

1st May 2020

David Stanton, TD
Minister of State at the Department of Justice
Dublin 2

Reference: Travellers during COVID-19 health crisis

Dear Minister

We hope you are well and want to acknowledge the progressive work being undertaken by Government during Covid 19.

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) has been working hard to ensure Travellers are supported in every way to reduce the spread and impact and supporting our members in their work towards same.

All ITM's COVID-19 related work has been facilitated through deploying staff to the front line and on accommodation, working with the Minister for Housing and his officials at the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government to ensure provisions have been adequately addressed locally and emerging matters taken account of within Traveller accommodation.

Much has been done across local authorities, however gaps remain, some of which continue to cause concern for the potential for Travellers to be sufficiently protected against infection with the Coronavirus and mitigation of contagion.

We have raised concerns too with the Department of Education and Skills, regarding the emergency regulations informing education practices during Covid-19, and for Traveller pupils who don't have access to appropriate remote learning devices to continue with their studies and the potential for students without additional support, of early school leaving and therefore be left behind and unable to access third level and or affect future employment chances.

We have asked for the Minister to revise the current regulations and provisions, to include special measures for Traveller students with a ring-fenced budget to provide for the appropriate technological devices that enable remote learning and support therein.

We have sought support for the welfare of Traveller children and have concerns for those most vulnerable to infection within the 40% of the Traveller population under 14 years.



We look to you now for the convening of a meeting of the NTRIS Committee to provide an overview of matters and emerging issues related to Travellers and Covid 19, in which to inform and support the formulation of plans and actions for Travellers and considering changes occurring for strategies in 2020.

I have outlined below, some further information regarding the Irish Traveller Movement's Covid 19 related activities at this time.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Joyce
Director