

ASYLUM SEEKERS: 6 FACTS

A FLAC factsheet, issued February 2010

- 1. Asylum seekers, through the Direct Provision system, receive a weekly allowance of €19.10 per adult and €9.60 per child.**
 - This amount has not increased since 2000. It is the only social welfare payment never to have increased in line with inflation or the cost of living.
 - Asylum Seekers receive clothing allowances in the form of Exceptional Needs Payments, usually twice a year, at the discretion of Community Welfare Officer, but there is no automatic entitlement. They may also apply for discretionary payments like Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance and Urgent Needs Payments.
- 2. Asylum Seekers are prohibited from working.**
 - Many asylum seekers have expressed a desire to work and contribute economically to society.
 - This prohibition leads to frustration and inertia amongst asylum seekers, preventing them from integrating into society, and has led to false labelling of asylum seekers as “spongers” or “scroungers”.
- 3. Asylum seekers are given no alternative other than direct provision accommodation while their application is being processed.**
 - Residents in direct provision accommodation are often subject to cramped and basic conditions, many housing whole families in one room.
 - The majority of direct provision residents cannot cook for themselves and the food is frequently labelled bland, repetitive and culturally inappropriate.
- 4. There are approximately 6,500 people living in direct provision accommodation. Of these, over 2,000 have been in such accommodation for three years or more.**
 - These conditions may be tolerable for a short period of time but in practice people are spending prolonged periods of time in situations which are injurious to their overall well being and development.
- 5. 15 % of those living in Direct Provision Accommodation are single women without children.**
 - There are currently no centres which cater solely for single women. This raises safety concerns in cases where these women may be alone and vulnerable.
- 6. Children constitute one-third of residents in the direct provision centres.**
 - Parents in the asylum process or leave to remain process receive a weekly allowance of €9.60 for each of their children; they are not entitled to Child Benefit from the Department of Family and Social Affairs. This exacerbates the issue of social exclusion as parents cannot afford to allow their children to integrate and participate in activities in the local community.