

## **Statement on Tents at Henry Street**

In recent months, there has been a significant increase in the placing and use of tents in Henry Street particularly around the Debenhams Store. Our Homeless Outreach Teams have constantly interacted with the occupants of these tents with a view to encouraging them to move into emergency accommodation facilities in the city where there has been considerable excess capacity currently and over recent months. Offers of accommodation were made to the occupants on a daily basis, some readily accepted such accommodation but returned after a few days/nights and the number of tents there has increased since Christmas.

As we have stressed many times sleeping in tents, particularly in bad weather, is dangerous unhygienic and a serious public health risk to both the occupants and at times to the general public. With little overall footfall in the City Centre because of Covid19 there is also a risk of assault and attack from gangs of youths etc. It is also clear that many occupants of tents are engaged in drug activity.

Business owners in the area have been complaining regularly about the situation.

We want people to be safe and come into shelter and stay in emergency accommodation, the current weather conditions exacerbate an already vulnerable situation.

On Friday morning staff from DCC and the DRHE including the Outreach Team, assisted by the Gardai Siochana worked in a very sensitive way and with a clear focus on the needs of the occupants to remove the tents from this location and to provide much more suitable accommodation to the couple and individuals involved.

There were nine tents in position at that stage, and one was unoccupied. The recent occupier of this tent is well known to our Outreach Service and the Outreach Team has kept his belongings safe and secure, he has access to emergency accommodation.

Two of those present have two separate live housing tenancies so did not require accommodation, another has an existing placement in emergency accommodation and the remaining 6 had left their placements in recent weeks. All 6 were again given emergency accommodation and accepted such. Our Outreach Team assisted and supported all the individuals back either to their tenancies or into emergency accommodation.

They retained their belongings but the DCC Waste Management Division took away all the tents.