

AGIY INFO

AGIY is a registered charity which aims to promote the interest and welfare of Irish youth in London.

AGIY's New Racial Discrimination Leaflet Help those who experience discrimination.

The 'No Irish' signs of the 1950s and 1960s may have disappeared but the reality of racism experienced by Irish people is still all too common. Behind all the 'Irish jokes' and various Irish caricatures there lies the real suffering that racism causes. The 1991 Census give an insight into the extent of Irish disadvantage.

AGIY's Census Briefings, *The Irish in London 1991*, shows that unemployment amongst Irish-born men is higher than the rest of the white population; second only to black Caribbean men. The data on Irish-born women reflects a high number in, low paid, part-time work. On almost all measures of household amenities, e.g. privacy, central heating, the Irish-born population has the worst condition of any group.

Such disadvantage is not all likely to be due to racial prejudice. However, case law confirms the point that racial prejudice contributes to the experience of the disadvantaged.

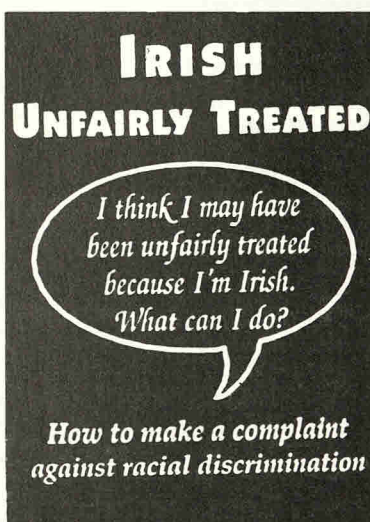
A fuller picture will be available when the Commission for Racial Equality's research on Irish disadvantage and discrimination is published within the next few months.

Herman Ousely (Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality), commented "Monitoring ... is the only way in which we can systematically look at patterns of discrimination that affect Irish people..." (AGIY/ALA Conference 23 March 1995).

The continuous monitoring of racial harassment by agencies will play an important role in providing the evidence needed to counter racism. Data on users of Irish welfare services show that: one in eight had experienced racial harassment. (Standardised Information System). This is likely to be an under-representation of the extent to which racial harassment is present. Many Irish people who acknowledge being treated unfairly or harassed do not describe their experience as racial harassment.

The Race Relations Act (1976) covers people of Irish origin. To assist Irish people *Irish Unfairly Treated* and their advisors AGIY has updated the leaflet: *How to Make a Complaint Against Racial Discrimination*. The new leaflet gives an overview of the key areas:

- ◆What is racial discrimination?
- ◆Can Irish people suffer racial discrimination?
- ◆Successful cases
- ◆What are my rights?
- ◆Where can I get help?
- ◆What happens when I complain?
- ◆Who pays for the complaint?



The next meeting of the London Irish Youth Forum on March 6 1995 will include a seminar for agencies on the procedures of how to make a complaint.

**all different
all equal**

AGIY is an active member and on the steering committee of the, *All Equal, All Different* campaign; the Europe-wide youth campaign against racism

xenophobia and anti-semitism.

The campaign in the UK involves hundreds of young people in activities all over the country. As a priority it is highlighting racial harassment and abuse, youth unemployment, access to education and training and discrimination in the criminal justice system.

Further information from Clare Mc Master at the Commission for Racial Equality. 0171 828 7022

HIV and Sexual Health Conference

Sponsors: Positively Irish Action on Aids (PIAA) London Borough of Hackney Open Doors Sexual Health Project.

I was privileged to participate at a conference where over one hundred women turned out in the snow, to identify and examine sexual health and HIV issues for women and to discuss ways to affect positive change.

Many had travelled from the Republic of Ireland to share their expertise. Ruth Riddick - Education Officer, Irish Family Planning Association, - kicked off the day by identifying what rights around sexual health, should women expect and those they can not afford to take for granted.

Brid Boland - London Irish Womens Centre - outlined some of the reasons why Irish women have different needs to their white English counterparts; a difference which may at times be due to the historical relationship between the two countries. Oonagh O'Brien, (PIAA), in her presentation, "A Community based Response", spoke about the ethos and history of PIAA, and emphasised the importance of Irish people - in particular Irish women in the community - , believing in their right to appropriate services and how they should not be reticent in the uptake of services.

The conference showed how historically, women have had to fight hard to get their concerns on the political agenda. For example, legislation on the development of employment rights for women, or birth control has been an extremely slow and hard fought campaign. The powerful role of the Catholic Church has a marked affect on many Irish women. Several speakers noted how the absence of research in the past, has allowed Irish women to remain an *invisible* group. To redress this historical imbalance several speakers recognised the need for constant monitoring and research into women's issues. Appropriate research will then help identify needs and how best those needs may be met.

Maeve Foreman, Senior Social Worker, St. James Hospital Ireland, spoke about women and HIV. Maeve reiterated the need for more research in Britain on Irish women affected by HIV and AIDS. Irish women who present themselves in the UK and the Republic show similar needs and experience of the virus. This contrasts with equivalent white English women affected. (E.g. uptake of services and medical treatment, causes of infection, etc.)

In short, Irish women have different needs and must therefore have specific service provision.

Linda Reid - International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS, - outlined the lack of information women have about services and the necessity for service providers to give information rather than assuming it is already known. Linda also outlined the necessity for women to develop the skills necessary to negotiate safer sex etc.

Fiona Bradley, GP and Clinical Lecturer spoke about her experience as a practising general practitioner in both London and Dublin, giving a valuable insight into the issues for general practitioners working with Irish women

While, Noreen Byrne, Chairwoman, The National Womens Council of Ireland, spoke of the council's attempts to broaden membership: to include women from all political parties.

There were workshops in the morning and afternoon about many specific issues. The workshops proved to be a great opportunity for women of different backgrounds to share, ideas, experiences, proposals - unfortunately the day wasn't long enough to hear all that had to be heard. A sentiment echoed by many of the organisers and participants! The useful links and contacts people made will be used again and again which in turn will help promote the central ideas emanating for the conference.

A well received reading by Mary Dorsey from her new book, closed the day. A report and recommendations will be available in June from PIAA. Credit must go to the organisers, the speakers, the facilitators, the participants and most importantly, the funders. Well done to all!

Kathryn Mc Grath is on student placement with AGIY from St. Patrick's College, Maynooth

National Lottery supports a new Guide to London for Young Irish People

The production of the new guide has been supported by the national lottery. AGIY has begun researching the fourth edition of the *Guide to London for Young Irish People*. The updated guide will meet the information needs of young people and their advisers. The guide will concentrate on 'survival-type' information necessary for young emigrants to establish themselves in London and will focus on; finding a place to live, getting a job/training, social security entitlement, access health services and legal rights. AGIY is committed to addressing the needs of a diverse emigrant group and the guide will include sections on services for people with disabilities, women, young mothers, gay men and lesbians and services for Travellers.

If you or your agency are currently a user of the present guide and would like to participate in our evaluation, or contribute in anyway to the new edition, please contact Dónal Mc Kinney, AGIY Information Worker and Administrator - 0171 700 8137

Agency Profile

Irish Support and Advice Service

Hammersmith and Fulham Irish Centre
Blacks Road, Hammersmith, London, W6 9DT
Tel: 0181 741 0466.

STAFF TEAM:

Paul Murphy - Director
Dónal Brennan - Community Care Development Officer
Siubhan McNally - Housing and Employment Officer
Nora O' Loughlin - Social Worker
Sandra Reagan - Locum Administrator

The Irish Support and Advice Service has been working with the Irish community in the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham for over 20 years. The group moved over a year ago to their new purpose built centre on Blacks Rd. The Irish are the largest ethnic minority community in the borough, consisting of at least 9% of the borough population

The staff of the centre have recognised, through their work, the range of personal, emotional, housing and health difficulties faced by the Irish in Britain, often as a direct result of emigration and having to cope with living in a different country. Similar difficulties are also presented by the Irish born in Britain. The centre promotes services for Irish people who face particular discrimination in society including those with mental health problems, women, lesbians and gay men and people living with HIV/AIDS.

Services provided by the centre:

Accommodation - Advice and support in obtaining accommodation. Information on housing rights for private and council tenants. The centre offers a referral service to London hostels including those that help to accommodate young Irish people who are new to London.

Access to Employment - Information is provided on employment. This service offers advice on further education and training courses.

Social Work Support - This service seeks to give support and counselling for families and individuals. The Centre provides a weekly information service for those living with HIV/AIDS.

Welfare Rights and Benefits

Information is provided on welfare rights: Where and how to register for unemployment benefit and Income Support. Where appropriate, advice workers liaise and negotiate with DSS.

Other Services - Obtaining a Birth Certificate from Ireland. Repatriation in certain circumstances. Registration with a doctor. Missing persons. Information regarding cultural, educational and sporting facilities and organisations facilitating social contact within the community.

Co-operative Working. Launch of new Irish Community Care Service

Because of the positive equal opportunity policy on the Irish community by the Hammersmith and Fulham council and the long standing working relationship between the centre and the statutory and voluntary agencies in the area; the needs of the Irish are recognised and responded to. The Draft Community Plan 1995/96 acknowledges the large number of isolated Irish people with mental health problems in the borough. In response to this, the Commissioning Placement Unit of Hammersmith and Fulham Social Services have contracted out three new services run by the centre; who have received £30,000 for their provision. These services were launched 25 January at the centre and was well attended by representatives from the voluntary and statutory sector.

The launch was addressed by **Mr. Steven Burke, Chair of the Hammersmith and Social Services Committee**, who welcomed the development of these services for the Irish community. **Ms. Kwan Ku, Commissioning Officer** for the voluntary sector spoke of the important role of local authorities in commissioning services which cater for minority ethnic groups. **Ms. Mary Tilki, Principal Lecturer, Middlesex University**, highlighted the worrying emerging health trends amongst the Irish community in Britain. **Mr. Dónal Brennan, Community Care Development Officer, Irish Support and Advice Service**, stressed the important role of Irish welfare agencies who provide new and culturally sensitive services in close collaboration with social service departments and health agencies. These services aim, to provide a relaxed environment for particular groups to share common experiences, to heighten self esteem, to devise strategies, to address needs, to assert their rights and access services available.

The new therapeutic services will consist of three groups which will run for four closed 12 sessions over a year.

The Older Peoples Group is for Irish people 55+ in need of social care and support to live independently in the community.

Irish Womens Group is a support and task centred project for Irish women. The group seeks to address issues of isolation. Loneliness and living in a different culture.

Irish Therapeutic Support Group any Irish person in need of the service. The group seeks to help alleviate social isolation, eighteen awareness of mental health services.

AGIY intends to include an 'Agency Profile' which will highlight service development in future editions of AGIYINFO. Contact the office if interested

Rights for Travellers (Cearta na dTaistealaithe)

Rights for Travellers is a report based upon the results of a London wide survey of local authorities carried out by the London Irish Women's Centre between March and November 1994. The research was collated prior to the introduction of the *Criminal Justice and Public Order Act* in November 1994. The legislation repealed the 1968 *Caravan Sites Act* which had previously made it mandatory for local authorities to provide sites for Travellers.

Rights for Travellers provides detailed and updated information on existing provision for Travellers in London. The report draws upon evidence from 22 councils, amounting to two thirds of London's local authorities and contains the views of Travellers and organisations working with them. It places the current position of Travellers in an historical and political context and examines the impact of discriminatory legislation upon Travellers' lives.

Travellers' needs and environment have been virtually excluded from the current debates about equality and justice. This report as well as highlighting, the lack of adequate provision for Travellers, and demanding immediate policy change provides a greater understanding of the culture and tradition of one of the oldest ethnic minorities in Europe. The report emphasises the need for consultation and cooperation between Travellers and service providers. Recommendations are aimed at central and local government and voluntary agencies who are committed to providing a culturally sensitive service to all its clients and customers.

Copies of *Rights for Travellers* (Cearta na dTaistealaithe) may be obtained from the London Irish Women's Centre, 59 Stoke Newington Church Street, London N16 0AR - Tel: 0171 - 249 7318

AGIY and FIS meet with the OPCS

AGIY and the Federation of Irish Societies meet with representatives from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) in January. The OPCS informed the delegates that no firm decision has been made on the final inclusion of an Irish category and there was no opposition in principle to its inclusion. OPCS also stressed that they would consult widely with users of Census data, and that evidence of a need for data on the Irish community among users would be one of the factors which would influence their final decision.

Representatives of FIS and AGIY outlined the existing need for data on the Irish community amongst public and private sector bodies. Representatives also highlighted the incompleteness of the data and suggested ways in which it could be enhanced by the use of a well drafted Ethnic question including an Irish category.

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The London Irish Youth Forum

Launch of AGIY's Racial Discrimination Leaflet

Makbool Javaid
Head of Litigation
for
Commission for Racial Equality

Wednesday March 6 1996
at

The London Voluntary Resource Centre
356 Holloway Road, Londn N7
(Tube - Holloway Rd. - Piccadilly Line)

10.30 am - 12.30 am

What is racial discrimination?

How does the Race Relations Act (1976)
affect the Irish?

What test cases have set precedents for
the Irish community

What is the procedure for bringing a
complaint?

What is the cost to a complainant?

Who will pay for the procedure?

What support can the CRE or Trade
Unions provide?

The London Irish Youth Forum

The London Irish Youth Forum is an umbrella group of agencies working with young Irish people. The Forum facilitates an exchange of information between agencies across London and provides an update on issues that affect young Irish emigrants.

New members to the LIYF are always welcome.