



Mercy Law
Resource Centre

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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION DURING COVID-19

OVERVIEW

- On 18 March 2020, the Traveller Accommodation Support Unit (TASU) in the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government issued Circular 06/2020 directing all Local Authorities to 'find prompt and practical solutions' on sites (both authorised and already established unauthorised sites) to reduce the spread of Covid-19.
- The Circular is a policy document which provides guidance to Local Authorities. It states that individuals and families who currently reside on an unauthorised site will face no ramifications if they approach the Local Authority for assistance during the Emergency Period. The Emergency Period is defined in Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Covid-19) Act and has been extended until 20 July 2020.



MEASURES BEING IMPLEMENTED

- The Department has funding available for essential mitigation works on sites aimed at reducing the risk of Covid-19 spreading in Traveller specific accommodation. The funding is to enable:
 - Provision of additional mobiles to allow for self isolation/cocooning or to alleviate overcrowding;
 - Setting up of additional temporary sites or to reopen vacant bays to allow for self-isolation, cocooning or to alleviate overcrowding;
 - Provision of additional sanitation facilities, including for unauthorised sites or for mobiles located outside of family members' homes, where it is deemed appropriate by Local Authorities. This includes portaloos, water tankers, additional waste collection and electricity supply;
 - Provision of hand sanitiser/hygiene packs for sites with limited facilities;
 - Provision of additional cleaning services including clearing rubbish.
- Where these additional measures cannot be implemented, the Circular stipulates that Local Authorities should work with families to source alternative accommodation on a temporary basis.





- If HAP is offered to an individual or family the Circular states that the Local Authority should provide assistance through the Tenant Liaison Officer.
- Evictions are prohibited during the Emergency Period. The emergency legislation prevents eviction from Local Authority dwellings and of Travellers resident in any location. Evictions may be permissible where movement is requirement to address hardship, provide protection and is subject to consultation with Travellers involved.
- The HSE has set up a new helpline to deal with Covid-19 queries from members of the Traveller Community. Phone or text **083 100 6300** if you have any questions or concerns relating to Covid-19.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- [MLRC Know your Rights: Emergency Measures in the Public Interest \(Covid-19\) Act 2020](#)
- [Emergency Measures in the Public Interest \(Covid-19\) Act 2020](#)
- [Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, Traveller Accommodation Support Unit Circular 06/2020](#)
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, Note for Clarifications on Circular 06/2020 and examples of good practice
- [HSE Community Supports](#)
- [HSE Mental Health Resources](#)
- [National Action Plan on Covid-19](#)
- [Exchange House, Confidential Phone Counselling Service for all members of the Traveller Community](#)
- [MLRC News Updates](#)



SUPPORT FROM MERCY LAW RESOURCE CENTRE

- Mercy Law Resource Centre (MLRC) is a registered charity and independent law centre.
- MLRC provides free legal advice and representation to people who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness.
- MLRC are contactable on (01) 4537459 and info@mercylaw.ie for any questions in relation to accessing homeless accommodation.

