Mr Eamon Ryan, TD,

Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport,

Leeson Lane,

Dublin 2.

*Via email* *minister@dttas.gov.ie*

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you to express my concern that asylum seekers remain unable to apply for learner driving permits. As many asylum seekers live in rural direct provision centres, with poor access to public transport their ability to engage with the communities around them is limited.

In the last Oireachtas, there was broad agreement that the bar on accessing driving permits should be changed. In its report on Direct Provision and the International Protection Application Process published in December 2019, the Joint Committee on Justice and Equality noted that “people in direct provision still face a number of practical obstacles to being offered and taking up employment – including difficulties in obtaining bank accounts, PPS numbers and driving licences. **These barriers must be addressed as a matter of priority** through a coordinated response across relevant Government Departments.”

I was pleased to see that the Programme for Government contained a pledge to remove these restrictions. I understand that significant reforms of the entire protection process are envisaged for a White Paper due to be published at the end of the year, however there should be no reason why this bar cannot be removed as a standalone action in advance of the White Paper. I urge you to take immediate action to change the RSA policy.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

NAME