural Studies
158. Dr Marie Therese Cooney, Sch0ool of Medicine, UCD
159. Dr Joss Moorkens, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies, Dublin City University
160. Dr David Nally, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge
161. Dr Deirdre McGowan, Head of Law, Technological University Dublin
162. Dr Almar Ennis School of History and Geography, DCUhyp, DCU
163. Dr John Morrissey, University of Sanctuary Committee, NUI Galway
164. Dr Aonghus Cheevers, School of Law and Government, DCU
165. Catherine Cosgrave, Managing Solicitor, Immigrant Council of Ireland Independent Law Centre
166. Dr. Egle Gutsche, School of Sociology, University College Dublin
167. Fiona Finn, CEO Nasc, the Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre
168. Prof Lauren Arrington, Department of English, Maynooth University
169. Mr. Brian Killoran, CEO, Immigrant Council of Ireland
170. Dr Amanda Haynes, Department of Sociology, University of Limerick
171. Dr. Joe Larray, Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University
172. Pat Brereton, School of Communications, Dunlin City University
173. Dr Úsaitéar Mac Gearailt, Fiontar agus Schoil na Gailege, DCU
174. Prof. Maura Conway, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
175. Prof Eugene McNulty, School of English, DCU
176. Dr Kirsty Park, School of Communications, DCU
177. Dr Claire Dorrity, School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork
178. Orla Higgins, Huston School of Film & Digital Media, NUI Galway
179. Dr Aonghus Cheevers, School of Law and Government, DCU
180. Dr Chris O'Connell, School of Law and Government, DCU
181. Dr. Félim Ó hAdhmaill, School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork
182. Dr Agnes Maillot, Chair of MA in Refugee Integration, Dublin City University
183. Prof Andreas Hess, School of Sociology, University College Dublin
184. Dr Ray Griffin, School of Business, Waterford Institute of Technology
185. Dr. Ela Drazkiewicz, Department of Anthropology, Maynooth University
186. Dr Lucy-Ann Buckley, School of Law, NUI Galway
187. Brenda Cooper, Director Horner APG
188. Dr. Kevin Lalor, Department of Social Sciences, TU Dublin
189. Dr Rosie Meade School of Applied Social Studies UCC
190. Dr Jennifer Kavanagh Law Lecturer Waterford Institute of Technology Waterford
191. Dr. Kathleen Cavanaugh Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI, G
192. Brendan Kennelly, School of Business and Economics, NUI Galway
193. Dr Amy Mullee, School of Agriculture and Food Science, UCD
194. Sinéad McGrath, International Development, Maynooth University
195. Dr Brad Anderson, School of Theology, Philosophy, and Ethics, DCU
196. Carol Ballantine, Centre for Global Women's Studies, NUI Galway
197. Rachel Hanna BL
198. Claire McGettrick, PhD Researcher in Sociology
199. Graham Clifford, Founder The Sanctuary Runners
200. Prof Rowena Pecchenino, Department of Economics, Maynooth University
201. Dr. Katie Robinson, School of Allied Health, University of Limerick
202. Dr. Gene Carolan, Lecturer in Law, Technological University Dublin
203. Deirdre Malone, PILA
204. Dr Irina Ruppo, National University of Ireland Galway
205. Dr. Debbie Ging, School of Communications, Dublin City University
206. Steve Coleman, Maynooth University
207. Dr. Stacey Scriver, Global Women's Studies, NUI Galway
208. Dr Su-ming Khoo, School of Political Science and Sociology, NUI Galway
209. Dr Moynagh Sullivan, Dept Of English, Maynooth University
210. Prof Claire Connolly, Dept of English, UCC
211. Dr Ray Griffin, School of Business, Waterford Institute of Technology
212. Dr Oisin Suttle, Department of Law, Maynooth University
213. Dr Aileen O'Driscoll, School of Communications, DCU
214. Dr Derina Johnson, Trinity Research in Childhood Centre / Children's Research Network, Trinity College Dublin
215. Dr Niamh T Brannelly, National University of Ireland, Galway
216. Lennita Oliveira Ruggi, Centre for Global Women's Studies, NUI Galway
217. Lorraine Grimes, Research Assistant, National University of Ireland, Galway
218. Dr. Fiachra Ó Súilleabháin, Lecturer in Social Work and Social Policy, School of Applied Social Studies, UCC
219. Dr. Ann-Marie Morrissey, School of Allied Health, University of Limerick
220. Ciara Fitzgerald Barrister
221. Dr Ronit Lentin (retired) Associate Professor of Sociology, Trinity College Dublin. Research areas: racism, migrant-led groups, Palestine
222. Dr. Padraig Murphy, School of Communications, Dublin City University
223. Nata Duvvury, Director, Centre for Global Women's Studies, NUI Galway
224. Dr. Zach Roche, School of Business, Waterford Institute of Technology
225. Dr Aoibhinn Ni Shuilleabhain, School of Mathematics & Statistics, University College Dublin
226. Dr. James Fitzgerald, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
227. Dr Vicky Conway, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
228. Mary Dempsey, National University of Ireland, Galway
229. Joseph Nyirenda, University of Sanctuary Committee, NUI Galway
230. Dr Rosie Gowran, Occupational Therapy, School of Allied Health University of Limerick
231. Sharon Dillon-Lyons BL
232. Dr Catherine O'Rourke, Ulster University
233. Dr. A. Jamie Saris, PhD, Department of Anthropology, MU/Medical Anthropology and Health Services Researcher
234. Dr Catherine Connolly, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
235. Dr. Jennifer Redmond, Assistant Professor in History Maynooth University
236. Claire McCarthy, Solicitor, O'Sullivan Whelan Solicitors
237. Marina Carr. Playwright. School of English DCU
238. Dr Marnie Hay, School of History and Geography, DCU
239. Dr Annie Cummins, School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork
240. Dr Laurence Cox, Sociology, Maynooth University
241. Marie Flynn BL
242. Prof Iain McMenamin, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
243. Dr. Laurence Davis, Department of Government and Politics, University College Cork
   and Visiting Fellow and Senior Member, Mansfield College, University of Oxford
244. Prof. Mathias Urban, Early Childhood Research Centre, Dublin City University
245. Dr. Lea David, School of Sociology, UCD
246. Alison Cooke, Scholars At Risk Network Ireland, Maynooth University
247. Rachel Power, FLAC
248. David Leonard, barrister
249. Andrea Fitzpatrick, NUI Galway
250. Dr Theresa O'Keefe, Department of Sociology & Criminology, UCC
251. Ciara L. Murphy, Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance, NUI Galway and
   Department of Drama and Theatre Studies, Mary Immaculate College, University of
   Limerick
252. Dr. Donal Coffey, Max Planck Institute for European Legal History
253. Triona Jacob, Barrister
254. Dr John Lannon, Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick
255. Dr Sylvia Murphy Tighe, Dept of Nursing & Midwifery, University of Limerick
256. Dr Liam Farrell, Dept of Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick
257. Dr Liam Farrell, Dept of Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick
258. April Duff, Barrister
259. Orla Hegarty, UCD School of Architecture, Planning & Environmental Policy
260. Katherine Fama, School of English, Drama, Film & Creative Writing, University
       College Dublin
261. April Duff, Barrister
262. Aidan Harte, Coordinator, NUI Galway University of Sanctuary Initiative
263. Zachary Murtagh BL
264. Dr Avril Brandon, Department of Law, Maynooth University
265. Cathal Kerrigan, Liaison Librarian, UCC Library
266. Aengus O'Corrain, Barrister
267. Dr Donnacha Ó Beacháin, School of Law and Government, DCU
268. Ciarán McCarthy B.L., Barrister-at-Law
269. Dr. Eoin Flaherty, Department of Sociology, Maynooth University
270. Dr Rosari Griffin, Adult Education, Centre for Global Development, and Office of VP
       for Learning and Teaching, UCC
271. William Quill BL
272. Dr Anne O' Brien, Department of Media Studies, Maynooth University
273. Chris Clarke, Senior Curator, The Glucksman, University College Cork
274. Mr. JP Quinn Head of UCC Visitors' Centre
275. Dr. Kevin Cahill, School of Education, University College Cork
276. Dr Louise Campbell, School of Medicine, NUI Galway
277. Dr Silvia Brandi, Quality Enhancement, University College Cork
278. Dr. Tom Moore, School of Biochemistry and Cell Biology, UCC
279. Dr Rhona O'Connell, School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCC
280. Professor Sinead McGilloway, Centre for Mental Health and Community
       Research/Dept of Psychology, Maynooth University
281. Grace O'Leary, Learning Technologies, University College Cork
282. Dr Gearóid Ó Cleirín, Fintar & Scoil na Gaeilge, DCU
283. Céile Varley BL
284. Prof David Kerins, School of Medicine, UCC
285. James Fairhead, Cork University Business School, UCC
286. Dr Dónal Hassett, Department of French, University College Cork
287. Dr Caroline Kitly, School of Nursing & Midwifery, University College Cork
288. Dr Breffni Lennon, Environmental Research Institute, University College Cork
289. Dr. Deirdre Horgan, School of Applied Social Studies, UCC
290. Dr Piáras Mac Éinrí, Lecturer in Migration Studies, Department of Geography, University College Cork
292. Dr Helen Kelly, Speech and Language Therapy, University College Cork
293. Dr Chris McCusker, School of Applied Psychology, UCC
294. Hascet Cetinkaya, Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUIG
295. Dr. Amanullah De Sondy, Senior Lecturer in Contemporary Islam, Study of Religions, UCC
296. Dr Sharon Lambert, School of Applied Psychology, UCC
297. Farouk Markos/lecturer
298. Dr Paul Corcoran, School of Public Health, UCC
299. Professor Elisabeth Okasha, UCC
300. Katarzyna Pyrz
301. Dr Margaret Murphy, School of Nursing and Midwifery, University College Cork
302. RGN - MSc Fabio Magarelli, Research Assistant UCC
303. Dr Audrey DunnGalvin Co-Director Early Years and Childhood Studies, University College Cork
304. Dr Oliver Feeney, School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCC
305. Dr Fiona Broughton Coveney, School of Languages, Law and Social Sciences, Technological University Dublin
306. Mary Liddy, Admissions Office, NUI Galway
307. Anne-Marie Curtin, EDI Officer, UCC
308. Dr. Lekha Menon Margassery, Postdoctoral Researcher, School of Biochemistry and Cell Biology, University College Cork.
309. Dr Máire Leane, School of Applied Social Studies, UCC.
310. Dr Kate Frazer, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, University College Dublin
312. Dr Peter Admirand, School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music, DCU
313. Dr. Manolis Adamakis, School of Education, UCC
314. Dr. Diarmuid Torney, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
315. Prof. Caitriona Ni Dhuill, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University College Cork
316. Majo Rivas LL.B, LL.M
317. Lyndsey El Amoud, Adult Continuing Education, University College Cork
318. Prof. Laura Rascaroli, Department of Film and Screen Media, University College Cork
319. Goretti Horgan, School of Applied Policy and Social Sciences, Ulster University
320. Claire Raissian, PhD candidate, Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway
321. Déirdre O'Byrne, Adult Continuing Education, UCC
322. Lydia Sapouna, Lecturer, School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork
323. Professor Anne Matthews, School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health, DCU
324. Prof. Daniel Carey, Director, Moore Institute, NUI Galway
325. Dr. Barry Boland, Dept. of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, University College Cork
326. Dr. Veronica Crosbie, Chair Universities of Sanctuary Ireland (UoSI)
327. Dr. Sue Mulhall, College of Business, Technological University Dublin
328. Tara Kenny, Department of Geography, University College Cork
329. Dr Catherine O'Sullivan, School of Law, UCC
330. Lydia Sapouna, College Lecturer, School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork
331. Mary Hurley, School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork
332. Professor Gerry Kearns, Department of Geography, Maynooth University
333. Dr Elizabeth Kiely School of Applied Social Studies UCC.
335. Eilis Barry, Chief Executive, FLAC
336. Paul O'Shea Barrister
337. Dr Aidan Kane, Economics, NUI Galway
338. Dr. Maura Cunneen, School of Education, University College Cork
339. Dr. Cassie Smith-Christmas, Marie Sklodowska-Curie Fellow, Roinn na Gaeilge, National University of Ireland, Galway
340. Clodhna Martin, PhD Researcher Children & Youth, School of Education, UCD
341. Zoë Lawlor, AHSS, University of Limerick
342. John Meehan School of Chemistry University College Cork
343. V'cenza Cirefice, Department of Geography, NUI Galway
344. Dr Damian Tobin, Cork University Business School, UCC
345. Loretta Brady, CACSSS Recruitment Projects Officer, UCC
346. Dr Tony Fitzgerald, School of Pubic Health/Mathematical Sciences, UCC
347. Ana Maria Sanchez Rodriguez, PhD, Maynooth University
348. Sara Creta, Early Stage Researcher, School of Communications at Dublin City University
349. Dr. Aisling O'Beirn, School of Art, Ulster University
350. Dr Susann Huschke, Graduate Entry Medical School, University of Limerick
351. Dr. Karen Smith, School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, UCD
352. Professor Tobias Lock, Department of Law, Maynooth University
353. Rachel Farrell, School of Education, UCD
354. Elizabeth Steiner-Scott, Department of History, UCC
355. Dr. Reana Maier, Institute for Social Sciences in the 21st Century, University College Cork
356. John Hastings, Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, UCC
357. Dr Sara Leitao, National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre, UCC, Cork
358. Dr Sandra Duffy, Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway
359. Professor Maggie O'Neill, Sociology&Criminology, UCC
360. Dr. Eoin Daly, School of Law, NUI Galway
361. Dr Brenda Daly, School of Law & Government, DCU
362. Dr Jim Shanahan, School of English, DCU
363. Dr Siobhan O'Sullivan, School of Applied Social Studies, UCC
364. Dr Ulrike M Vieten, Queen's University Belfast
365. Bridget Carroll, UCC
366. Ann Lyons, Community Knowledge Initiative, NUI Galway
367. Dr John Cunningham, School of History and Philosophy, NUI Galway
368. Dr David Landy, Department of Sociology, Trinity College Dublin
369. Dr James Alexander Fraser -- Lecturer in English, NUI Maynooth
370. Prof Louise Alcock, School of Natural Sciences, NUI Galway
371. Dr. Joan McCarthy, Senior Lecturer Healthcare Ethics, School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCC
372. Dr. Gertrude Cotter, Lecturer Centre for Global Development UCC
373. Dr Judi Pettigrew, School of Allied Health, University of Limerick
374. Dr Jill O'Mahony, Waterford Institute of Technology
375. Dr. Cassie Smith-Christmas, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action Fellow, NUI Galway
376. Jenna Harris, School of Theology, Philosophy and Music, DCU
377. Dr Ivar McGrath, School of History, University College Dublin
378. Dr. Rebecca Murphy, Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Maynooth University
379. Clare Daly MEP
380. Nicola Maxwell, School of Applied Social Studies, UCC
381. Solange Cullen, Researcher, Department of Food Business and Development, University College Cork
382. Professor Susan Smith, Department of General Practice, RCSI
383. Dr Harry Gijbels, Senior Lecturer, Retired) School of Nursing and Midwifery, University College Cork
384. Niall Duggan School of Society, Politics and Ethics UCC
385. Anne Fitzpatrick, School of Applied Psychology, UCC
386. Glen Guilfoyle, Social Policy, LIT
387. Dr Brid McGrath, GP & BCLF, University College Cork.
388. Professor Maurice Devlin, Head of Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University
389. Dr Deirdre Flynn, Department of English Language and Literature, MIC Limerick
390. Prof Steve Hedley, School of Law, UCC
391. Dr. Fiona Murphy, Queen's University Belfast
392. Ross Pratt-O’Brien BL
393. Dr Deirdre Lundy ICGP Dept of Reproductive & Sexual Health
394. Dr Avril Kennan, CEO Health Research Charities Ireland
395. Dr Niamh O’Brien General Practitioner Galway & HSE West Drug Service
396. Dr Seán Hewitt, School of English, UCC
397. Berni Smyth, Chairperson of the Irish Refugee Council
398. Dr Anne Marie Power, School of Natural Sciences, NUIG
399. Aoife Crummy, PhD Scholar, School of Education, University College, Dublin
400. Dr Aoife Jackson, Discipline of General Practice, NUIG
401. Dr Deirdre O’Donnell, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, UCD
402. Dr. Jeneen Najj, Department of Media Studies, Maynooth University
403. Sarah Curristan, School of Law, Trinity College
404. Marcella Towler, School of Education, UCC
405. Dr Maria McNamara, School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, UCC
406. Caroline Shore, School of Applied Social Studies, UCC
407. Dr Nikita Burke, School of Nursing and Midwifery, NUI Galway
408. Dr Mary Cooper general practitioner
409. Dr Stephen Lucek, School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics, University College Dublin
410. Professor Michael Doherty, Dept of Law, Maynooth University
411. Yvonne Pennisi, Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, UCC
412. Sophie van der Valk, School of Law, Trinity College Dublin
413. Dr J M Mancini, Department of History, Maynooth University
414. Irene Murphy, Managing Director, Youth Work Ireland Galway
415. Dr Valerie Cummins, School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, UCC
416. Prof. John O’ Brennan, Maynooth University.
417. Dr Marta Kempny, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, QUB
418. Julia Hull, Solicitor practitioner in International Protection
419. Assoc. Prof. Katherine O'Donnell, History of Ideas, UCD School of Philosophy
420. Albert Llussà, Solicitor, Daly Lynch Crowe & Morris Solicitors
421. Dr Máirtín Ó Maoláin, GP and Clinical Lecturer in General Practice, RCSI
422. Dr. David Mangan, School of Law, Maynooth University
423. Dr Joe Whelan, School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork.
424. Claire Tadla, Information & Referral Service Coordinator, Irish Refugee Council
425. Colin Smith BL
426. Emma Hurley, postdoctoral researcher, UCC
427. Leah O Leary, Immigration Solicitor, Daly Lynch Crowe & Morris Solicitors, Dublin 2
428. Dr Ruth Dwyer, General Practitioner, Lucan
429. Brian Killoran, CEO, Immigrant Council of Ireland
430. Dr. Sarah Robinson, School of Applied Psychology, UCC
431. Dr Sile Creedon, School of Nursing and Midwifery, University College Cork
432. Michelle McDonagh, Law graduate
433. Dr. Riòna Í Ní Fhrighil, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, OÉ Gaillimh
434. Professor Brian Hughes, School of Psychology, NUI Galway
435. Dr Cliona Ó Gallchoil, School of English and Digital Humanities, UCC
436. Dr Brendan O’Shea, GP / Asst. Adj Prof in Public Health & Primary Care, Trinity College
437. Dr Danielle Kennan, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway
438. Dr. Ursula Barry, Associate Professor, Senior Researcher with Gender Studies, UCD
439. Dr Angela Veale, School of Applied Psychology, UCC
440. Dr Helen Hynes, Lecturer, School of Medicine, UCC
441. Joseph S. Robinson, Department of Geography, Maynooth University
442. Laoighseach Ní Choistealbha, MA, human rights and poetry
443. Dr Amy Morgan MB Bch BAO MICGP GP Louth
444. Dr Lucy Kelly. General Practitioner. Dublin
445. Sasha Brown, PhD candidate Geography, Maynooth University / Migration and asylum
446. Steven Loyal School of Sociology, UCD
447. Dr. Elaine Byrne, General Practitioner and CMO HSE West Drug Service
448. Dr Brian Kennedy GP Nenagh Co. Tipperary
449. Dr Vittorio Bufacchi, Department of Philosophy, UCC
450. Dr. Conor Linehan, School of Applied Psychology, UCC
451. Dr Anne Karhio, Moore Institute, NUI Galway
452. Christian van den Bosch, Environmental Research Institute, University College Cork
453. Dr Sinéad Feeney, General Practitioner
454. Dr Olga O’Mahony, Access Centre, NUI Galway
455. Dr Siobhan McDonagh GP Galway city
456. Dr Ciara Conlan, Infectious diseases registrar
457. Dr Mike Thompson, General Practice, Midleton
458. Dr Nirav J Mehta, medical doctor and immigrant
459. Dr Roisin Costello ,GP
460. Dr Cliona O’Carroll, School of Irish Learning, University College, Cork
461. Dr Liz Guerin General Practitioner
462. Dr. Colin Murphy, School of Engineering, UCC
463. Prof Pat Dolan UNESCO Chair School of Political Science and Sociology NUI Galway
464. Dr Paul Burgess. School of Applied Social Studies, UCC
465. Eoin Craven, Solicitor
466. Dr Aisling Donovan G.P.
467. Rose Garland, Asylum & Immigration Caseworker
468. Dr Emer Shortall General Practitioner
Dr Hilda Loughran, Sch. of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, UCD
Larry Donnelly, School of Law, NUI Galway
Dr Hazel O’ Brien School Of Humanities Waterford Institute of Technology
Fionn Woodhouse, Department of Theatre, UCC
Dr Sheila Rochford, Assistant Programme Director, Cork GP Training Programme
Cian Power, MPH, Student Budgetary Advisor, University College Cork
Dr. Brenda Moran, GP & SMO GUM Clinic, South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital, Cork
Marita Hennessy PhD, College of Medicine and Health, UCC
Thomas O’Carroll- Acquisitions Section, UCC Library
Dr Karen Lynch-Shally, Department of Law, Maynooth University
Dr Méabh Ni Fhuartháin, Centre for Irish Studies, NUI Galway
Dr. Daniel Savery, Access Centre, NUIG
Dr Mary Byrne, UCC
Colette O’Beirne, Department of External Affairs, DCU
Stephanie Hanlon, Social, Political and Community Studies, Carlow College, St. Patrick’s
Dr Eluned Lawlor. General Practitioner. Loughboy Medical Centre. Kilkenny
Dr Colm Kearns, School of Communications, Dublin City University
Neza Subic, PhD Candidate, School of Law, University College Dublin
Dr. Lucia Gannon. General Practitioner, Tipperary
Colum Foley, Open Education, Dublin City University
Brian O Connell, Chartered Physiotherapist, Cork
Karina Curley, Widening Participation, DCU
Glen Guilfoyle, Department of Applied Social Sciences, Limerick IT
Professor Claire Hamilton, Professor of Criminology, Maynooth University
Susan McLaughlin GP Cork City
Dr Cathy Banstead General Practitioner, Educator in General Practice.
Cara O’Mahony, Research Assistant, School of Law, UCC
Sharon Mc Ardle, School of Arts and Movement, DCU
Dr Suzanne Kelly, General Practitioner, Co. Cork
Dr. Brendan Flynn, Political Science & Sociology NUI Galway
Maureen O’Connor, University College Cork
Dr Aidan Doyle, School of Irish Learning, UCC
Dr Ebun Joseph, Royal College of Surgeons, Race Relations Consultant and Lecturer Black Studies
Dr. Ciara Murphy, General Practitioner
Dr Kathleen Ryan, School of Applied Psychology, UCC
Dr. Hilary Shallow, GP, Cork City
Breege Keenan, Crosscare Refugee Service
Prof. Don Ross, Head, School of Society, Politics, and Ethics, University College Cork
Christine Chasaide Adult Continuing Education UCC
508. Dr. Francesca Lorenzi, School of Policy and Practice, DCU
509. Prof Robbie Gilligan, School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin
510. Dr Maíthú O Tuathail, GP, Dublin
511. Dr Cliodhna McCullagh GP Dublin
512. Dr Maureen Kelly MB BCh BAO MICGP FRCGP PhD; Senior Lecturer in General Practice, NUI Galway
513. Dr. Éabha Ni Mhurchú, GP, Cork.
514. Dr Morgan Cawley Buckley, Lecturer, Social, Political and Community Studies, Carlow College, St. Patrick's
515. Dr Helena McKeague, Graduate Entry Medical School, UL
516. Gerry Dunne, Marino Institute of Education
517. Ciara Bourke MB, BCh, BAO, MICGP
518. Dr. Orla Ryan, Community Art and Media Studies, Institute of Technology, Carlow & Carlow College
519. Anita Finucane, Barrister
520. Dr. Aisling Quinn, General Practitioner
521. Dr. James Cuffe School of Society, Politics & Ethics, UCC
522. Dr. Conor Fanning GP, Ennis
523. Dr. Barbara Siller, Department of German, University College Cork
524. Dr. Adam Loughnane, Philosophy, UCC
525. Miriam Watchorn, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies, Dublin City University
526. Dr Derek Coyle, English Literature, Carlow College/St Patrick's
527. Lisa Ryan, Research Assistant, School of Public Health, UCC
528. Dr Margaret Steele, Department of Philosophy, UCC
529. Dr Annie Ó Breacháin, School of Arts Education and Movement, DCU
530. Jennifer Scholtz, Independent Researcher
531. Dr Colin Coulter, Department of Sociology, Maynooth University
532. Dr Marie-Annick Desplanques, Folklore and Ethnology, UCC
533. Catherine Donovan, Research Grants & Contracts, UCC
534. Dr. Mareese Murphy, GP, Laois
535. Dr Emer Nowlan, CEO Educate Together
536. Carmel Shortiss, School of Microbiology, UCC
537. Claire Jackson Law UCC
538. Killian O’Brien, School of Law, Trinity College Dublin
539. Dr. Niamh Gaynor, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
540. Sheena McLoughlin, DCU Educational Trust, Dublin City University
541. Dr Shirley Martin, School of Applied Social Studies, UCC
542. Dr. Eilish Dillon, Maynooth University Department of International Development
543. Dr Orla Murphy, Digital Humanities, University College Cork
544. Dr Brid Ni Chonaill, School of Humanities, Technological University Dublin
545. Professor Louis de Paor, Centre for Irish Studies, NUI Galway
546. Dr Alessandro Salice, Department of Philosophy, University College Cork
547. Derick Mitchell CEO Irish Platform for Patient Organisations, Science and Industry
548. Dr Darius Whelan, School of Law, University College Cork
549. Professor Linda Connolly, Maynooth University
550. Dr Christine Linehan, Director UCD Centre for Disability Studies, UCD School of Psychology
551. Dr. Caítriona Dowd, School of Law and Government, DCU
552. Dr. Andrew Jackson, Sutherland School of Law, UCD
553. Dr. Gaël Le Roux, Lecturer, Community and Youth Development, TU Dublin
554. Dr. Ciara Greene, School of Psychology, UCD
555. Joanie Cousins. Lecturer. TU Dublin Blanchardstown Campus.
556. Dr Nick Chisholm, Director, Centre for Global Development, UCC
557. Dr Briie Casey, Programme Coordinator, Certificate in Homeless Prevention, Dublin City University, Founding member of Nurses and Midwives for Inclusion Health Group
558. Helen Maher, Vice President, Carlow College St. Patrick’s
559. Dr. Abina Crean, School of Pharmacy, University College Cork
560. Dr. Ciara Greene, School of Psychology, UCD
561. Joanie Cousins. Lecturer. TU Dublin Blanchardstown Campus.
562. Dr Nick Chisholm, Director, Centre for Global Development, UCC
563. Helen Maher, Vice President, Carlow College St. Patrick’s
564. Dr. Abina Crean, School of Pharmacy, University College Cork
565. Dr Bernie Grummell, Maynooth University
566. Dr Barbara O’Toole, Marino Institute of Education, Dublin
567. Dr Carmel Davies, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, University College Dublin.
568. Dr Nessa Cronin, Centre for Irish Studies, NUI Galway
569. Dr. Giovanni Baldassini, General Practitioner, Cork
570. Dr Gideon Fadiran, University College Cork
571. Dr Colm McLaughlin, Centre for Business and Society, University College Dublin
572. Prof. Edmond Byrne, Process & Chemical Engineering, University College Cork
573. Rosa M. Senent, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies, Dublin City University
574. Dr Fiona Monahan, GP, Medi-Group, Cathedral Road, Cork
575. Niamh Rooney, Lecturer, Dept. Of International Development, Maynooth University
576. Maria Kenneally, Humanities Lecturer, TU Dublin
577. Michael Sherman, Theology Lecturer in Arts & Humanities, Carlow College, St Patrick’s
578. Ines Bento Coelho, Postdoctoral researcher, University College Cork
579. Sheila Coyle, School of Humanities, TUDublin Blanchardstown Campus
580. Sarah Hawes, National College of Ireland
581. Dr. Caroline West, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies, Dublin City University
582. Alan Titley, Emeritus Professor of Modern Irish, UCC
583. Professor Andy Prothero, UCD Centre for Business & Society (CeBaS)
584. Prof. Donna Marshall, UCD Centre for Business and Society, University College Dublin
585. Cillian Bracken, Barrister
586. Dr. Liam Norton, GP, Cork
587. Ryan Sebastian, Biomedical Engineer, Research Assistant, Tyndall National Institute
588. Sarah Jane Aberasturi, School of Applied Languages & Intercultural Studies, Dublin City University
589. Professor Lisa O'Malley, Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick
590. Dr Maura Adshead, Associate Professor, Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick.
591. Dr Samantha Dockray, School of Applied Psychology, University College Cork
592. Angela Rickard Department of Education, Maynooth University
593. Dr. Siobhán Airey, UCD
594. Julie Daniel, Dublin City University
595. Professor Eilis Hennessy, School of Psychology, University College Dublin
596. John Brennan, Vice-President International Federation of Social Workers Europe and Vice-Chair, The Irish Association of Social Workers
597. Megan Vine, PhD researcher, Social and Community Psychology
598. Dr Rebecca Dennehy, College of Medicine and Health, UCC
599. Dr. Ciara O’Connell, Trinity College Dublin
600. Ass Prof Maura Adshead, School of Politics & Public Administration, University of Limerick
601. Dr Owen Worth, Department of Politics and Public Administration University of Limerick
602. Dr. Karol Laffan GP
603. Stephanie McDermott Equality & Diversity Carlow College St Patrick’s
604. Angela Rickard, Department of Education, Maynooth University
605. Lorna Fitzpatrick, President, the Union of Students in Ireland
606. Dr Angela Flynn, School of Nursing and Midwifery, UCC.
607. Rebecca Jeffers, School of Applied Social Studies, UCC.
608. John Kissane, Tyndall Institute, UCC, Cork.
609. Kieran Allen, School of Sociology, UCD
610. Dr Ken Ó Donnchú, Roinn na Nua-Ghaeilge, UCC
611. Professor Mairead Kiely, School of Food and Nutritional Sciences, University College Cork
612. Dr. Eoin O’Connor, Postdoctoral Researcher in Physics, NUI Galway
613. Deirdre Kearney, PhD candidate TCD, Behavioural Psychologist, Adult Disability Services
614. Michael Hofer-Robinson, Department of German, UCC
615. Elaine Feeney, National University of Ireland, Galway
616. Siobhra Aiken, Centre for Irish Studies/ Access Office, NUI Galway
617. Professor Neil Robinson, Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick
618. Dr Joan Giller, Spirasi, Cork, psychotherapist
619. Heidi Schoenenberger, PhD researcher, NUI Galway
620. Dr Siobhán Banda, Department of Law, Maynooth University.
621. Dr Thomas Laffan, GP; MB BCh BAO MICGP; Crumlin Medical Clinic, D12.
622. Dr Pat Bracken, Consultant Psychiatrist, Co Cork
623. Dr Aisling Ní Shúilleabhain, GP, Adjunct Asst Prof Primary Care, TCD
624. Professor Margaret Kelleher, School of English, Drama and Film, University College Dublin
625. Dr Maeve Houlihan, UCD Lochlann Quinn School of Business
627. Dr. Patrick Crowley, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, UCC
628. Dr Ciaran O'Halloran, GP
629. Dr Nuala Brady, School of Psychology, UCD
630. Dimitri Bettoni, School of Communications, DCU
631. Mary Cunniffe, Public Health Nurse(Social inclusion)
632. Niamh Osborne, Legal Executive, KOD Lyons Solicitors
633. Dr Sinéad Ring, Department of Law, Maynooth University.
634. Dr Larfhlaith Watson, School of Sociology, University College Dublin
635. Dr Rachel Hilliard, School of Business & Economics, NUI Galway
636. Ciarán Doherty, Barrister
637. Jesse Jones, Technological University Dublin
638. Georgina Lawlor, School of Humanities, Technological University Dublin
639. Caroline Mangan, UCD Global, University College Dublin
640. Gearóidín McEvoy, PhD Candidate, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
641. Dr. Sarah McLoughlin, Research Scientist, School of Biology and Environmental Science, UCD
642. Tony McGillicuddy BL, Law Library, Four Courts, Dublin 7
643. Dr. Elizabeth Kyte, Women's Studies, UCC
644. Amin Sharifi Isaloo - Sociology - UCC
645. Cathy McLoughlin, Head of DCU Access Service
646. Dr. Lisa Godson, School of Visual Culture, National College of Art and Design
647. Dr Kevin O'Sullivan, School of History & Philosophy, NUI Galway
648. Dr Clare O'Halloran, School of History, UCC
649. Dr. Peter Moran, School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, UCC.
650. Maria Manning, PhD Researcher, UCC
651. Dr Penelope Muzanenhamo, UCD College of Business
652. Dr Eithne Heffernan, School of Medicine, NUI Galway
653. Dr Verena Commins, Centre for Irish Studies, NUI Galway
654. Grace O'Hara, UCD Volunteers Overseas, University College Dublin
655. Dr Ger McLoughlin GP Carrigtwohill Co Cork
656. Martina Hynan, PhD researcher, Centre for Irish Studies, NUI Galway
657. Professor John Geary, College of Business, UCD
658. Seána Glennon, PhD Candidate, School of Law, University College Dublin
659. Dr. Marcin Szczersinski, School of Applied Psychology UCC
660. Hilary Minch, Manager, UCD Volunteers Overseas
661. Dr Sean Butler, Lecturer in Law, UCC
662. Dr. Fiona Sheridan, Discipline of Management, Cairnes Business School, NUIG
663. Dr Emma O’Cinneide, General Practitioner, Co. Offaly
664. Dr Iain Atack, International Peace Studies, TCD
665. Zoe Liston UCDVO
666. Dr Anna Beug, general practitioner, lecturer general practice UCD
667. Cathriona Gaffney, School of Psychology, UCD
668. Dr Dorota Szelewa, Asst Prof in Social Justice, University College Dublin
669. Dr Ciara Smyth, School of Law, NUI Galway
670. Anne Ahern, Barrister, UCC Law Department
671. Dr Mary Barry General Practitioner
672. Seamus O’Halloran, Seamus O’Halloran S6
673. Sinead Dolan, St. Angela’s College, Sligo, Access Officer
674. Teresa Buczkowska, Integration Manager, Immigrant Council of Ireland
675. Dr. Matthew Cannon, Applied Social Sciences, Limerick Institute of Technology
676. Sarah Clancy, Community Worker
677. Valerie Connor, School of Media, Technological University Dublin City Campus
678. Dr Aisling McMahon, Department of Law, Maynooth University
679. Aoife Dillon, Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioner and member of Nurses and Midwives in Inclusion Health Group
680. Dr Valentina Paolucci, UCD School of Business
681. Sinead Dolan, Access Officer, St. Angela’s college, Sligo
682. Dr David O’Connell, Edenpark Surgery
683. Dr. Katharina Swirak, Department of Sociology and Criminology, University College Cork
684. Liam Sunner, School of Law and Government, DCU
685. Dr. Siobhán Madden, Community Education and Research, Independent Scholar, Galway.
686. Dr. Mags Crean, Postdoctoral Researcher, University College Dublin
687. Dr Jim Harty, GP
688. Luke Field, Department of Government & Politics, University College Cork
689. Dr Tom Hickey, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
   (Constitutional law)
690. Dr Mari Gleeson, GP
691. Jamie Canavan, PhD researcher, Dept. of History, NUI Galway
692. Dr Niamh Pattwell, School of English, Drama and Film, UCD
693. Elizabeth Murray, Immigration Consultant, Co. Mayo
694. Carmel Hennings, Department of Nursing, Health and Disability, St. Angela's College, Sligo.
695. Dr Gillian Wylie, International Peace Studies, TCD
696. Professor Caroline McGregor, National University of Ireland, Galway
697. Dr Rachel Hoare, Trinity College, Dublin and psychotherapist working with unaccompanied minors
698. Sarah Bowman, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin
699. Dr. Maria Dempsey, Applied Psychology, UCC
700. Dr Claire Gillan, School of Psychology, Trinity College Dublin
701. Dr Kathy D'Arcy, Women's Studies, UCC
702. Grainne Mellon, Barrister
703. Dr Patrick Cadwell, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies, DCU
704. Dr Anne Neylon, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool
705. Dr Michelle D'Arcy, Department of Political Science, Trinity College Dublin
706. Dr Susie Donnelly, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, University College Dublin
707. Dr. Fintan Sheerin, Associate Professor in Intellectual Disability Nursing, School of Nursing & Midwifery, TCD
708. Dr Gordon Dalton, Senior Research Fellow, MaREI, UCC
709. Dr Cormac O'Brien, School of English, Drama and Film, University College Dublin
710. Dr Damian Gallagher, Ulster University Business School
711. James Heaney, Dept of Humanities, Carlow College
712. James Mullan, School of Microbiology, UCC, Cork.
713. Dr Frances Enright, Consultant paediatrician si Community child Health Mercy University Hospital Cork
714. Dr Rory Mc Daid, Dept. of Policy and Practice, Marino Institute of Education
715. Dr Mike Murphy, School of Applied Psychology, UCC
716. Dr Adrian Grant, Lecturer in Policy, Ulster University
717. Pádraig Fhia Ó Mathúna, Acadamh na hOllscoilíochta Gaeilge, OÉG
718. Dr Aileen O'Carroll, Maynooth University,
719. Dr Maria Helen Murphy, Department of Law, Maynooth University
720. Dr Pablo Gracia, Department of Sociology, Trinity College Dublin
721. Katie Murphy Diabetes Nurse Facilitator, Dept of General Practice, UCC
722. Michael Quinlan, Solicitor and Director / Secretary, Nasc, the Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre
723. Dr Órla Ní Dhughghaill, School of Chemistry, UCC
724. Margaret Ann Cusack, Migration (Children)
725. Prof. Sheila Killian, University of Limerick
726. Madeline Boughton, Associate Professor, School of Communications, Dublin City University
727. Brian Hand, Artist and Head of Dept of Sculpture and Expanded Practice, NCAD
728. Julie O'Leary BL, Legal Manager, Nasc, Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre
729. Dr Mairead O'Connor, Research Fellow, School of Public Health, UCC
730. Marcus Gatto, J.D., Boston University Study Abroad, Law and Ethics
731. Dr Patricia Kennedy, st Angela's College. Sligo
732. Dr Catherine Ann Cullen, writer
733. Dr. Philomena McKenna, retired Anaesthetist, Galway ,
734. Liz Farsaci, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin
735. Mary Mac Nelis retired teacher for visually impaired
736. Dr. Ciaran McCullagh retd Sociology UCC
737. Dr. Philomena McKenna, retired consultant anaesthetist, GalwayBernadette D'Arcy.

Bridging The Gap

738. Prof. Jonathan Stock, Department of Music, UCC
739. Aga Wiesyk, Communications, Irish Network Against Racism
740. Dr James M Smith, English Department, Boston College
741. Dominic Thorpe, Artist
742. Dr David Kinlen / GP Trainee, RCSI
743. Prof. Stephen Wilmer, School of Creative Arts, TCD Trinity College Dublin
744. Mary Cronin, Lecturer, School of Public Health, UCC
745. Dr Lorcan Sirr, Technological University Dublin
746. Norman Hagen, Employability Consultant, Ulster University
747. Dr Deirdre Rafferty, Consultant Paediatrician, Mercy University Hospital, Cork
748. Dr. Sinéad Mitchell NUI Galway School of Engineering
749. Dr Maria Parsons, IADT & TUI
750. Maebh Coleman, TU Dublin
751. Barbara Gormley PhD Pandemic Communication DCU
752. Dr Ruth Harris Senior Lecturer in Humanities TU Dublin
753. Dr Linda Moore, Senior Lecturer in Criminology, Ulster University
754. Dr Maria Parsons, English, Media and Cultural Studies, IADT, Trade Union
    Representative Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI)
755. Maura Kilfeather, International Student Advisor, St. Angela's College, Sligo
756. Ciarán Ahern, Solicitor
757. Dr Tim Groenland, School of English, UCC
758. Rachel Lynch, MIACP & EUPATI FELLOW Accredited psychotherapist
759. Dr. Veronica Corcodel, Assistant Professor, School of Law and Government, Dublin
    City University
760. Professor Saoirse Nic Gabhainn, Health Promotion Research Centre, School of
    Health Sciences, NUI Galway
761. Dr Paul Candon, Independent researcher (Social Sci/Media), Co Dublin.
762. Carmel Geoghegan, Dementia Ireland
763. Dr Orfhlaith Ni Bhriain Irish World Academy of music and dance , University of
    Limerick
764. Dr Fergus Lalor, Chemistry Dept., UCC (Rtd.)
765. Dr Maria Deiana, Queen's University Belfast
766. Tony Ryan, Emeritus Professor, College of Medicine and Health, UCC
767. Michael Barron, Civil Society Consultant
768. Dr. Katie McElroy, General Practitioner, Kildare
769. Dr John McCabe, Geriatrics SpR Mater Hospital Dublin
770. Dr Fergus McAuliffe, School of Earth Sciences and iCRAG, University College Dublin
771. Prof Helen Phelan, Irish World Academy, University of Limerick
772. Dr Louise Forde, School of Law, UCC
773. Dr. Elena Vaughan, Postdoctoral Researcher, Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway
774. Susan Carton Department of Nursing, Health Sciences and Disability studies, St Angela's College Sligo
775. Dr Emma McEvoy, Department of Law, Maynooth University
776. Dr Sara Burke, Assistant Professor of Health Policy, Centre for Health Policy & Management, Trinity College Dublin
777. Dr. Kathy Glavanis-Granatham (retired), Sociology and Criminology, UCC
779. Dr.una Ni Chaoimh, Dept. of Geography (retired), UCC.
780. Dr. Ailbhe Murphy, Artist and Director of Create
781. Prof Ray Murphy, Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway.
782. Professor Caroline McIntosh, School of Health Sciences, NUI Galway
783. Dr. Elaine Keane, School of Education, NUI Galway
784. Eoghan McConalogue, ollamh cúnta le Gnó, Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
785. Dr Jacqueline O'Toole Lecturer IT Sligo
786. Dr Alan Cusack, School of Law, University of Limerick
787. Ken Mc Cue, Cultural Planner, Sport Against Racism Ireland
788. Clare Bell, TU Dublin
789. Angus O’ Riordan, Language and Literacy Tutor, Spirasi, Youth and Education Service, Dublin Adult Learning Centre
790. Dr Maria O’Brien, School of Communications, Dublin City University
791. Prof.Eamon O’Shea, NUI Galway
792. Professor Shane Darcy, Irish Centre for Human Rights, School of Law, NUI Galway
793. Lewis Mooney BL
794. Virginija Petrauskaite, Trainee Solicitor, KOD Lyons
795. Dr. Roja Fazaeli, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Studies, Trinity College Dublin
796. Dr Timmy Frawley, UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems
797. Shane O'Curry, Director INAR Irish Network Against Racism
798. Deirdre Moore, Barrister
799. Gráinne Gilmore BL
800. Dr Caroline Sweeney, School of Law, University of Limerick
801. Lorna Moloney, ACE, University College Cork
802. Dr Carmel Hannan, Department of Sociology, University of Limerick
803. Claire Nolan, School Administrator, School of Information and Communication Studies
804. Dr Emer Clifford, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, UCC
805. Dr. Lorraine McIlrath, Community Knowledge Initiative, NUI Galway
806. Dr Anne B Ryan, Dept of Adult and Community Education, MU
807. Maebh Coleman, TU Dublin
808. Anne Walsh National Youth Council of Ireland
809. Dr Bernadine Brady, UNESCO Child & family Research Centre, NUI Galway
810. Garreth Smith, Department of Humanities, TU Dublin
811. Dr Erika Biagini, Dublin City University
812. Dr. Tanja Kovačić, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway
813. Maura Kavanagh, Immigration and Human Rights paralegal
814. Dr Paula Devine, Schol of Soc Sciences, Education & Social Work, Queen's University Belfast
815. Dr. Lisa Pursell, School of Health Sciences, NUI Galway
816. Ann Byrne, UCC Library
817. Dr. Garrett Greene, School of Mathematics and Statistics, UCD
818. Dr Kathy Looney, School of Psychology, UCD
819. Liam Herrick, Irish Council for Civil Liberties
820. Dr Colette Kelly, Director Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway
821. Dr Mary Rogan, School of Law, Trinity College Dublin
822. Doireann Ansbro, Irish Council for Civil Liberties
823. Prof. Denis O'Mahony, Dept. of Medicine, UCC
824. Dr Lorraine Burke, School of Psychology, NUI Galway
825. Dr Harry Browne, School of Media, TU Dublin
826. Dr Nóra Ni Loinsigh, Barrister
827. Dr Tina Kinsella, Department of Design and Visual Arts, IADT
828. Dr. Merike Darmody, Social Research, ESRI
829. Ciara O'Halloran, Civic and Community Engagement, UCC
830. Dr. John Cullen, School of Business, Maynooth University
831. Clr. Colette Finn, Cork City Council.
832. Prof. Daniel Faas, Department of Sociology, Trinity College Dublin
833. Dr Patricia Brazil, Averil Deverell Lecturer in Law, Trinity College Dublin
834. Dr Louise Gibson Senior Lecturer in Paediatrics UCC
835. Noemi Magugliani (PhD Fellow, Irish Centre for Human Rights)
836. Prof. Susi Geiger, School of Business, UCD and Access for Medicines Irelands
837. Prof. Peter Stone, Political Science, TCD
838. Caroline Burke, dept of Geography, UCD
839. Dr Marguerite Barry, School of Information & Communication studies, UCD
840. Gráinne O' Connor, educator
841. Ronan Harrington MSc, Research Assistant, School of Microbiology, UCC
842. Dr Pádraic Moran, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures, NUI Galway
843. Michael Lynn SC
844. Prof Amanda Phelan, School of Nursing & Midwifery, TCD
845. Dr. Aisling de Paor, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
846. Dr Natasha Remoundou, NUI Galway
Dr Claire Murray, School of Law, University College Cork
Robert Crowley BL
Aoife Harte, Journalist
Ailbhe Smyth, Women’s Studies, UCD (retired)
Lindsay Ruigrok, Solicitor (England & Wales)
Fiona Bolger, poet
Louise Sarsfield Collins, Maynooth University
Michael Tobin, School of Humanities, Waterford Institute of Technology
Jim Roche, Senior Lecturer, Research on housing, Dublin School of Architecture, TU Dublin.
Joanne McHale, Lecturer, Department of Humanities, TU Dublin
Dr. Michael Carr, School of Multidisciplinary Technologies, TU Dublin
Dr. Gerardene Meade-Murphy, Dept. of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, University College Cork
Dr. John Molyneux, Lecturer in Art History (retired) and writer on political theory, history and art history.
Dr. Joanne McVeigh, School of Applied Psychology, University College Cork
Dr Lauren Kierans BL
Barra Ó Seaghdha, writer, & lecturer (SALIS, DCU)
Deirbhile Ni Bhrolcháin, Múinteoir, amhránaí
Diego Castillo Goncalves, doctoral researcher, School of Law, Trinity College Dublin
Elaine Clotworthy, Dept of Arts, Matino Institute of Education
Joe Holt BL
Prof. Marie-Louise Coolahan, School of English & Creative Arts, NUI Galway
Dr. Cara Nine, Political & Ethical Philosophy, UCC
Dr. Frédérique Vallières, Assistant Professor and Director, Trinity Centre for Global Health (TCD)
Mary O Sullivan, Mature Student Officer, University College Cork
Linda Horgan, Dept of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy, UCC.
Dr. Mark Walsh, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Maynooth University
Christine Farrell, DCU Students' Union President 2019/ 2020
Dr. Ethna Regan, School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music, Dublin City University
Dr. Ethna Regan, School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music, DCU
Callaghan Commons, Vice President for Academic Affairs DCUSU
Katie Fay, Vice President for Engagement & Development, DCU Students’ Union
Sandra Ratcliffe, Lecturer, School of Humanities, TUDublin-Blanchardstown Campus
Dr. Deirdre Niamh Duffy, Senior Lecturer in Social Care, Manchester Metropolitan University
Aisling Fagan, DCU Students’ Union Vice President for Welfare and Equality
Bernie D’Arcy. Bridging The Gap. activist and human rights
Dr Kamal Abouhajar, Consultant Anaesthetist, MRHM
Cindy O’Shea, School of Applied Social Studies, UCC
Michael Conlon SC
885. Dr. Kayla Rush, School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music, Dublin City University
886. Dr Janos Fiala-Butora, Centre for Disability Law and Policy, NUI Galway
887. Nessa Darcy, Community Officer, Discovery Gospel Choir
888. John Malcolm Anderson, Software Engineer/ Corporate Social Responsibility, Verizon Media
889. Dr Joanna Hofer-Robinson, School of English, University College Cork
890. Dr Sarah Otten, Carlow College, St Patrick's
891. Amy Stapleton, youth trainer with Voices of Refugees in Europe, PhD researcher in TCD
892. Dr. Kylie Jarrett, Maynooth University
893. Dr Brian Murphy, Access Foundation Programme, Technological University Dublin
894. Dr Ruari-Santiago McBride, School of Education, University of Limerick
895. Dr. Dragana Jurišić, School of Communications, DCU
896. Dr Aogáin Mulcahy, Sociology, UCD
897. Dr Bernadette Cronin, Department of Theatre, University College Cork
898. Dr Melanie L. Marshall, School of Film, Music, and Theatre, University College Cork
899. Anwen Tormey, PhD Candidate, U. of Chicago
900. Dr Christine Gaffney, ISS21, University College Cork
901. Dr Cara Connolly MB FRCSI MCh FRCS Plast
902. Dr Ellen Crushell, Dean, Faculty of Paediatrics, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland
903. Clare Muireann Murphy, Storyteller and Artist, Bristol UK
904. Dr Martin Marjoram, Lecturer, Dept of Science, TU Dublin
905. Francesco Edoardo Chessa, PhD candidate
906. Dr Mary Galvin, Department of Design Innovation, Maynooth University
907. Mark Doyle, WIT School of Humanities
908. Dr. Niloufar Omidi, Lecturer in Human Rights for Advocates, Huston School of Film & Digital Media, NUI Galway
909. Dr. Thomas Murray, Higher Education Programme Director, An Cosán
910. Dr. Conor Little, Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick
911. Dr John McFarland consultant psychiatrist Mid West Mental Health Services.
912. Thomas Erbsloh, Community Worker
913. Dr Ruth Brennan, Marie Skłodowska Curie Individual Fellow, Trinity Centre for Environmental Humanities, Trinity College Dublin
914. Bernie D'Arcy Public Speaker. Human Rights Activist
915. Dr Ronan McDermott, UCD Centre for Humanitarian Action
916. Sheila Lonergan, School of Engineering, University College Cork
917. Dr Jennifer Symonds, School of Education, University College Dublin
918. Temmuz S. Gürbüz, Huston School of Film, NUI Galway
919. Fiona Crowley, Amnesty International Ireland
920. Tim Hanley LLM, Campaigns Officer, Amnesty International Ireland
921. Colm O’Gorman, Executive Director, Amnesty International Ireland
922. Dr. Caroline Crowley, Crowley Research (independent social research services), West Cork
923. Dr Seamus Taylor, Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University
924. Aisling Walsh, PhD Candidate at the School of Sociology & Politics NUI Galway
925. Dr. Niamh Cummins, School of Allied Health, University of Limerick
926. Dr. Cian McCafferty, Department of Anatomy & Neuroscience, University College Cork
927. Lorraine Tansey, NUI Galway
928. Dara Kerins, NUI Galway
929. Dr Angelina Espinoza, Marie-Curie EI Fellow, BIS Dept., University College Cork
930. Dr Uinsionn Mac Dubhghaill, Discipline of Journalism and Communication, NUI Galway
931. Alastair Nightingale, Department of Psychology, University of Limerick.
932. Colette Kelleher, Former Senator
Dear Chairperson and Members of the Special Committee on Covid-19 Response,

On April 01 2020, 932 experts in health systems, public health, social policy, law, human rights, migration and racism wrote to various Government ministers and State health officials on international protection applicants and direct provision. In line with the Government's own advice, we requested that people in direct provision be provided with:

(a) own-door accommodation;
(b) individualised access to sanitation and eating facilities to every family unit and single person in the international protection system.

I attach the full letter and list of signatories below.

It is with enormous regret, that months into the Covid-19 pandemic response, such necessary and appropriate actions have not been undertaken.

With the potential for a further wave of Covid-19 at any time, I urge the Committee to ask Department of Justice and Equality and Health Service Executive officials what planning is underway to ensure people resident in direct provision centres will be permitted to follow clear government social distancing advice. It is essential that such planning occur with all due haste.

Do not hesitate to contact me should further information be requested.

Is mise le meas,
Liam

Please note I am working remotely and am best contacted through email.

Dr Liam Thornton | Associate Professor in Law | UCD Student Consultations: Please email liam.thornton@ucd.ie to request an online appointment.

E: liam.thornton@ucd.ie

Web: www.liamthornton.ie
Re: Urgent- Social Distancing and Direct Provision

Micheál Martin <Micheal.Martin@oireachtas.ie>
To: Liam Thornton <liam.thornton@ucd.ie>
1 April 2020 at 15:48

Dear Liam,

Many thanks for contacting me in relation to this very important issue. There can be no doubt that those living in direct provision, no more than those in our prison system, are at increased risk if the Covid19 virus comes into the centre. This issue is of particular concern when we consider the many people living in such centres (or in emergency accommodation) who would be classed as vulnerable.

We have raised this matter directly with Minister Flanagan and I am attaching a letter sent by the Fianna Fáil Justice Spokesperson, Jim O’Callaghan, to Minister Flanagan on behalf of the party. We have been advised that all centres (including emergency accommodation centres) are being assessed by the HSE as to how they could manage an outbreak in the relevant setting. Each centre has been asked to generate a self-isolation capability. As you correctly point out, it is essential that cocooning measures for the most vulnerable are put in place without delay.

I appreciate that this is not enough but please rest assured that Fianna Fáil is doing its utmost to assist in finding a solution to this problem.

Thanks again for contacting me.

Regards,

Micheál Martin

----- Forwarded message -----
From: Liam Thornton <liam.thornton@ucd.ie>
Sent: Wednesday 1 April 2020 13:09:45
To: Liam Thornton
Subject: Re: Urgent- Social Distancing and Direct Provision

Dear Deputy,

Further to my correspondence with you yesterday, please find attached the letter to government on the direct provision system and Covid-19, with over 850 signatures from a range of experts, requesting, in summary,

"...to provide own-door accommodation and individualised access to sanitation and eating facilities to every family unit and single person in the international protection system, given that such action is practicable at this time."

The full letter and the signatories are attached to this email.

Take care,

Liam
Subject: Re: Urgent- Social Distancing and Direct Provision
To: <Leo.varadkar@oireachtas.ie>, <Charles.flanagan@oireachtas.ie>, <simon.harris@oireachtas.ie>, <Eoghan.murphy@oireachtas.ie>, <regina.doherty@oireachtas.ie>, <Katherine.zappone@oireachtas.ie>, <paschal.donohoe@oireachtas.ie>, <David.stanton@oireachtas.ie>, <finian.mcgrath@oireachtas.ie>, <info@health.gov.ie>, INFO <info@justice.ie>

Dear Government Ministers and State Officials,

Please find attached a letter with a final list of over 850 signatories from persons who are experts in the fields of medicine, nursing, public health, law, human rights, migration etc regarding social distancing and direct provision.

In summary, we implore you to act now, to provide own-door accommodation and individualised access to sanitation and eating facilities to every family unit and single person in the international protection system, given that such action is practicable at this time.

Take Care,
Liam

Please note I am working remotely and am best contacted through email.

| Dr Liam Thornton | Lecturer in Law | UCD Student Consultations: Fridays 2pm to 4pm- Please email liam.thornton@ucd.ie to request an online appointment. |
| E: liam.thornton@ucd.ie |
| Web: www.liamthornton.ie |


COVID-19 and DP (1).docx 
14K
Dear Mr. Thornton,

Firstly I would like to thank you for taking the time to contact me regarding international protection applicants (also known as asylum seekers) and the measures I am taking to ensure their safety during the COVID-19 crisis. It is heartening to see the many messages of support and concern for applicants being received during these very difficult times.

Please be assured that myself, Minister of State Stanton and our officials take the safety and wellbeing of all international protection applicants extremely seriously. An intensive operation is underway within my Department to manage aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic within our sector.

Planning at a National Level

At national level, planning for the management of the health response to the COVID-19 pandemic is being led by the HSE which, as you may have seen in the daily updates, is mobilising an ambitious plan. My Department is working closely with the HSE as part of the Government team responding to the crisis and we are sharing information with one another all of the time.

The International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) of my Department, formerly known as the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA), is working closely with the HSE and in particular their National Social Inclusion team and is following all its advice.

IPAS will continue to respond to all medical advices received working with the HSE in a collaborative and proactive manner. In that regard, a dedicated team has also been established in IPAS to manage issues relating to COVID-19 in accommodation centres (including in emergency accommodation locations). This unit is in constant contact with all of our premises.

Minister Stanton and I recognise that the centre managers and their staff are providing an essential frontline service away from their own homes and families during this uncertain time and we commended their dedication and their commitment to protecting the welfare and safety of residents.

Departments Response - Accommodation Centres and COVID-19

There are a number of measures underway to support contingency planning and preparedness in accommodation centres for COVID-19 and I would like to share some of this information with you.
Intensive work has been underway in the Department since the emergence of the COVID-19 crisis to ensure that to the best of our ability, we protect the health and welfare of asylum seekers and refugees availing of direct provision services. The assessment is that dedicated Direct Provision Centres are safer environments than emergency accommodation.

Our officials have now secured over 650 additional beds which will provide valuable additional accommodation to support the measures required for vulnerable residents; the provision of offsite accommodation for self-isolation; and will help with social distancing measures by reducing overall numbers in some existing centres. This is a critical part of our overall strategy to protect our residents. My Department has now procured a total of five hotels to provide additional accommodation.

The new accommodation will, in the main, be located in Dublin, Galway and Cork. These facilities will supplement new mainstream centres which have opened recently in Tullamore, Rossliare Harbour and Caherciveen following tendering processes. Since the start of the year, over 1,350 bed spaces have been procured enabling older centres to close and to move residents from emergency accommodation locations to dedicated centres, where cross agency services to residents can more effectively be provided. We have now brought the emergency locations which have no other guests into the supported environment of dedicated centres in order to provide greater support to residents and managers of the accommodation.

The new accommodation that we have procured means that we can help these centres where social distancing is obviously more challenging by reducing the overall number of residents they are accommodating. We are ensuring that no more than 3 people are sharing a room (similar to a small sized family unit) in any of our centres during this public health crisis. Residents will start to see the impact of these measures very quickly.

Transfers to the new accommodation has already begun and will continue in the coming days. However at all times, we are guided by the HSE and the National Public Health Emergency Team and we will continue to do everything possible to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all applicants.

Contingency Planning

All current accommodation centres including former and current emergency centres have completed contingency plans for COVID-19. These plans are regularly reviewed by IPAS in light of appropriate advice from the HSE to promote shared learning and best practice across centres. The nine HSE Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO) regions have assessed all centres where people are living in congregated settings to establish their state of readiness and provide appropriate advice to assist us.

I can also tell you that the Department is in constant contact with centre managers and accommodation providers, who have been made fully aware of the HSE advice on social distancing. Residents have also been made aware of the need for social distancing, good hand hygiene and coughing/sneezing etiquette. Information and posters have been distributed to all centres and translations of public health information have also been provided. Centre managers have been advised to increase the standard and frequency of cleaning throughout the centres, paying particular attention to communal areas.

Each centre manager has had to make sure their centre has adequate supplies of cleaning products, sanitiser, tissues and wipes. Hygiene products are distributed to international protection applicants as required. My Department has procured a large volume of hand sanitiser for residents and staff across our network of centres that have been distributed by courier to all of our centres.

Each centre has been asked where possible to generate a self-isolation capability for use by persons suspected to have the virus. Any COVID-19 suspected or confirmed case, outbreak or contacts are managed by Public Health which also advises on follow up actions including control measures such as isolation. My Department, of course, does not hold medical information related to our residents. It would not be appropriate that we would hold confidential medical information. This information is held by the HSE and local GPs and we are and will be guided by them.

Social Distancing and Self- Isolation

In terms of social distancing, centres without self-catering facilities have already been implementing measures to move to takeaway services as opposed to communal dining or have introduced staggered mealtimes to reduce contacts. We have temporarily closed our centres to visitors. The additional accommodation that we have procured in recent days and weeks also means that we can reduce overall numbers of residents in some centres to further support social distancing. We are ensuring that no more than 3 people are sharing a room (similar to a small sized family unit) in any of our centres during this public health crisis.

Offsite self-isolation means that we can support people who are suspected of having the virus or who have the virus but with mild symptoms away from their centre. Once they are fully recovered they can then return to their centre with no risk to any other resident. Our first location for self-isolation is in Dublin. We have procured a hotel, which will provide places for 100 people. The HSE will provide the onsite health care supports, and I am delighted to say that the Peter McVerry Trust has agreed to provide the necessary social care and supports for the people staying there.

Now that we have an agreed model with the HSE, this approach can be replicated in any location where we need it and we are working to identify the optimum locations for such additional facilities.
Cocooning and Older Residents

All of our older residents who are aged 65 or older are currently cocooned alone or are cocooning with their family members.

The HSE is also advising cocooning measures for anyone within the six categories of very serious medical illnesses published by the HSE last Friday evening. The measures we have announced will allow us to provide further supports for such people, where needed, based on individual assessments currently being made by the HSE National Social Inclusion team.

Residents who do not need cocooning measures in line with HSE guidelines can of course take brief daily exercise within 2km of the centre and we encourage them to do so. This is important for maintaining good physical and mental health especially for families with children who are unused to spending long periods indoors.

Information for Residents

Our website www.accommodationcentres.ie has been adapted to include a new section where public health information and trusted online information sources have been consolidated and we are encouraging all residents to visit the site.

My Department is also putting in place a national clinical telephone service providing public health advice to IPAS, centre management and residents. In addition, it will provide an online GP service to any residents who have not yet been allocated a GP by the HSE or who have a GP but are unable to make contact with them. This online GP service will also make the arrangements for testing, where required.

Complaints and Transfers

It must be stated that where a resident has a complaint or requires information they should first seek to engage with the manager of their accommodation centre. It is also open to residents to make a formal complaint to the IPAS directly on any matter that has not been resolved by the management.

We take complaints from residents very seriously and all residents are made fully aware of their ability to contact the Department at any time, in confidence, and have been provided with the appropriate contact details. In addition complaints may be made directly to the Office of the Ombudsman or the Children's Ombudsman.

I should also say that we totally reject any suggestion that sanctions, such as transfers, are implemented against a resident as a result of complaint. Any transfers that take place from one location to another are a normal part of the Department’s commitment to move residents to the most appropriate accommodation centre as soon as places become available.

Families are prioritised for these transfers especially where own-door accommodation becomes available. While it may be the case that such transfers may entail moving to a different region at short notice, this relates solely to availability of appropriate spaces in the dedicated accommodation centre for the particular person or family and the need to utilise the temporary accommodation for new protection applicants.

Conclusion

Finally, I hope that this information will provide you with some reassurance of the proactive steps that my Department in close cooperation with the HSE is taking to ensure the safety of all international protection applicants. I would again like to thank you for taking the time to contact me on this very important issue and to assure you that myself, Minister Stanton and our officials will continue to treat the COVID-19 pandemic as an urgent priority.

Yours sincerely,

_________________________
Charlie Flanagan, T.D.
Minister for Justice & Equality

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Re: Urgent- Social Distancing and Direct Provision

Dear Liam

Please see below correspondance that Micheál has received from Minister Flanagan.

Best regards,

Ashley

From: eCorrespondence (Justice) <Justice-Correspondence@cloud.gov.ie>  
Sent: Thursday 9 April 2020 10:23  
To: Micheal Martin  
Subject: Correspondence

Deputy Micheal Martin T.D.  
Micheal.Martin@oireachtas.ie  

9th April 2020  
Re: International Protection Applicants and Covid 19  
Minister's Reference: DJE-MO-01812-2020

Dear Deputy Martin,

I wish to refer to your correspondence dated 31st March 2020.

Firstly I would like to thank you for taking the time to contact me regarding international protection applicants (also known as asylum seekers) in particular those living in Ciuin House, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim and the measures I am taking to ensure their safety during the COVID-19 crisis. It is heartening to see the many messages of support and concern for applicants being received during these very difficult times.

Please be assured that assured that myself, Minister of State Stanton and our officials take the safety and wellbeing of all international protection applicants extremely seriously. An intensive operation is underway within my Department to manage aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic within our sector.

At national level, planning for the management of the health response to the COVID-19 pandemic is being led by the HSE which, as you may have seen in the daily updates, is mobilising an ambitious plan. The Department is working closely with the HSE as part of the Government team responding to the crisis and we are sharing information with one another all of the time.

The International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) of my Department, formerly known as the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA), is working closely with the HSE and in particular their National Social Inclusion team and is following all its advice.

IPAS will continue to respond to all medical advices received working with the HSE in a collaborative and proactive manner. In that regard, a dedicated team has also been established in IPAS to manage issues relating to COVID-19 in accommodation centres (including in emergency accommodation locations). This unit is in constant contact with all of our premises.

Our officials have now secured over 650 additional beds which will provide valuable additional accommodation to support the measures required for vulnerable residents; the provision of offsite accommodation for self-isolation; and will help with social distancing measures by reducing overall numbers in some existing centres. This is a critical part of our overall strategy to protect our residents. The Department has now procured a total of five hotels to provide additional accommodation.

The new accommodation will, in the main, be located in Dublin, Galway and Cork. These facilities will supplement new mainstream centres which have opened recently in Tullamore, Rosslare Harbour and Caherciveen following tendering processes. Since the start of the year, over 1,350 bed spaces have been procured enabling older centres to close and to move residents from emergency accommodation locations to dedicated centres, where cross agency services to residents can more effectively be provided. We have now brought the emergency locations which have no other guests into the supported environment of dedicated centres in order to provide greater support to residents and managers of the accommodation.
The new accommodation that we have procured means that we can help these centres where social distancing is obviously more challenging by reducing the overall number of residents they are accommodating. We are ensuring that no more than 3 people are sharing a room (similar to a small sized family unit) in any of our centres during this public health crisis. Residents will start to see the impact of these measures very quickly.

The HSE is also advising cocooning measures for anyone within the six categories of very serious medical illnesses published by the HSE last Friday evening. The measures we have announced will allow us to provide further supports for such people, where needed, based on individual assessments currently being made by the HSE National Social Inclusion team. In this respect, I advise that the mother with the sick child in Ciuin House wishing to seek her own door accommodation should contact IPAS directly. She may do so by emailing their helpline: ipasinbox@justice.ie

Transfers to the new accommodation has already begun and will continue in the coming days. However at all times, we are guided by the HSE and the National Public Health Emergency Team and we will continue to do everything possible to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all applicants.

All current accommodation centres including former and current emergency centres have completed contingency plans for COVID-19. These plans are regularly reviewed by IPAS in light of appropriate advice from the HSE to promote shared learning and best practice across centres. The nine HSE Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO) regions have assessed all centres where people are living in congregated settings to establish their state of readiness and provide appropriate advice to assist us.

I can also tell you that the Department is in constant contact with centre managers and accommodation providers, who have been made aware of the HSE advice on social distancing. Residents have also been made aware of the need for social distancing, good hand hygiene and coughing/sneezing etiquette. Information and posters have been distributed to all centres and translations of public health information have also been provided. Centre managers have been advised to increase the standard and frequency of cleaning throughout the centres, paying particular attention to communal areas. Each centre manager has had to make sure their centre has adequate supplies of cleaning products, sanitiser, tissues and wipes. Hygiene products are distributed to international protection applicants as required. My Department has procured a large volume of hand sanitiser for residents and staff across our network of centres that have been distributed by courier to all of our centres.

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Now that we have an agreed model with the HSE, this approach can be replicated in any location where we need it and we are working to identify the optimum locations for such additional facilities.

Our website www.accommodationcentres.ie has been adapted to include a new section where public health information and trusted online information sources have been consolidated and we are encouraging all residents to visit the site. My Department is also putting in place a national clinical telephone service providing public health advice to IPAS, centre management and residents. In addition, it will provide an online GP service to any residents who have not yet been allocated a GP by the HSE or who have a GP but are unable to make contact with them. This online GP service will also make the arrangements for testing, where required.

Finally, I hope that this information will provide you with some reassurance of the proactive steps that my Department in close cooperation with the HSE is taking to ensure the safety of all international protection applicants including those living in Ciuin House, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim. I would again like to thank you for taking the time to contact me on this very important issue and to assure you that myself, Minister Stanton and our officials will continue to treat the COVID-19 pandemic as an urgent priority.

Yours sincerely,

Charlie Flanagan, T.D.
Minister for Justice & Equality
The full letter and the signatories are attached to this email.

Take care,

Liam

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: Liam Thornton <liam.thornton@ucd.ie>
Date: Wed, 1 Apr 2020 at 12:54
Subject: Re: Urgent- Social Distancing and Direct Provision
To: <Leo.varadkar@oireachtas.ie>, <Charles.flanagan@oireachtas.ie>, <simon.harris@oireachtas.ie>, <Eoghan.murphy@oireachtas.ie>, <regina.doherty@oireachtas.ie>, <Katherine.zappone@oireachtas.ie>, <paschal.donohoe@oireachtas.ie>, <David.stanton@oireachtas.ie>, <finian.mcgrath@oireachtas.ie>, <info@health.gov.ie>, INFO <info@justice.ie>

Dear Government Ministers and State Officials,

Please find attached a letter with a final list of over 850 signatories from persons who are experts in the fields of medicine, nursing, public health, law, human rights, migration etc regarding social distancing and direct provision.

In summary, **we implore you to act now, to provide own-door accommodation and individualised access to sanitation and eating facilities to every family unit and single person in the international protection system, given that such action is practicable at this time.**

Take Care,

Liam

Please note I am working remotely and am best contacted through email.

| Dr Liam Thornton | Lecturer in Law | UCD Student Consultations: Fridays 2pm to 4pm- Please email liam.thornton@ucd.ie to request an online appointment. |
| E: liam.thornton@ucd.ie |

Web: www.liamthornton.ie