

BIAS NEWS

ISSUE NO. 1

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1990

FREE

*Information Service
to the Irish Community in London*



IRISH HOMELESSNESS

IRISH WOMEN

EDITORIAL COMMENT

For any migrant population such as the Irish, access to housing is of utmost importance; a home, a job and a feeling of being part of a community are vital ingredients to successful settlement by the migrant. The latter end of the 1980's, however, saw greater housing shortages and more homelessness, particularly among the young Irish and Irish families.

The 1980's also saw a greater increase in the level of emigration from Ireland to Britain (nearly 50,000 in 1989). Changes in Housing legislation in the late 1980's gave more rights to landlords and less to people in private rented accommodation. The result of all this is that many Irish people do not have the necessary up-to-date information about housing rights and housing availability when they arrive in London.

This information Newsletter forms part of BIAS' response to this situation.

The Birth of the News

This Newsletter is the product of a three-way arrangement between the Brent Irish Advisory Service (BIAS), Action Resource Centre (ARC), and Marks & Spencer. Karen Colman and Janet Cooley from Marks & Spencer have produced this Newsletter for BIAS as a pilot edition to test out how best to produce, distribute and future editions. They did this on a short secondment—spending 100 hours each over a period of three months—arranged by ARC.

ARC brings management and business skills to community organisations through seconded staff from public and private sector employers. ARC's role is to match secondees to appropriate projects, monitor progress and ensure that good practice is followed.

Short assignments such as the one undertaken by Karen and Janet are called 'Development Assignments' because they provide a development opportunity to the staff undertaking them. There are a range of benefits for those concerned. The community organisation benefits from the skills brought in by the secondee and receives a piece of work that might otherwise not have been done. The secondee is able to develop project management skills in a different environment and has the opportunity to experience working in a totally different sector. The seconding company gains through a wider view that employees can bring back to their day-to-day work, and as a business it can support the community from which it derives its income.

BRENT IRISH ADVISORY SERVICE

Information: From its Information Centre, BIAS offers up-to-date information and confidential advice on people's rights in Britain, Ireland and Europe, including Housing, Welfare, Employment, Training, Education, Legal, Health, Cultural and Social activities. BIAS is also involved in community work, helping Irish people start new projects and activities. Our information and advice work enables us to research, identify and respond to unmet needs of the Irish community.

Housing: BIAS provides information and advice about housing rights and opportunities for the homeless, single people, couples and people with housing problems.

Welfare: BIAS provides information and advice about welfare rights and benefits, practical assistance and support to Irish people in need or at risk.

Training: BIAS provides a range of training services to agencies/groups working with the Irish community.

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London Boroughs
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London Borough
of Brent



The Irish
Government

IRISH HOMELESSNESS

ADVICE AND INFORMATION

Homeless people can and should seek advice on their housing situation. Their rights—to rent, to live free from harassment, to enjoy quiet occupation—are important rights which people are often not aware exist. Specialist advice and information services are available for all housing problems and enquiries. Most Local Authorities have a Housing Aid Service and a Homeless Persons Unit (HPU)—contact the local Town Hall for the address of the one that covers your locality.

The following voluntary bodies are also able to offer advice on housing problems:

ASS (Advisory Service for Squatters), 2 St. Pauls Road, London N1 2QN. Tel: 071-359 8814.

CHAR (Housing Campaign for Single People), 5/15 Cromer Street, London WC1. Tel: 071 833 2071.

Housing Advice Switchboard, 47 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0AN. Tel: 071 434 2522 (24 hours).

SHAC The London Housing Aid Centre), 189A Old Brompton Road, London SW5 0AR. Tel: 071-373 7276.

Shelter, 88 Old Street, London EC1.

MIND (National Association for Mental Health), 22 Harley Street, London W1N 2ED. Tel. 071-637 0741.

HOMELESSNESS

The Housing Act 1985 (part III) places a duty on Local Authorities to provide accommodation and rent for certain homeless people. To be considered for a Council property, a person or a member of his/her family must be homeless, or likely to be homeless in 28 days, and be in priority need, that is, if she is pregnant, s/he has dependent children, is vulnerable due to ill health, old age, youth, mental illness or handicap, or other special reasons. A person who becomes homeless due to flood, fire or other disaster will have a right to be rehoused. If a family or person is accepted to be homeless and in priority need, then temporary accommodation must be provided by the Council. If you become homeless or arrive in Britain without first securing accommodation, contact the local housing office or the Town Hall who will put you in touch with the Homeless Persons Section. Many Councils have a different emergency telephone number for use outside office hours, which is available from the local Town Hall number, the Samaritans or the Police. The emergency number will probably be answered by a receptionist who will ask for brief details before contacting the duty Homeless Persons Officer or Social Worker.

Single people or families who made themselves homeless deliberately, and who fit the above criteria, for example, leaving accommodation in Ireland without due cause, have no claim to the right to rent Council accommodation. Although they may be housed temporarily while their case is being assessed, these people will not be offered permanent Council accommodation and must seek alternatives or return to Ireland. Irish people often have added difficulties in obtaining decent secure accommodation as they face discrimination and insensitivity by housing bodies and Councils who do not understand the reasons for Irish people emigrating; becoming homeless, or because they ignore the fact that the Irish are over-represented in homeless figures and live in the worst type of accommodation.

HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

Housing Associations or Housing Trusts are independent non-profit making organisation which provide rented housing for people in housing need. Their spending is controlled by Government through the Housing Corporation and some are also supported by Local Authorities.

Many Housing Associations accept nominations from local Councils and you therefore will have to apply to the Council for housing and be put on their waiting list before you will be considered by these Housing Associations. Some Housing Associations, however, still take referrals from individuals and agencies.

Housing Associations provide housing for people in need: some work for particular groups such as people from ethnic minorities, students, or women. The most common conditions that applicants have to fulfil are: to be in housing need—usually this means that you must be homeless, living in bad conditions, or without security of tenure; to have a local connection—you must be living or working in the area or have relatives in the area; to have a low income. In London there are two Irish housing associations, both of which are registered with the Housing Corporation. Innisfree Housing Association provides a range of housing—short-life and hostel accommodation for homeless and badly housed single people and couples without children. Cara Housing Association is based in Islington and provides housing for a number of sections of the Irish community through special projects. Further information on Irish Housing Associations is available from:



Electric House
296 Willesden Lane
London NW2 5HW
Tel: 081-451 5199



424 Seven Sisters Road
Manor House
London N4 2LX
Tel: 081-800 2744/2886



c/o Haringey Irish Centre
Pretoria Road
Tottenham N17 8PX
Tel: 081-365 1751

WHERE TO GET INFORMATION AND HELP IF YOU ARE IRISH IN LONDON

London is made up of 33 Borough Councils

BARKING (1) Civic Centre Dagenham Essex RM10 7BN 081-592 4500	BARNET (2) Town Hall The Burroughs London NW4 4BG 081-202 8282	BEXLEY (3) Civic Officers Broadway Bexleyheath Kent DA6 7LB 081-303 7777	ISLINGTON (19) Town Hall Upper St Islington London N1 2UD (See also (l) below) 071-266 1234	KENSINGTON & CHELSEA (20) Town Hall Hornton St London W8 7NX 071-937 5464	KINGSTON (21) Guildhall Kingston-upon-Thames Surrey KT1 1EU 081-546 2121
BRENT (4) Town Hall Forty Lane Wembley Middlesex HA9 9HD (See also (a) & (b) below) 081-904 1244	BROMLEY (5) Civic Centre Rochester Ave Bromley Kent BR1 3UH 081-464 3333	CAMDEN (6) Town Hall Euston Rd London NW1 (See also (c) & (d) below) 071-278 4444	LAMBETH (22) Town Hall Brixton Hill London SW2 1RW (See also (m) below) 071-274 7722	LEWISHAM (23) Town Hall Lewisham London SE6 4RU 081-695 6000	MERTON (24) Crown House London Rd Morden Surrey SM4 5DX 081-543 2222
CITY OF LONDON (7) P.O. Box 270 Guildhall London EC2 2EJ 081-986 6428	CROYDON (8) Taberner House Park Lane Croydon Surrey CR9 3JS 081-686 4433	EALING (9) Town Hall New Broadway London W5 (See also (e) below) 081-579 2424	NEWHAM (25) Town Hall Barking Rd London E6 (See also (n) below) 081-472 1430	REDBRIDGE (26) Town Hall 128-142 High Rd Ilford Essex IG1 1DD 081-478 3020	RICHMOND (27) York House Richmond Way Twickenham Surrey TW1 3AA 081-891 1411
ENFIELD (10) Civic Centre Silver St Enfield Middlesex EB1 3ES 081-366 6565	GREENWICH (11) Town Hall 29-37 Wellington St London SE18 6PW (See also (f) below) 081-854 8888	HACKNEY (12) Town Hall Mare St London E8 1EA (See also (g) below) 081-986 3123	SOUTHWARK (28) Town Hall Peckham Rd London SE5 8UB 071-703 6311	SUTTON (29) Civic Offices St Nicholas Way Sutton Surrey SM1 1EA 081-770 5000	TOWER HAMLETS (30) Town Hall Patriot Square London E2 9LN 071-484 5212
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM (13) Town Hall King St Hammersmith London W6 9JU (See also (h) below) 071-748 8588	HARINGEY (14) Civic Centre High Rd Wood Green London N22 4LE (See also (i) (j) & (k) below) 081-975 9700	HARROW (15) Civic Centre Station Rd Harrow Middlesex HA1 2UH 081-863 5611	WALTHAM FOREST (31) Town Hall Forest Rd London E17 4JF 081-527 5544	WANDSWORTH (32) Town Hall Wandsworth High St London SW18 2PU 081-871 6000	WESTMINSTER (33) Westminster City Hall Victoria St London SW1E 6QP 071-828 8070
HAVERING (16) Town Hall Main Rd Romford Essex RM1 3BD 0708 766999	HILLINGDON (17) Civic Centre High St Uxbridge Middlesex UB8 1UW 0895 50111	HOUNSLOW (18) Civic Centre Lampton Rd Hounslow Middlesex TW3 4DN 081-570 7728	WHERE ELSE TO GET INFORMATION IRISH EMBASSY, 17 Grosvenor Place, London SW1. 071-235 2171 (a) BRENT IRISH ADVISORY SERVICE (BIAS), Electric House, 296 Willesden Lane, London NW2 5HW, 081-459 6286. (b) SAFE START FOUNDATION, 71 Cricklewood Broadway, London NW2 3JR. 081-208 1058. (c) IRISH CENTRE CAMDEN, 50 Camden Sq, London NW1 9XB. 081-485 0051. (d) ACTION GROUP FOR IRISH YOUTH, 5-15 Cromer St, London WC1. 071-278 1665. (e) IRISH COMMISSION FOR PRISONERS OVERSEAS, 1 Berrymead Gardens, Acton, London W3 8AA. 081-993 9823. (f) IRISH IN GREENWICH, 115-123 Powis St, Woolwich, SE18 6JL. 081-317 1435. (g) LONDON IRISH WOMEN'S CENTRE, 59 Stoke Newington Church St, N16. 071-249 7318. (h) IRISH ADVICE CENTRE, 55 Fulham Palace Rd, Hammersmith W6 7EA. 081-741 0466. (i) IRISH LIAISON UNIT (L.B. Haringey); 081-975 9700 ext. 2942. (j) IRISH CULTURAL & COMMUNITY CENTRE, Pretoria Rd, Tottenham N17 8OX. 071-365 1125. (k) HARINGEY IRISH COMMUNITY CARE CENTRE, 72 Stroud Green Rd, N4. 071-272 9230. (l) IRISH WOMEN IN ISLINGTON GROUP, Cabin Y, 25 Horsell Rd, N5. 071-609 8916. (m) IRISH IN BRITAIN REPRESENTATION GROUP, 245 Coldharbour Lane, Brixton SE9. (n) CAIRDE NA nGAEL, 2 Windmill Lane, Stratford E15. 081-519 5089. Information about private rented accommodation can also be found in local newspapers in London as well as in the: IRISH POST, 77 South Rd, Southall, Middlesex. 071-700 4600. LONDON IRISH NEWS, Catherine Wheel Rd, Brentford, Middlesex. 081-569 9969. IRISH WORLD, 307a High Rd, Willesden, London NW10. 081-451 6604.		

THE
BOROUGHES
OF
LONDON



GENERAL NEWS PAGE

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MIGRANT

All immigrant communities in Britain are faced with great difficulty in securing adequate housing. The majority of Irish migrants to London are young single people but there is a growing number of families with children moving to London, primarily for employment. These families experience great difficulty in securing adequate housing and many are forced to rely on Local Authority homelessness provision.

Many Irish people moving to Britain are often forced to move into squats, with friends and relatives and/or into sub-standard accommodation and many Irish people in Britain do not realise that they have the same rights to housing as people who are citizens or subjects of Britain.

For people from the Irish Republic in London (those for whom the only accurate statistics are available), the breakdown of housing tenure in 1986/87 was as follows:

Owner Occupation	40%
Local Authority	44%
Private rented	11%
Housing Association	5%

Source: London Research Centre

EMIGRATION

1982-89 177,000 people left Ireland.

12 months
to

April '89 46,000 people left —highest total that decade.

1989 First time in 27 years that the Irish Republic's population had fallen.

5% of Britain's total population are Irish born.

Source: 1981 Census

6% of London's population are Irish born.

Source: 1981 Census

1% of Irish-born in Britain are Travellers—nearly 15,000.

Source: Catholic Welfare Bureau, Dublin

30% of people who sleep out in Central London are Irish.

Source: *Sleeping out in Central London Report 1986.*

BIAS

Every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in this Newsletter, but in no circumstances will Brent Irish Advisory Service be liable for any errors or omissions. The information has been compiled to the best of Brent Irish Advisory Service's knowledge at the time of going to print but may be altered subsequently. Any information which assists in maintaining accuracy will be appreciated.

With thanks to BIAS staff and Management Committee, Innisfree H.A., Karen Coleman, Janet Conway and Gerry Stevenson.

FOR FURTHER COPIES OR IF YOU NEED ANY INFORMATION CONTACT:

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