

FOI/2021/0210 – any (including any appendices or documents related to or attached to) - 1. Memorandum for Government; 2. Aides Memoire; 3. Government decisions - pertaining to the system of direct provision for asylum seekers between 01/01/2014 and 31/12/2016 (Dr Liam Thornton, UCD)

19	Memorandum for the Government - 'Increase the weekly rate of Direct Provision Allowance paid to children residing in Ireland under the system of Direct Provision including the Irish Refugee Protection Programme and the Resettlement Programme'	04/01/16	Yes	
20	Extract from Briefing Note for Government meeting of 5 January 2016		Yes	
21	Government Decision	05/01/16	Yes	
22	Memorandum for the Government - 'Seanad Private Members' Motion - Status of the recommendations of the Working Group on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers, in relation to children and young people	25/01/16	Yes	

23	Extract from Briefing Note for Government meeting of 26 January 2016		Yes	
24	Government Decision	26/01/16	Yes	

#ExploringDP



04/01/2016

Ref:

Oifig an Aire Coimirce Sóisialaí
Memorandum for the Government
Increase the weekly rate of Direct Provision Allowance paid to children
residing in Ireland under the system of Direct Provision including the Irish
Refugee Protection Programme and the Resettlement Programme

1. Decision Sought

Approval to be given to:

the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection and the Minister for Justice and Equality jointly to:

increase the weekly rate of Direct Provision Allowance paid to children residing in Ireland under the system of Direct Provision including the Irish Refugee Protection Programme and the Resettlement Programme from €9.60 to €15.60 with effect from January 2016.

2. Background/Reason for Memorandum

Applicants for international protection, also known as asylum seekers, are offered accommodation under the system of Direct Provision and Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres operated by the Reception and Integration Agency of the Department of Justice and Equality. This includes persons seeking asylum in Ireland and also those relocated under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme. Persons seeking protection are not obliged to accept Direct Provision and may provide for themselves during their time in the State. However, those who do accept the offer of Direct Provision are provided with accommodation, all food and health services together with other facilities and services designed to ensure their needs are met while seeking the protection of the State.

In addition to the applicant being provided with all basic necessities and food and accommodation, a weekly allowance for incidental personal expenditure, known as Direct Provision Allowance (DPA), is paid to applicants and dependents who reside within the system of Direct Provision. DPA is administered by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) on an administrative basis on behalf of the Department of Justice and Equality and is funded from the vote of the Minister for Social Protection.

DPA was introduced in 2000 at the weekly rate of IR£15 per adult and IR£7.50 per child and has remained unchanged since its introduction, currently payable at €19.10 per adult and at €9.60 per child. A Working Group was established by the Minister for Justice and Equality and the Minister of State with responsibility for New Communities, Culture and Equality in 2014 arising from a commitment in the Statement of Government Priorities 2014-2016, to report to Government on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers. The Report of the Working Group, published following the Government Decision S180/20/10/1918 of 30th June 2015, recommended that the adult rate of DPA should be increased to €38.74. This would reinstate the original ratio between the weekly allowance and the DSP weekly Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) payment.

The Working Group also recommended that the weekly child rate be increased to €29.80, i.e. the child rate would be aligned with the increase for a qualified child currently payable under the SWA scheme. In making their recommendations the Working Group was mindful of the fact that Child Benefit is not payable in respect of children in Direct Provision since the introduction of the Habitual Residence Condition in 2004.

The Government, in its Decision S180/20/10/1918 of 30th June 2015 recommended that the Report of the Working Group should, in the first instance, be the subject of a detailed discussion at the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform. The Department of Justice and Equality, in conjunction with relevant Departments, has prepared and submitted a report for the Cabinet Committee on the legal, financial and practical implications of the Report's recommendations. The rates of DPA, similar to other recommendations of the Working Group, will be subject to further consideration by the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform in due course. However, it is considered that there is an urgency to provide for some level of immediate increase in respect of children which the Working Group identified as a particularly vulnerable group within the system of Direct Provision.

3. Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP)

In September, the Government agreed to establish an Irish Refugee Protection Programme and to accept up to 4,000 persons overall under the EU Resettlement and Relocation programmes. Included in the 4,000 are 600 people to be relocated under the European Council's Decision of 14 September, 2,022 expected to be relocated under the Council's Decision of 22 September with the balance of people expected to be resettled in Ireland under the UNHCR-led Resettlement Programme.

Persons accepted here under these programmes also have an entitlement to apply for family reunification, if they wish to do so, thereby further increasing the numbers accepted by Ireland. Ireland has indicated that under relocation our preference would be to have a number of family units from Syria. The first family expected to arrive in Ireland in January 2016 are a Syrian family of ten including eight children.

Persons coming to Ireland under the IRPP will be offered full board, accommodation and other supports, for example health, education, etc., and will reside in the newly established Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres (EROCs) for a limited period of time. Persons will either have programme refugee status on arrival (under resettlement) or will have their applications for asylum under the relocation measures processed in an accelerated procedure of approximately 8-12 weeks. Persons coming to Ireland under relocation will come from third countries with a 75% recognition rate (the share of positive asylum decisions in the total number of decisions at first instance) and therefore the vast majority are likely to have a positive decision on their application at first instance. While awaiting status determination, these persons will not qualify for regular weekly social welfare payments as they will not satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition. These persons will however be entitled to receive the weekly Direct Provision Allowance (DPA). Once status is granted, applications for weekly social welfare payments will be considered in line with the normal procedures.

4. Resettlement Programme

In addition to those who seek international protection in Ireland or those who are relocated to Ireland under the IRPP, the Government is also involved, with the UNHCR, in the selection and transfer of refugees to Ireland – these refugees are known as programme refugees as set out in Section 24 of the Refugee Act of 1996.

Ireland joined the UNHCR (UN High Commission for Refugees) led Resettlement Programme following a Government Decision in November 1998 when it was decided to

admit 10 applicants plus their immediate families for resettlement each year (usually about 40 persons per year).

In 2015, 176 refugees displaced by the Syrian conflict have been admitted from Jordan and Lebanon under the UNHCR led refugee resettlement programme. It is planned that an additional 120 refugees will be admitted from Lebanon in early 2016. The remaining cases will be admitted on a gradually increasing phased basis thereafter.

The Government has committed to accepting 520 programme refugees into Ireland between 2015 and 2016. Many of these refugees will be children. Programme refugees satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition and are eligible for social welfare payments. The means assessments for social welfare payments take into account the non-cash benefits provided under the DP system. In general, this results in a similar rate of payment being payable to children as that under DPA. On leaving DP the entitlement is re-assessed and full rates of payment reinstated as appropriate.

5. Unaccompanied Minors accommodated by Túsla – the Child and Family Agency

Túsla, the Child and Family Agency, report that separated children seeking asylum (also known as unaccompanied minors) are generally placed in foster care by Túsla. A foster care allowance is then payable, which is separate to the Direct Provision system. These applicants would only be eligible to receive the Direct Provision Allowance if they return to the Direct Provision system after turning 18.

6. International Protection Act

One of the key recommendations in the Report of the Working Group, which goes to the heart of the length of time people spend in Direct Provision, is the early enactment of the International Protection Bill. The Government brought forward, as a major priority, legislation to provide for the introduction of a single applications procedure for international protection. The International Protection Bill passed all stages of both Houses of the Oireachtas on 18th December 2015 and was signed into law by the President on 30th December 2015. The reforms provided for in the Act will simplify and streamline the existing arrangements and provide applicants with a final decision on their protection application in a more straightforward and timely fashion, thereby reducing the length of time that persons may spend in the Direct Provision system. The introduction of a single application procedure will bring Ireland in line with the arrangements for the processing of protection applications in all other EU Member States and will significantly streamline and speed up the processing of protection applications. The Act responds to 26 of the recommendations contained in the Report of the Working Group.

The Act also provides for the transfer of responsibility for the processing of protection applications from the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) to the Department of Justice and Equality. It is intended to establish a Protection Office within the Department for this purpose. The Act also provides for the establishment of an independent International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT). Existing best practice will be protected and embedded within the new regime.

Other initiatives being taken to reduce the length of time that persons spend in the Direct Provision system include the scheduling of interviews on Saturdays, the transfer of subsidiary protection application processing to the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner, the establishment and subsequent enhancement of a legal panel to assist the Commissioner with this work, and the appointment of additional members to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal. In addition, 1,359 grants of Permission to Remain were given to long stayers (those in the Direct Provision system for 5 or more years) in 2015 (as at 17/12/15).

7. Asylum Trends

It is important to note that the numbers applying for asylum in Ireland have increased significantly over the last two years. In 2013, there were 946 applications and this increased to 1,448 in 2014. In 2015, there has been a sharp increase in applications with approximately 3,300 applications expected to be received by year end – more than double the total for last year. Approximately half of all applicants rely on the Direct Provision system. While the proposed increase in DPA for children is relatively modest (€6 per week), it should be noted that any increase in a country's income support for asylum seekers can have the unintended consequence of acting as a pull-factor in encouraging additional applicants. Sweden, whose system is considered to be one of the most generous towards asylum seekers in the EU, receives significantly more applications for asylum from unaccompanied minors than all other EU Member States. In 2015, Sweden expects to receive 175,000 applications for international protection, some 33,000 of which are from unaccompanied minors. The refugee crisis has led to many Member States, including Sweden, reverting to minimum standards of reception and benefits to discourage further applications. There has also been a trend this year of increased asylum numbers coming from the Western Balkans. For example, this year the third ranking country of origin for asylum seekers to Ireland is Albania. Based on information from the European Asylum Support Agency (EASO) many of those coming from the Western Balkans are selecting the EU country they seek asylum in based on the relative welfare and education benefits to be had. It is important to bear these factors in mind when considering this and any future increases to DPA, both for adults and for children.

In this context, it is also important to note that the two EU Council Decisions on Relocation make reference to the provision of services in kind only to applicants under Relocation measures, as follows:

Recital 33 of the Decision of 14th September (1523/2015)

"With a view to reaching the same objective, Member States should consider imposing reporting obligations and providing applicants for international protection with material reception conditions that include housing, food and clothing only in kind, as well as, where appropriate, ensuring that applicants are directly transferred to the Member State of relocation."

Recital 39 of the Decision of 22nd September (1601/2015)

"Additionally, in line with the objectives set out in Directive 2013/33/EU, the harmonisation of reception conditions amongst Member States should help to limit secondary movements of applicants for international protection influenced by the variety of conditions for their reception. With a view to reaching the same objective, Member States should consider imposing reporting obligations, and providing applicants for international protection with material reception conditions that include housing, food and clothing only in kind, as well as, where appropriate, ensuring that applicants are directly transferred to the Member State of relocation. Likewise, during the period of the examination of applications for international protection, as provided for in the asylum and Schengen acquis, except for serious humanitarian reasons, Member States should neither provide applicants with national travel documents, nor give them other incentives, such as financial ones, which could facilitate their irregular movements to other Member States. In case of irregular movements to other Member States, applicants for or beneficiaries of international protection should be required to go back to the Member State of relocation, and that Member State should take those persons back without delay. "

8. Impacts

Poverty Proofing

Increasing the child rate of DPA will have a positive effect on all children residing within the Direct Provision system. This measure provides a small increase in the disposable income for families enhancing their quality of life and social inclusion.

There are no impacts for the following: Jobs, North-South, East-West Relations, Gender Equality, Competitiveness & Industry Costs, Rural Communities, Quality Regulation, People with Disabilities

9. Cost to Exchequer of Proposal

There are currently approximately 570 families with 1,100 dependent children being paid DPA and residing in some form of Direct Provision. Based on these numbers, the cost of implementing a weekly increase of €6 (from €9.60 to €15.60) is €345,000 in 2016. It is proposed to implement the increase effective from January 2016 with payments made as soon as possible in the New Year allowing time to facilitate the implementation of the new rate on the DSP's systems. The cost of this specific increase, based on the current numbers of families in Direct Provision, can be accommodated within the DSP Vote in 2016.

10. Ministerial Observations

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform have been appraised of the measure.

11. Observations Returned

No observations supplied

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Extract from Briefing Note for Government meeting of 5 January 2016

Item No. 8: Increase the weekly rate of Direct Provision Allowance paid to children residing in Ireland under the system of Direct Provision including the Irish Refugee Protection Programme and the Resettlement Programme

The Tánaiste and M/J&E seek approval for an increase from €9.60 to €15.60 in the weekly rate of Direct Provision Allowance (DPA) paid to children residing in Ireland under the system of Direct Provision, including the Irish Refugee Protection Programme and the Resettlement Programme. The increase will take effect from January 2016.

The DPA has remained unchanged since its introduction in 2000. The Working Group established to report on Improvements to the Protection Process recommended that it be increased (to €29.80). An inter-Departmental report on the legal, financial and practical implications of the Working Group's recommendations was submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform and will be subject to further consideration in due course. However, there is an urgency to provide for some level of immediate increase in respect of children, whom the Working Group identified as a particularly vulnerable group within Direct Provision.

Arrivals under Irish Refugee Protection Programme will be entitled to receive the DPA. In September, the Government agreed to establish an Irish Refugee Protection Programme and to accept up to 4,000 persons overall under the EU Resettlement and Relocation programmes. Of the 4,000, the Government has committed to accepting 520 programme refugees into Ireland under the Resettlement Programme between 2015 and 2016. Many of these refugees will be children. Programme refugees satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition and are eligible for social welfare payments. The means assessments for social welfare payments take into account the non-cash benefits provided under the DP system. In general, this results in a similar rate of payment being payable to children as that under DPA. On leaving DP the entitlement is re-assessed and full rates of payment reinstated as appropriate.

Túsla, the Child and Family Agency, report that separated children seeking asylum (also known as unaccompanied minors) are generally placed in foster care by Túsla. A foster care allowance is then payable, which is separate to the Direct Provision system. These applicants would only be eligible to receive the Direct Provision Allowance if they return to the Direct Provision system after turning 18.

The numbers applying for asylum in Ireland have increased significantly over the last two years. In 2013, there were 946 applications; this increased to 1,448 in 2014. In 2015, approximately 3,300 applications were expected to be received by year-end. Half of all applicants rely on the Direct Provision system. While the proposed increase in DPA for children is relatively modest (€6 per week), any increase in a country's income support for asylum seekers can act as a pull-factor in encouraging additional applicants. There has also been a trend this year of increased asylum numbers coming from the Western Balkans. For example, this year the third-ranking country of origin for asylum seekers to Ireland is Albania. Based on information from the European Asylum Support Agency (EASO), many of those coming from the Western Balkans are selecting the EU country in which they seek asylum based on the relative welfare and education benefits to be had. It is important to bear these factors in mind when considering this and any future increases to DPA, both for adults and for children.

Some 570 families with 1,100 dependent children are being paid DPA and residing in some form of Direct Provision. Based on these numbers, the cost of implementing a weekly increase of €6 is €345,000 in 2016. The cost can be accommodated within the D/SP Vote in 2016.

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CRUINNÍÚ RIALTAIS

Data: 05/01/2016

Ábhar: 8. Increase the weekly rate of Direct Provision Allowance paid to children residing in Ireland under the system of Direct Provision including the Irish Refugee Programme and the Resettlement Programme

An tAire a thionscain: Oifig an Aire Coimrice Sóisialaí agus Oifig an Aire Dlí agus Cirt agus Comhionannais

Data an Mheabhráin: 04/01/2016

Cinnadh an Rialtais:

Approved the increase to the weekly rate of Direct Provision Allowance paid to children residing in Ireland under the system of Direct Provision including the Irish Refugee Programme and the Resettlement Programme from €9.60 to €15.60 with effect from January 2016.

Handwritten signatures and initials.

Ard-Rúnaí an Rialtais

Cóip curtha chuig: Oifig an Aire Airgeadais, Oifig an Taoisigh, Oifig an Aire Iompair,

Turasóireachta agus Spóirt, Oifig an Aire Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige, Oifig an Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta, Oifig an Aire Caiteachais Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe, Oifig an Aire Sláinte, Oifig an Aire Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála, Oifig an Aire Dlí agus Cirt agus Comhionannais, Oifig an Aire Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara, Oifig an Árd-Aighne, Oifig an Aire Cosanta, Oifig an Aire Post, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta, Oifig an Aire Comhshaoil, Pobail agus Rialtais Áitiúil., Oifig an Aire Tithíochta, Pleanála, Pobail agus Rialtais Áitiúil, Oifig an Aire Ealaíon, Oidhreachta, Gnóthaí Réigiúnacha, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta, 2020
Rename, Rename2020, Oifig an Aire Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige, Oifig an Aire Oideachais, Oifig an Aire Gnóthaí Eachtracha, Oifig an Aire Cumarsáide, Fuinnimh agus Acmhainní Nádúrtha, Oifig an Aire Comhshaoil, Aeráide agus Cumarsáide, Oifig an Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna, Oifig an Aire Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithe ar son na hAeráide agus Comhshaoil, Oifig an Aire Iompair

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25/01/2016

Ref:

**Oifig an Aire Dlí agus Cirt agus Comhionannais
Memorandum for the Government**

**Seanad Private Members Motion - Status of the recommendations of the
Working Group on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct
Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers, in relation to children and young
people**

1. Decision Sought

The Minister for Justice and Equality requests the approval of the Government to accept the Seanad Private Members Motion requesting her to outline the status of the recommendations of the Working Group on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers in relation to children and young people.

2. Background/Reason for Memorandum

This Private Members Motion has been raised by Senators Fiach MacChongail, Jillian van Turnhout, Katherine Zappone, Averil Power and Mary Ann O'Brien and is for discussion on Wednesday, 27 January 2016 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. in the Seanad.

The text of the motion is as follows:

“That Seanad Éireann:

Welcomes the Final Report of the "Working Group to Report to Government on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers", published in June 2015

Notes, according to the latest available statistics from the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA), in its Monthly Report September 2015, there are 4,814 RIA residents “live on the system” of which 1,225 are children.

Welcomes Ireland’s ratification of the third Optional Protocol on a communications procedure of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which allows individual children, including those in Direct Provision, to submit complaints concerning specific violations of their Convention rights.

Asks the Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald TD, to outline the exact progress of the recommendations, in relation to children and young people, drawing specific attention to the following recommendations:

- Child-friendly materials containing relevant legal information should be made available and widely distributed, including through special information services for children such as specialised websites. (Recommendation 3.263);
- The remit of the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of the Ombudsman for Children should be extended to include complaints relating to: services provided to residents of Direct Provision accommodation centres, and transfer decisions following a breach of the House

Rules. (Recommendation 4.135);

- Tusla – Child and Family Agency should liaise with RIA to develop a welfare strategy within RIA, to advise on policy and practice matters and to liaise on individual cases as required. (Recommendation 4.199);
- Tusla and HSE should identify a named social worker on their respective child protection, mental health and primary care teams to be the identified lead social worker for a Direct Provision centre in their area. (Recommendation 4.199);
- The Minister for Justice and Equality should establish an inspectorate (or identify an existing body), independent of RIA, to carry out inspections in Direct Provision centres against the newly approved standards. (Recommendation 4.226);
- All families should have access to cooking facilities (whether in a self-contained unit or through use of a communal kitchen) and their own private living space in so far as practicable. (Recommendation 4.75); and
- The Direct Provision weekly allowance for adults should be increased from €19.10 to €38.74 for adults and from €9.60 to €29.80 for children. (Recommendation 5.30)

3. General Position on Report of Working Group on Protection Process

The Minister for Justice and Equality published the Report of the Working Group on the Protection Process, following the Government Decision S180/20/10/1918 of June 30th 2015.

The establishment of the Working Group arose from the Statement of Government Priorities 2014-2016. The terms of reference of the Working Group were directed towards improving existing arrangements for the processing of protection applications and showing greater respect for the dignity of persons in the system and improving their quality of life.

The report contains a total of 173 recommendations many of which have implications for a number of Government Departments and services.

The Government, in its Decision recommended that the Report of the Working Group should, in the first instance, be the subject of a detailed discussion at the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform. This Committee agreed that the Minister for Justice and Equality should prepare a report for the Committee, in conjunction with relevant Departments, on the legal, financial and practical implications of the Report's recommendations. Relevant Government Departments and Offices 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 of the responses received was carried out by the Department of Justice and Equality and a report in relation to the matter was prepared for the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform. This report included categorisation of the recommendations into those that can be easily implemented, those implementable with resource implications and those which require further consideration. The Cabinet Committee has advised that the recommendations should be progressed, where possible, resources permitting, with those requiring further consideration to be afforded such consideration as soon as practicable.

One of the key recommendations in the report, which goes to the heart of the length of time people spend in Direct Provision, was the early enactment of the International Protection Bill which provided for the introduction of a single applications procedure for international protection. The International Protection Bill was published on 19th November 2015 and was enacted on 30 December, 2015 This reform will simplify and streamline the existing arrangements and provide applicants, including children, with a final decision on their protection application in a more straightforward and timely fashion. The introduction of a single application procedure will bring Ireland in line with the arrangements for the

processing of protection applications in all other EU Member States and will significantly streamline and speed up our processing of protection applications. The Bill responds to 26 of the recommendations contained in the Report of the Working Group.

4. Position on Recommendations which are the subject of this Memorandum

The relevant lead Departments and/or Agencies with responsibility for the recommendations have been requested to provide updates with regard to progress. This information is being compiled at present and details of progress to date in this regard will be available to the Minister in advance of the Seanad debate.

Of the seven recommendations in question, three are considered to be easily implementable (recommendations 3.263, 4.199 (2 elements) and are not anticipated to present difficulty with implementation. Two others are considered to be implementable with resource implications (recommendations 4.75, 5.30). Progress has already been made in respect of 5.30 which recommends an increase in the direct provision allowance. This recommendation has been partly implemented with the recent decision of Government to increase the Direct Provision weekly allowance for children by €6 from €9.60 to €15.60. This increase was effective from January, 2016. Government has committed to revisit this issue in the future in terms of potential further increases. It should also be noted that the recent increase follows a decision by the Minister for Health to exempt persons receiving a Direct Provision allowance from the requirement to pay prescription charges.

The recommendations requiring further consideration refer to extending the remit of the Office of Ombudsman and Ombudsman for Children (4.135) to include complaints relating to services to residents of Direct Provision; and to establishing an inspectorate, independent of RIA, to carry out inspections in direct provision centres (4.226). Discussions between officials of the Department of Justice and Equality and the Office of the Ombudsman took place in December last. Similar discussions will take place with the Ombudsman for Children in the very near future. It is considered that progress can be made very quickly in implementing these recommendations.

RIA has improved its own complaints mechanism, including the appointment of an independent appeals officer, and the effectiveness of these improvements in providing resolutions to issues that arise is being monitored in the context of the recommendations to add a further redress layer to residents via the Ombudsman. These matters will be reported on to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy and Public Service Reform to inform their further consideration of these two recommendations.

The Minister will be provided with full briefing in relation to all relevant recommendations in advance of the Seanad debate.

5. Impacts

There are no impacts for the following: Jobs, North-South, East-West Relations, Gender Equality, Poverty Proofing, Competitiveness & Industry Costs, Rural Communities, Quality Regulation, People with Disabilities

6. Cost to Exchequer of Proposal

This proposal has no cost to the Exchequer.

7. Observations Returned

No observations supplied

Extract from Briefing Note for Government meeting of 26 January 2016

Item No. 16: Seanad Private Members Motion - Status of the recommendations of the Working Group on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers, in relation to children and young people

M/J&E seeks approval to accept this Private Members' Motion requesting her to outline the status of some of the recommendations of the Working Group on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers in relation to children and young people, which has been raised by Senators MacChongail, van Turnhout, Zappone, Averil Power and Mary Ann O'Brien and is due for discussion in the Seanad on Wednesday, 27 January.

The Working Group recommendations to be responded to include that the remit of the Office of the Ombudsman and Office of the Ombudsman for Children should be extended to include complaints relating to services provided Direct Provision (DP) to residents; that Tusla should liaise with the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) to develop a welfare strategy to advise on policy and liaise on individual cases; that Tusla and the HSE should identify a social worker to be lead social worker for relevant DP centres; that M/J&E should establish an inspectorate to carry out inspections in DP centres; and that the DP weekly allowance should be increased from €19.10 to €38.74 for adults and from €9.60 to €29.80 for children.

The Memo says that most of these recommendations are considered easily implementable or implementable with resources implications, with progress already made in respect of an increase in the DP allowance. Two require further consideration: extending the remit of the Office of Ombudsman and Ombudsman for Children, and establishing an inspectorate to carry out inspections in DP centres. Discussions have been/will be taking place and it is considered that progress can be made very quickly in implementing these recommendations.



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Uimhir Thagartha: S180/20/10/0122H

CRUINNIÚ RIALTAIS

Dáta: 26/01/2016

Ábhar: 16. Seanad Private Members' Motion - Status of the recommendations of the Working Group on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers, in relation to children and young people

An tAire a thionscain: Oifig an Aire Dlí agus Cirt agus Comhionannais

Dáta an Mheabhráin: 25/01/2016

Cinneadh an Rialtais:

Agreed not to oppose the Seanad Private Members' Motion on the status of the recommendations of the Working Group on Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers, in relation to children and young people, which is due to be debated in Seanad Éireann on Wednesday, 27 January 2016.

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Ard-Rúnaí an Rialtais

Cóip curtha chuig: Oifig an Aire Airgeadais, Oifig an Taoisigh, Oifig an Aire Caiteachais Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe, Oifig an Aire Coimirce Sóisialaí, Oifig an Aire Stáit ag Roinn an Taoisigh