



Leeds Irish health & homes



***ANNUAL
REPORT
1999/2000***

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WHO ARE LEEDS IRISH HEALTH & HOMES?

Leeds Irish Health & Homes (LIHH) is a voluntary organisation providing culturally sensitive housing and support services to single Irish people. We recognise how our community's experience of factors such as homelessness, poor quality and transient housing, discrimination, isolation and heavy manual labouring have contributed to a marked deterioration in Irish people's mental and physical health in Britain.

Formed as a steering group set up in 1992, we were formally constituted in 1996 as a member of the National Housing Federation and as an Industrial and Provident Society with charitable status.

Specifically, LIHH are responding to:

- **The high number of homeless Irish people in Leeds**
- **The over-representation of Irish people admitted to hospital and referred for assessment under the Mental Health Act 1983**
- **The lack of culturally appropriate support and services to Irish people in the community setting**

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- 1.** We will provided accommodation and associated support services to single Irish people who are homeless, insecurely housed, experience, or are vulnerable to mental or physical ill-health
- 2.** We will raise awareness within the public and voluntary sector to the specific needs of Irish people in terms of their housing and health needs.
- 3.** We will bring to the attention of the wider public, the needs of vulnerable Irish people
- 4.** We aim to establish a network of Irish people who are interested in the need for culturally sensitive support and mental health issues surrounding Irish homelessness.
- 5.** We have a commitment to lobbying for an Irish category in all ethnic monitoring. We will act as an information exchange, providing a network for the various agencies concerned with Irish mental health issues
- 6.** To work in counteracting direct and indirect discrimination in the mental health service

CHAIR'S STATEMENT

I am delighted to welcome you to LIHH's annual report for 1999/2000. This report shows that we have had another successful year.

The number of supported units we manage continues to grow and our tenants are enjoying one of the most settled periods of their lives. Thanks to funding jointly through Leeds Health Authority and Leeds Social Services, we have been able to broaden the scope of support we offer. We now have an Elders Outreach Worker who supports vulnerable elderly Irish people in the community.

LIHH has demonstrated a strong performance in an increasing uncertain operating environment. Our track record on voids and bad debts is enviable. During the year we have put in place sound accounting systems which will provide us with the necessary management information to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our decision making.

The board of management have recognised the need for a comprehensive review. This will place us in a strong position to face the challenge and grasp the opportunities presented by the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, the Housing Green Paper and Supporting People

Early in the new year, we intend to develop our objectives, plans and targets for the next three years.

We are looking forward to the future. Our partnerships with Social Services, Health, Housing, the Ridings and North British Housing Associations will ensure that we continue to provide a 'best value' service to our tenants and funders.



Finally, I would like to thank Ant Hanlon for his solid leadership and enthusiasm, a brilliant staff team and my fellow committee members whose expertise, knowledge and skills make my role easy.

Mary Sheard

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1999 - 2000



Left to Right:

LORRAINE MANGAN

Social Worker

CLODAGH MURPHY (*Vice-Chair*)

Training Officer, Mental Health

BRIGID O'CALLAGHAN

Student

JOHN MELAUGH

Senior Probation Officer

MEL NALLY (*Treasurer*)

Relationship Manager, Bank of Ireland

PETER McHALE

Development Worker, Catholic Care

PATRICK O'CONNOR

Manager, Community Mental Health Team

AGGIE NOTHARD (*Secretary*)

Manager, Leeds Carers Health Project

GARY BURNS

Principal Case Worker Mental Health

CLARE WHELAN

Community Mental Health Support Worker

SEAMUS O'MAHONY (*Not Pictured*)

Consultant Gastro-entriologist, Leeds General Infirmary

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1999/2000 has been a year of growth and diversification for the service provision of Leeds Irish Health & Homes. We saw the housing support service grow, the development of an outreach focus, and a strengthening of partnerships.

Alongside the recognition to meet further housing need, we saw an opportunity to strengthen organisational capacity through developing a Team Leader position for the housing service. With the help of a grant from Tudor Trust, this post has become a reality. This will bring our number of supported housing units to 42 in early 2000/1.

Financial prudence has been maintained during growth. Our rental increase was RPI + 1% as stipulated by the Housing Corporation and whilst our rental income grew by 56% the final voids and bad debts figure was 3.5%. An excellent record for this project.

We have developed our Elder's Outreach Project since September 1999. This has been a tremendous success, with numbers contacted and supported in the first six months reaching over 50.

We also recognised the need to develop our corporate objectives for the coming years to take account of our successes, and the important initiatives of 'Supporting People' and Best Value. I would like to thank Leeds Health Authority for their funding and commitment to respond to the recommendations of the plan. This is very good news for vulnerable members of our community.

LIHH recognise that the essence of an holistic service is being able to guide our customers to use the services they need. We do this through developing successful partnerships with agencies and individuals. Our commitment to partnership working is strong and underpins our service provision here.



LIHH is the sum total of its staff, committee and service users. My thanks go to the committee for their guidance and vision, the staff for their continued hard work, skill and dedication and to our service users for their feedback, honesty and trust.

Ant Hanlon

EVENTS



A number of successful roadshows were held for Irish pensioners to highlight services, benefits, safety and health initiatives.

These were made possible through funds made available from the Leeds Health Action Zone.



In October, a **World Mental Health Day Fleadh** was jointly held with Harehills Irish Music Project. Music, poetry and wit were provided from Co.Sligo, London and Leeds. The day was about recognising the positive contribution Irish people make to Leeds' cultural make-up. The Health Education Authority provided the funds and has asked us to repeat this innovative project this year.



St Patrick's Day was put to good use, as local musicians Limited Edition raised £350.00 for LIHH. This money is to be used to provide for Irish music classes for tenants. We hope next year, to be able to provide the music ourselves!

Leeds Social Services fund an activities group for us, which allows tenants to take part in outings and events to combat the isolation many feel living on their own. St Patrick's Day and Christmas parties are memorable, and ten-pin bowling gets the competitive streak going. Thank you Ted for the coaching!!

HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICE



MARY BAILLIE:
Team Leader

My post was created to expand and develop the housing service. I am enjoying it very much and working with the Irish community is a real pleasure.

Over the next year, my role is to develop and support 8 tenancies, manage the housing support service and develop policies, procedures and work practice guidelines to ensure the quality of our service remains constant.

KEVIN PONTING:
Housing Support Worker

I have been with LIHH for over two years now and have a background in direct access hostel and resettlement work. It has been a real learning experience working for a specialist organisation like LIHH, especially being involved in cultural awareness training. I am looking forward to being involved in the organisation's development over the coming year.



KAREN MALLON:
Housing Support Worker.

Originally from Co. Down, I have been with LIHH for over 2 years now. I have witnessed the organisation grow over time to the point where it provides a much more comprehensive service to the Irish community in Leeds. I thoroughly enjoy working with my tenants and gain great satisfaction from seeing them achieve a better standard of living and a fulfilment of their goals.



CASE STUDY

Mr. R. came to England as a young man in the early 70's. He settled in Leeds and raised a family. Mr. R. became a skilled craftsman and was much sought after in his field of work for his skill and expertise. However, despite this and throughout his working life, Mr. R. was the constant target of racial abuse and harassment.

The pressure of this intimidation became so intense that in the early 90's Mr. R. suffered a complete mental breakdown. He was referred to a psychologist but these interventions made little impact and he continued to live with the symptoms of extreme anxiety and depression.

In 1998, he was referred to LIHH. His experiences while in the UK had caused Mr. R. to conclude that he was ill fitted to the culture here and that ultimately to return to live in Ireland was his only salvation.

Our first step was to set Mr. R. up in a fully furnished flat of his own; LIHH provided practical and emotional housing support, and in partnership with Touchstone's Community Support Team, additional support was secured and he continues to receive regular therapeutic intervention to combat depression without drugs.

18 months on, Mr. R's condition has improved steadily and he feels more able to cope with everyday situations. In partnership with the Safe Home Project, Co. Mayo, LIHH are preparing a permanent move with support for Mr. R. back to the Republic. In the meantime he has even begun to fulfil a life-long ambition by taking part in traditional Irish music classes run by LIHH and Harehills Irish Music Project. For the first time in many years, Mr. R. is beginning to believe the future is worth looking forward to.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE RIDINGS HOUSING ASSOCIATION

1999/2000 has been yet another successful year in the partnership between Leeds Irish Health & Homes and The Ridings Housing Association.

The association monitors the work of its managing agents and was pleased with the results from Irish Health & Homes. We acknowledge the successful combination of growth and satisfactory management of our properties.

The tenants in our properties have sustained their tenancies well during 1999/2000. Losses from voids and bad debts remain at a minimum for the scheme. Staff from IHH have liased well with staff from the association in managing the scheme.

The association looks forward to continued success with Irish Health & Homes in 2000/2001.

HELEN LENNON
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

IRISH ELDERS OUTREACH PROJECT

CAROLINE MURPHY:

Elders Outreach Worker.

I have been in post since September 1999. The aim of my work is to promote and provide practical help and advice to improve the quality of life for Irish elders in Leeds. The work has been challenging, but at the same time, rewarding and enjoyable. We have received some money through the **Health Action Zone** to start a **'Day Club' for Irish elders**. We have refreshments, lunch and music. This provides a space for Irish people to meet with each other, share their experiences and removes some of the isolation many members of our older community experience.



ADMINISTRATION

JANET STEPHENS:

Administrative Worker.

Since I started in April 1998, my role has expanded as the organisation has grown, and we now have more employees. It was a totally new venture for me, as I had never worked in the voluntary sector before, but I feel I have learnt a lot since being here about the Irish community in Leeds. I find the work itself rewarding and interesting and it's good to know we are proving an essential service that was previously lacking.



TENANT'S COMMENTS

"I find visits to the office very helpful."

"I wasn't aware of what I was entitled to but for ye."

"I came to LIHH because I was in need of support owing to social isolation, poor accommodation and the legacy of emotional abuse"

"You're great."

"When I came back from Dublin, you gave me a second chance. I'll always appreciate that."

"I'm very happy with the support I get; I don't feel I need anyone else."

"I had a wonderful day yesterday among my own people."

"The office has a nice atmosphere; it feels welcoming and I enjoy popping in to see the staff."

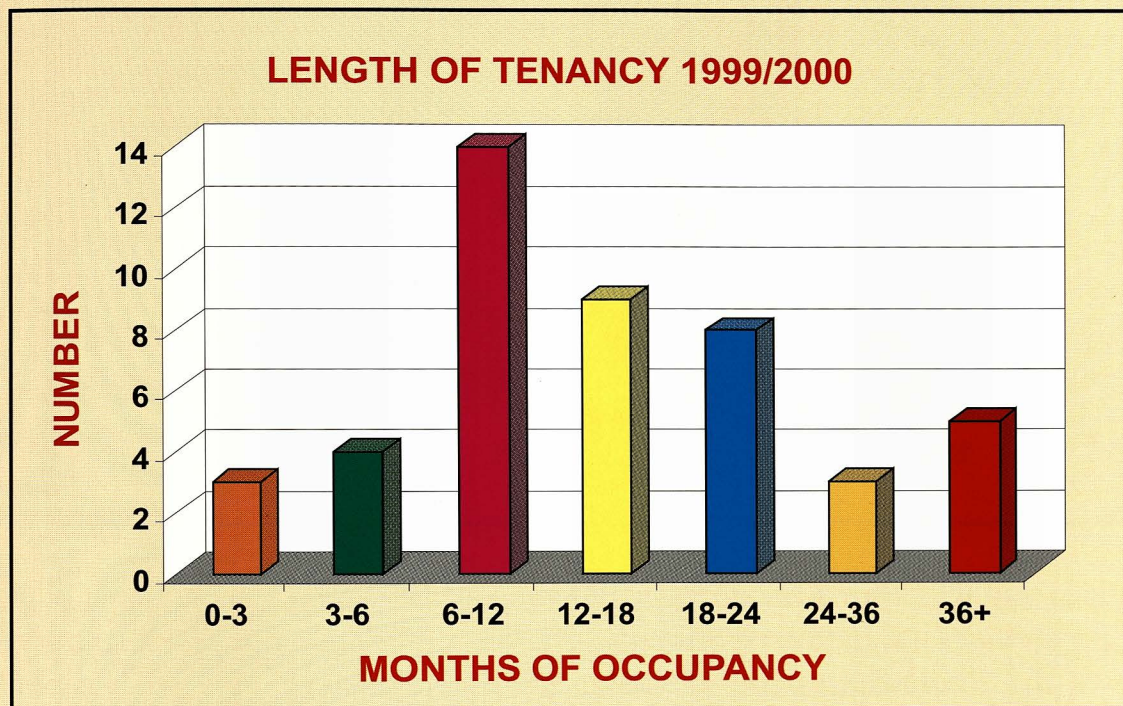
"I love ye all."

HOUSING MANAGEMENT

ALLOCATIONS

LIHH is committed to housing single people in greatest need. Intervention with each tenant is guided by an individually devised **support plan**. These plans are then regularly reviewed to ensure that the goals that tenants and workers agree are being met. We work with a wide range of agencies to ensure that the most appropriate support is given.

Our policy is showing fruition. **35% of tenants have maintained their accommodation for longer than 18 months**; for some tenants this has been their longest period of stability.



SERVICE DELIVERY

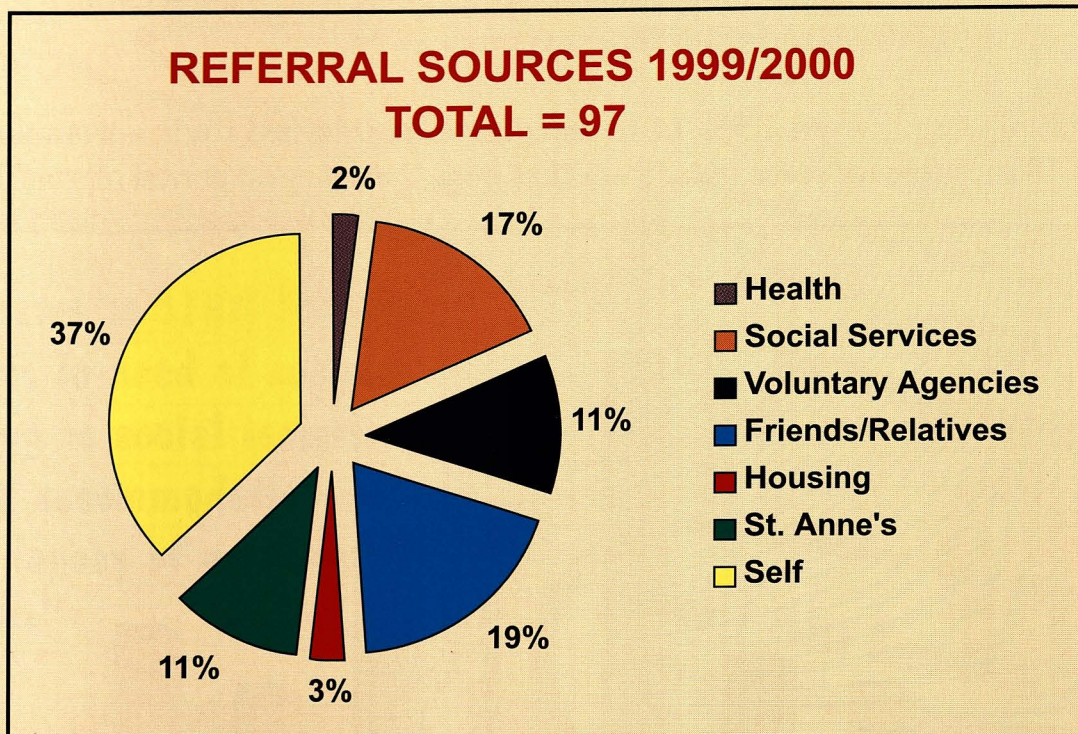
LIHH continues to improve and develop its housing management policies and service delivery in line with **'Supporting People'** and **Best Value**.

Our **voids and bad debts** figures for the year are **3.5%**, which is an excellent achievement for a special needs organisation, and our final arrears figure of **1%** of total rent receivable is almost totally attributable to housing benefit delays. We have also kept our rent increase for 2000/1, as previously, to **RPI+1%** as stipulated by the Housing Corporation.

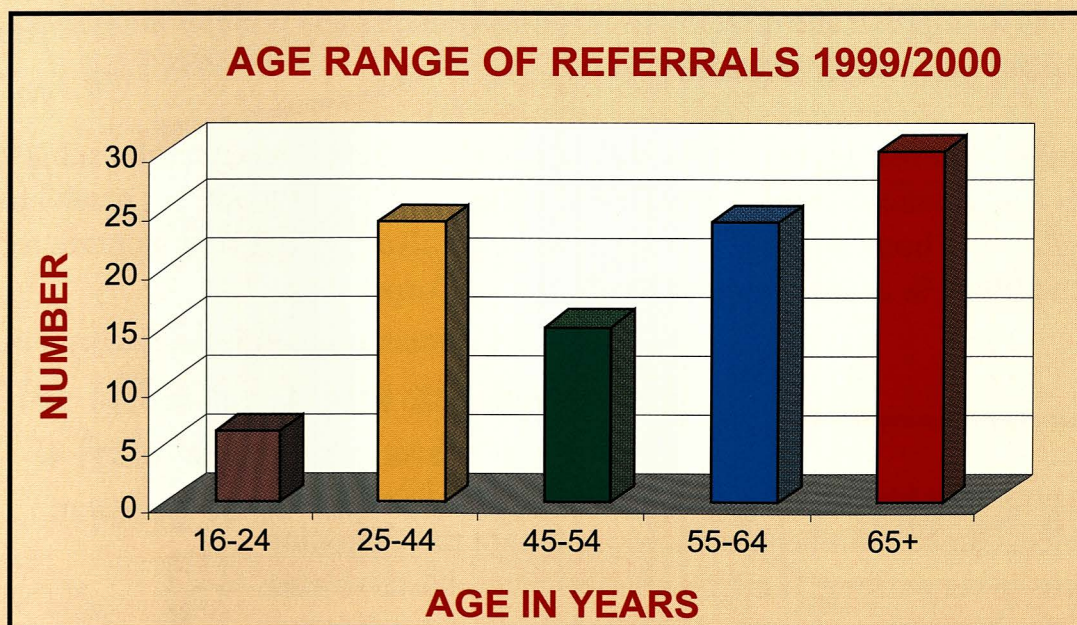
Our aim is to continuously improve our performance whilst ensuring a quality service. Our commitment to improved **tenant participation** to measure this is very strong; our first quarterly tenants newsletter 'Irish in Leeds' is due out soon, and a schedule of regular tenant meetings is maintained.

USERS OF OUR SERVICES

LIHH recognises the importance of taking its services to the community. Over **55%** of our referrals came either from Irish people seeking our services themselves, or via a friend or relative. This is a very important indicator for us given the fact that our community do not traditionally access supporting services well.



We also noticed that with the addition of our Elders Outreach service, the number of people over 55 seeking our services has increased dramatically. We see this as a positive response, especially at the time of the **Reconfiguration of Older people's services**, and the **National Service Frameworks on Coronary Heart Disease, and Mental Health**. We will have important information to feed in regarding Irish need.



FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR

	1999/2000 £	1998/1999 £
INCOME		
1. HOUSING RENTS	143,270	90,129
2. HOUSING CORPORATION	28,292	28,080
3. LEEDS CITY COUNCIL	27,288	26,460
4. DION FUND	6,307	11,232
5. LEEDS HEALTH AUTHORITY	12,000	0
6. HEALTH ACTION ZONE	3,135	0
7. LEEDS URBAN INITIATIVE	2,500	0
8. OTHER INCOME & GRANTS	10,004	4,981
TOTALS	<u>232,796</u>	<u>160,882</u>

EXPENDITURE

1. HOUSING SERVICES	159,534	118,338
2. CENTRAL, OUTREACH & ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	45,479	31,275
TOTALS	<u>205,013</u>	<u>149,613</u>

LIHH would like to record our thanks to IME Omar & Co. who have audited the full accounts for 1999/2000. The Auditor's opinion was unqualified and the Management Committee approved our accounts on 17th July 2000. A full set of accounts can be obtained from LIHH.

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BANKERS: Bank of Ireland, 31 King Street, Leeds LS1 2HL




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A member of the National Housing Federation

A member of ^{national} **homeless alliance** 

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