



9 December 2020.

Mr. Owen Keegan,
Chief Executive,
Dublin City Council,
Civic Offices
Wood Quay
Dublin 8.

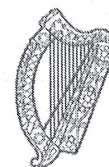
Re: Emergency response to rough sleeping during Covid-19 and the cold weather period

A Chara,

I am writing in response to recent reports regarding access to emergency accommodation for certain individuals presenting to homeless services. A number of concerns have been raised in relation to emergency accommodation not being made available for rough sleepers presenting from outside the local area.

I know you and your teams have worked diligently to ensure people who need shelter can receive it and in this light I am asking you to continue these efforts and to exercise discretion to ensure that the most vulnerable on our streets do not end up sleeping without shelter during these extraordinary times due to a local connection in not being from the area. I will keep this matter under close review to ensure its effectiveness and to avoid any unforeseen negative consequences.

Each local authority has a statutory responsibility with respect to the provision of emergency accommodation for households who find themselves homeless in their functional area. Funding is provided by my Department under section 10 of the Housing Act 1988 to provide homeless services in each functional area. It is particularly important that local authorities continue to address homelessness at the point which it occurs, at a time when we are seeking as a nation to minimise movement between counties.



Over the past year our public services have displayed an admirable capacity for swift responsiveness to the global pandemic, meeting challenges where and when they arose. The work of our homeless services has been exemplary in this regard through the hard work and endeavour of you and your staff to react to changing needs. I know you will continue with this remarkable public service on the whole and in light of my aforementioned request.

I want to re-iterate my commitment to addressing the homelessness issue through the unprecedented €218m secured for the sector in Budget 2021 as well as our historic social housing building plans to help secure long term housing and adequately resource Housing First.

This year the government has provided unprecedented financial support for homeless services to protect this vulnerable group during this challenging period. This winter I want to ensure that no homeless person in need is without shelter. A local connection should not be a barrier to this emergency response.

Thank you and your teams for your incredible work and commitment and I look forward to your co-operation in this matter.

Is mise, le meas,

Darragh O'Brien, TD,
Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.