

Press Release – embargoed to 3.30pm, Monday 25th September

In the face of the missing of the *Rebuilding Ireland* target of moving families out of hotels and B&B emergency accommodation by 1 July, MLRC renews its call for urgent issues in the provision of emergency accommodation to families and individuals to be addressed by the Minister for Housing, Planning, and Local Government.

MLRC continues to welcome the Government’s long-term commitment to tackling Ireland’s deepening homelessness crisis and the unprecedented level of families and children accessing emergency accommodation. MLRC also welcomes short-term measures taken by the Government to alleviate the crisis such as the initiative to expand the homeless HAP scheme. By enhancing rent limits to assist homeless households in securing tenancies and offering a place finder service to assist those households with sourcing accommodation, the scheme is a welcome immediate measure to help alleviate the crisis in the short-term.

However, MLRC is anxious to highlight several very urgent issues relating to the provision of emergency accommodation to families and vulnerable people who are homeless. In the past year MLRC has encountered a worryingly high level of unlawful refusals to provide homeless accommodation to those at risk of sleeping rough, and the frequent placement of families with children in unsuitable hotel and B&B accommodation for very prolonged periods with no upper time limit. MLRC has also frequently noted an absence of suitable accommodation for people who are homeless who may have a particular health need or vulnerability.

MLRC strongly recommends that immediate action must be taken to address these and similar kinds of urgent issues relating to the provision of emergency accommodation. MLRC is concerned that if strong and immediate action is not taken to address these issues they will continue to have an extremely detrimental

impact on the health and well-being of some of the state's most vulnerable families and children.

Mercy Law Resource Centre (MLRC), an independent law centre which provides free legal help for those who are facing homelessness. MLRC's Annual Report was launched by Dr. Niall Muldoon, the Ombudsman for Children. MLRC welcomed the Government's long-term commitment to addressing the worsening homelessness crisis and the modest progress made in relation to the Government's *Rebuilding Ireland* policy. MLRC called for strong and immediate action to tackle several worrying trends relating to the provision of emergency accommodation which are having a particularly detrimental impact on children and families.

At the launch, MLRC called on the Minister for Housing to urgently act on the issues affecting those accessing, or seeking to access emergency accommodation. Speaking at the launch, MLRC's Managing Solicitor said:

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