

ASYLUM SEEKERS: 6 FACTS

A FLAC factsheet, updated July 2016

- 1. Asylum seekers, through the Direct Provision system, receive a weekly allowance of €19.10 per adult and €15.60 per child.**
 - The adult rate of payment 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 can apply for discretionary payments such as Exceptional Needs Payments, Urgent Needs Payments and the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance. However, there is no automatic entitlement to a payment.
 - In June 2015, the McMahon report recommended that the Direct Provision weekly allowance for adults be increased to €38.74 and to €29.80 for children.
- 2. Asylum Seekers are prohibited from working.**
 - Many asylum seekers want to work and contribute economically to society.
 - This prohibition on work can result in 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 have no facility to cook for themselves and the food they receive is frequently labelled bland, repetitive and culturally inappropriate.
- 4. There are approximately 4300 people living in direct provision accommodation. Of these, almost 1400 (33%) 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. Some 10 % 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 over one-quarter of residents in the direct provision centres.**
 - Parents in the asylum process or leave to remain process receive a weekly allowance of €15.60 for each of their children; they are not entitled to Child Benefit from the Department of Social Protection. 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.

FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres) is an independent human rights organisation dedicated to the realisation of equal access to justice for all.

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See FLAC's report on Direct Provision, *One Size Doesn't Fit All (2009)*, at www.flac.ie