

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

### **MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK**

**18<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2023**

- Email dated 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in reply to Notice of Motion from Members that the Council writes to the Minister for Housing asking him to issue revised advice to local authorities in relation to the Croí na Cónaithe grant to make it easier to prove vacancy when the purchaser of the property cannot get a signed affidavit from the vendor or the necessary ESB bills.
- Email dated 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2023 from the Office of the Minister of State for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan, Delivery and Reform and 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Mental Health and Older People in reply to Notice of Motion from Members that Limerick City and County Council write to the Minister for Health to allocate dedicated funding to treat people suffering from the mental health disorder known as compulsive hoarding or hoarding disorder, and for the Minister for the Environment, Climate & Communications to allocate dedicated funding to local authorities to assist with the removal of hoarded material accumulated by people suffering from this disorder, from their private or Council properties.
- Email dated 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2023 from the Office of the Minister of State for Special Education and Inclusion in reply to Notice of Motion from Members to write to the Minister of State for Special Education and Inclusion, Josepha Madigan, TD to seek clarification if any staff redundancies are planned for St. Vincent's Lisnagry Special Needs School in Limerick by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) for the upcoming school year 2023/2024, and to request that all measures are taken to ensure no redundancies are made at this school.
- Email dated 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Justice in reply to Notice of Motion from Members that Limerick City and County Council write to the Minister for Justice requesting that the Immigration Appointment waiting time be reduced. Presently the waiting time is 14 weeks.

**From:** Minister O'Brien Office <[ministerobrien-housing@corr.cloud.gov.ie](mailto:ministerobrien-housing@corr.cloud.gov.ie)>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 10, 2023 11:07 AM  
**To:** Customer Services <[customerservices@limerick.ie](mailto:customerservices@limerick.ie)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]FAO: Mark Leahy HPLG-MOBO-02610-2023

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10th July 2023

[customerservices@limerick.ie](mailto:customerservices@limerick.ie)

Ref: HPLG-MOBO-02610-2023

Dear Mr. Leahy,

Thank you for your email to Mr. Darragh O'Brien, T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, in connection with your query.

Your correspondence is currently receiving attention and a further reply will issue as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

**Niamh Redmond**  
**Private Secretary**

**From:** Minister of State <[noreplymos-dccae@corr.cloud.gov.ie](mailto:noreplymos-dccae@corr.cloud.gov.ie)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday 18 July 2023 14:51  
**To:** Customer Services <[customerservices@limerick.ie](mailto:customerservices@limerick.ie)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Re: Meeting Novelplast

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Our Ref: CCAE-MOS-00336-2023

Mr. Mark Leahy  
[customerservices@limerick.ie](mailto:customerservices@limerick.ie)

18th July 2023.

Dear Mr. Leahy,

The Minister of State for the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan, Delivery and Reform, with special responsibility for Communications and Circular Economy, Ossian Smyth T.D., has asked me to reply to your recent correspondence relating to allocation of funds to local authorities to assist with the removal of hoarded material accumulated by people suffering from compulsive hoarding disorder.

As you are aware, the primary responsibility for management and enforcement responses to littering and illegal dumping lies with the local authorities. The Department provides extensive policy, financial and legislative support to the local authority sector to support their efforts.

For example, the Department provides significant funding to tackle illegal dumping with almost €15m to date provided under the Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI) since it was first launched in 2017. €2.8m was provided in 2022 with a further €3m allocated in 2023 to support a collaborative approach between local authorities, community groups and other State Agencies to tackle the problem of illegal dumping.

The Department also continues to invest heavily in the local authority waste enforcement network through the Local Authority Waste Enforcement Measures Grant Scheme, with the intention of maintaining a visible presence of waste enforcement personnel on the ground across the State. €7.7m was provided to local authorities under the scheme in 2022 and a similar amount has been allocated in support of the scheme in 2023 with €244,347 allocated specifically to Limerick City & County Council.

A further €2m has been allocated for 2023 to support the enhancement of the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLAs) and expansion of waste enforcement structures across the country.

It is a matter for each local authority to decide the most appropriate abatement, enforcement, awareness and clean-up actions in their functional areas while taking account of local circumstances and priorities.

There are currently no plans to introduce specific supports to local authorities to deal with clean up costs arising from people suffering with compulsive hoarding disorder.

I trust this clarifies the position.

Your sincerely,

**Albert Morris**

Private Secretary to Minister of State for the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan, Delivery and Reform  
Government Buildings | Upper Merrion Street | Dublin 2 | D02 R583

An Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí, An Plean Forbartha Náisiúnta, Seachadadh agus Athchóiriú  
Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan, Delivery and Reform

Email: [Albert.Morris@per.gov.ie](mailto:Albert.Morris@per.gov.ie)

[www.per.gov.ie](http://www.per.gov.ie)

**From:** Minister of State Butler <[noreplymosb-health@corr.cloud.gov.ie](mailto:noreplymosb-health@corr.cloud.gov.ie)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 10, 2023 9:27 AM  
**To:** Customer Services <[customerservices@limerick.ie](mailto:customerservices@limerick.ie)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]HEA-MoSB-00669-2023

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HEA-MoSB-00669-2023

9 August 2023

Dear Mr. Leahy,

Thank for your recent correspondence on behalf of Limerick City & County Council regarding funding for hoarding disorders. Having sought a report on this matter from the HSE, the following outlines the position.

A hoarding disorder is where someone acquires an excessive number of items and stores them in a chaotic way, usually resulting in unmanageable amounts of clutter. The items can be of little or no monetary value.

This terminology does not refer to situations in which people collect items such as books or stamps. Typically, a distinction can be drawn between a 'hoard' and a 'collection' in terms of how the items are stored and organised. A collection is usually well organised and the items are accessible. A hoard however, is usually very disorganized.

Hoarding disorders can be quite debilitating, resulting in poor hygiene, isolation and loneliness. They can pose a health and safety risk to individuals as they may encourage rodent or insect infestations, cause injury through trips and falls, or could lead to blocked exits in the event of fire. They can also interfere with everyday living by blocking access to rooms, for example.Â

Hoarding behaviour is not necessarily an indicator of mental illness, but this behaviour has been associated with severe depression, psychotic disorders (such as schizophrenia), and obsessive compulsive disorder. However, in some cases, hoarding is a condition in itself and is often associated with self-neglect.

In the event that an individual identifies their hoarding behaviour as problematic they can speak to their GP, who can refer the person to a therapist or specialist in the area, including referral to a specialist community mental health team.

Primary Care services and some Adult Safeguarding Community Mental Health services often work with service users with hoarding disorder or self-neglect behaviours including offering or signposting to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) or cognitive behavioural approaches and identifying practical supports to address the behaviour where the service user engages and permits this.

Further information including the supports available for hoarding can be found here: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/hoarding-disorder/> and here: Talking therapies - HSE.ie.

In relation to the call for dedicated funding for treatment for people with a hoarding disorder, all proposed new developments will be assessed as part of the annual Estimates process.

I trust the above information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Butler T.D.  
Minister for Mental Health and Older People.

**From:** Minister of State Madigan <[no-reply@cloud.gov.ie](mailto:no-reply@cloud.gov.ie)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday 9 August 2023 13:35  
**To:** Customer Services <[customerservices@limerick.ie](mailto:customerservices@limerick.ie)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]EDU-MoSM-00953-2023

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Mr. Mark Leahy  
[customerservices@limerick.ie](mailto:customerservices@limerick.ie)

**PLEASE QUOTE REF NUMBER ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE**

Our Ref: EDU-MoSM-00953-2023

Dear Mr. Leahy,

I refer to your recent correspondence in relation to staff numbers at St. Vincents Special School in Limerick.

Enabling children with special educational needs to receive an education is a priority for this government. It is also a key priority for me as Minister for Special Education & Inclusion, for my department and for the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

The vast majority of children with special educational needs are supported to attend mainstream classes with their peers. Where children with more complex needs require additional supports, special classes and special school places are provided.

For 2023, the spend by my department on special education has been substantially increased by over 10% on last year, meaning that for 2023 my department will spend over €2.6 billion on special education.

This level of educational funding and support is unprecedented and represents in excess of 27% of the department's total allocation for 2023.

This includes funding to support children with special educational needs in mainstream classes; funding for new special classes and new special school places; additional special educational teachers, special needs assistants (SNAs) and funding for the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

In 2023, the number of teaching and SNA posts in our schools will increase with an additional 686 teachers and a further 1,194 SNAs in our schools.

For the first time ever there will be over 19,000 teachers working in the area of special education and over 20,000 SNAs. Together we have almost 40,000 qualified and committed people in our

schools who are focused wholly and exclusively on supporting children with special educational needs.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is responsible for determining the appropriate staffing levels in relation to the support of pupils with special educational needs in special schools, in accordance with the policies of the Department.

Special school staffing allocations are reviewed and updated each year by the NCSE and special schools are staffed on the basis of each year's current school enrolments. Staffing arrangements for special schools are in line with policy advice provided by the NCSE in 2013, which did not recommend alteration to staffing ratios established under the Special Education Review Committee (SERC) Report in 1993.

Enhanced pupil teacher and SNA ratios are provided to special schools to support them in dealing with pupils' educational and care needs. These schools are staffed on the basis of individual pupil profile and the disability categorisations of those pupils, as opposed to being based primarily on school designation, in accordance with my Department's Circular 0032/2019 - Appointment of Administrative Deputy Principal and Staffing in Special Schools.

In relation to staffing at St. Vincents Special School, the NCSE have advised that the school is provided with class teachers on a ratio that reflects the profile of needs of the students. In respect of the school in question the maximum ratio of one teacher to every six students is applied.

The total enrolment for the school for the 2023/2024 school is expected to be 100 pupils, this is the lowest level of enrolment at the school since the 2015/2016 school year. A decision to reduce enrolments to 100 was made by the Board of Management of the school at local level.

The school are aware that resources are allocated in line with enrolments and the care needs of the students.

Based on the enrolment a total of 17 class teachers have been allocated, the school also has 2 concessionary teaching posts, an admin principal post and an admin deputy principal post. This brings the total teaching and school leadership posts to 21 posts.

The SNA allocation for the school was subject to a review and the school have been notified of an SNA allocation of 43 whole time equivalent posts for the 2023/2024 school year.

When a school has been allocated an SNA, the Board of Management, as the employer, is responsible for filling the vacancy and the decision on whether to employ a full time SNA to fill a full time post or to employ an equivalent number of part time SNAs rests with the employer.

The SNA allocation can change from year to year as children with care needs leave the school, as new children with care needs enrol in a school and as children develop more independent living skills and their care needs diminish over time. There is a prescribed special class to SNA ratio.

The Department acts as paymaster to over 3,700 schools whose Boards of Management are the direct employers of the staff in those schools. School staff in the Education and Training Board sector are employed and paid by the ETBs.

Queries in relation to employment and recruitment matters at school should be directed to the Boards of Management as the employer.

I hope the above is of some assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

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Keith Murphy  
Private Secretary to Minister Josepha Madigan T.D.  
Minister of State for Special Education and Inclusion

**From:** Ministers Office <[noreplymo-justice@corr.cloud.gov.ie](mailto:noreplymo-justice@corr.cloud.gov.ie)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 9, 2023 3:57 PM  
**To:** Customer Services <[customerservices@limerick.ie](mailto:customerservices@limerick.ie)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Ref: DJE-MO-06136-2023

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Mr. Mark Leahy

[customerservices@limerick.ie](mailto:customerservices@limerick.ie)

**Ministers Reference: DJE-MO-06136-2023**

Dear Mr. Leahy,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Minister for Justice, Ms. Helen McEntee, TD. I am responding to you on behalf of the Minister.

The Department of Justice registers people residing in the Dublin area only. Registrations and renewals for customers outside of Dublin are processed by the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) through the Garda Station network, you may wish to contact An Garda Síochána in relation to registrations in the Limerick area.

In relation to the Dublin region I can confirm that there is currently no backlog for in-person first time registration appointments. Appointment slots are available the next day via the appointment booking call centre, if required.

For online renewals, a live processing date is posted on the website and updated weekly. This is currently 4 weeks from date of application (dependant on all required documents being submitted). Once a person successfully completes a first time registration or renewal they receive an IRP card within 10 working days via express post.

I trust the information provided is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

**Emma McHugh**  
Private Secretary to the Minister for Justice

*Please note that if the issue raised in your correspondence is deemed more appropriate to another organisation, such as another Government Department or Agency, your correspondence will be forwarded to that organisation for attention in accordance with the provisions of the Department of Justice Privacy Statement, which can be accessed [here](#).*