

Minister Jim O'Callaghan
Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration
51 St Stephen's Green
Dublin 2

12 August 2026

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you regarding the recent appointment by your Department of Allpro Services as the representative service for unaccompanied minors under the International Protection Act 2026.

Focus Ireland, as a provider of supports for unaccompanied minors, would echo the concerns raised by the Children's Rights Alliance in a letter to the Committee on Children and Equality, dated 30th June 2026, regarding this appointment. We are deeply concerned that a facilities management company which describes itself as specialising in cleaning, security, pest control, and landscaping has been appointed to represent young people who arrive in Ireland alone, many of whom having experienced significant trauma. Given the specific needs of this group, we question this company's capacity to effectively support and represent them throughout the complexities of the international protection process.

Since 2023, Focus Ireland, in partnership with Tusla, has provided supported accommodation for unaccompanied 16 and 17-year-olds through the Haven in Clonmel. Through our day-to-day work with these young people, we have a deep understanding of their complex needs and vulnerabilities. Failure to provide adequately resourced, specialist supports through the representative service could have serious implications for unaccompanied minors and would undermine the legislative requirement to prioritise their best interests.

In response to a number of Parliamentary Questions following the announcement of the appointment, including PQ 503 on 23rd June 2026 and PQs 396, 397 and 398 on 16th July 2026, you outlined some of the criteria for the staff employed as child representatives which included three years' previous experience working with children and registration with professional bodies. You also stated that Allpro Services was the 'strongest applicant for this role' citing its 'previous relevant experience including responding to emergency welfare presentations involving underage homeless individuals and vulnerable young people'.

The criteria you refer to in your parliamentary replies do not appear to adequately reflect the challenges facing unaccompanied minors arriving in Ireland, which we are aware of from our own work in this area. There are widespread concerns about the implications of the EU Migration and Asylum Pact and we believe that it is important that the implementation of all elements of the Pact by Irish authorities is carried out in a way which builds confidence in the capacity of the Pact to respond to immigration challenges in a fair and humane way.

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Against this backdrop, we are trying to understand how Allpro Services could have been assessed as the strongest candidate from among the seven applicants considered by the evaluation panel, particularly in relation to experience of child protection, advocacy and safeguarding.

We would welcome further information on the evaluation criteria used in the procurement process, including how previous experience, child protection expertise, safeguarding capacity and outcomes for vulnerable young people were assessed and weighted.

We note that an evaluation of the initial six-month contract is planned. Given the importance of this role and the vulnerability of the young people concerned, we would strongly encourage that this evaluation be conducted independently, using a more relevant range of criteria than indicated to date, and that its findings be published in a timely and transparent manner.

With thanks for your attention. We remain at your disposal, and that of your staff, should you require any further information or any further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Allen
Director of Advocacy