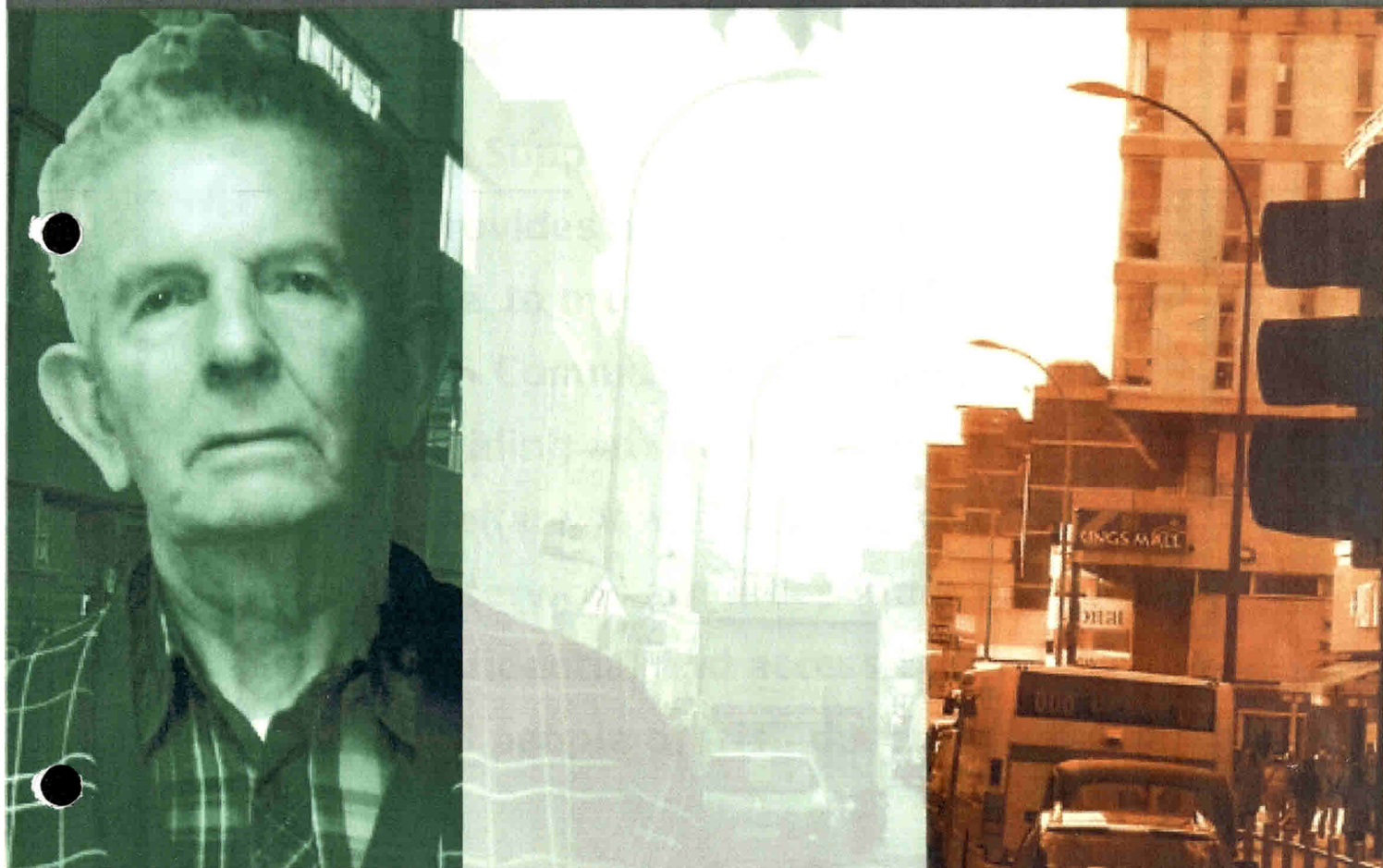


# IRISH SUPPORT & ADVICE SERVICE



## Annual General Meeting 2008

**Working With The Needs  
Of The Irish Community**

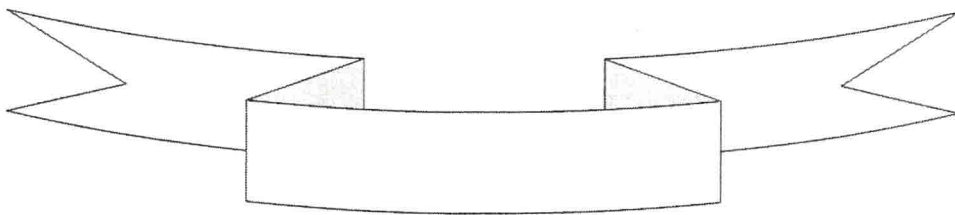


The Irish Support & Advice Service is part of the Irish Charitable Trust. Registered Charity No: 1053278. Company Ltd By Guarantee No: 3137725.

# **ISAS**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**The Irish Support and Advice Service,  
ISAS, provides a culturally sensitive  
service, to meet the needs of the  
Irish Community in London,  
by providing advice and support on  
social, welfare, law and health matters.  
ISAS services are independent,  
confidential and accessible  
to all people of Irish descent.**



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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**



## PRODUCTION

ISAS was established in 1992, is a registered charity and provides support and advice to





## INTRODUCTION

The Irish Support and Advice Service, (ISAS), is a registered charity and was first set up in 1969 to provide core support and advice to the Irish community. Since then, in one form or another, ISAS has been working to identify and meet the culturally specific needs of the Irish community in London.

ISAS currently operates from the prime location of The Irish Centre, in Hammersmith, West London, and continues to play a large part in the provision available in the Centre. We have steadily progressed as an organisation to become firmly established as a key Irish advice agency in London, with clients from over 20 other London boroughs accessing our wide range of services.

Over the years, ISAS has developed a proven track record for delivering high quality, value-for-money services to the Irish community. Our service is a key contributor to the collection of data aimed at identifying the changing and unmet needs of the Irish community, and developing strategies to provide relevant, alternative services that can best meet those needs.

ISAS has identified service needs in the Irish community within the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham through its monitoring records, and also nationally by contributing to the data collected by the Federation of Irish Societies in the United Kingdom. The data clearly show that our specialised services are required in order to meet the needs of the elderly Irish community who came to the UK in the 1940's, 50's and 60's. Our experience is that many of these elderly clients are living in areas of high deprivation, also that they are isolated and do not engage with mainstream services.

As a service, we would like to develop an additional range of services to meet those needs. These services can only be developed to run in conjunction with our existing services when we have secured the appropriate funding as part of our three-year development plan.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ISAS is a key Irish advice agency and in 2009 will have served the Irish Community for four decades in London and in the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham in particular. Key support from the Dón (the Irish Government), over the last four years, has helped ISAS continue to make significant progress year by year.

The past year has seen a massive increase in demand for the culturally specific services which ISAS provides. Since both the staff and financial resources available are limited this has put the service under considerable strain, with the consequent need to make difficult operational decisions. Nevertheless, due to the commitment and hard work of the dedicated staff team, and some successful help from key volunteers, ISAS exceeded performance targets and expectations for 2007.

Historically and now, ISAS has operated and developed in the face of the oppressive challenge of the limited financial resources available in the sector. This situation puts pressure on ISAS and its staff, and significantly reduces its proven capacity for success. More recently, the massive increase in demand from the Irish community for the essential services ISAS provides, combined with the needs identified and outlined in the three-year business plan, make it imperative that ISAS secures additional, adequate funding to ensure the continuation, expansion and future success of this service.

## **BUSINESS PLAN SUMMARY**

The 3 year business plan gives a background to the organisation and identifies the changing needs of the Irish community. It proposes a strategic development and finance plan for ISAS to meet those needs, and to ensure the continuation and success of the organisation's future.

Emphasis is placed on the needs of the older Irish community who face increasing isolation and poverty. The plan identifies four broad aims in relation to the organisation's work with the Irish community in West London. They are:-

- To continue to develop and expand services for the Irish community.
- To reduce poverty and isolation for the community.
- To develop organisational infrastructure and capacity building.
- To continue to develop IT and obtain essential equipment.

In order to achieve these aims it is envisaged that the staffing requirement will increase from the current three staff to six staff members.

The funding requirement will double from the current £100k to £200k.



## CHAIR'S REPORT

The past year has been highly successful in terms of organisational and client outcomes, and ISAS continues to build upon the achievements of 2007.

The Irish community is very much an invisible ethnic group. Many of the needy within the community are reluctant to engage with mainstream services and are often overlooked by statutory and other voluntary services. ISAS has shown its ability to make contact with a community that is hard to reach, and has been very successful in helping such clients obtain welfare benefits and housing, clearly showing how the provision of such culturally specific services contributes to social justice in the boroughs where we work.

It is very pleasing to report that 2008 has proved to be another positive milestone for the organisation in a number of core areas, including service delivery, partnerships, exposure of the service and financial stability. In particular considerable progress has been made by ISAS in developing additional new services and expansion of services in the London Borough of Ealing. The profile of the service has been raised in a number of other London boroughs, and requests received for partnership working have been successfully met. ISAS has demonstrated its ability to deliver a range of efficient and effective services that make a real difference to people's lives. ISAS performance and client outcomes are particularly impressive when the limited staff resources are measured against the outcomes they achieved in the past year (details follow in the Director's report).

Funding the service continues to be a large preoccupation. In the UK, both local councils and central government focus increasingly on funding generic services only, making no provision for specialist services such as ISAS, despite our proven ability to reach out to our community and provide high quality value for money services. Nevertheless, we continue to work with Hammersmith Council on how best to support the local Irish community, and we have been successful in securing funding from key providers including Dón. Without their support ISAS could not have reached out and improved the quality of people's lives. However, in response to the new climate ISAS is currently implementing a new strategy as we will need to develop our fundraising capacity and look more to the Irish community as a whole to support this essential work..

A number of new members have joined the Board, bringing to it more, relevant experience of the community as well as of advice and voluntary settings, and we aim to continue to strengthen representation on the Board. As always, our main goal is to ensure that the Irish Support and Advice Service expands to meet the needs of the Irish community in London, which is another reason for developing our fundraising.

On behalf of the Service, I want to give sincere thanks to all those bodies that have funded our work, and to conclude by offering my personal thanks to the Director, staff, volunteers, and members of the board for all their commitment and efforts during this past year which have ensured that ISAS is run and operates so well. I look forward to the challenges we will have to meet as the Service enters its fortieth year.

***Dermot Murphy***



## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ISAS is a long-established, active Irish advice agency playing a key role in the Irish community in London, and is centrally located in Hammersmith with clients coming from over 20 London boroughs to access its services.

With the support of the Dón, ISAS has made marked progress over the last four years. In the past year 1093 clients have attended the drop-in advice service, representing a 23% increase. Client income is up by 110% to £450,000 and 27 people have been re-housed or assisted to return to Ireland. ISAS currently coordinates 3 Irish Pensioners' Groups, and successfully launched a new service in the borough of Ealing this year. It has also taken over the work of the former South London Irish Welfare Service in Merton and Wimbledon.

ISAS has maintained its proven track record for delivering high quality, value-for-money services to the Irish community. Even with the limited staff and financial resources available to it, ISAS has exceeded performance targets and expectations with the successful help of key volunteers, and it must be noted that ISAS experienced a massive increase in demand for its culturally specific services. However, there is only so much a small staff can achieve, and this leads at times to difficult operational decisions.

### Funding

Funding avenues continue to be ever more difficult with government emphasis on funding generic rather than specialist services. Competition within the voluntary sector also makes it even more difficult to access the limited funding available. ISAS is in the process of developing a new fundraising strategy.

### Partnership working

ISAS works proactively with a number of key partners within Hammersmith and Fulham including HAFAD, Causeway, Cara, Charing Cross Hospital, Social Services, the Law Centre, Threshold and many more organisations. In the London Borough of Ealing ISAS is actively working with the Irish Chaplaincy, Acton Homeless Concern, Age Concern, Alzheimer's Society.

### Staff Thanks

I would highlight my special thanks to the staff and volunteers for all their hard work, commitment, enthusiasm and humour over the last 12 months that has enabled the service to achieve tremendous outcomes and assist so many vulnerable clients.

A culturally specific service is unique in its nature, real evidence for the idea that one size does not fit all, and that is why ISAS' approach to service delivery for the Irish Community has been so successful in reaching out to those often overlooked by mainstream services. We are passionate about the Irish Community and going the extra mile to ensure that both statutory services and entitlements are received by the Irish Community.

**Mike McGing**

## Treasurers Report

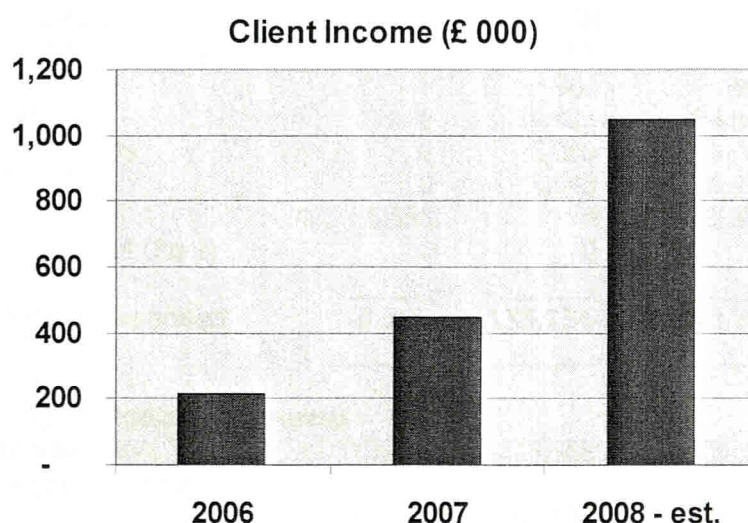
In the year to the end of March 2008, the scope of ISAS' operations has increased significantly compared to the previous year. Consequently, financial needs have expanded accordingly. This has been met through a variety of funding sources. The major funding source continues to be the Irish Government's Dion fund, to whom we remain ever grateful.

The summarised financial information contains extracts from the Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2008. Our total income for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 was £169,328 and our expenditure was £140,751, compared to £102,126 and £91,698 respectively for the previous period. The designated and restricted funding is £109,88634. ISAS at this time has five members of staff both on short and long term contracts including a number of volunteers.

Our accounts indicate that ISAS operates an increasingly lean and cost-effective service. For every £1 received by ISAS the Service generates over £6 of income for clients in the form, for example, of pension that may be owing to them, or benefits to which they are entitled.

The financial goal for 2008-9 is the further diversify funding sources to match the spending commitments inherent in the expanded area covered by ISAS.

**Gary O'Brien**





**THE IRISH CHARITABLE TRUST  
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES  
(Including Income & Expenditure Account)  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2008 Total Funds £	2007 Total Funds £
<b>Incoming Resources</b>					
<i>Incoming resources from</i>					
<i>Charitable activities</i>					
Grants	3	0	146,505	<b>146,505</b>	111,597
<i>Incoming resources from</i>					
<i>Generated funds</i>					
Donations		13,400	0	<b>13,400</b>	7,655
Other Income (Clients)		0	4,216	<b>4,216</b>	0
Investment Income		5,207	0	<b>5,207</b>	2,464
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>		<b>18,607</b>	<b>150,721</b>	<b>169,328</b>	121,716
<b>Resources Expended</b>					
<i>Charitable activities</i>					
Salaries / ENIC		0	103,577	<b>103,577</b>	97,042
Other Staff Costs		0	828	<b>828</b>	728
Clients Welfare		0	2,739	<b>2,739</b>	3,676
Pensioners Group		0	319	<b>319</b>	0
Hall Hire		0	335	<b>335</b>	0
Promotional Literature		0	38	<b>38</b>	2,125
Volunteers Expenses		0	53	<b>53</b>	0
Consultancy		0	900	<b>900</b>	0
Premises Costs		0	14,424	<b>14,424</b>	0
Office Refurbishments		0	5,000	<b>5,000</b>	0
Operational Costs		0	6,943	<b>6,943</b>	9,098
<i>Governance costs</i>	4	5,595	0	<b>5,595</b>	2,178
Prior Year Adjustment (Rent)		0	0	0	(6,000)
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>		<b>5,595</b>	<b>135,156</b>	<b>140,751</b>	108,847
<b>Net incoming (outgoing) resources</b>					
<b>For the year</b>		13,012	15,565	28,577	12,869
Balance brought forward at 1 April 2007		32,177	49,132	81,309	68,440
<b>Balance carried forward at 31 March 2008</b>		<b>45,189</b>	<b>64,697</b>	<b>109,886</b>	81,309
		=====	=====	=====	=====

### Real life Advice and Support

Mr X who had worked all his life and through ill health found himself with no money and sleeping in a car. Mr X had turned 60 and was not aware of assistance available to him both relating to welfare Benefits and housing options. Mr X approached ISAS in a very distressed state, but within a month we had sorted out his pension credit and got him a one bedroom sheltered accommodation property and some money towards furniture from a small Irish charity. Mr X's quality of life had completely changed and improved because of his involvement with ISAS. We are all very proud of this and feel that clients such as Mr X are the reason why our service is so crucial.

● Another case I would like to tell you about is that of Mr B who had been living in a small studio room for about 15 years, the room was crumbling with damp, he had no access to a bathroom as the landlord had absolutely piled the bathroom full of rubbish. The room was extremely dark as it was in a basement, and had a tiny stove and a small sink only in it and a foldaway bed on the floor. Following a visit to Mr B in his home ISAS made an application for sheltered housing and submitted with this application a very strong letter of support.

Following a visit from the sheltered housing officer, Mr B received the offer of a new flat within a matter of weeks. ISAS also assisted Mr B with grant applications to get new furniture as most of his belongings had been ruined by damp over the years. Mr B is so happy in his new flat and regularly pops in to see us to say thank you and to let us know how he is getting on.

● These are just two of our many success stories of last year; with the continued growth and expansion of ISAS we hope that we will be able to reach out to many more people in similar situations and offer assistance and support to them.



## Staff Team

Mike McGing	Director
Sarah Taylor	Senior Advice Worker
Christina Martin	Elders Advice Worker
Katie Westbrook	Advice Worker
Frances Whelan	Advice and Outreach Worker
Mary Burns	Pensioners Worker

## Management Committee

Dermot Murphy  
Chair  
Appointed 2008

Michael Guest  
Director  
Appointed 2004

Gary Obrien  
Treasurer – Director  
Appointed 2007

Robert Mulchay  
Director  
Appointed 1970s

Jerry Crilly  
Solicitor – Director  
Appointed 2002

Maire Gaffney  
Consultant - Director  
Appointed 2005

Fiona Gowen  
Director  
Appointed 2008

Jim Doyle  
Housing – Director  
Appointed 2005

Jacqui Read  
Civil Servant- Director  
Appointed 2002

Francis McGuinness  
Director –2007

Marie Linnane  
Director

Bankers  
Allied Irish Bank  
361 King Street  
Hammersmith W6 9DT

Auditors  
Smartwise Management

Solicitors  
Cliona O'Tuama  
Hamilton House  
1 Temple Avenue  
London EC4 OHA

## Acknowledgments

The Irish Support would like to thank both existing and past funders to the service.

The Irish Government (DION)  
The Irish Chaplaincy  
Society of the Sacred Heart (Hammersmith)  
LB Hammersmith and Fulham  
St Johns Southworth Fund