

Donegal Intercultural Platform clg



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Intercultural Platform urges caution and care when commenting on issues relating to refugees and International Protection Applicants

Donegal Intercultural Platform is calling on community leaders and elected representatives to take care and consider carefully the language they use when addressing complex issues like refugee accommodation and our State responsibilities under international treaties to offer protection to people fleeing war and persecution.

We recognise that many at home and abroad have an interest in 'weaponising' the challenges around asylum and refugee supports where failures in decades of housing policy and state investment are laid at the door of people who are seeking protection in Ireland and those who are at the margins of our society.

We are particularly disappointed with the recent comments of Councillor Michael McClafferty who spoke emotively about people sleeping under bridges while those he referred to as 'visitors' were given precedence.

Whilst we welcome Cllr. McClafferty's new-found interest in the challenges of housing and homelessness, we do not see value in blaming the victims in our emergency response to the Ukraine war or other international crises. We also note that the Irish state also houses Irish people in hotels and other emergency facilities as a short-term response to homelessness, that whilst not a solution does provide a minimum of shelter and safety.

The real issue is the need for an increased local response in Donegal to the crisis of homelessness and the provision of a fit-for-purpose homeless service in the county that currently does not exist. We would welcome Cllr. McClafferty's support and engagement for this approach which would need to be driven by our County Council. We also believe a review of the Habitual Residence Condition policy is long overdue as the current system adds to the exclusion of many of the most excluded residents.

Many of the state systems in Ireland were under pressure long before the arrival of the Ukrainian refugees and only the repair and improvement of these systems will offer an equitable way for all the residents of Ireland.

We urge care and consideration in people making statements about these complex and challenging issues because people can often unwittingly provide oxygen for negative and far right voices who want to sew division, anti-minority and racist ideology into our society.

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