

**To all Directors of Service- Housing**

**March 18<sup>th</sup> 2020**

**Traveller Accommodation Unit - Electronic Correspondence**

Dear Colleagues,

As you are aware, on Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup> 2020, the Taoiseach announced that a number of significant measures are being put in place, arising from the Coronavirus/COVID19 situation. The measures are designed to reduce the spread of COVID19 and lessen the risk of infection, especially to vulnerable groups.

Some members of the Traveller community, particularly those living on sites with limited facilities, may be particularly vulnerable and extra measures may need to be put in place to protect Travellers living in Traveller specific accommodation in each local authority.

The following areas have been identified to date, where additional measures may be required in Traveller accommodation facilities in order to reduce the risk of the spread of the virus:

1. Extra toilets;
2. Running water;
3. Additional mobile accommodation / space where there is overcrowding;
4. Extra refuse collection;
5. Access and egress on sites; and
6. Additional units (either mobiles on site or houses elsewhere that will allow for self-isolation/ quarantine).

It should be noted that every effort should be made to find prompt and practical solutions on existing sites. Where these additional measures prove not possible, it may be necessary for local authorities, to work with the families involved, to move residents to alternative accommodation on a temporary basis.

In addition to the above, you may also have identified other measures that are of value that could be employed in other local authority areas to prevent the spread of the virus. If this is the case, please advise the Traveller Accommodation Unit so that we can share with other local authorities.

If local authorities, consider that the above additional measures are required in relation to any site they should contact the Department to discuss. The Traveller Accommodation Unit has some funding available for essential mitigation works and any such requests will be prioritised within 24 hours.

I refer you to Circular 46/2016, which outlines the availability of funding for the purchase of mobile homes in cases of emergencies. Consideration of any proposals under this circular will also be prioritised by the Traveller Accommodation Unit and we will respond within 24 hours.

Please ensure that lines of communication are open with the Traveller Community and Traveller Organisations in your area and they are referred to the HSE Guidelines as appropriate. We would be

grateful if you keep us informed of all developments and issues arising on sites including instances where testing is required.

Any queries in relation to this Circular should be addressed [TAU@housing.gov.ie](mailto:TAU@housing.gov.ie)

Yours sincerely,

Rosemarie Tobin

Principal Officer

Traveller Accommodation Support Unit