



Oifig an Ard-Rúnaí  
An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí  
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada  
Stráid Stórais  
Baile Átha Cliath 1

Office of the Secretary General  
Department of Social Protection  
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada  
Store Street  
Dublin 1

(01) 7043000

Facs / Fax (01) 7043721

Mr Tom Sheridan  
Joint Committee on Education  
and Social Protection  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

30 July 2015

Your Ref: esp 537

Dear Mr Sheridan,

I refer to your correspondence of 10 June 2015 regarding the recent report of the Joint Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions '*Report on the extension of the remit of the Ombudsman to cover all aspects and bodies associated with the Direct Provision System (DPS) and the extension of the remit of Freedom of Information to cover all aspects and bodies associated with the DPS including all the suppliers of goods and services, whether from the Private or Public Sectors*'.  
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The views in relation to the relevant recommendations concerning this Department are set out as follows:

**Recommendation 8.6** -- *The rate of the allowance has remained the same for the last 15 years. The Joint Committee recommends that this matter be examined immediately and the allowance be raised significantly. The Joint Committee also recommend that the allowance be discontinued where the right to work is granted however, this needs to take account of the nature of the work being either part or full-time and remunerated at a rate no less than the minimum wage rate.*

The Direct Provision Allowance (DPA) is administered by the Department of Social Protection, on an administrative basis on behalf of the Department of Justice and Equality. Any increase to the DPA rate would primarily be a matter for the Department of Justice & Equality having regard to its overall impact on the Direct Provision system. Any increase would also have to be considered in a budgetary context. The recent report, '*Working Group to Report to Government on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers*', examined the issue of the weekly rate of DPA and recommends that it is increased.

DPA, unlike social welfare assistance payments, is not means tested and is payable to all persons in direct provision irrespective of their means. Should persons in Direct Provision be permitted to engage in remunerative employment, a policy review of the scheme may be required to assess the impact on the payment of DPA. Such a review would be the responsibility of the Department of Justice and Equality.

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I trust that this response provides the Department's position regarding the recommendations made and if you require further clarification, please contact Jackie Harrington, Principal Officer at [jackie.harrington@welfare.ie](mailto:jackie.harrington@welfare.ie).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Niamh O'Donoghue', written over a horizontal line.

Niamh O'Donoghue  
Secretary General

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**Karen Byrne**

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**From:** Mary Pracht  
**Sent:** 07 August 2015 15:26  
**To:** Denis Moynihan; Roshin Sen  
**Cc:** Jackie Harrington; Michael Keeley; Karen Byrne  
**Subject:** FW: Costings request  
**Attachments:** DPA costs modelling -Aug 2015.xlsx

Denis, Roshin,

Please see attached some figures that I've worked up using existing DP figures (from the working group report). Applications to RIA this year are already running approx. 150% ahead of last year and I've added a note in the table.

Regards,  
Mary

Mary Pracht  
SWA Policy Unit  
Extn: 48430

T: 071 9148430  
E: [mary.pracht@welfare.ie](mailto:mary.pracht@welfare.ie)

**From:** Jackie Harrington  
**Sent:** 03 August 2015 22:11  
**To:** Mary Pracht  
**Subject:** FW: Costings request

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Mary, please see attached - will follow up with Denis tomorrow. Jackie  
Sent from my Windows Phone

**From:** [Denis Moynihan](#)  
**Sent:** 03/08/2015 21:38  
**To:** [Jackie Harrington](#); [Helen Faughnan](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Costings request

Talk tomorrow

Sent from my Windows Phone

**From:** [Garrett ORorke](#)  
**Sent:** 31/07/2015 16:41  
**To:** [Denis Moynihan](#)  
**Cc:** [David Reilly](#)  
**Subject:** Costings request

Denis,

Can you please examine the costings request below and reply as soon as practicable?

I'll be on leave for the next three weeks but David will be here and I would be grateful if you could send a reply to this request and the previous one on to him.

Regards,  
Garrett

To ensure a fair, efficient and responsive operation of INIS and RIA for period 2016-2021 in forecast economic environment.

To outline

- The cost of increasing weekly support of approximately €19 by 10%, 25% and doubling such support on the basis of existing numbers in RIA, and also on the basis of an increase of 10, 20%, 50% and doubling in numbers in RIA.
- The cost of increasing weekly support for minors in RIA by 10%, 25%, 50% and doubling such support on the basis of existing numbers in INIS, and also on the basis of an increase of 10%, 20%, 50% and doubling in numbers in INIS.

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Karen Byrne

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**From:** Roshin Sen  
**Sent:** 26 August 2015 14:50  
**To:** Jacinta Crawford  
**Cc:** Niamh O'Donoghue; Anne Vaughan; Edward Brophy; Terry.Quinn@tanaiste.gov.ie; paul.d.obrien@tanaiste.gov.ie; Denis Moynihan; John Conlon  
**Subject:** Budget options - Draft 2  
**Attachments:** OPTIONS LIST 2 - 25 08 2015.xls

Jacinta

Please find attached a revised illustrative Budget package of c. €240 million, following the meeting on Monday.

Kind regards

Roshin

4-3476

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	2016 Cost €m	2017 Cost €m	2018 Cost €m	Full Year Cost €m	Notes / Comments
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Direct Provision					
Increase the DPA allowances for adults and children living in Direct Provision. [Implementation Date: 2016].					The Report of the Working Group on the Protection Process including Direct Provision and supports to asylum seekers recommended an increase of the weekly allowance for adults from €19.10 to €38.74 and the allowance for children from €9.60 to €29.80. Cost, per the Report, is €3.6 million in 2016 - this cost needs to be revisited.





Óifig an Aire Coimircíe Sóisialaí  
Office of the Minister for Social Protection

Ms Frances Fitzgerald, T.D.  
Minister for Justice and Equality  
94 St. Stephen's Green  
Dublin 2

18 September 2015

**Re: Report of the Working Group on the Protection Process**

Dear Frances,

I refer to your letter dated 17 July concerning the recommendations of the Working Group on the Protection Process. I welcome the report and my response in respect of the recommendations impacting the Department of Social Protection is set out under as follows:

**Recommendations 3.128, 3.134 & 3.135 Persons awaiting decisions for five years or more**

I support the proposed actions to address those in the system for 5 years or more. However, it must be noted that additional social welfare costs arising from the implementation of these recommendations is significant and cannot be met from within the expenditure ceilings set for the Department of Social Protection in 2015 and subsequent years.

The maximum estimated full year cost of this proposal in respect of the payment of social welfare entitlements is over €42 million in total, comprising over €15 million in respect of those in Direct Provision accommodation and a further €27 million in respect of those outside of such accommodation. This €42<sup>1</sup> million includes the additional cost between the rate of Direct Provision Allowance (DPA) and the full social welfare rates payable to eligible persons and their dependents with status. It also includes the estimated cost of Child Benefit €1.1m and Rent Supplement<sup>2</sup> €14.3m.

<sup>1</sup> The costings assume that all persons will qualify for full rate Social Welfare payments

<sup>2</sup> Some of this expenditure may fall to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in respect of local authority areas where the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is implemented or persons are provided with housing by the Local Authorities



### **Recommendation 5.169 Transitional Supports**

The Department welcomes the recommendation that the Minister of State for Equality, New Communities and Integration convenes a task force of cross-departmental representatives, State agencies and relevant NGOs to roll out a consistent integration plan for the legacy cohort in Direct Provision who have been, or will be, granted status, and also to address the transitional support needs of future applicants who will be processed under the proposed Single Procedure. The Department of Social Protection is represented on this recently established task force and is fully engaged in the process.

### **Recommendation 5.30 Financial Supports**

The DPA, payable at the weekly rate of €19.10 for an adult and €9.60 for a child, is administered by the Department of Social Protection, on an administrative basis on behalf of the Department of Justice and Equality. Any increase to the DPA rate is a matter for Government having regard to its overall impact on asylum policy, the Direct Provision system and the level of disposable income available to social welfare recipients and those in low income employment. Any increase would also have to be considered in a budgetary context with additional funding provided to the Department of Social Protection.

At the time of writing the report, the additional annual cost to the Department in relation to the recommended increased cost of Direct Provision Allowance was estimated at some €3.6 million in 2016 rising to €5 million in 2019. This cost is based on an assumption of a 100% increase in applications in 2015 and a further 10% each year thereafter [section 6.42 of report]. However this may not reflect sufficiently the significant increase in numbers seeking asylum this year and also in relation to recent events in Europe.

The Department of Social Protection has a lead role in respect of the recommendations relating to the Community Welfare Service. The recommendations in this regard are as follows:

- The Department of Social Protection should reinstate on-site Community Welfare Service to residents in Direct Provision accommodation centres.
- The Department of Social Protection should continue to make every effort to ensure that Designated Persons in the Community Welfare Service strive towards consistency when administering the Exceptional Needs Payment Scheme in relation to persons in the system throughout the country.

The Department continues to examine the operation of all its services, including the Community Welfare Service (CWS), in the context of the efficient delivery of the Pathways to Work commitments and the development of Intreo services nationally. The Pathways to Work Programme represents a significant reform in the social welfare system and highlighted the need for the Department to focus its resources on the provision of opportunities, supports and assistance to unemployed people. The Department has intensified its level of engagement with those who are unemployed, and in particular, those who are, or become, long-term unemployed. As part of this on-going

process the administration of the CWS services has been re-structured, including some of those provided on-site in Direct Provision centres.

Where the service has been re-structured, alternative arrangements have been put in place to ensure that customers are provided with on-going access to the supports provided by the CWS. In the event that a customer has difficulty attending a clinic, for example due to illness, there is the facility to phone the CWS and discuss their case and, if required, the officer may arrange a visit to the client's residence. The position regarding Direct Provision centres that do not have an on-site CWS service will continue to be reviewed in the context of available resources.

It should be noted that an on-site CWS is currently provided in the majority of Direct Provision centres.

Exceptional Needs Payments are payable at the discretion of the officers administering the scheme taking into account the requirements of the legislation and all the relevant circumstances of the case in order to ensure that the payments target those most in need of assistance. The Department keeps the scheme under continuous review to ensure consistency in the administration of the scheme generally. Specific guidance will issue shortly to officers dealing with Direct Provision residents/centres, to include Exceptional Needs Payments, Direct Provision Allowance, other DSP schemes and practical/operational issues. The recommendation regarding the exercise of discretion in administering the Exceptional Needs Payment scheme to support LGBT people to access appropriate supports and services will also be included in this guidance (recommendation 5.113 refers).


#### Recommendation 5.49 - Access to the Labour Market

In relation to the recommendation regarding access to the Labour Market, DPA, unlike social welfare assistance payments, is not means tested and is payable to all persons in direct provision irrespective of their means. Should persons in Direct Provision be permitted to engage in remunerative employment, a policy review of the scheme may be required to assess the impact on the payment of DPA. Such a review would be the responsibility of the Department of Justice and Equality with input from the Department of Social Protection as necessary.

Access to the labour market would bring with it eligibility for certain social protection schemes such as Family Income Supplement and other benefits such as Illness benefit and jobseekers benefit in due course on the same basis as the general population.

The table that was circulated with your letter has been completed and is attached. I trust this sets out my position.

Yours sincerely,

  
Joan Burton T.D.  
Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection

Briefing Note for the Tánaiste and Minister of State for the Cabinet Committee on Social  
Policy and Public Service Reform, 21 September 2015 @2.30pm

Agenda Item: [REDACTED] Direct Provision

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## Direct Provision Allowance and supports to persons in direct provision

- Asylum seekers accommodated under the system of Direct Provision operated by the Reception & Integration Agency (RIA) of the Department of Justice and Equality are provided with full board accommodation and other facilities/services. Asylum seekers in direct provision do not satisfy the Habitual Residency condition and therefore have no entitlement to Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance.
- A weekly allowance, known as Direct Provision Allowance (DPA), is paid to asylum seekers who reside within the system of direct provision – paid by DSP on an administrative basis on behalf of the Department of Justice and Equality. DPA is payable at the weekly rate of €19.10 per adult and €9.60 per child in respect of personal requisites. The report to Government of the Working Group (on which the Department was represented) on Improvements to the Protection Process, recommends an increase in the weekly rate of DPA to €38.74 per adult and €29.80 per child.
- Approximately 2,600 DPA payments are currently made on a weekly basis. The budget allocation for the scheme for 2015 is €3.5m. Latest figures from D/Justice (August 2015) show that there are currently over 4,600 persons residing in Direct Provision centres. The number of asylum seekers continues to increase and could exceed 3,500 in 2015.
- In 2013 and 2014, over 14,300 ENP payments were made to asylum seekers in direct provision to cover costs such as those associated with adult and child clothing, travel and child related items such as prams and buggies, at a cost of €1.1m per year. Asylum seekers can also qualify for the Back to School Clothing & Footwear Allowance (BSCFA) - in 2014 €139,000 was paid to 616 asylum seeker families.
- The Department is participating in the Taskforce for Transitional Supports for Persons Granted Status in Direct Provision which will report to the Cabinet Committee by end September 2015. An information pack is being prepared and information sessions provided by multi-agency groups across 8 Direct Provision centres for persons transitioning into the wider community. DSP representatives will attend these information sessions, commencing this week. The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government is assessing what accommodation is available as part of this group.

## DSP Response to the Working Group on the Protection Process

- Correspondence issued to Minister Frances Fitzgerald<sup>1</sup> concerning the recommendations of the Working Group on the Protection Process. The following comments were provided on the key recommendations impacting DSP:

**Persons awaiting decisions at the protection process and leave to remain stages for five years or more:**

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<sup>1</sup> On 18 September 2015

#### Financial supports:

- Any increase to the DPA rate is a matter for Government having regard to its overall impact on asylum policy, the Direct Provision system and the level of disposable income available to social welfare recipients and those in low income employment. Any increase would also have to be considered in a budgetary context with additional funding provided to the Department of Social Protection.
- At the time of writing the report, the additional annual cost to the Department in relation to the recommended increased cost of Direct Provision Allowance was estimated at some €3.6 million in 2016 rising to €5 million in 2019. This cost is based on an assumption of a 100% increase in applications in 2015 and a further 10% each year thereafter [section 6.42 of report]. However this may not reflect sufficiently the significant increase in numbers seeking asylum this year and also in relation to the recent events unfolding in Europe.

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SWA Section

21 September 2015

Seirbhísí Leasa Shóisialaigh  
An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí  
Bóthar an Choláiste  
Sligeach



Social Welfare Services  
Department of Social Protection  
College Road  
Sligo

134

LoCall 1890 500 000 (ROI only)

Mr Greg Straton  
Director  
SPIRASI  
213 North Circular Road  
Phibsboro  
Dublin 7

DSP, 2015f

17 December 2015

Case Number: MOSREP-2015-3396

Dear Mr Straton,

Mr Kevin Humphreys TD, Minister of State for Social Protection has asked me to reply to your correspondence regarding the 'Christmas Bonus' for Direct Provision Allowance recipients.

Direct Provision Allowance (DPA) is paid to asylum seekers resident in direct provision centres by the Department on an administrative basis on behalf of the Department of Justice and Equality. DPA is payable at the rate of €19.10 per week for adults and €9.60 for children.

As you are aware, the Government has approved the payment of a Christmas Bonus on an administrative basis to long-term recipients of Direct Provision Allowance (DPA) for 2015.

Customers who have been in receipt of DPA continuously for more than 15 months have received a Christmas Bonus of 100% of their weekly DPA payment, subject to a minimum payment of €20. For example, a single person in receipt of DPA will have received a bonus payment of €20, a couple in receipt of DPA will have received a bonus payment of €38.20 (€19.10 x 2), with an increase of €9.60 in respect of each child.

The recent Report of the Working Group on the Protection Process recommended an increase in the rate of the Direct Provision Allowance payment in respect of adults and children. The Government in its decision of the 30 June 2015 recommended that the Report should in the first instance be the subject of detailed discussion at the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform. The recommendation in relation to the rate of DPA will be considered by the Cabinet Committee in due course.

Yours sincerely

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Karen Byrne  
SWA Section  
Tel: 071 9138612, Email: karen.byrne@welfare.ie



Seirbhísí Leasa Shóisialaigh  
An Roinn Coimíre Sóisialaí  
Bóthar an Choláiste  
Sligeach



Social Welfare Services  
Department of Social Protection  
College Road  
Sligo

LoCall 1890 500 000 (ROI only)

Ms Tanya Ward  
Chief Executive Officer  
Children's Rights Alliance  
7 Red Cow Lane  
Smithfield  
Dublin 7

DSP, 2015g

17th December 2015

Case Number: REPS-2015-6467

Dear Ms Ward,

Ms. Joan Burton, TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection has asked me to reply to your correspondence regarding the Direct Provision Allowance.

The Report of the Working Group on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers which was published on 30 June 2015, contains 173 recommendations many of which have implications for a number of Government Departments and services. The Government recommended, when approving the publication of the Report, that it should in the first instance be the subject of a detailed discussion at the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform.

The Committee held its first discussion on the Report on 13 July, 2015 and agreed that the Department of Justice and Equality should prepare a report for the Cabinet Committee, in conjunction with relevant Departments, on the legal, financial and practical implications of the Report's recommendations. Relevant Departments were contacted seeking their views on the Report's recommendations, asking them to identify any impacts and issues that may arise and timescales for implementation. An analysis, based on observations received from the relevant Departments and agencies, of the recommendations contained in the Report of the Working Group has been prepared for the Cabinet Committee. The recommendations relating to increasing the rate of Direct Provision Allowance for both adults and children require further consideration by the Cabinet Committee.

Yours sincerely,

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Mary Pracht  
Assistant Principal  
SWA Policy Unit

Email: [mary.pracht@welfare.ie](mailto:mary.pracht@welfare.ie)

**Karen Byrne**

**From:** Denis Moynihan  
**Sent:** 23 December 2015 10:52  
**To:** Helen Faughnan  
**Cc:** Jackie Harrington; Mary Pracht  
**Subject:** Helen - for later

1. Annual cost of increasing child DPA rate to €29.80

Children, Current Weekly Rate €9.60

Mary Pracht Dec 10.

Option:	Current No of children on DPA claims	Additional Annual Cost	Total Annual Cost
Increase to €29.80	1,096	1151238.00	1,698,362

9.6

1096

DM Dec 23

		€	New Rate €
Cost of	€1.00 per week increase	56,992	
Cost of	€5.40 per week increase	307,757	15.0
Cost of	€9.50 per week increase	541,424	19.1
Cost of	€20.20 per week increase	1,151,238	29.8

Karen Byrne

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**From:** Helen Faughnan  
**Sent:** 31 December 2015 10:39  
**To:** Jacinta Crawford; Teresa McQuirk; Edward.Brophy@tanaiste.gov.ie; Paul.D.O'Brien@tanaiste.gov.ie  
**Cc:** Niamh O'Donoghue; Anne Vaughan; John Conlon; Denis Moynihan; Jackie Harrington; Mary Pracht  
**Subject:** Gov Memo increase DPA child rate  
**Attachments:** Govt memo increase DPA child rate Jan 2016FINAL.DOCX; Note for Tanaiste re Memo on increasing DPA child rate.doc  
  
**Importance:** High

Jacinta/Teresa, attached is the final Government memo on increasing the child rate of DPA which is approved by both the Tánaiste and the Minister for Justice. Please arrange to have it uploaded onto eCabinet. Also attached briefing note for the Tanaiste on memo.

Paul, the Tánaiste has agreed to issue a joint press release with Minister Fitzgerald after Cabinet on Tuesday - Jackie and Mary will liaise with Justice to prepare a draft.

Regards  
Helen

Helen Faughnan  
Assistant Secretary  
Department of Social Protection  
Goldsmith House  
Pearse Street  
Dublin 2  
Ph. 01- 673 2749  
Email: [Helen.faughnan@welfare.ie](mailto:Helen.faughnan@welfare.ie)

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Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015