

Jason X. O'Mara

From: Brian P Merriman
Sent: Tuesday 18 September 2018 13:02
To: [REDACTED]; Michael J. Kirrane
Cc: [REDACTED]; Louise P. Sandom
Subject: RE: JRS Ireland Budget 19 Submission re Increasing Direct Provision Allowances

Thanks very much [REDACTED] for the update.

Using the Mc Mahon point needs to be set in the current context. The Mac Mahon group made its decision in the context of there being a prohibition on the right to work and hence complete dependency on the DP allowance. As you are aware, but it is not referred to below, access to the labour market has been activated since Ireland opted-in to the recast reception Conditions Directive at the end of June. The very poor take-up by eligible applicants (of a simple and accessible scheme) would appear to undermine your argument that DP has a negative economic effect? Either people are working already and have been for some time, while in DP, or they are not interested in accessing the labour market?

Also the three increases in the Children's allowance since McMahan don't seem to be acknowledged, and I gather you are seeking less than a two euro increase to make a radical difference in their lives in this submission? Access to back to school clothing allowances etc are of course maintained and children's DP allowances are protected regardless of the means of their working parent under the new labour market access. Those key points accurately set out the current context (post Mc Mahon) of the economic circumstances of those in our centres.

The complete acknowledgement of the reform of the economic circumstances post McMahan would be an interesting point of discussion and would alter radically the context in which your proposal is being made?

As always your good work in the Centres is greatly appreciated,

Regards Brian

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Ph: [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 September 2018 12:47
To: Michael J. Kirrane ; Brian P Merriman
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: JRS Ireland Budget 19 Submission re Increasing Direct Provision Allowances

Dear Michael and Brian,

I am writing to to follow up on the JRS Ireland's pre-budget submission seeking increases in direct provision allowance payments in Budget 19. Although the direct provision allowance payment is administered by the Department of Social Protection and paid from the DSP budget, my understanding is that the policy underpin for the level of the payments comes from the Department of Justice JRS Ireland is calling on the Government to restore the real value of Direct Provision allowance payments in Budget 2019 by increasing weekly payments to €40.83 for adults and to €31.80 per child so asylum seekers can live with greater dignity. This would ensure the full implementation of McMahan Report Recommendation 5.30, updated in line with increases in social welfare payments since its publication in 2015.

JRS Ireland is present and delivers services to asylum seekers in 10 Direct Provision centres across the country. The adverse effects of growing up and living long term in the institutional environment of Direct Provision are well documented, including; boredom; poor mental health; creation of dependency; negative impact on family life and the healthy growth and development of children; and a loss of dignity.

Living with dignity requires the enjoyment of basic physical and mental needs and from a child's perspective, there is also the necessity for the enjoyment of conditions that facilitate healthy growth and development. However, the current weekly allowance of €21.60, payable to adults and children living in Direct Provision, increases the risk of child poverty and prevents residents from being able to meet regular daily living costs (transport, food, recreation or personal expenses) and to participate fully in Irish society (unable to attend birthday parties or school trips).

Recently, families in Direct Provision struggled to afford the costs of sending their children back to school and young men and women are forced to exclude themselves from the local community as they have no means to effectively participate.

The McMahon Report Recommendation 5.30 was a consensus decision by all Working Group members including officials from the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Justice. The projected cost of implementing the updated recommendation is estimated to be less than €5m. This is 0.025% of the Department of Social Protection budget in 2018 of €20bn. The financial cost of the proposed increases are relatively low, yet the human costs of a failure to implement these increases are significant for the 5,600 Direct Provision residents, of which more than 1,500 are children.

As this submission only seeks to restore the value of direct provision payments, which have reduced substantially in 'real' terms since their introduction in 2000, the increases proposed for Budget 2019 could not be construed as creating a 'pull' factor. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Direct Provision residents who have a right to work and find employment, will at specified income thresholds have their allowance reduced or withdrawn based on a means test after 12 weeks and also be required to contribute towards the cost of accommodation.

The full JRS Ireland Budget 19 Submission is attached. I would be delighted for the opportunity to discuss this submission further with you. I can be reached at [REDACTED] or by return email.

Thanking you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

JRS Ireland