

“MOVING FORWARD”

FINAL REPORT OF THE IRISH LIAISON UNIT, 1990

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*** HARINGEY COUNCIL ***

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Leader's Office

HARINGEY COUNCIL

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FOREWORD

This report does not so much mark an ending in Haringey as the commencement of a new phase of work in addressing Irish issues. It marks the integration of Irish issues and the Irish Liaison Unit into the Race Equality and new Equalities Co-ordinating structures.

The Irish Liaison Unit was established in June 1987 in recognition of the disadvantage and discrimination experienced by the Irish community in the borough. The unit, over the past three years, has carefully documented the needs of the community, raised awareness throughout the Council of these needs, and assisted in initiating constructive responses for the benefit of the Irish community.

Now three years on, the Irish Liaison Unit has successfully established Irish community concerns as race equality issues in Haringey. The situation has now been reached where the existence of the Irish Liaison Unit as a separate entity is no longer required. That is not to say that no more work needs to be done on Irish issues. On the contrary, as the body of this report highlights, in many ways we are just beginning. But from now, Irish issues will be dealt with, within the same structure as all other ethnic minority communities concerns, that is in the race equality structure. This is in recognition of the fact that Irish issues are race issues and this is where they should be addressed.

Haringey Council is proud of the fact that it was the first local authority to begin to address Irish issues with the establishment of the Irish Liaison Unit. We also take pride in the progress we are now making with the integration of Irish issues and specialist Irish staff into our race equality structure. We are at the forefront of such initiatives among local authorities in Britain. Other authorities may learn from our situation. There is a justification for having specialist Irish policy staff in a local authority for an initial 2/3 period given past exclusion and resistance to some of the issues involved. However, ultimately, if the experiences of the Irish community are to be effectively addressed, they must, in the long term, be dealt with as issues of race equality, and within race structures.

In conclusion, we look forward to progressing Irish community concerns in the years ahead within our race equality structure, and remain trenchant in our commitment to achieving equality of opportunity for Irish people in Haringey as users of services, as employees of the authority or residents of the borough.



Toby Harris, Leader of Haringey Council

1. INTRODUCTION

The report that follows is the final review report of the Irish Liaison Unit in Haringey Council. Its' publication marks the integration of Irish issues and the Irish Liaison Unit into the Council's Race Equality structure and Equalities Co-ordinating Unit. Haringey Council was at the forefront of addressing Irish issues in a local authority setting by establishing the Irish Liaison Unit in 1987. It is again at the forefront in being the first local authority in this country to integrate Irish issues into its' Race Equality structure, reflected in work programmes and personnel.

This report aims to briefly outline the key issues addressed by the Unit since its' establishment, the integration of Irish issues into Race Equality and a brief look to the future with some points of note for other local authorities.

2. BACKGROUND, ESTABLISHMENT AND INDUCTION:

The Irish Liaison Unit was established in June 1987 as one of Haringey Council's equalities and strategic policy units within the Chief Executives group of services. The Unit was established following a period of intense lobbying on behalf of the Irish community and active consultation with Council Members. The basic role ascribed to the Unit from the outset was:

- (1) To provide policy advice and support to the Council on all matters relating to the Irish community and;
- (2) To provide advice and support to Irish community organisations in Haringey and to assist in the development of facilities and resources for the community.

The Unit upon establishment had a compliment of 5 posts as follows:

- Co-ordinator (and Liaison Officer, Social Services)
- Senior Administrative Officer
- Irish Liaison Officer (Housing)
- Irish Liaison Officer (Community Affairs)
- Irish Liaison Officer (Education)

The Unit from the outset was to be centrally based with a strategic role but functionally linked to the four key services of Social Services, Housing, Community Affairs and Education as identified by both the community and the Council.

In the various financial cuts exercises that the Council has undergone since September 1987 the Unit has lost two posts, i.e. the posts of Irish Liaison Officer (Community Affairs) and the Irish Liaison Officer (Education). The Unit at the time of writing this report had 3 established posts and a total budget of £66,700. The established posts are:

- Co-ordinator (and Liaison Officer, Social Services)
- Senior Administrative Officer
- Irish Liaison Officer (Housing)

Once in post, the Unit devised an extensive induction programme which involved making contact with all the main Council services together with all of the Irish community organisations in Haringey. This induction highlighted a number of key issues. It highlighted a widespread lack of awareness of Irish issues within the Council, and at the same time, a wide range of needs within the Irish community, articulated by community groups, and which they felt were in part the responsibility of the local authority to address. As a result of these findings, the Irish Liaison Unit set about devising a strategy to move forward with addressing the issues raised.

3. DEVISING A STRATEGY AND WORK PROGRAMME

It was clear to Unit staff that in order to fulfil their role within the Council, there was a need as a matter of priority to:-

- document in some detail the identifiable and felt needs in the Irish community;
- develop an appropriate mechanism for ongoing consultation with the Irish community regarding their needs and any related issues;
- produce a strategy and policy document on the Irish community in Haringey;
- devise work programmes for Unit staff based on this strategy.

With these ends in sight the Unit set about undertaking the following projects.

4. PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN:

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE AND POLICY REPORT:

This was the first major work project undertaken by the Unit. The Conference was held in November 1987 and its purpose was to:

- provide the local Irish community with an opportunity to articulate their needs to the Council;
- act as an initial stage in an ongoing consultative process with the Borough's Irish community;
- provide the basis for a policy report on the needs of the Irish in Haringey and to help establish priorities for future work within the Council on issues affecting Irish people;
- assist the Council in the implementation of its equal opportunities policies with regard to the Irish community.

The conference was very well attended and addressed the needs of the Irish community in the areas of housing, social services, community affairs, education, social and cultural issues, employment and training, and policing. The conference proceedings formed the basis of the Council's strategic policy document on the Irish community entitled, "The Irish in Haringey — An Assessment of Need and a Programme for Action". This report was launched by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Toby Harris, and was subsequently considered by the Race Equality, Ethnic Minorities Joint Consultative and relevant service committees and its recommendations agreed by same.

All the main recommendations were agreed in principle with the responsibility for their implementation delegated to the appropriate services. Where possible the Irish Liaison Unit has devised implementation plans to assist services in this process. The Unit drew up annual work programmes based on the identified priorities and the recommendations agreed by Members. This work programme was approved by the Race Equality Committee.

HARINGEY IRISH CONSULTATIVE FORUM:

In order to develop an appropriate mechanism for ongoing consultation with the Irish community regarding their needs and related issues, the above mentioned conference agreed to the setting up of a community consultative forum between the Irish Liaison Unit and the local Irish community. The purpose of the Forum when originally established was:

- to provide a framework for ongoing consultation between the Irish Liaison Officers and the local Irish community;

- to keep the Irish Liaison Officers informed of issues of concern to the local Irish community;
- to provide a forum through which the Liaison Unit remained accountable to the local Irish community.

It was decided that there would be representatives on the Forum from all of the existing Irish community organisations in the Borough together with representatives from specific sections of the community; women, youth, the elderly, Irish travellers, lesbians and gay men, and people with disabilities.

The Forum was formally launched by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Toby Harris, in January 1988. Since its establishment, the Forum has met on a regular three monthly cycle. At its meetings the Forum has:

- received regular updates on the work of the Irish Liaison Unit;
- had representations from various Council Services including Central Personnel, Economic Development Service and the Housing Service;
- considered the future of Irish issues in Haringey Council, and raised these and related matters with Council Members and officers;
- contributed to the identification of new and emerging needs in the community.

Over its 2½ years in existence the Forum has become successfully established as the umbrella body representing the interests of the Irish community in the Borough. With the integration of the work of the Irish Liaison Unit into Race Equality and the disbanding of the Unit, it will be necessary to amend the constitution and role of the Forum. Preliminary steps have been taken to facilitate the necessary changes and the Forum will in the future exist as a freestanding self-servicing voluntary sector body which will continue to liaise with the Council on behalf of the Irish community. The Forum is based at 72 Stroud Green Road, London, N.4, and can be contacted by writing to the Chair or Secretary at that address.

IRISH AWARENESS TRAINING:

At the Consultative Conference on the needs of the Irish community, the need to provide awareness training for Council staff on Irish issues and on the Irish experience in Britain was strongly recommended. In response to this, the Irish Unit devised a one day Irish Awareness Course for Council staff. The purpose of the course is to provide information on the Irish experience in Britain focusing on:

- the historical context;
- the immigration experience itself;
- anti-Irish racism — its' roots and manifestations, and
- indicators of disadvantage and discrimination (focusing on the employment, housing and mental health experience of the Irish in Britain).

Approximately 230 Council staff have attended the Course to date. The course has initially been targetted at Housing, Social Services and Race Equality staff. The course has, in the main, been very favourably received, as the following comments received from course participants indicate:-

“Very beneficial. Wish I had done it years ago. But wasn't long enough”.

“Very informative. Provided good background to understanding Irish experiences in Britain”.

“Helpful, informative and interesting. I think awareness courses for other minority groups could learn from this courses' structure and presentation”.

“Useful, helpful and enlightening. Quite heavy going though. In my view, it should be a two day course”.

This course will continue to be provided in the future as an integral part of the Councils race equality and equal opportunities training programme.

RACE INITIATIVES WITH LOCAL AND NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

As the only strategic policy unit in a British local authority concerned specifically with the Irish community, the Unit has over the past three years initiated, actively assisted and helped co-ordinate a number of race initiatives with both local and national implications. Among these are:-

THE ETHNIC ORIGIN QUESTION IN THE 1991 CENSUS OF POPULATION:

Over the past two years the Irish Liaison Unit has been actively involved in attempts to secure an Irish category in the ethnic origin question which will appear in the 1991 Census of Population. The Unit contributed to a submission to OPCS, the CRE and the Minister with responsibility for the Census which outlined the case for an Irish category. The CRE supported the Irish submission and wrote to OPCS stating that the Irish community submission had clearly established that there existed Irish disadvantage which merited monitoring similar to the experience of other minority communities. However, OPCS and central government continue to refuse to concede on an Irish category. The result is that there may now be a format of questions asked which will not establish the full extent of racial disadvantage in Britain.

There has more recently developed within the Irish community a campaign known as the The Irish Community Census Campaign (abbreviated to T.I.C.C.) the aim of which is to secure an Irish category in the Census or failing that to secure the most favourable response to the ethnic origin question by the Irish community. They intend to launch an extensive information programme aimed at Irish people throughout Britain in the months prior to the Census informing them about the ethnic origin question, its purpose, and format, and encouraging them to identify themselves as Irish in the category marked ‘other’. The Irish Liaison Unit in keeping with Council policy on the ethnic origin question provide ongoing advice and support to this campaign. The Irish Community Census Campaign can be contacted by writing to them at 72 Stroud Green Road, London, N.4.

THE COMMISSION FOR RACIAL EQUALITY AND THE IRISH COMMUNITY — SETTING A NEW AGENDA ON IRISH ISSUES:

Over the past year, the Irish Liaison Unit has initiated and co-ordinated a series of discussions with the CRE with the aim of getting the Commission to set a new agenda on Irish issues. These discussions have been focussed on securing the following on behalf of the Irish community from the CRE:

- the explicit recognition by the CRE of the Irish as an ethnic minority group and a subsequent change in their recommended system of ethnic classification to include a distinct Irish category;
- the commissioning of a full scale research study and production of a report on the Irish community in contemporary Britain under the auspices of the CRE;
- the explicit recommendation to all relevant bodies for the need to monitor Irish ethnicity;
- the need to include the Irish community as a matter of course, in any of the Commissions general writings, reports or research on racial equality and ethnic minority concerns in Britain;

- the need to appoint staff to the Commission with specialist knowledge of and empathy with the Irish community in Britain.

These discussions are now at an advanced stage, and the Irish community remain committed to securing a favourable response to their demands from the Commission. The Irish Liaison Unit staff and Haringey Council will remain actively involved in these discussions due to their strategic local and national significance for the Irish community and due to their significance in addressing Irish issues as Race issues akin to other ethnic minority concerns in this country.

CRE — RACE AND HOUSING

The CRE issued a draft code of guidance on rented housing that failed to provide illustrations and examples relevant to the Irish community. The Irish community are particularly dependent on the private rented sector for accommodation. Recognising this fact, the Irish Liaison Unit compiled a submission requesting the Commission to revise its Code of Practice in line with the recommendations contained in the submission.

At the time of writing, the Commission have yet to respond with details of what amendments are to be made to the Code.

In November 1989 the CRE hosted a Conference on Race and Homelessness which included, for the first time, an Irish dimension with the participation of the Irish Unit, Irish housing groups, Cara, Innisfree, and an Teach.

HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS AND ETHNIC MONITORING

During the early part of 1989 some initial research undertaken by the Irish Liaison Unit confirmed that Housing Associations locally were not addressing Irish housing needs within their equal opportunities policies. At the same time it came to our attention that the National Federation of Housing Associations (NFHA) and the Housing Corporation were developing a new system for monitoring the activities of housing associations nationally which included monitoring the ethnic origin of people they housed. This recording system known as Core identified certain ethnic categories but excluded the Irish as a separate group.

Following submissions from the Irish Liaison Unit, Irish housing and community groups, and representations from the Irish Embassy, the NFHA finally agreed to change the ethnic classification to include the Irish community.

Whilst the campaign was successful in achieving this basic data collection requirement it highlighted the continuing failure of these organisations to address Irish disadvantage, specifically the failure to take account of Irish housing needs within the framework of equal opportunities and race equality.

RESEARCH PROJECT — THE SOCIAL SITUATION OF IRISH ELDERLY IN HARINGEY:

Earlier this year, the Irish Liaison Unit produced a research report on 'The social situation of Irish elderly in Haringey'. This report was based on a survey research project undertaken by the Unit, the aims of which were to:-

- obtain a profile of the social situation of Irish elderly in Haringey in the following areas:- Housing, Social Services usage and needs, Leisure and Recreation, employment experience, health situation and experience of racial prejudice in Britain.

- establish the necessary database on which both Haringey Council's services, the Irish community voluntary sector and others could better plan their services for Irish elderly.

As part of the project the Unit staff interviewed 100 Irish elderly in the borough. Upon publication, the report was favourably reviewed in the local and national media and among the comments made upon its publication were the following:

"The isolation of elderly Irish people in Haringey appears to be compounded by a lack of contact with social services. The research shows that Irish elderly are treated differently and highlights a basic part of that treatment is racial prejudice."

Social Work Today

"The Commission for Racial Equality welcomes this report which confirms previous evidence about the social situation of the Irish community in Britain. We will raise its findings with the relevant authorities in the time ahead."

"The Commission for Racial Equality"

Since its publication the Unit has highlighted its recommendations and findings both within the Council and with other appropriate bodies. Among its main findings were the following:- Of those surveyed:

- 68% lived alone
- 69% were between the ages of 65 and 74 years
- 33% had no other relative living in London currently
- 61% previously worked in unskilled manual work
- 66% had personal experience on anti-Irish racism in Britain

Recently, a major national charity for the aged has indicated an interest in the projects findings and has invited an application for funding for a project for Irish elderly from an Irish group in Haringey.

ONGOING ADVICE AND SUPPORT TO THE COUNCIL

The Unit staff have provided ongoing policy advice and support to the Council both at office and member level. This advice and support has been wide-ranging and has included involvement in various working groups within the authority, participation in management teams, submissions to various reviews etc. as well as a resource for consultation with individual officers, members and management. The Unit has produced numerous committee reports since its establishment on key issues facing the Irish community in the areas of social need, service provision, employment and training.

ONGOING ADVICE AND SUPPORT TO IRISH COMMUNITY GROUPS

The Unit staff have provided ongoing advice and support to existing Irish community groups in Haringey, and in particular to Haringey Irish Cultural Centre. Unit staff have produced in conjunction with the Irish Centre a development strategy for the Centre, have devised an equal opportunities policy for the Centre and provide advice and support in various recruitment initiatives. The Unit staff have also provided advice and support to existing Irish housing associations in the borough. They have also facilitated reviews of Irish community organisations and written review reports at the request of management committees. All of these services have been provided as part of the Unit's role as a specialist resource within the Council for the benefit of the Irish community.

LINKS WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES AND EQUALITIES ISSUES

The Unit staff have always sought to foster constructive links and relationships with other minority and disadvantaged communities, and have also addressed the concerns of minorities within the Irish community. Such co-operation has helped to foster a greater understanding within the Council and between communities of the varied dimensions of social inequality and the relations between these dimensions. Among the initiatives undertaken in this area by Unit staff are the following:-

BLACK AND IRISH COMMUNITIES WEEKEND

The Unit staff, in co-operation with the Central Race Equality Unit and Members, organised a highly successful Black and Irish communities weekend in April of this year. The purpose of that weekend's activities was to explore the links between the Black and Irish communities historical and contemporary experiences of disadvantage and discrimination, whilst also acknowledging the specificity of experience for both communities. A report of the weekend's activities is to be produced by the Council and it will contain papers on racial stereotypes of Black people and on racial stereotypes of Irish people. It was widely felt that the weekend's activities were a success and was in itself an important watershed in moving towards an integrated race structure in Haringey. A number of important recommendations came out of the weekend's deliberations including:- a recommendation to establish a Black and Irish Alliance, a town tripling venture between Montserrat, Galway and Haringey and a recommendation for a conference to be held exploring the Black and Irish dimensions in contemporary education in Britain.

IRISH LESBIANS AND GAY MEN

In any of the work projects undertaken by Unit staff the concerns of minorities within the Irish community including those of Irish lesbians and gay men have been addressed. The Unit staff ensured that their concerns were addressed in the initial consultative conference, and have provided active support to the establishment of an Irish gay men's network. The Unit has also presented a report to the Lesbian and Gay Committee on its work on lesbian and gay equality issues. The Unit has also included a comprehensive article on Irish lesbians and gay men in Britain in our newsletter, and plans to have a lesbian and gay workshop in the community call back conference planned for early next year.

IRISH WOMEN

The Unit staff have, at all times, addressed the specific concerns of Irish women in projects undertaken by the Unit. Unit staff have provided awareness training for local authority staff, and spoken at national conferences and seminars on the issues facing Irish women in Britain. The Unit has provided support to community groups working with Irish women. It has also produced a statistical and demographic profile of Irish women in London based on available census and other data.

STRATEGY DOCUMENT, 'EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES — THE IRISH DIMENSION', AN AGENDA FOR CHANGE

In recognition of the fact that many existing equal opportunities policies programmes do not include the Irish, and in order to raise awareness of the importance of the Irish dimension to equalities work, the Unit staff undertook to produce a strategy document on the Irish dimension to equal opportunities covering both employment and service delivery issues. The document starts by establishing the fact that the Irish in Britain constitute one of the largest ethnic

minority groups, and then focuses on a critical examination of conventional explanations of Irish disadvantage and discrimination and then goes on in the second half of the report to set an agenda for change by incorporating the Irish dimension into all equalities work in Britain in the future. This is done by focusing on the legal position, the practice of equal opportunities, an outline of the Irish dimension to equal opportunities, an outline of issues of multiple disadvantage and concluding comments and recommendations. This document produced by the first and only existing strategic policy unit concerned with the Irish community in a local authority makes a significant contribution to race equality and equal opportunities work in Britain generally and should act as an important reference for all authorities concerned with meeting the needs of the Irish community.

IRISH LIAISON UNIT — CURSAI

Over its 3 years of existence, the Unit has produced an occasional newsletter, Cursai. The newsletter has aimed to address various topics of concern to the Irish community ranging from policy matters to cultural events, local services and entertainments. Given the lack of awareness around Irish issues generally, the Newsletter is an ideal mechanism whereby issues are raised and information transferred both within and between the Council and the local Irish community.

ADVISORY LEAFLETS FOR THE COMMUNITY AND THE COUNCIL

Since its establishment the Irish Liaison Unit has produced a number of advisory leaflets both for the Council, its officers and Members, and Irish people in Haringey. Among the leaflets produced were an advisory and promotional leaflet on the Irish Liaison Unit, its role and services provided by Unit staff, and an information leaflet outlining the range of voluntary sector services for Irish people in Haringey. This information leaflet is an important resource both for Irish people in Haringey in terms of accessing services within the Irish community and an important resource for Council officers in working with Irish people in Haringey.

EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES — JOB FAIR FOR THE IRISH COMMUNITY

Since its establishment the Irish Liaison Unit has monitored, on an ongoing basis, the employment situation of the Irish in Haringey Council's workforce. The unit has produced regular employment profiles of Irish employees in the Council based on the 6 monthly equal opportunities headcount data. The analysis undertaken by the Unit has consistently found:-

- that Irish people are under-represented within the Council's employment compared to their numbers in the borough generally.
- that Irish employees in the Council's employment are overwhelmingly concentrated in the two lowest grades of the Council's employment. At the time of the last headcount 65% of Irish employees were in the two lowest grades.

Arising from these findings and based on representations made to the Council by Haringey Irish Consultative Forum, the Irish Liaison Unit, in conjunction with Central Personnel Services, organised a Job Fair for the Irish community. The purpose of the Job Fair was to positively profile employment opportunities in the Council amongst the Irish community and to positively welcome applicants from Irish people for employment in the Council. The Job Fair was held in January 1990 and was very well attended with over 400 people attending on the day. The Irish Liaison Unit have been monitoring the headcount data in the months since this initiative to ascertain its impact on the employment position of the Irish.

Indications are that the position of the Irish has not improved, and it may be necessary for the Council to consider other initiatives if the employment position of the Irish is to significantly improve. There are two basic initiatives which may help in this regard and they are the inclusion of the Irish by name as a matter of course in adverts positively welcoming applicants from Black and minority ethnic applicants, and secondly, the advertising of all external vacancies in an Irish community newsletter, rather than the highly selective use of this medium for advertising that exists at present.

SOME OTHER ISSUES ADDRESSED

Among some of the other issues addressed by the Unit staff since its establishment was:

- advice and support to Irish people on the issue of registering under the terms of the British Nationality Act of 1981;
- organisation of Haringey Irish Arts festival in 1988;
- a seminar on the 1988 Housing Bill and the Irish community;
- the organisation of AIDS awareness training for the staff and management of Irish community organisations in Haringey, and assistance on the production of a HIV information leaflet targeted at the Irish community.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT

Over the past year, the Irish Liaison Unit, in co-operation with the Police Research Unit has worked closely with Irish organisations in tackling the human rights issues arising out of the operation of the Prevention of Terrorism Act legislation.

As a result there has now developed a new campaign aimed at raising public awareness about the role the PTA plays in undermining human rights in Britain called the Repeal the PTA campaign. It was officially launched at the House of Commons in March of this year by Clare Shortt MP and representatives of all the major Irish organisations in Britain. In a message of support to the launch Paul Hill of the Guildford 4 and the first person to be arrested under the PTA had this to say: "I was the first person to be picked-up under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and was detained for fifteen years. I fully support the efforts of the campaign... to put an end to the framing of innocent people".

The campaign now functions as an independent organisation with the aid of a number of lawyers and civil libertarian groups. The Irish Liaison Unit will continue to offer advice and support as appropriate.

5. INTEGRATION OF IRISH ISSUES INTO RACE EQUALITY

In March of 1989 the Council appointed two external consultants to undertake a review of the existing race equality structures and practices. The terms of reference of this review were:-

1. to examine the practices and procedures required to ensure the effective implementation of the Council's race equality strategies.
2. to review the progress on achieving these strategies and to identify any problem areas or barriers preventing their effective implementation.
3. to make recommendations on the most effective Council-wide race equality structure to promote the Council's objectives across the Council's recognised ethnic minority communities.

The Irish Liaison Unit, its structure, role and practices came within the terms of this review. The staff of the Irish Liaison Unit met with the consultants on a number of occasions and made a detailed submission to this review, including Haringey Irish Consultative Forum who met with the consultants and also made a detailed written submission on behalf of the individual members and member organisations in Haringey. The Consultants review report was published in November 1989. Upon publication Haringey Irish Consultative Forum expressed its disappointment with the review's failure to provide any analysis of the Irish Liaison Unit, the background to its establishment, the obstacles to its effective working, its achievements and the strategy necessary to effectively integrate Irish issues into race equality. Haringey Irish Consultative Forum issued a position statement on the review and on the race equality structure necessary for Haringey. In summary, they stated that the most appropriate structure for addressing race equality issues within the Council was a single integrated race equality structure based on the principles of equity in work programmes and a balanced representation of staffing across the borough's recognised ethnic minority communities. Failing the creation of such a structure they stated that the best alternative for addressing Irish issues was the retention of the Irish Liaison Unit.

Haringey Council members and senior management also expressed serious disappointment with many aspects of the consultants final report. The Council subsequently established a Member and Officer Working group to consider the recommendations in the Consultants review and to come up with further recommendations for effective structures to promote race equality in Haringey. The report of this working party was published earlier this year, and with regard to the Irish Liaison Unit it recommended:

"That the work of the Irish Liaison Unit be fully integrated into the race equality structure with clear commitment to Irish issues and the needs of the Irish community being incorporated into the work programme, and that the Unit be disbanded and necessary proposals to change the establishment be developed by Management with full safeguards for staff in post."

The Race Equality Committee ratified this recommendation on March 6th 1989. The Irish Liaison Unit and Haringey Irish Consultative Forum agreed with this decision in principle. The Unit staff and the community forum have consistently held the view that the best future for race equality in Haringey was the creation of a single integrated race equality structure working equitably with all recognised Black and ethnic minority communities, and with a balanced staffing composition, reflective of the population in the borough. Following upon this decision, the Council's senior management in conjunction with the Irish Liaison Unit initiated the process of integrating Irish issues into the race equality structure. The Irish Liaison Unit staff identified a number of issues to be addressed in integrating Irish issues into race equality and these are in summary:

1. a work programme for race equality that is equitable across the concerns of the recognised ethnic minority communities;
2. a commitment to achieving a balanced representation of staff in race equality across the ethnic minority communities;
3. a race awareness training module that encompasses awareness training on all of the recognised ethnic minority communities;
4. a substantive research function in future structures addressing race equality;
5. a Community Liaison Officer team comprising a Liaison officer on each of the main ethnic minority communities providing a community specialism to complement the generic race equality structure.

A number of these have already been addressed, whilst others are currently being addressed, others still await serious attention. Some others may well be affected by the implications of Poll Tax capping and the attendant cutbacks. However, none of this detracts from the significance of successfully addressing all of the above identified issues if Irish issues are to be successfully integrated into race equality in the long term in Haringey.

6. INTEGRATION INTO THE EQUALITIES CO-ORDINATING STRUCTURE

Whilst writing this report, Haringey Council is undergoing a major restructuring of its central equalities structure across all of the equalities areas. This restructuring, which involves significant cutbacks in terms of staffing and resources, has been decided upon in light of the implications of Poll Tax Capping recently imposed on the Council. The Council has decided to establish a centrally based Equalities Co-ordinating Unit which will be headed by an Equalities Co-ordinator, and will have separate teams dealing with Disabilities, Lesbian and Gay, Race and womens equality issues. Irish issues will come within the race equality teams brief. Thus the integration facing the Irish Liaison Unit and Irish issues in the immediate future is twofold involving an integration into race equality and into the central equalities co-ordinating structure at the same time.

7. CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Haringey Council took the initiative amongst British local authorities in addressing the needs of the Irish community with the establishment of the Irish Liaison Unit in 1987. It is now progressing work on Irish issues a step further by integrating Irish issues and the Irish Liaison Unit into its race equality structure. The Council is doing this in recognition of the fact that Irish issues are race issues and the central race equality structure is where they are most appropriately located and addressed.

The Irish Liaison Unit in Haringey and its work has acted as a source of motivation and example which a number of other local authorities have followed. Since its establishment, a number of other London local authorities have contacted Haringey Council to seek advice on creating structures to meet the needs of the Irish community in their midst. A number of these have followed Haringey's example of hosting an initial consultative conference with the local community, and a number have now established consultative fora with their local Irish communities. A number also have plans to employ specialist policy and liaison officers to address the needs of the Irish community. Increasingly, there is a recognition that Local Authorities in their race equality programmes may have operated an overly reductionist concept of race and ethnicity in the past that excluded the Irish and that was neither in keeping with the race relations legislation or available evidence on racial disadvantage.

The Irish Liaison Unit in Haringey has, through its work, contributed to raising awareness of Irish issues as race issues and to shifting opinion in this area both locally and nationally. It has done this so successfully within Haringey itself that the Council has now decided to locate work on Irish issues in the future within the race equality structure. The Irish Liaison Unit in Haringey has fulfilled its function as a separate entity. It has raised awareness about Irish issues, Irish disadvantage and needs. It has contextualised Irish issues as race issues. In doing so, the degree to which the Unit has been successful, is the degree to which it has now made itself unnecessary as a separate entity. This is not to say that no more work is needed on Irish issues in Haringey. On the contrary, we are entering a new phase after the Unit has raised the issues and defined them as race issues. The issues and the means of addressing them in future to be located in the race structure together with Irish staff. That is where they belong.

There are lessons for the future in the Haringey experience for other local authorities addressing the needs of the Irish community. Given the past exclusion of Irish issues from race equality work generally, there is a case to be made for specialist Irish policy advisers being employed by local authorities for an initial 3 year period to raise the issue, and work towards their eventual location in race. We do not feel however, that Irish issues should, in the long term, be located separately from other race issues in any local authority. This can contribute to community tensions, notions of hierarchy of disadvantage, and differing priorities afforded to different communities concerns.

In conclusion, let it be said that the Irish Liaison Unit staff look forward to working more closely with workers from the other black and ethnic minority communities in Haringey in addressing racial disadvantage and discrimination as we move into the race equality structure. We also look forward to working closely with other equalities issues and staff. We look forward to sharing and learning from each others experience and concerns. The case of the Irish illuminates race and equality issues in fundamental ways and as Nelson Mandela stated on a recent visit to Ireland, the Irish have an affinity with other disadvantaged groups, "an affinity which belongs to peoples who have suffered in common and who are tied together by bonds of friendship and solidarity".

FACTS ON THE IRISH COMMUNITY

1. At the time of the last census in 1981 there were 850,397 Irish born people resident in Britain. There are also a substantial number of people born in Britain of Irish origin who identify themselves as Irish. In sum, the Irish constitute one of the largest ethnic minority groups in Britain.
2. In Haringey, at the time of the last census, it is estimated that 1 in 7 are of Irish origin making the Irish one of the largest ethnic minority communities in the borough.
3. At the time of the last census (1981), 50% of the Irish population in Britain lived in the South East with 32% in the Greater London Area. In Haringey, the highest concentrations are in the Hornsey and Stroud Green Areas (1981 census).
4. At the time of the last census (1981), the Irish were the ethnic minority group with the second highest rate of unemployment in London, second only to the Afro-Caribbean community.
5. At the time of the last census (1981), the Irish were found to have one of the lowest shares of owner-occupation in London, second only to the Bangladeshi community. The Irish were also found to be those most likely to live in the private rented sector furnished where some of the worst conditions in the London housing market prevail.
6. Analysis of longitudinal census data indicates that the Irish now have the highest standardised mortality rate of all ethnic groups in Britain. Those with the next highest rate are those of African origin. (Liverpool University 1990).
7. Most studies of the mental health experience of immigrants to Britain have been based on hospital records. The most comprehensive of these is an analysis of all people who were admitted to psychiatric hospitals in England and Wales at the time of the 1971 Census. The analysis found that Irish immigrants to Britain had the highest rates of psychiatric hospital admission. Little attempt has been made to seriously analyse this data.
8. In Haringey Council at December 1989, the Irish totalled 10% of the workforce with 65% in the two lowest grades of Council employment.

IRISH EMPLOYEES IN HARINGEY COUNCIL

A PROFILE (AS AT DECEMBER 1989)

1. Haringey Council produces what is known as Headcount statistics every 6 months. The purpose of these Headcount statistics is to enable the Council to monitor the progress of the Council's equal opportunities employment policies in the areas of Race and Gender. The headcount is attached to the payroll and the ethnic origin of the new starters is known from the application forms. This headcount data is therefore continuously being updated.
2. The Council's equality target for the recruitment of people from the Black and Ethnic Minority groups is 40% by 1990.
3. The total percentage of Black and Ethnic Minority employees across all services was 39.13% in December 1989.
4. The most recent headcount statistics available to us at present are those of December 1989.
5. According to these figures, of a total workforce of 8,640, 868 employees are Irish.
6. **Thus the Irish comprised 10.05% of the Council's workforce.**
7. This compares with some of the other Black and Ethnic Minority groups as follows:-
 - 52.4% of employees of UK/European origin
 - 5.5% of employees of Asian origin
 - 16.3% of employees of Caribbean/West Indian origin
 - 2.9% of employees of Greek Cypriot origin
 - 1.1% of employees of Turkish Cypriot origin.
8. The Irish employees in the Council are distributed across the various grade bands as follows:
 - 64.7% of Irish employees are in manual or craft scales
 - 19.7% of Irish employees are in Scale 1-5
 - 7.1% of Irish employees are in Scales 6-SO2
 - 3.7% of Irish employees are in Scales PO1-PO3
 - 1.7% of Irish employees are in Scales PO4 and above.
9. Thus the overwhelming majority of Irish employees in the Council's employment are in the two lowest grades of employment.
10. The position of the Irish in the Council's employment compares with some other ethnic groups as follows when seen in tabular form:

ETHNIC ORIGIN	* GRADE BAND *				
	MANUAL AND EQUIV.	SCALE 1-5 AND EQUIV.	SCALE 6-SO2 & EQUIV.	PO1-PO3 AND EQUIV.	PO4 + AND EQUIV.
UK/EUROPEAN	44.8%	27.7%	14.9%	7.9%	4.9%
CARIBBEAN/ WEST INDIAN	43.4%	33.5%	15.9%	5.0%	2.1%
GREEK CYPRIOT	17.0%	47.4%	27.0%	7.1%	1.6%
TURKISH CYPRIOT	33.0%	36.4%	18.2%	9.1%	3.0%
ASIAN	28.6%	26.3%	17.5%	9.6%	6.3%
IRISH	64.7%	19.7%	7.1%	3.7%	1.7%

11. What these figures highlight very clearly are two main facts about Irish employees in Haringey Council.

Firstly, that the Irish are the Ethnic Group with by far the highest concentration in the two lowest grades (i.e. 64.7% of Irish employees).

and

Secondly, that the Irish together with the Greek Cypriots are the ethnic groups with the smallest proportionate representation in the Council's most senior grades (i.e. only 1.7% of Irish employees).

12. On the issue of gender breakdown of Irish employees in Haringey Council, the substantial majority of Irish employees in Haringey's employment are women, that is 73.7% of Irish employees are women.
13. Further important facts about Irish women's employment in Haringey Council is that Irish Women are overwhelmingly concentrated in the two lowest grades of Haringey's employment, that is 66% of Irish women are under Scale 5, and in fact 49% are concentrated in the manual and craft scales.
14. What these figures clearly illustrate is that Irish women in Haringey Council's employment clearly experience severe gender as well as ethnic disadvantage.

(Compiled June 1990: based on December 1989 Headcount Data).

APPENDIX 3

LIST OF VOLUNTARY SECTOR SERVICES FOR IRISH PEOPLE IN HARINGEY ADVICE, INFORMATION AND SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

Haringey Irish Community Care Centre,
72 Stroud Green Road,
Finsbury Park,
London, N.4.

Tel: (071) 272 9230

provides an advice, information, drop-in and social work service for Irish people in Haringey and surrounding areas. The Centre also provides a luncheon club for Irish elderly, group work support for Irish women, and an outreach service to homeless families. The Centre is currently developing services for the Irish disabled and those with mental health problems.

Haringey Irish Cultural and Community Centre,
Advice and Information Service,
Pretoria Road,
Tottenham,
London, N.17.

Tel: (081) 885 3490

Open: Monday	10 - 1 and 2 - 5 p.m.	Thursday	2 - 5 p.m.
Tues.	6 - 8 p.m.	Friday	10 - 1 p.m.
Wed.	closed to public		

Advice and information is provided on finding a job and employment rights. Finding accommodation and housing rights. Social security benefits and entitlements. Debt counselling. Education and training opportunities. Irish community organisations, activities and resources. Health services and self-help organisations.

HOUSING

An Teach
Irish Short Life Housing Group
c/o Haringey Irish Centre,
Pretoria Road,
London, N.17.

Tel: (081) 365 1751

An Teach is a short life housing group which aims to provide temporary housing for young, single Irish people in London. For information of vacancies etc. please contact An Teach at the above address or phone number.

CARA,
Irish Homeless Project,
424 Seven Sisters Road,
London, N.4.

Tel: (081) 800 2744

CARA is a housing project which aims to provide supported housing for single homeless Irish women and men wherever in London that a need is identified. For further information of vacancies and location of houses please contact the Advice services listed in this leaflet.

SERVICES FOR TRAVELLERS

Haringey Travellers Support Group,
c/o 72 Stroud Green Road,
London, N.4.

Tel: (071) 272 7594

Haringey Travellers Support Group is a voluntary organisation which seeks to defend the rights, support and campaign on behalf of the Travellers in Haringey. The group comprises members of the Travelling community, workers working with Travellers, and other settled people concerned about the situation of Travellers.

SERVICES FOR IRISH WOMEN

Mother and Toddlers Group,
Haringey Irish Centre,
Pretoria Road,
Tottenham, London, N.17.

Tel: (081) 885 3490

Meets every Thursday 12 - 3 p.m.

A Mother and Toddlers support group with full creche facilities. Organises range of activities including self defence, arts and crafts sessions etc.

Haringey Irish Womens Group,
Haringey Irish Centre,
Pretoria Road,
Tottenham, London, N.17.

Tel: (081) 885 3490

Meets every Wednesday 12 - 3 p.m.

Provides range of activities for Irish women including jewellery making, photography, film shows, relaxation, health care and advice service support.

GAELIC SPORTS IN HARINGEY

Shannon Rovers (Gaelic Football Club),
c/o 11 Stirling Road,
London, N.22.

Tel: (081) 881 0401

Shannon Rovers is a Haringey based Gaelic football club who provide a range of Gaelic sports (hurling and Gaelic football) for the people of the borough.

CAMPAIGN GROUPS, RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

Haringey Irish Association,
c/o 2A Brabant Road,
Wood Green,
London, N.22.

Tel: (081) 886 7126 or (081) 889 6579

The Haringey Irish Association is an Irish community organisation founded in 1979 which campaigns on behalf of the Irish community across a broad range of issues. Over the years the Association has addressed the following issues affecting the community:

- (1) the provision of services, in particular social and cultural services to the Irish community. The HIA founded the Irish Community Care Centre in 1982 and played a central part in lobbying for the Irish Cultural Centre's establishment.
- (2) representation of Irish issues within Haringey Council (HIA campaigned successfully with other community groups for Irish representation on the Ethnic Minorities Joint Consultative Committee).
- (3) direct provision of cultural and educational facilities for the community.

The Haringey Irish Association is affiliated to the Federation of Irish Societies in which it has played a very active role to date.

Haringey Irish in Britain Representation Group,

c/o Hornsey Library,
Haringey Park,
London, N.8.

Tel: (081) 348 3351

Haringey Irish in Britain Representation Group is a community organisation which is fundamentally concerned with tackling anti-Irish racism in Britain. The group address anti-Irish racism at a number of levels: in the media, in the education system, in the law and seeks to redress discriminatory practices encountered by the Irish community in all areas of social provision and employment. The group believes that the roots of anti-Irish racism in Britain lie in Britain's colonial history in Ireland and campaigns for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal, political, economical and military of Britain from Ireland, thus allowing self-determination for the Irish people as a whole.

Haringey Irish Working Group,

c/o Haringey Irish Cultural Centre,
Pretoria Road,
Tottenham, London, N.17.

Tel: 081 348 3351

Haringey Irish Working Group was established in 1986. It aims to co-ordinate campaigns and work in Haringey around British withdrawal from Ireland and other issues facing the Irish in Britain. You can write to the group at the above address.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CENTRES

Haringey Irish Cultural and Community Centre,

Pretoria Road,
Tottenham, London, N.17.

Tel: (081) 885 3490

Haringey Irish Cultural and Community Centre is a social, cultural and community centre which provides a broad range of facilities and services for the Irish community in Haringey, including traditional dancing, ceilidhis, language classes, a youth club, womens groups and a social club with regular entertainment.

