**COVID-19 NGO GROUP**

**C/O Community Work Ireland,**

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**To:** Minister Regina Doherty

**Date:** June 9th 2020

**Subject:** COVID-19 NGO Group[[1]](#footnote-1) - School Meals Programme

Dear Minister Doherty,

Prompted by the COVID-19 crisis, a group of NGOs, facilitated by Community Work Ireland, have been meeting online to share information on COVID-19 related issues and challenges and the responses needed to mitigate the consequences for the already marginalised groups and communities that they represent.

One of the most significant concerns that has been identified by the NGO Group is that of food poverty, specifically in this case, food poverty as it affects children and young people. We understand from our work that the Schools Meals Programme has played a very important role in mitigating against hunger during the initial phases of the COVID-19 crisis. However, we now understand that the Programme is to end with the academic year as usual.

We know that you have been a strong advocate for the School Meals Programme and we are writing to urge you to consider the extension of the Programme in what is a very unusual time. Where alternative methods of preparation and delivery need to be identified, we suggest that this could be done through the network of Family Resource Centres, Local Development Companies or Community Response Forums operational in every local authority area.

Yours sincerely,

Anastasia Crickley, Chairperson Community Work Ireland Policy Group on behalf of the COVID -19 NGO Group

Contact: annirwin@communityworkireland.ie or phone 087 – 9326467

**COVID-19 NGO Group Members:**

* Belong To
* City Wide Drugs Crisis Campaign
* Community Work Ireland
* Dublin City Community Cooperative
* Dublin North North East Recovery College
* European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland
* Independent Living Movement Ireland
* Irish Council for Civil Liberties
* Irish Local Development Network
* Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed
* Irish Refugee Council
* Longford Community Resources
* Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
* National Collective of Community Based Women’s Networks
* National Women’s Council of Ireland
* National Youth Council of Ireland
* One Family
* Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre
* Simon Communities of Ireland
* Threshold
* West Clare Family Resource Centre
1. Prompted by the COVID-19 crisis, a group of NGOs, facilitated by Community Work Ireland, have been meeting online to share information on COVID-19 related issues and challenges and the responses needed to mitigate the consequences for the already marginalised groups and communities that they represent. <https://www.communityworkireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/covid-19-ngo-group-joint-submission.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)