

Minister Heather Humphreys, T.D.
Minister for Social Protection & Justice
Department of Justice,
51 St. Stephen's Green,
Dublin 2
Do2 HK 52

21st October, 2021

M 72314

Re: Clondalkin Area Committee Meeting of South Dublin County Council
held on 20th October, 2021


Dear Minister Humphreys,

I write on behalf of the Elected Members who at the Clondalkin Area Committee meeting held on 20th October, 2021 passed the following motion:

"That this Area Committee demands that the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage initiates a full review into the protections in place for Homeless People and review all services that work with homeless and work with the Department of Justice and the Garda Commissioner to introduce a rigorous Garda Clearance Policy as to protect the most vulnerable people in our society. We also ask that SDCC review each of the Homeless Services and Housing Associations they use and ensure they are fit for purpose. This motion follows a serious of allegations against a now deceased CEO of a Homeless charity. This motion should be sent to the Minister for Housing Local Government and Heritage, the Minister for Justice, the Garda Commissioner and the Director of Housing within South Dublin County Council for an urgent response to this Committee."

I would be obliged for your comments and response as soon as possible to enable me to revert to the Committee.

Yours Sincerely,


Sharon Conroy,
Senior Executive Officer



Ms. Sharon Conroy
South Dublin County Council
County Hall
Tallaght
Dublin 24

5 November 2021

Minister's Reference: DJE-MO-04849-2021

Dear Ms. Conroy,

I refer to your correspondence to Minister Heather Humphreys T.D regarding protections in place for homeless people. As you may be aware, Minister Helen McEntee T.D. has now resumed office as Minister for Justice following her maternity leave. I am responding on Minister McEntee's behalf.

The Minister is deeply concerned by allegations that members of the homeless community may have been harmed while in the care of services there to support them at a vulnerable time. The Minister is also very cognisant of the need to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that only suitable people are recruited and employed to work with vulnerable people.


As you may be aware, the oversight of groups working with homeless people is primarily a matter for the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and the HSE. I note that you have also written to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in relation to your specific concerns.

I hope you can appreciate that the Minister does not have a statutory role in relation to vetting requests to An Garda Síochána. The administration of the Garda vetting process is an operational matter for An Garda Síochána and I note that you have sent your motion to the Garda Commissioner.

Earlier this year Minister McEntee announced the establishment of an interdepartmental working group which is undertaking a review of existing Garda vetting arrangements and legislation, including the inclusion of homeless outreach services. The Minister looks forward to receiving the report of the group which is due to report by the end of this year. Its recommendations will shape amendments required to the vetting legislation and process, including those required to commence periodic re-vetting. The group is specifically examining what if any amendments will be required to remove any doubt that outreach and other services for homeless people who are vulnerable are covered by the vetting regime.

I hope that this information will be of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

p.r. 

Patrick McCabe

Private Secretary to the
Minister for Justice