



Camden Irish Forum

The Camden Irish Forum (CIF) was established in March 1991 following the Camden Irish Conference held at Camden Town Hall in 1990. We are an independent non-party political and unfunded group. Our meetings are held quarterly at the Camden Irish Centre and they are open to all Irish people who live or work in Camden.

There are estimated to be 15,000 Irish people living in Camden. The Irish community is the largest and one of the oldest ethnic minorities in the Borough. Yet our ethnic minority status and needs are frequently unrecognised.

CIF exists in order to ensure that the concerns of Irish people in Camden are expressed and taken on board by the relevant bodies. Since our inception, we have made representations to Camden Council and to other statutory providers. Although the Local Authority formally recognises the ethnic minority status of the Irish and has implemented a number of other recommendations from the Camden Irish Conference, much work remains to be done.

Over the past year CIF has organised public dialogue between the Irish community and the authorities in Camden. Our meetings have been attended by representatives from Arlington Day Centre, Camden Irish Centre, Camden Elderly Irish Support Network, CARA, Connolly Association, Conradh na Gaeilge, Conway House, Federation of Irish Societies, Kilburn Irish Youth Project, London Irish Women's Centre, Trasna as well as individual community activists and trade unionists.

We have met with Camden's Director of Housing, it's Assistant Director of Social Services and officers from the Childcare Section of Social Services. We have submitted proposals concerning the specific needs of Irish children and Irish elderly for inclusion in Camden's Childcare and Community Care Plans. We have taken up collective and individual cases of anti Irish racism. We have also acted in cases involving the abuse of civil liberties, including that of Gerry Kelly who was imprisoned because he could not afford to pay his Poll Tax without his family being informed, and that of Sister Sarah Clarke who was interrogated in her home by Special Branch Officers.

CIF welcomed the declaration of the IRA and Loyalist Cease-fires in August and November last year and we have continued to campaign for the abolition of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) over the past 12 months. We have supported the efforts of Saoirse in calling for the release of Irish political prisoners and we have made representations to Camden's MPs, our MEP and the Irish Embassy concerning this matter as well as the need for immediate all Party talks as a means of developing the Peace Process.

For more information on CIF contact Christie O'Sullivan on 0171 387 3035.