



**Irish
Support**

and

**Advice
Service**



Annual Report 97-98



OFFICERS AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS

THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Michael Feerick	Chair
Bob Mulcahy	Vice Chair
Kevin O'Byrne	Treasurer
Adrian Jones	Trustee
Tony Hennessy	Trustee
John Reid	Trustee
Kay Curtin	Trustee
Jean Mullane	Trustee
Kevin Nolan	Trustee
Alice Kennedy	General Member
Fr. Bob Dunn	General Member
Jacqui Reid	General Member

COMPANY SECRETARY

Patrick McNally

REGISTERED OFFICE

The Irish Centre
Black's Road
Hammersmith
London W6 9DT

AUDITORS

Michael Bell & Co.
Chartered Accountants
56 St James's Street
London E17 7PE

BANKERS

Allied Irish Bank plc
Sovereign House
361 King Street
Hammersmith
London W6 9NA

SOLICITORS

Cliona O'Tuama
Hamilton House
1 Temple Avenue
London EC4Y 0HA







CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



On behalf of the Trustees of the Irish Support & Advice Service (Founded as a welfare bureau in 1974, the ISAS Charity is now constituted as a company limited by guarantee incorporated on 14 December 1995.), ***I am pleased to report to you, our members, supporters and well-wishers notable progress during the past financial year ending March 31st 1998.***

Before I recount the fruits of our work and the activities and goals to which we have addressed ourselves through the past year, I would like to outline for those of you less familiar with the charity the objectives of the organisation.

Objectives of the Irish Support & Advice Service

Our charity was established for the purpose of relieving poverty and distress among Irish immigrants to the United Kingdom with particular regard to:

1. Assisting immigrants where required to find suitable employment and accommodation in the UK.
2. Endeavouring to supply the material and emotional support required by such immigrants in need.
3. Assisting Irish and other immigrants to obtain the benefit of the statutory and voluntary support networks available.
4. Providing information generally for immigrants with regard to social and recreational activities.
5. Advising and assisting immigrants in connection with repatriation.
6. Assisting persons in difficulty or need generally without regard to race, religion, colour, gender, sexual orientation, class or disability.

Of all the demographic profiles, the two which we deal with on the most regular basis are young people, often those recently arrived unprepared from Ireland and Irish immigrants who came from Ireland in the 40's and 50's working in manual labour. Today, most of these people are of retirement age and a most unacceptable percentage have little provision for the future. Alone, friendless and in poverty, there is perhaps no single group of Irish people world-wide who face such isolation and marginalisation. Within this group, ISAS has focused its Outreach Program. Such is the need in this quarter that we aim to substantially increase our activity within this area in the coming years.





Review of Developments, Activities and Achievements.

After 8 years service as Director of the Service, Paul Murphy left our employment to start a new London Initiative called Irish Employment and Training Agency. We would like to thank Paul for his many years of dedicated service and wish him every success in his new role. In the summer of 97, the Committee took the opportunity to instruct an independent Management Consultant to assist them in a thorough review of the Charity's activity believing that a complete re-assessment of any charity is due every five years or so. The report was most worthwhile providing the committee with unambiguous and clear recommendations, giving the charity a new sense of purpose and direction. Towards the end of the year, we successfully recruited a General Manager, Mr. Jonathan McCafferty in succession to Paul Murphy and embarked upon a series of structural changes. Jonathan previously worked as the Director of the Harrow Crossroads with Outreach and with the St Mungo Association where he held the position of Corporate Administrator. Jonathan's experience in private sector fund raising has already been of great assistance to the charity.

Core Frontline Work

The core work of the charity, that of a front line advice agency has continued to grow from strength to strength. This part of our service is supported principally by grant aid from the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and by the Irish Government through the Dion Committee. With over 8,400 personal callers and as many telephone enquiries seeking advice, information and support in the past 12 months, our four front line workers have a pivotal role to play in providing support, guidance and advocacy to the Irish Community in West London. With staff skilled and experienced in housing, employment, welfare rights and social work, we are able to execute high quality case work support and refer to the appropriate local resource or in some cases provide long-term support.

Outreach Work

Thanks to a very generous response from private donors and commercial sponsors, including the Jefferson Smurfit Foundation, we have continued our innovative outreach work throughout the year. We have sought out the most distressed members of the West London Irish community, those who live out their lives in social isolation, want and despair. These people are most frequently called the "Lost Generation", people who came to England to help build London's post war economy. Not all have enjoyed the material success they hoped for, and lack both family near at hand, and often the means and mobility to visit their kith and kin in Ireland. There are over 10,000 elderly Irish people living alone in West London. These people desperately need our help in combating a very lonely existence. Our Outreach Worker, Shane Brennan, provides strong case work support, frequently on elemental matters such as registering with a doctor, making contact with long lost family members, resolving landlord and tenants disputes and preventing evictions. We have formed a Retired Irish Workers' Club, where elderly people may gather together and combat loneliness with occasional social outings to the seaside during summer days. Our parties on feast days, such as Christmas and St Patrick's Day have proved to be very popular, and are much appreciated by the more senior members of the Irish community as are our less frequent summer day trips. Our Newsletter enjoys a wide circulation at all venues where lonely Irish people may be found - launderettes, day centres, pubs, church halls and cafes.





Fundraising

Apart from our solicitation of large private donations from foundations, corporates and wealthy individuals to support the expansion of our Outreach work (and we hope to announce the successful conclusion of a major fund-raising initiative very shortly) we have embarked on many smaller initiatives.

In early 1997, we embark upon a marathon sponsorship program as a Gold Bond holder, where with paying a deposit we receive six places guaranteed for the next four years. We were particularly delighted that due to the support of others involved in the London Marathon we were able to field 23 runners in all raising £7,000 in sponsorship. We offer our sincere thanks to all involved and look forward to your continued support for this occasion in the coming year.

Community Development

Thanks to funding from the City Parochial Foundation and the Ireland Fund of Great Britain, we were able to supplement the Community Care Contract funding which we have been receiving for the past two years. This enabled us to have the Community Care Development Worker continue working full time for the first 6 months of the year and enabled our three separate groups, those for elderly, women, and for those with mental health problems to continue and function satisfactorily. The vulnerable Irish people assisted by the work of the Group Leaders and by other members of the group have greatly appreciated the development of these new services.

During the year we have continued to support the Hammersmith and Fulham Irish Pensioners' Group who recently moved from MacBeth Street into the Irish Centre. The group meet here weekly for 3 hours and now have a membership of over 30 and an average attendance of 25 pensioners a week. New pensioners continue to make contact and join the group from referrals of the ISAS staff.

Increasing focus on Volunteers

We are very conscious that one of the very best ways of developing the service is to work with the many volunteers who regularly offer their services for free. For instance, the presence of volunteers running the front desk position in the foyer of the Irish Centre is a great success of Irish community action. ISAS are responsible for this and we get a £11,000 reduction in our annual rent and service charges bill of £20,000 for providing this service. Volunteers from the Irish Support & Advice Service set up the main hall for the pensioners, provide secretarial and administrative assistance, and assist in the care-taking of the Irish Centre and help out in a variety of other ways.

For our most dedicated volunteers, we were delighted to make nominal reimbursements of expenses during the year. Gaps in our services and possible one-day closures of our service were avoided thanks to funds from Wates Foundation to cover staff holidays. Indeed, the fundraising by the Christmas Raffle and the Marathon Runners, as well as donations from a variety of individuals and groups helped to meet several un-funded costs of the charity during the year, particularly the small welfare disbursements to those most in need. We are greatly indebted to the Irish Youth Foundation and the Society of St Vincent de Paul for assistance with welfare costs and the repatriation of people in desperate circumstances.





With no doubt, our charity is growing from strength to strength. We are attracting new members at a rate unprecedented in our long history and our volunteer numbers are rising. All the same, we are in greater need of your help than ever before. Our older generations in Britain are facing the appalling prospect of loneliness and despair in greater numbers than ever before. Never have so many of our fellow immigrants faced such isolation. In the face of this exceptional circumstance we must make new and dynamic efforts to respond.

In the coming year, we are preparing to increase our Outreach Program threefold. We have many committed volunteers and funders on board but we need more help than we have today. We ask for your for help. How can you assist us? If you are prepared to offer your services free of charge, give time to be included in our planned volunteer programs or simply would like to make a donation, please do not hesitate to contact Jonathan McCafferty, our General Manager, or any member of our Committee Members or staff.

On a final note, I would like to thank our staff for their dedicated work during their year. As for our volunteers, nothing inspires us privileged trustees more than seeing their patience and skill at work. To Jonathan, Sandra, Val, Angela, Shane and all the volunteers our heartfelt thanks.

mipe le meaf,

Michael G. Feerick
Chairman
ISAS

Marathon Runners Wanted

The Irish Support and Advice Service needs runners to take part in the Flora London Marathon each year. Enjoy a new challenge and raise funds for this good cause.

Any one interested in taking part or in helping us to find sponsors for our Flora London Marathon team please contact:

Shane on: 0181 741 0991



IRISH SUPPORT & ADVICE SERVICE
 Registered Charity No. 1053278
 Company Limited by Guarantee No.3137725



Results

The results for the year, and the charity's financial position at the end of the year are shown in the attached financial statements. We are pleased to report an improvement in our financial position which allows us to face the future with confidence as we fulfil our mission to the Irish community in need.

The Trustees

The Trustees who served the charity during the period were as follows:

Mr M Feerick	Chair	(Appointed 12.4.96)
Mr R Mulcahy	Vice-Chair	(Appointed 14.12.95)
Mr K O'Byrne	Treasurer	(Appointed 14.12.95)
Mrs M C Curtin	Trustee	(Appointed 25.4.96)
Mr Adrian Jones	Trustee	(Appointed 17.12.97)
Mrs E Marron	Chair	(Appointed 14.12.95 : Resigned 18.9.97)
Mrs J Mullane	Trustee	(Appointed 11.4.96)
Mr J Reid	Trustee	(Appointed 5.12.96)
Mrs E Tharpe	Trustee	(Appointed 9.12.96)
Mr J A Hennessy	Trustee	(Appointed 5.12.96)
Mr P McNally	Trustee	(Appointed 1.5.96)
Mr P McNally	was appointed Secretary on 7.4.97.	

Auditors

A resolution to re-appoint Michael Bell & Co. as Auditors for the ensuring year will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting in accordance with Section 385 of the Companies Act 1985.

Registered Office

Signed on behalf of the
Members of the Committee

Irish Centre
Blacks Road
Hammersmith
London
W6 9DT

Mr Patrick McNally
Company Secretary

Approved by the Trustees on 30th. September 1998





STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Company law requires the Members of the Committee to prepare Financial Statements for each financial year, which gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of the surplus or deficiency for the year then ended.

In preparing those Financial Statements, the Members of the Committee are required to select suitable accounting policies, and then apply them on a consistent basis, making judgements and estimates that are prudent and reasonable. The Members of the Committee must also prepare the Financial Statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Members of the Committee are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity, and to enable them to ensure that the Financial Statements comply with Companies Act 1985. The Members of the Committee are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.



AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS



We have audited the Financial Statements on Pages 9 to 12, which have been prepared under historical cost convention and accounting policies.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AND THE AUDITORS

The Members of the Committee (who also act as Trustees for the charitable activities of the company) are responsible for the preparation of the Financial Statements. It is our responsibility to form an independent opinion, based on our audit, on those Statements and to report our opinion to you.

BASIS OF OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the Financial Statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made in the preparation of the Financial Statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the charitable company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit, so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary, in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the Financial Statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion, we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the Financial Statements.

OPINION

In our opinion, the Financial Statements gave a true and fair view of the charitable company's state of affairs as at 31 March 1998, and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, in the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985.

56 St James's Street
London E17 7PE

MICHAEL BELL & CO
Chartered Accountants

30th September 1998





Statement of Financial Activities – Year Ended 31st March 1998

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 1998	Total Funds 1997
	£	£	£	£
Incoming Resources:				
Donations	15,522	27,000	42,522	44,449
Grants Receivable	100,372	52,640	153,012	110,129
Other income	5,248	0	5,248	2,675
Total Incoming Resources	<u>121,142</u>	<u>79,640</u>	<u>200,782</u>	<u>157,253</u>
Resources Expended:				
Direct charitable expenditure	64,676	74,855	139,531	128,703
Fundraising and publicity	1,403	0	1,403	2,264
Management & administration	43,897	0	43,897	49,112
Total Resources Expended:	<u>109,976</u>	<u>74,855</u>	<u>184,831</u>	<u>180,079</u>
Net Movement of Reserves:	11,166	4,785	15,951	(22,826)
Balances brought forward	<u>17,044</u>	<u>7,715</u>	<u>24,759</u>	<u>47,585</u>
Balances carried forward	<u>28,210</u>	<u>12,500</u>	<u>40,710</u>	<u>24,759</u>

The charitable company has no recognised gains or losses other than the results for the year as set out above.

All of the activities of the charitable company are classed as continuing.





Summary of Income and Expenditure Account

Year ended 31st March 1998

	1998	1997
	£	£
Income	195,534	154,578
Total Expenditure	184,831	180,051
Operating Deficiency/Surplus	10,703	(25,473)
Other Income:		
Interest receivable and similar income	5,248	2,675
Interest payable and similar charges	0	(28)
Net (Deficiency)/Surplus for the financial year:	<u>15,951</u>	<u>(22,826)</u>

The charitable company has no recognised gains or losses other than the results for the year as set out above.

All of the activities of the charitable company are classed as continuing.





Balance Sheet as at 31st March 1998

Fixed Assets:	1998	1997
	£	£
Tangible Assets	2,046	<u>6,682</u>
Current Assets		
Debtors	13,596	10,428
Cash at bank and in hand	64,919	<u>34,341</u>
	<u>78,515</u>	44,769
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year:	(39,851)	<u>(26,692)</u>
Net Current Assets:	<u>38,664</u>	<u>18,077</u>
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities:	<u><u>40,710</u></u>	<u><u>24,759</u></u>
Reserves		
Designated funds		
Other Charitable funds	20,425	23,000
Restricted	7,785	(5,956)
	<u>12,500</u>	<u>7,715</u>
	<u><u>40,710</u></u>	<u><u>24,759</u></u>

These financial statements were approved by the members of the committee on 26th November 1998 and are signed on their behalf by:

Mr. M. Feerick

Mr. K. O'Byrne

Mr. P. McNally





Jimmy Burke

by **Shane Brennan**
Outreach Worker ISAS

This is the story of Jimmy Burke. Jim was born in 1930 and left his native Co. Galway in 1948. Like many of his generation, Ireland did not have a lot to offer at the time. In his own words “there was no work and I didn’t want to bother the family “. So, he headed for London to seek opportunities. He had no intention of staying in London for the next 50 years. If he had any plans, it was to get work, earn money, send money home and to eventually head back home and settle down.

Jim was part of a great influx of migrants from Ireland at this time. He found accommodation in Rowton House, which was on the Hammersmith Road. Rowton House no longer exists. It was a hostel which slept 180 men a night, many from the same part of the world as Jim.

Jim worked all his life in a variety of jobs, sometimes working on the major building sites of the time. He was part of that giant army of Irish men and women who rebuilt London after the war. Doing manual labour for most of your life eventually takes its toll on your physical health. As a result, he now suffers from very bad arthritis and has been taking pain killers for a number of years.

Over the last 50 years, Jim has lived in temporary accommodation, bedsits in and around the Hammersmith area. Jim has never been a great drinker and never gambled, besides the Grand National. However, he has never earned enough to save, although years ago, he managed to send money home.

I came across Jim while working with another client in Charing Cross Hospital in early 1997. He had been admitted to hospital after suffering from a mild stroke. Initially he asked for assistance with his pension claim, which had been an ongoing issue for him for some time. I did this. He was due to leave hospital at the end of the week and I said I would visit him at home the following week.

When I visited him, I had trouble gaining access to his room, which was at the back of a house on the Uxbridge Road. This can be a common problem with outreach work. Eventually, someone let me in. I walked down a long dark passage, then down a few steps. I was convinced no one would live down there. I came across Room Number 4. I knocked on the door and I heard Jim call out. I shouted out it was me, and after a while, Jim managed to let me in.





Jimmy Burke

Over the last 2 years, I have visited many people who live in just 1 room. These are classed as bedsits. But Jim's room was very small and I could see the bed, but everything else was full of clutter. Jim sat on a chair and looked very pleased to see me. I sat on the only available space, which was his bed. He was pleased to hear that I managed to deal with his pension.

I spoke to Jim about his housing situation. He told me his housing history. He has always lived in what can best be described as short-term accommodation, bedsits and single rooms. He has lived in his present room for a year-and-a-half and said that he was quite happy. In his room, there was no visible means of heating, no running water, he had to share a toilet with everyone else on his floor at the end of the corridor and the bathroom was 2 floors up. I talked about how we could move him into better accommodation. Jim, however, did not want to move. I suppose that after the shock of suffering from a mild stroke, he felt comfortable in this environment, so I left the issue of his housing for the time being.

While in hospital, Jim had reflected on the years gone by. He spoke emotionally about his family. Jim said he had lost all contact with them, but was keen to get in touch with his brother. He had never returned to Ireland since he left and asked me if I could possibly locate his brother. He gave me his brother's name and that of the town in Co. Galway. I said that I would try and asked him to consider his housing situation.

Finding people is a common feature of the work of our agency. Finding Jim's relatives was easy. He comes from a small town. A town where everyone is known to everyone else. We have copies of the Irish telephone directories, so after 3 calls, I was speaking to Jim's sister-in-law. She said that Jim's brother, her husband, had died 2 months ago. She mentioned that she would have contacted Jim, but she never knew where he lived.

I now had the unenviable task of relaying this information to Jim. It was several days before I visited him again, which gave me time to think how to approach this matter. Jim, like so many of his kind, has no family or relatives in London, and because of his mobility problems, has lost touch with many of his friends. Isolated and lonely, this news would be heart-breaking to him. I spent longer than normal there, and said I would call again soon. I gave him the address of his sister-in-law and asked him if he wanted to contact anyone else.

When I visited him again, he told me that he was OK. Again, I went through the process of how we could help him move into supportive housing. I said this would be a great help to him. He told me he would consider it.

The next time I called, he told me where he was living was fine and he did not want to 'put any one to trouble'. It is common in this work for many clients to decline help and services which they are entitled to. Many consider the work of social services, home helps, meals-on-wheels, etc., to be acts of charity. This is also often the case around claiming benefits that they are entitled to.





Jimmy Burke

When I left Jim, I told him I would stay in touch. Over the next few months, I occasionally popped in to see him. In the spring of 1998, I called on him and I could tell something was wrong. He told me how 3 days earlier, he was robbed on the street outside the front door to his home. They had taken his pension. He was not concerned about the money, but he was very frightened by the experience. Now, he asked me to start the process of finding him new accommodation. I referred him to special needs housing. I had 2 interviews with Jim with referral offers and within 3 weeks Jim was moved. He now lives in his own warden assisted, self-contained, one bedroom flat. He has more space, is warm and secure.

I believe Jim's story is typical of many of his generation. The story might vary here and there, but on the whole, you will not find great differences between many of the men who left Ireland in that period. Of course, some did very well, settled, married and had children, kept in touch with their families and often returned home. However, the facts are that high numbers of elderly Irish people in West London can be found living in the worst housing. They are suffering from high levels of bad health, higher than any other group in society.

It is the aim of the Outreach Service to assist these individuals in any way that we can, and if things go to plan, we will soon be able to offer an effective Outreach Service to Irish elders across West London.





Bridget's Story

by Val Vehemony
Social Worker

Bridget (name changed) presented herself to ISAS as a self-referral. She came to London from Co. Donegal Ireland in the 1960s, and settled down and married here. At 58 years of age, Bridget was widowed and living alone in housing association accommodation. Bridget needed help to fill in her Housing Benefit Application Form.

During the interview, it became clear that Bridget had other issues related to her health and well-being. With gentle prodding, I became aware that she had been diagnosed with a malignant carcinoma (cancer) in 1996 and underwent extensive and evasive surgery to remove the cancer and prevent the disease from spreading. Within weeks however, she was again receiving chemotherapy. The operation had not been the success Bridget prayed for.

Bridget had a short remission period, but had to undergo more chemotherapy in 1997 and radiotherapy in 1998. She has had a number of admissions to hospital and has had to attend numerous appointments for treatment as a out-patient. However, throughout this time, she was not given social work support or made aware of her entitlement to welfare benefits.

Without the help of the Irish Support & Advice Service, these important comforts would not have been made available to this terminally ill woman.

It is because the Irish Support and Advice Service is able to offer the full assurance of confidentiality and highly skilled staff, operating in a setting which is sensitive to the cultural needs of our users like Bridget, that we are able to discover peoples' true needs and make sure that the help we give is appropriate.

The forms for Disabled Living Allowance are complex and forbidding. This makes many who are in need reluctant to make a claim. It took us a good 2 hours to complete the forms for Bridget.

Irish Support and Advice Service made an immediate application, recognising that special rules apply in Bridget's terminal health condition. Of course, this advise and support should really have been provided by some other responsible agency as soon as Bridget's terminal illness was diagnosed. It is good to know that Bridget's application was successful and Disabled Living Allowance was awarded. We were there for Bridget when it mattered most, genuinely concerned and sharing her troubles by providing the practical help Bridget most needed.

All too often one hears the term "socially excluded" for those who, despite their ample and clear needs, escape the attentions of the services, which could help them. Irish people are all too frequently among the socially excluded - their needs not noticed nor numbers counted. Bridget's history is that of the socially excluded. It demonstrates the need and usefulness of the Irish Support and Advice Service.





Would you like to be a Volunteer?

If you have spare time and would like to help the
Irish Support and Advice Service, we have vacancies for:

Volunteer Advisers

Volunteer Outreach Workers

Volunteer Administrative

Volunteer Reception Workers

We depend on our volunteers for all we achieve for Irish
people in need.

Full training given.

No experience necessary and past experience and skills
put to good use.

**Telephone Jonathan McCafferty on:
0181 741 0466 for further details**

