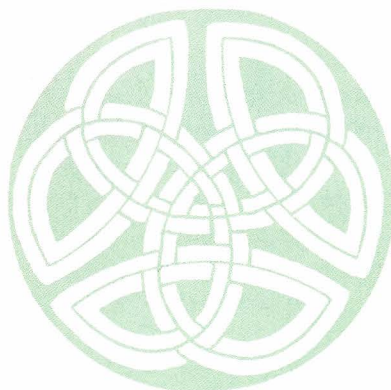




Brent Irish Advisory Service

Celebrating
25 years
of
BIAS
1978-2003

25th Anniversary Supplement



1978/79

- ☐ Brent Irish Steering Group Committee formed in January 1978 and produced a Report highlighting the need for the establishment of The Brent Irish Advisory Service – Membership of this Steering Group included Catherine Coleman, Francis Corr, John Leonard, Noel Moynihan (Chair) and Donal McGrath (Secretary)
- ☐ One of the first tasks of the Steering Group was to complete a Brent Council Urban Aid funding application for the salary and running costs of one paid worker to develop an Irish welfare organisation in Brent (Bid completed in November 1978)

1979/80

- ☐ Brent Irish Steering Group became Brent Irish Advisory Service
- ☐ BIAS Constitution and Memorandum of Articles drawn up by Brent Community Law Centre
- ☐ Received Brent Council Urban Aid Funding in April 1979 (£8,200) and on 11th June 1979 first paid employee commenced employment with BIAS as Community Organiser/Co-ordinator.
- ☐ Received grant from the Irish Government Committee on Emigrants for Welfare Work (now DION) to assist in our welfare work
- ☐ In November 1979 Brent Irish Cultural Committee formed “A multi-cultural society means giving equal recognition status to all ethnic cultures ... The BICC will work towards this end”
- ☐ 40 active volunteers involved in advice/welfare work; cultural activities and in compilation of the first edition of The Irish in Britain Directory
- ☐ 1st Edition of “The Irish in Britain Directory” published by a team of voluntary workers
- ☐ BIAS was granted the temporary use of Social Services offices in Kilburn for advice/information sessions. All other BIAS activities took place from the Co-ordinator's home
- ☐ Financial turnover/income for the year £8,620 and 500 new service users contacts
- ☐ Membership of BIAS first Management Committee included Padraic Kenna (Chair), John Clarke (Treasurer), Marie Dalton (Secretary), Kieran Bradley, Margaret Gallagher, Agnes Lewis, Kevin McCarthy, Catherine Coleman and Donal McGrath

1980/81

- ☐ Set up BIAS Short-Life Housing Group in September 1980 for single Irish migrants in housing need. This group obtained two houses from Brent People's Housing Association (now Network) and housed 12 people
- ☐ Set up “Cairde BIAS (Friends of BIAS) a voluntary group who wished to support BIAS aims and objects by holding regular socials and producing a BIAS newsletter
- ☐ 2nd edition of the Irish in Britain Directory produced by team of voluntary workers
- ☐ Continued to use Kilburn Social Service offices for advice sessions and Co-ordinator's home for all other activities

1981/82

- ☐ BIAS received an Irish Post Community Award in 1981 in recognition of the organisation's services to the Irish Community in Brent. A Neolithic Celtic design was presented to one of BIAS' founding members (Catherine Coleman)
- ☐ In September 1981 BIAS presented the “Ireland Entertains Festival” in Brent Town Hall featuring drama, film, music and Irish dancing. Also presented a collection of Irish books and educational materials at Brent Teachers Centre
- ☐ 3rd edition of the Irish in Britain Directory produced by a team of voluntary workers – sold 3,000 copies throughout Britain and Ireland

- ☐ Demand for BIAS services continued to increase, particularly housing/homelessness. BIAS Committee lobbied Brent Council for funding to employ a full-time Irish Housing Advice Worker
- ☐ Continued to use temporary offices in Kilburn for advice sessions, and Organisers home for all other activities

1982/83

- ☐ Printed a four page supplement for 3rd edition of Irish in Britain Directory and sold 4,000 copies throughout Britain and Ireland
- ☐ BIAS first public AGM held in Brent Town Hall at which the Brent branch of the Irish in Britain Representation Group (IBRG) was formed
- ☐ The GLC (Greater London Council) purchased a disused building in Salusbury Road, Queens Park, for conversion into an Irish Centre and BIAS Cultural Committee became the Irish Cultural Centre Steering Group.

1983/84

- ☐ In October 1983 BIAS moved to temporary offices in Willesden Green (Electric House, 296 Willesden Lane, London, NW6) owned by Brent Peoples Housing (now Network Housing Association)
- ☐ Funding received from Brent Council Housing Committee to appoint an Irish Community Housing Worker

1984/85

- ☐ Formation of BIAS Housing Advisory Committee – comprising of BIAS staff, and volunteers and workers of local housing providers who had an interest in the housing needs of the Irish community in Brent
- ☐ Revival of BIAS role as a housing provider and successfully developed one house for 6 residents (57 Wrentham Avenue)
- ☐ Appointed two further workers – Jim Smith (2/04/1984) first full-time Housing Worker and Maria Power (5/11/1984) first part-time Secretary. This marked the first additional workers to the organisation since its inception in 1978
- ☐ Catherine Coleman one of BIAS founding members dies (RIP)
- ☐ Moved office to 76-82 Salusbury Rd, Queens Park, London, NW6 6BX (Brent Irish Centre)

1985/86

- ☐ 8 May 1985 Formation of Innisfree Housing Association as an Industrial and Provident Charitable Society
- ☐ The management of BIAS short-life housing schemes (4 houses with 20 residents) was transferred to Innisfree, and one of the properties was named “Catherine Coleman House” in memory of one of BIAS founding members
- ☐ In May 1985 a BIAS delegation went to Dublin to meet the Irish Government to discuss the mobility of Irish people who wished to return to Ireland and to highlight the increase in numbers of young people coming unprepared to London in search of work and housing
- ☐ First Social Work student placement (July-September 1985).
- ☐ Report produced on Mental Health and the Irish Community - a public meeting was organised which led to the formation of Brent Irish Mental Health Group and the production of Report -
- ☐ First Christmas Party for BIAS pensioners in December 1985 and 50 hampers delivered to Irish elderly in Brent

1986/87

- ☐ Brent Council provide a temporary Travellers Site in the borough (The Book Centre) and BIAS set up The Brent Travellers Support Group

- ☐ After 3 years of lobbying, funding was secured from Brent Social Services to employ an Irish Community Social Worker
- ☐ 30 volunteers now assisting BIAS in achieving its mission

1987/88

- ☐ In July 1987 Jim Smith (first Housing Worker) left BIAS, Padraic Kenna took up post on a temporary basis in August 1987 and Jim Glackin succeeded to the post in February 1988
- ☐ Donal McGrath (first BIAS Co-ordinator) left BIAS and took up post with Brent Council Race Relations as Irish Policy Officer. In November 1987 – Padraic Kenna appointed as temporary Co-ordinator
- ☐ Received funding from Ealing Council to research the needs of the Irish in Ealing from which a project worker was appointed
- ☐ First grant received for the production of “The Irish in Britain Directory” from London Borough Grants Unit (now The Association of London Government) from which the first Information/Advice Worker was appointed
- ☐ Report produced by student on the Irish Community and Mental Handicap
- ☐ Report produced by Brent Irish Mental Health Group and joint initiative with Brent Mind led to the development of an Irish Housing Project
- ☐ Moved back to offices in Electric House, 296 Willesden Lane, London NW2
- ☐ Irish migration to England estimated at 40,000 annually, the highest percentage coming to Brent

1988/89

- ☐ BIAS incorporated as a Company in June 1988
- ☐ Padraic Kenna (BIAS 2nd Co-ordinator) left BIAS in December 1988 and took up post as Co-ordinator with Innisfree Housing Association. Stan Quirey appointed as temporary part-time Co-ordinator in February 1989
- ☐ Patricia Gormely appointed as first Irish Community Social worker in March 1989
- ☐ Two reports published by BIAS - The Irish in Ealing and Irish Homeless Families in London and the latter was launched in Dublin
- ☐ Irish Youth Project developed in partnership Kilburn Irish Youth Action Group and two detached youth workers were employed for a six-month period.
- ☐ Set up the “Over-here Youth Club” in Gladstone Park Community Centre.
- ☐ Set up a “Learning Needs Group” at Strathcona Social Education Centre (Wembley) for Irish people experiencing physical/learning difficulties
- ☐ On-going lobbying for a permanent Travellers Site in Brent through the Travellers Liaison Forum
- ☐ 4th Edition of the Irish in Britain Directory produced and 10,000 copies sold throughout Britain and Ireland

1990/91

- ☐ BIAS arranged a holiday to Ireland for a group of Irish pensioners. The group met Mary Robinson and had tea at “Aras an Uachtarain”! Many had not been back to Ireland for 30-40 years or since they first migrated
- ☐ “BIAS News” launched and 1,000 copies produced with the financial assistance of Marks and Spencer’s.
- ☐ Three-year funding received from Brent and Harrow Health Authority (Joint Finance programme) for an Irish Elders Project and first Elders Worker appointed. Irish Elders Luncheon Club established in partnership with Brent Pensioners Link (now Elders Voice)
- ☐ Funding received from DION and Ireland Funds to employ a full-time Youth Worker This project established a “Young Irish Mothers Group” in partnership with Kilburn Irish Youth Project (KIYP) and commenced a volunteer visiting service to prisoners at Feltham Young Offenders Institute.

- ☐ BBC Children in Need and Brent Social Services jointly funded a one week holiday for the “Young Irish Mothers Group”
- ☐ Launched the “Shamrock Youth Club” for young people with special needs and appointed a part-time Learning Disabilities Worker
- ☐ Brent Council Housing Department appoints first Travellers Officer to work on the temporary halting site (The Book Centre in Neasden)
- ☐ Michael Callanain – one of BIAS founding member died during the year (RIP)

1991/92

- ☐ Accent Drug Prevention Project established in August 1992 through one year funding from Home Office and The Irish Youth Foundation and project worker appointed
- ☐ BIAS held an Information Day on “Moving to Ireland” in partnership with the Irish Department of Social Welfare (first time the Irish Department of Social Welfare ventured abroad to provide social welfare information).
- ☐ The Trasna Project (formerly the Young Irish Mothers Group) formally established through funding received from BBC Children in Need, The Irish Youth Foundation and Telethon 1992, and jointly managed by BIAS and KIYP
- ☐ The Single Homeless Irish Mental Health Project established through funding from Crisis and Brent Joint Consultative Forum.
- ☐ BIAS organise one week holiday to Bognor Regis for Irish pensioners
- ☐ Because of Brent Council cutbacks BIAS lost funding for its housing worker. Emergency funding received from Crisis and Brent and Harrow Health Authority

1992/93

- ☐ Three publications produced this year: - Moving to Ireland, Moving within the European Community and Who Cares for the Irish Community
- ☐ Evening Housing Advice Surgery provided by BIAS Housing Worker and two volunteers
- ☐ Irish Elders Social Club established in August 1992 in Wembley (Copland’s Community Centre) and held weekly on Wednesdays (1-4pm). This was a joint initiative between Brent Social Services and BIAS for older Irish people living north of the borough. A light meal and a programme of social and cultural activities was provided
- ☐ Had to move offices as Landlord (Network Housing Association) required BIAS current office space. Moved to 99 Villiers Rd, Willesden, London, NW10

1993/94

- ☐ 5th Edition of “The Irish in Britain Directory” produced
- ☐ The management of the Trasna Project transferred to Kilburn Irish Youth Project.
- ☐ BIAS commissioned by Department of Health to conduct research and make recommendations to health providers and purchasers on alcohol misuse services for Irish people in Brent. Research worker appointed in February 1994
- ☐ Evening Counselling Service established by 3 trainee volunteer Counsellors
- ☐ BIAS held a Conference in Brent Town Hall on “Single homeless Irish People and Mental Health
- ☐ Funding terminated for Housing Advice Post and post-holder leaves
- ☐ Had two break-ins at current offices

1994/95

- ☐ Had to move offices again as Villiers Road office building was acquired for a private housing development. Moved to Aras na nGael 76-82 Salusbury, NW6 .
- ☐ A further three-year funding secured for BIAS Elders Project through the Brent Joint Finance programme
- ☐ Tuesday Luncheon Club moved to the newly established Westbrook Community Centre in Harlesden

- ☐ BIAS and Elders Voice organise a one week holiday to Torquay for a group of Irish pensioners
- ☐ BIAS worked closely with Brent Council and The Brent and Harrow Health Authority to develop an Irish specific Alcohol Misuse Project in the borough

1995/96

- ☐ Aras na nGael (Irish Centre) went into receivership – had to move offices again. Moved to Premier House, 313 Kilburn Lane, London, NW10
- ☐ Social Work post now working with Children & Families only
- ☐ Irish Travellers Health Access research project established through funding from the Ethnic Health Unit to investigate health issues and access to health services for Travellers living in Brent and Harrow and a Project Worker was appointed
- ☐ “The Hidden Minority” (Mental Health and the Irish Experience in Brent) published in conjunction with Equal Access in 1996

1996/97

- ☐ BIAS became a Registered Charity in August 1996
- ☐ New Travellers Site in Brent opened in March 1997 – Lynton Close Travellers Site
- ☐ Secured two-year National Lottery Charities Board funding (now The Community Fund) for a Travellers Youth and Womens’ Project to work with Irish Travellers in the London boroughs of Brent and Harrow
- ☐ Irish Health Profile published – joint initiative between Brent and Harrow Health Authority and BIAS
- ☐ Outcome of BIAS Alcohol Research Project in 1994 led to the establishment of The Irish Community Alcohol Service in Brent (now Brent Community Alcohol Service).
- ☐ Funding secured from Harrow Council to research the health and community care needs of the Irish community in Harrow.
- ☐ Moving to Ireland Research Project established (Ar ais Aris) and funded by Age Concern Ealing and Housing Association Charitable Trust to investigate the possibility of community care placements and direct housing transfers of older Irish to Ireland

1997/98

- ☐ Stan Quirey (3rd Co-ordinator) leaves BIAS. Karen Mc Hugh appointed December 1997
- ☐ Office move to The Old Library Building, Willesden Green Library Centre in March 1998 on a five-year lease. First secure and suitable office space since BIAS inception
- ☐ Opened second office in Harrow-on-the-Hill
- ☐ Launched BIAS Irish Travellers Project in Harrow office. Three Project Workers appointed – Youth Worker, Women’s Worker and Project Manager
- ☐ Launched Irish Elders Day Care Project (held on Fridays) at the Westbrook Community Centre in July 1998
- ☐ In January 1998 launched weekly Irish Advice Surgery at Age Concern Ealing Borough on Monday afternoons by voluntary worker (Sr. Bernardine McNulty)

1998/99

- ☐ Irish Travellers Movement Working Group formed following a Conference held on 22nd July 1998 entitled “A National Need”
- ☐ Evening Legal Advice Surgery provided by Procaccini and Farrell Solicitors on first and third evening of each month (6-8pm) at BIAS head office in Willesden Green
- ☐ Produced “Irish in Harrow Needs Analysis - An assessment of the Community Care Needs of the Irish community in the London borough of Harrow”
- ☐ Numerous events/projects were developed by BIAS Travellers Project to include a Irish Dancing classes, football, netball, as well as a programme of courses for adults in partnership with BACES to include hairdressing, soft furnishing, beauty therapy, first aid, personal development and others

1999/2000

- ☐ Age Concern Ealing Borough secured funding from DION for a part-time Irish Advice Worker
- ☐ A further two-year funding secured from the National Lottery Charities Board for Irish Travellers Project. Project move to Rayners Lane
- ☐ Three-year funding secured from Brent and Harrow Health Authority for Transition to Old Age Project – an assertive outreach project working with Irish people who have a health, housing and/or social care need and a project worker was appointed
- ☐ Travellers “Youth at Risk Project” established in July 2000 through three year funding from Comic Relief and The Irish Youth Foundation and project worker appointed
- ☐ London Irish Women’s Centre provide a weekly counselling surgery in BIAS offices (Wednesday mornings 10am-1pm)
- ☐ BIAS secured three-year funding from Comic Relief to employ a Development Worker to initiate the establishment of the Irish Traveller Movement

2000/01

- ☐ BIAS Income increased by one third - from £228,726 in 1999/2000 to £444,932 this year. Staff numbers also increased from 12 in 1999/2000 to 21 this year. There were 6,000 service user contacts during the year.
- ☐ Commence work on achieving level 1. of PQASSO (Quality Assurance Mark)
- ☐ Funding secured from Age Concern England to develop a Volunteer Visiting and Support Project to work with Irish elderly in Brent and Harrow
- ☐ BIAS Newsletter launched in March 2001
- ☐ In November 2001 BIAS held an “Irish in Harrow Conference” in Harrow Civic Centre
- ☐ Monthly Advice Surgery provided on the South Kilburn Estate by BIAS Advice Worker (Friday mornings 10am-1pm)
- ☐ A monthly legal advice surgery was provided from our Harrow office
- ☐ Funding secured from Sure Start Central Brent (Central Government initiative to support families with children aged 0-4)
- ☐ Secured On Track funding (Central Government funding for children aged 4-11)
- ☐ Established monthly Irish Foreign National Groups in Brixton and Wandsworth Prisons through funding from HMS Prison Service, Comic Relief and The Irish Youth Foundation
- ☐ Adult literacy, information technology, cookery and childrens’ activities were held during the year for Traveller families in Brent and Harrow
- ☐ ITM Development Worker appointed
- ☐ BIAS Travellers Project joint partners in “The Room to Roam” Research Project, which will be the first national research project concerned with Irish Travellers

2001/02

- ☐ Census 2001 included “Irish” as an ethnic category for the first time
- ☐ Achieve Level 1. of PQASSO (Quality Assurance Mark)
- ☐ Housing Advice Worker appointed through funding from DION funding (The Irish Government).
- ☐ Emerald Circle (over 65 support group) established in Harrow in January 2002 - through funding from DION and Harrow Council. The group meets weekly and provides a culturally sensitive and supported service to isolated Irish elders in Harrow
- ☐ ITM fully independent of BIAS from 31 March 2002

- ☐ 21 active volunteers providing home-visiting and support to elderly Irish in Brent and Harrow
- ☐ Brent Social Services, Older Peoples Services, agree a Service Level Agreement for an Irish Elders Day Care Project in Brent
- ☐ A "Lunch with Lap Top" project developed at our Luncheon Club in partnership with Head to Head Training and Elders Voice
- ☐ Two further years funding received for expanded Travellers Project to work in six London boroughs. The new Project includes a Families Worker, Youth Worker, Health Promotion Worker, Manager, Fundraiser and Secretary. The Project moved from Rayners Lane to offices adjacent to BIAS head office in Willesden.
- ☐ Numerous events/projects were developed by BIAS Travellers Project to include a Teddy Bears Picnic, a Christmas Nativity Play, Nature Walks, an after-school club, an under-12's football team as well as a programme of courses for adults
- ☐ Three-year funding secured from the Youth Justice Board for an Irish Mentoring Project

2002/03

- ☐ 31st March 2003 Karen Mc Hugh (4th Co-ordinator) takes sabbatical from BIAS. Peter O'Callaghan appointed as Locum Co-ordinator. Karen Mc Hugh continues as part-time Fundraiser/ Development Worker
- ☐ Our Elders Day Care Service and Luncheon Club had to re-locate from Westbrook Community Centre, as Brent Social Services required this space. The Day Care Service moved to Knightleas Court in Willesden and The Luncheon Club moved to Clochar Court (Innisfree HA Sheltered Housing Scheme)

2003/04

- ☐ Three-year continuation funding secured from National Lottery Charities Board for Transition to Old Age Project.
- ☐ Three-year funding secured from the Association of London Government for an expanded Irish Advice Service to cover the boroughs of Brent, Harrow and Westminster primarily and London generally
- ☐ Three-year continuation funding secured from Comic Relief and annual funding from the Irish Youth Foundation and HMS Prison Service for the continuation of the Youth at Risk Project
- ☐ Three-year continuation funding secured from DION (Irish Government) for Advice Service and Elders Service in Brent and Harrow
- ☐ Negotiated a further 5 year lease of BIAS offices at the Old Library Building
- ☐ ITM hold an Irish Travellers Cultural Awareness Day in Camden Irish Centre and BIAS Travellers Project display art work and scrap metal project materials
- ☐ BIAS 2nd office in Grange Road to be demolished on (24/02/04) – additional office space to be negotiated
- ☐ IFNG's established in Brixton, Feltham and Wandsworth Prisons and all other London Prisons are visited on an ad hoc basis

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this Report is accurate, BIAS cannot be held liable for any errors or omissions or any consequences arising from them.

Published by BIAS, The Old Library Building, Willesden Green Library Centre, 95 High Road, London, NW10 2SF

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