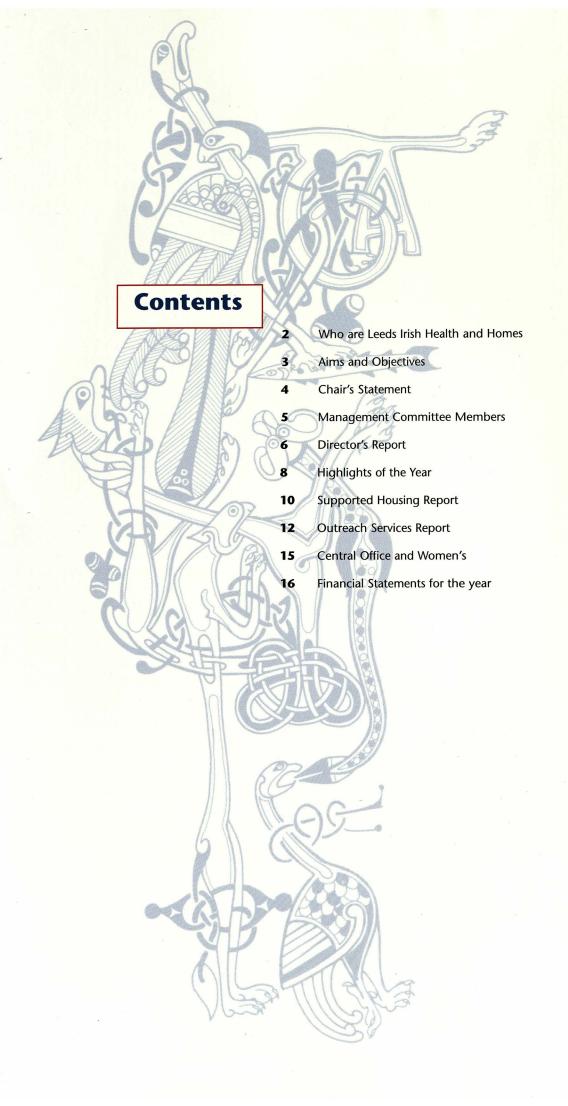


Annual Report 2000 > 2001



WHO ARE LEEDS IRISH HEALTH AND HOMES?

LIHH is a voluntary organisation providing culturally sensitive housing and outreach support services to vulnerable and isolated Irish people.

We developed from a steering group set up in 1992 as a response to concerns about the disadvantage they saw occurring in the Irish community.

Specific concerns were:

- The high number of single homeless Irish people in Leeds, especially older men
- The over-representation of Irish people in Leeds admitted to hospital and referred for assessment under the Mental Health Act
- The lack of culturally appropriate support services to Irish people in the community
- The over-representation of Single Irish people living in rooms and boarding houses
- Major health inequalities being experienced by Irish people, especially single and the elderly
- The high incidence of Irish people with alcohol problems
- The poor take-up of support services by Irish people here

In January 1996, we received initial funding support from Leeds City Council to commence our work. We were also formally constituted as a member of the National Housing Federation and as an Industrial & Provident Society with charitable status.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1 We will provide 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 support and assist our tenants to develop their skills for independent living.
- **3** 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.
- 4 We will bring to the attention of the wider public, the needs of vulnerable Irish people.
- 5 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.
- **6** 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.
- **7** To work in counteracting direct and indirect discrimination in the mental health service

CHAIR'S STATEMENT



I am delighted to be able to report on another excellent year for Irish Health and Homes. Many congratulations to Ant and his team for their work over the past twelve months.

As an Irishwoman and Chair of Irish Health and Homes I am especially moved by the words of our tennants in this report. This confirms for me the need for Irish Health and Homes to continue and develop our culturally sensitive service.

Our outreach work and supported housing have grown significantly over this past year and we welcome two more staff members to our team.

While our work has continued to develop and grow, so have our partnerships. We now work closely with Leeds City Council Housing and Social Services, Primary Care Trusts, the Health Service, Ridings Housing Association, and North British Housing Association.

A host of new Government policies will affect our work over the next year or so, for example, Supporting People and the National Framework on Mental Health and Older People. Irish Health and Homes are in a strong position to meet the opportunities and challenges these new initiatives will bring.

Finally, I want to thank my colleagues on the Management Committee for all their wisdom and support over the past twelve months.





MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2000-2001

Mary Sheard	Chair
Clodagh Murphy	Vice-Chair
Mel Nally	Treasurer
John Melaugh	
Peter McHale	
Gary Burns	
Patrick O'Connor	e o
Brigid O'Callaghan	
Lorraine Mangan	Resigned 17th July 2000
Clare Whelan	
Seamus O'Mahony	
Sínead Creggan	Appointed 4th December 2000

DIRECTOR'S REPORT



Last year Leeds Health Authority funded the production of a Corporate Plan, which would guide our development through the next three years. We were able to sign this off in December 2000 and have started to work with our partnership agencies in order to deliver its recommendations.

We increased the number of properties in our management to 44 units whilst maintaining our excellent voids and bad debts record, which

came out for the year at 2.2%. Our rental increase was also in line with housing corporation recommendations.

Our work with Irish elders has gone from strength to strength, with Caroline becoming more involved with the development of day services and disseminating information about the pre-1953 Irish pension.

We also saw a successful Health Action Zone bid materialise to start our Health Outreach Project, which provides advice, support and information to Irish people with various health needs. We will also be producing a report early in 2002 looking at, and recommending action to combat the health inequalities that exist for a disproportionate number of Irish people here.

This year has also seen a number of significant developments by the statutory authorities in trying to consult with the various black and minority ethnic communities here. LIHH have established themselves as a member of these groups to ensure that an Irish dimension is developed to any plans. We are also engaging with the Primary Care Groups/Trusts to establish their responsibilities to vulnerable and isolated members of our community.

The next twelve months see the gathering of pace for many government initiatives that will affect our work. We have 'Supporting People', Neighbourhood Renewal, and the National Frameworks on Mental Health and Older People to name a few, all which need to ensure that Irish people's needs are taken fully into account. We will also be preparing agencies for the results of this year's census.

All of this work however will not divert us from our main focus, which is to provide quality support services that respond to the needs of our clients. We will be endeavouring over the next 12 months to consult and work with our customers to ensure they receive the kind of support that they feel they need.

I would sincerely like to thank all the staff members at Irish Health & Homes. Their skills, knowledge and commitment ensure that our support services remain highly valued by our customers.

I would like to thank members of the management committee for their support and guidance throughout the past year.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Irish people who have put either their trust, or that of their relatives, with LIHH over the past year. I hope that you feel your faith has been rewarded.

Ant Hanlon

Director

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

1 TAKE ME HOME TO MAYO

This year we established links with the Mayo Emigrant Liaison Committee. It was formed in Castlebar, Co.Mayo, in September 1999 with a view to addressing the growing concern over the social isolation, failing health, loneliness and the deteriorating quality of life which is now being experienced by many elderly immigrants, especially in Britain.

They intend to develop close links with the various agencies, committees and groups who work in emigrant, and welfare-related areas in Britain. It is hoped to put in place worthwhile strategies whereby some very positive ventures can be developed and brought to fruition.

We have been allocated spaces for 12 people on a holiday they are organising during September 2001. People who have not been home for more than 20 years will be able to visit Ireland and see the changes in a supportive environment. They will also get a chance to meet President McAleese when she officially inaugurates the holiday. This is something we hope will turn into an annual event for our clients.

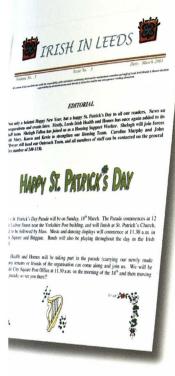
2 NEWS NEWS AND MORENEWS

Our quarterly newsletter 'Irish in Leeds' has continued to be produced this year, gaining acclaim on its way. Originally produced for our tenants, the newsletter was seen by other members of the Irish community and we were asked to make it more widely available. Packed with information on services, benefits, stories and what's on, we are hoping that more businesses from the community start to support us and advertise their news with us. This year, with funding from Leeds Social Services, we will be able to produce 3000 copies each issue.

3 Corporate Planning

Leeds Health Authority provided funds which enabled us to develop a Corporate Plan for the next 3 years. Besides drawing on staff and committee ideas, the process also included asking our customers how they thought we should be developing, and asking partner agencies what they would like from us.

Peter Bevington, the consultant, saw the organisation having a 'family atmosphere which was valued by its tenants'. He also saw the need for other agencies to start to create partnerships with us to ensure that they were meeting the needs of vulnerable Irish people.



4 Census 2001

For the first time, this year's census had its own Irish tick-box, thereby providing much needed information about members of the Irish community in Britain. This was something Irish groups had been campaigning on for a number of years, and was recommended by the CRE report in 1997. The information will help local authorities and other service planners to direct

services to where they are needed. We helped to raise awareness amongst Irish people in Leeds through the distribution of promotional material and participation in a roadshow with the Federation of Irish Societies at Leeds Irish Centre.

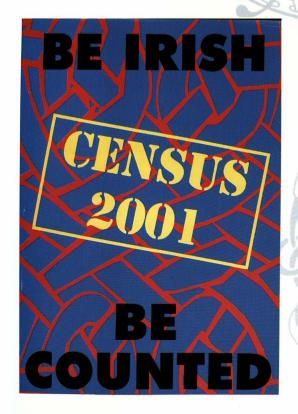
5 Federation of Irish Societies

This year saw Ant Hanlon being elected onto the FIS committee as an officer without portfolio. This is an exciting opportunity for LIHH and Ant to become involved in the planned development of the Federation over the next year.

6 A Long way from Home

We have been making a video about the Irish in Leeds. It considers the experiences of people who use our services, looks at the history of the community here, and how being Irish has affected people's feelings, and opportunities, of being part of community life here. The video will be finished in September 2001 and will be available to agencies as a training aid when considering why Irish people value support services which do not respond to them with traditional stereotypes and prejudices.

It is a celebration of our community's history, strength and adaptability!





SUPPORTED HOUSING REPORT

The housing service has expanded at a healthy and steady pace over the past year to 44 units by the year-end. We have started to develop positive links with Leeds City Council Housing Department and are expanding into new locations as we endeavour to offer our tenants better choice in the quality and location of properties.

The housing team has continued to develop its skills and strengths through regular team meetings, training and co-working. We are striving to meet the requirements of Best Value and Supporting People, and are constantly reviewing our services to ensure they meet with their criteria.

I am extremely happy to report that whilst increasing the number of properties in our management, we improved on our last year's voids and bad debts performance and came in at 2.2%. A fantastic achievement by the team!

Our focus this year has been trying to include tenants in developing the type of support they feel they want. In addition to quarterly tenant meetings to discuss any ways in which our services could improve, we have been trying to increase the opportunities for people to get together on a social basis, which then helps tenants feel less isolated.

We have started a monthly video club, which shows lrish interest films. We have been running a music group in partnership with Harehills Irish Music Project which gives people an opportunity to learn the fiddle. We have also just completed our first tenant aspiration survey which instead of being a quality check for us is asking tenants if they would like to see any specific developments to support them more.

As ever, our celebrations for St Patrick's Day and Christmas were memorable and well attended. With funding raised by Noel and Martin at the Harp, we were able to dine at the Mansion House. Tenants are still talking about it! Thank you to all of those who support our fundraising efforts. Your generosity is well received.

Mary Baillie-

Team Leader

Housing Support Workers: Karen Mallon Kevin Ponting Shelagh Fallon





CASE STUDIES

1 Mary, in her 30's and second-generation Irish, has been a tenant of LIHH for over four years. She says,

"My CPN knew I needed somewhere to live, got hold of Irish Health & Homes' number and found out that I was eligible to have a flat. I don't know much about housing or whatever, but I know that if he hadn't have found it, I'd probably be living over the road at my mum's, but I wouldn't like that.

The flat has given me somewhere to live on my own. I've come from a big family and it was nice to get out of that situation, but at the same time, it's comfortable, safe, and I just have to lock the door and I know that nobody'll get in. It's my own now, you know, it's my own flat and I can do what I want in it.

I feel very settled here. I get, my housing support worker visits once a week, which is fine because there's someone to talk to if you're a bit low, or whatever. Once a week is fine for me to see somebody, and I'm very settled now."

2 Tom, in his 50's came to England in 1972. He was in his early 20's and worked as a chef in some of the best hotels and restaurants in London. Tom had obtained diplomas in catering from his home town of Cork.

The higher his skill level took him, the more racial abuse and harassment he received. He started to drink too much as a comfort and protection, so that no one could hurt him further. During this time depression hit him, and he ended up becoming involved in crime, resulting in him spending time in prison.

When not in prison, he started to live in hostels, moving throughout England. He stayed for a few nights in each and was often gone before he paid them. This was his way of life until he came to Leeds in 1998. He heard about LIHH and referred himself.

Tom felt he could no longer sustain his lifestyle as his physical and mental health were deteriorating rapidly. We housed Tom in his own flat and started to provide him with the support to manage his own tenancy for the first time in his life. Three years on, and having moved through some difficult transitions, Tom says he is very happy and content as a tenant of LIHH. He has

seen an improvement in his physical and mental health, in that he has been able to successfully stay in his own flat, making close relationships with other tenants.

Tom says he enjoys the support he receives and does not imagine ever leaving the organisation

TENANT COMMENTS

- **1** Since I have moved into my flat I am so much better in myself. I am more settled and I feel like a human being again. If there are any problems I can talk to my Housing Support Worker and that puts my mind at ease.
- **2** You see I have no family now so I look upon Irish Health & Homes as my family, like an adopted family, and I really enjoy being with them, you know, you call in any time and have a laugh. I know a lot of residents who stop me on the street, ... we have a chat, you know, and... that's what they've done for me
- **3** LIHH are like a family to me; it makes my life complete
- **4** LIHH are great support for me when I am unwell and depressed, they lift my spirits
- **5** I feel safe and secure just coming to the office
- **6** I feel that Irish Health & Homes have given me a new start in life

OUTREACH SEVICES REPORT



IDIGIA FILIDEDS PROJECT

This past year has seen me establishing the project both within our community and in the consciousness of agencies throughout Leeds who may come into contact with vulnerable Irish elders.

We have had an increase in the number of people using us for advice and information. This has escalated since we started to produce information about the pre-1953 Irish pension. We have been able to raise awareness within the com-

munity about other things relevant to them via our bimonthly 'Irish Elders Noticeboard' which we have been producing. This is distributed far and wide to capture the widest audience possible.

Myself and John O'Dwyer have started a day for Irish elders at the Montague Burton Day Centre which is attracting an increasing number of people. Bingo, raffle, music, food and chat are the order of the day, within an Irish environment. We have seen improvements in people's health and well-being through attendance here, and we are endeavouring to get Leeds City Council to provide transport so that some of the more isolated members can attend more often.

I have also been supporting the development of the West Yorkshire Irish Pensioners Forum, which started in February, to try to bring pensioners from across Yorkshire together to campaign on issues relevant to them. I have just been elected onto their committee and hope that the information and knowledge I gain through my work will be of use to them.

Caroline Murphy

Elders Outreach Worker

CASE STUDY

Joseph, in his late 50's, came to England in 1970, arriving in Coventry spending six months roaming the streets doing, odd jobs and then moved to Birmingham.

"I found it very frightening 'cos I didn't believe there was as much hate for the Irish over here as there was at that time. The Birmingham bombings went off shortly after I came. We used to work around with signs saying 'deaf and dumb' 'cos your accent would get you a hiding.

Nearly every night in Birmingham, there was Irish being picked up left, right and centre. I was picked up myself a couple of times, even though there was no reason for them to pick me up. They used to charge you with drunk and disorderly or anything they could get as an excuse.

The Irish were stereotyped as either bombers, IRA or drunkards, and I still think today they class us as either drunkards or builders working for Wimpey's.

They don't class us as educated people, they seem to think that we're backward. You get remarks like 'potato head' and ... you get quite a lot of thunderous remarks being made; if we complained like some of the other ethnic groups, there'd be hell to pay.

The Irish were used to do all the cheap work, but you weren't accepted, you weren't allowed to get flats or houses in the fairly good areas. One saying I remember was that was the Irish built the country, but they weren't allowed to live in it.

I came to Leeds in about 1980 to work and started working for British Waterways on the barges but I had a bad accident which resulted in numerous operations and I had to get a different type of work then because I couldn't handle heavy work.

I started to drink heavily to cope with the pain and my problems, thinking that this would solve things. I didn't know there was such an organisation as LIHH. I'd been to Social Services looking for some place I could go to a couple of times a week, or if I could do voluntary work, and the lady who came to see me said they had nothing and they couldn't involve me in anything so I thought that was the end of it. Then about three months later she came back with Caroline. I think that was the best day of my life when she came with Caroline, even though I didn't know at the time who

Caroline was. She saw what state I was in, she saw the state of everything and she said she'd help me. Within a fortnight I had the flat that I'm in now.

LIHH furnished it for me, new cooker, new washer, and they're still in the process of trying to get me to live civil, if that's the word to use, I'm not used to having to a place, so I'm not used to having everything tidy.

I've been a loner most of my life, and I don't associate with people very well for periods of time. When Caroline came into my life, at my friend's flat I was staying at, she might not realise it, but she actually saved my life because I'd taken one overdose, and I'd been broken into numerous occasions. I got put in hospital for three weeks by two blokes beating me up because they wanted my bank card, and I didn't even have a bank account, so Caroline moved me out of there to here.

I'm beginning to feel more relaxed with people now than I have for a long time, that's why I enjoy going down to the Day Club on a Friday. It is the first time that anybody has got me out of my flat; there wasn't anybody who cared or troubled about it before. As I say, I got in touch with Social Services and they said there was nothing they could do for me, but Irish Health & Homes gave me something now that I look forward to each week.

I can honestly say that if I didn't have the support, I think I'd go back on the drink and just end up dead, because that was pattern for me."

THE DAY CLUB

"A lot of the elderly Irish people that I particularly come across feel quite isolated, even though they might live in a nice area or, you know, have lots of friends. Sometimes it's a cultural thing that they feel, that they want to



be amongst other Irish people, so that was part of the reason why we set up the Day Club here on a Friday."

Day Club Users Comments

1. A cup of coffee, friendliness, companionship When I get here I have a cup of coffee, which I love, and it's handed to me, I don't have to make it..and everyone's so friendly, I just I'm amongst nice people, good kindly people and I love it.



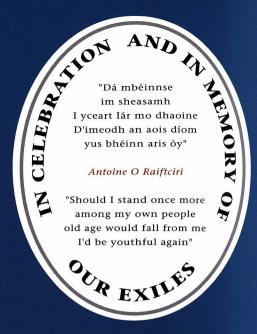
- 2. I love the bingo, I love the raffle, I love the sandwiches, and ...it's altogether a lovely day, I really and truly look forward to it...I love coming now on a Friday, ...I see all my friends.
- 3. I don't think that you treat people different, I think you treat everybody that comes to you with caring.

Health Outreach Project

This began in November 2000 after we obtained 18 months funding from Leeds Health Action Zone as a response to concerns about inequalities which were affecting a disproportionate number of our community.

Our concerns were

- * A lack of information, specifically monitoring, which made statistics on Irish need 'invisible' and therefore did not lead to any service planning to address difficulties
- * A lack of appropriate response to the CRE research from 1997 by the statutory and voluntary care agencies.
- * The major health inequalities being experienced by Irish people, especially single and the elderly
- * The high incidence of Irish people with alcohol problems
- * Irish people tending to access support services at times of crises, when their health problems were in more chronic states



My role is to support people with health difficulties and assist them in getting the support. I am also compiling a report which will be available in early 2002 looking at the barriers to health and social care for vulnerable Irish people.

I am providing much needed information on the difficulties which some Irish people have for the health and social care agencies, and have begun to feed this to the Primary Care Groups to ensure the Irish community's needs are addressed.

Our provision of day care has seen one way in which helping people to overcome their isolation has a beneficial affect on their health and well-being. The fact that most are in the company of their own people also creates a spark that is hard to put into words.



John O'Dwyer- Health Outreach Worker

CENTRAL OFFICE

Janet Stephens : Administrative Worker

Paul Challenor : Accounts



LEEDS IRISH WOMEN'S GROUP

LIHH provides administrative support to LIWG. This was formed by a group of LIHH tenants to bring together Irish women who felt socially isolated, or whose lives meant they could benefit by meeting other Irish women in a social setting. The group consists of 10 members whose ages range from 30 to 70. The group is run by those women who participate in it and everyone is seen to be an equal member. They hold monthly meetings and organise monthly social outings. Currently there are free alternative therapy sessions being held at LIHH's offices on a fortnightly basis.

Group members have been very busy organising and taking part in a variety of events

During the past year, they have been to Dublin and Windermere as well as more regular trips to the Irish Centre, meals, cinema etc.

The women say the group has led to very positive experiences for them as they have seen their own ideas through. It has led to friendships, increased confidence and self-esteem and above all, they have fun.

The group is open to Irish women of all ages living in Leeds and they would love to see it grow in numbers.

Comments

1. It has benefited me enormously and has given me a social event. I find the alternative taster sessions interesting.

2. It's nice to mix with other women who are in the same situation, and who I feel a rapport with.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR

		2000/2001	1999/2000	
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	(O) N R9	(3)		
1	Housing Rents	177380 / 99	143355	
2	Housing Corporation	29000	28292	
3	Leeds City Council	32800	27288	
4	Dìon Fund	8430	6307	
5	Leeds Health Authority	17237	12000	
6	Leeds Health Action Zone	14689	3135	
7	Leeds Urban Initiative	2500	2500	
8	Other income, grants	24650	10004	
	and donations	HI 107/		
		JIMA / 18/		
	TOTALS	306686	232881	
•	1860	18		
EXPENDITURE				
		CAT TO ANSI		
1	Housing Services	211759	160454	
2	Outreach Services	39549}		
3	Central Office &	45151}	44644	
	Administrative Services	6772		
		1		
	TOTALS	296459	205098	
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LIHH would like to record our thanks to Bartfield & Co. who have audited the full accounts for 2000/2001. The Auditor's opinion was unqualified and the Management Committee approved our accounts on 23rd July 2001. A full set of accounts can be obtained from LIHH.

Auditors: Bartfield & Co. Burley House, 12 Clarendon Road, Leeds, LS2 9NF

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

