



The London Irish Centre

Annual Report

2002/03



Art Class; Bridie Joyce

Serving Irish community for forty-nine years

Charity No. 221172

Our History – 49 YEARS OF SERVICE

The London Irish Centre was formed 49 years ago with the aim of providing the following services to the Irish community in London:

- To form a social service bureau to give advice on various problems and to keep a register of decent lodgings for men and women.
- To provide a hall for social and recreational functions.
- To provide temporary hostel accommodation.

In 1955 the London Irish Centre was formally opened and it has delivered all of the above services with consistency over the past 48 years.

MISSION STATEMENT

London Irish Centre Charity Community Services aims to respond to the unmet needs among Irish people for a culturally sensitive and supportive welfare advice/advocacy and training service which celebrates and promotes Irish culture, and counteracts the negative discrimination Irish people face as an ethnic minority group, especially in terms of their access to employment and mainstream provision.

Our Aims

- To provide a well managed and resourced Referral, Advice and Information service
- To provide support and training for disadvantaged persons
- To provide a range of in-house and outreach service to elderly Irish persons
- To provide services that will improve the health and well being of the Irish community
- To provide a missing persons service
- To provide a range of Irish cultural and educational programmes
- To provide a venue for Irish organisations to work from and the meet.

TRUSTEES' REPORT 2002/03

During the course of the past year the London Irish Centre achieved the objectives that it set out in its development plan. A number of new initiatives were put in place and its existing services performed to a high standard. The Centre's services were externally monitored and evaluated during the past year. Once again the Centre demonstrated its ability to deliver a range of efficient and effective services that make a real difference to peoples lives. The Centre exceeded all best value criteria. It demonstrated excellent levels

of performance and exceedingly high outcomes. The Centre is grateful to the assistance that it received from CEMVO (Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations) and Bennet Brooks for the professional consultancy provided. We are grateful to Irish Post and Irish World newspapers for highlighting important and key issues in the Irish community. The trustees deeply appreciate the excellent service given to the Centre by its staff, volunteers and committees. They are grateful to all who support the Centre through grants, fundraising and donations.

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

We've had another busy year. Our volume of service as measured by our Standardised Information Monitoring System shows a substantial increase in outcomes. We demonstrate our outcomes empirically rather than anecdotally. Frontline endeavour has extraordinary exigencies and continuity of service delivery remains paramount. The high service volumes achieved are proof of such continuity. They are also a sign of increased demand on our services. This has been noticeable in the wake of the closure and downsizing of similar services elsewhere.

Our pattern of expansion has increased this year. Our Elders Outreach Service in Kilburn began in November 2002 and has quickly achieved very high subscription levels. We were honoured to welcome Ambassador Daithi O Ceallaigh to our new offices in Kilburn to formally launch the Project. Our Health Volunteering Project for Elders also operates from Kilburn. The Irish Healthy Living Centre is preparing to launch from our Camden site. This will be a much needed health resource centre for the Irish community in London. Finally, we were pleased this year to receive grant approval for the first time for the ALG to develop our services. In particular, it will enable us to foster and develop increased participation of the Irish Community in Borough and London wide citizenship and

governance issues, ensuring that their voice is heard and taken into account. The ALG are a major charitable funder in London. We believe the approval of the ALG to be a strong sign of confidence in our ability to deliver services of good quality and variety.

This note would simply not be complete without an expression of sincere thanks and tribute to our staff whose dedication and purposefulness endure so demonstrably.

DEVELOPMENT WORKER

The year 2002/03 was remarkable period in the growth and development of services at the London Irish Centre.

New Funding Secured

Consortium on Opportunities for Volunteering – Volunteer Organiser.
New Opportunities Fund – Irish Healthy Living Centre Co-Ordinator.
Nuffield Foundation – Elders Outreach.
City Parochial Foundation – Elders Outreach.
Community Fund – Elders Outreach.
Community Chest – Disability Access Lift Repair and Refurbishment.

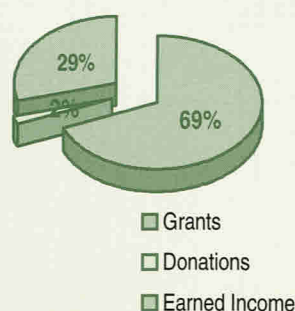
Renewed Funding

Irish Government, Dion Grant – Advice Service.
Irish Government, Dion Grant – Elders Outreach.
Irish Government, Dion Grant – Development Worker.
London Borough of Camden – Co-Ordinator and Administrator.
London Borough of Camden – High and Dry Club and Alcohol Assessment.
Durkan Ltd. – Elders Outreach.
Bridge House Estates Trust Fund – Youth Resettlement Project.

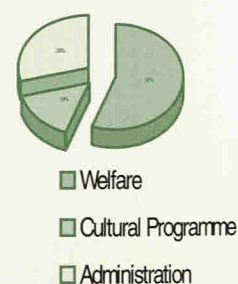
Applications Ongoing:

Association of London Government – Development Worker.
Heritage Lottery Fund – Irish Centre Heritage Project.
Primary Care Trust – Integration of Social

INCOMING RESOURCES



OUTGOING RESOURCES



Services previous funding.

The Older Persons project is now in its sixth year. It is a service for people aged 55 and upwards who may be in need of support and services in order to live independently within the community.

The Project Aims:

- To inform older people on services and encourage the take up of such services in order to promote a good quality life.
- To ensure that appropriate services are provided.
- To minimise the risks of isolation and loneliness by encouraging social interaction – introduction to Lunch Club, Group Activities.
- To link housebound older people with volunteer befrienders.
- To promote and encourage activities which will benefit health and well being.

How can Older People avail of the Outreach Service?

People can self-refer, be referred by family, friends, GP, Community Nurses, Social Advice Workers.

Older People are visited in their own homes. A basic checklist is used to establish the persons needs – it covers the following themes:

- **Housing**
- **General Health** -registered with GP, contacts with other health professionals.
- **Income/Benefits check**
- **Daily Living Tasks** – check the ability to attend to personal care matter, meal preparation, shopping, laundry and household chores.
- **Social Networks/Hobbies**
- **Family Contacts**

The resettlement of six people to sheltered housing has successfully taken place so far this year. Two other people are currently awaiting offers. The move to a new home is a big life change for people. The older person needs support, reassurance and assistance in order to cope with transition.

It is very rewarding to observe the positive changes to people's health and wellbeing as a result of moving to a better quality housing.

A quote from an older person who was recently resettled "The logistical problems of moving to a new home would have been much too difficult without your help".

Outreach Volunteers

The project is linked to Age Concern Camden's 'Good Neighbourhood Scheme'. There are currently a team of volunteer befrienders supporting the project. They are each linked with older housebound people who value the support they provide. Volunteers make planned visits to the older person with whom they are linked to on a weekly basis.

Daycentre

There is a Lunch Club facility three days per week – Monday, Wednesday and Friday. There is regular attendance of 25-30 people. It provides Older People with the opportunity to meet socially, to take part in group activities and share a meal together.

The members have had the opportunity to attend sessions on:

Health Awareness Topics
Crime Prevention – Personal Safety issues
Complementary Therapy

The following activities are provided:

Art – weekly on Monday afternoons. A colourful class enjoyed by 10 people.

Exercise – weekly on Wednesday mornings. Gentle exercises to music appreciated by 8 people.

Computer Skills – weekly on Wednesday afternoons – started this September. In its infancy stages – 7 keen members so far.

A quote from a member of the art group; "This is wonderful. It gives me a lift. It helps me cope with ageing and illness. It reassures me that the interests of older people are acknowledged by providing activities and information in the lunch club".

Thanks to Westminster Kingsway College for providing the Tutor support for the classes.

• The year 2002/2003 was an important year for the Survivor's Outreach Service. The service has continued to expand and now has in excess of four hundred clients. The increase in the numbers of clients suggests to us that there are many more survivors residing in the UK who would undoubtedly benefit from our service. Indeed, a key concern of the service is that the Redress Board has not yet been adequately advertised here in the UK.

• The establishment of the Education Fund for survivors and their families has been a very significant development this year. The purpose of this fund is to provide an opportunity for those who were denied an education to do a course of study that is of interest to them. Our service provides information and application forms relating to the fund.

• The recent resignation of Justice Laffoy and the future plans for the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, resulted in a high volume of calls to the service. We were in a position to provide reassurance to our clients who expressed concern about their application to the Redress Board.

• Over the course of the past year, many of our clients have received their records from the institution where they lived, and have required support in relation to this. Unfortunately, the information provided in these documents is generally minimal, leaving many survivors with a sense of further loss.

Many survivors have accessed this service to inquire about the effect of any compensation on their benefits. LISOS continues to offer more generic advice including information relating to benefits, health issues, housing, and records and family tracing.



Luncheon Club; Christmas party at the London Irish Centre.

Case History

The Centre provides a twice weekly Club for persons who refrain from alcohol. The quality of support provided to persons who have completed a time of detoxification practices and rehabilitation is exceptional. The Club is deeply grateful to Cavan County Council, Killnacrott Abbey and their supporters in Cavan for providing them with a wonderful holiday this year.



A master of the art of Irish music: Séan Casey at the Return to Camden Town Festival

Advice Worker's Report

The London Irish Centre offers a drop-in advice service, staffed by three full-time Social Advice Workers. This service has been offered for 50 years.

Social Advice Workers assist clients with a variety of issues. A large majority of clients seek assistance with Welfare Rights, Housing and Health related queries. Frequently these three main issues are presented in a single interview, and it is a role of an Advice Worker to decipher the client's immediate needs.

From experience it has been found, that while a client presents with a query relating to one topic, there are generally underlying issues. These include drug and or alcohol problems, domestic violence and harassment, literacy problems, social isolation, undiagnosed mental and physical health problems and chronic financial situations.

As a long established and respected Advice Service the London Irish Centre has built up strong links with other statutory and voluntary agencies. These contacts are a very important resource to the Advice Worker as they assist in meeting the needs of the presenting clients. Along with referrals to specific agencies, it is a growing trend for clients to be referred to the London Irish Centre as it is seen as a service that specifically addresses the needs of disadvantaged Irish in London.

Kathleen is a single parent caring for four school aged children. She had recently undergone a hip replacement operation and was having difficulties coping. She came to the London Irish Centre to seek information on obtaining a new bed that would provide her with the support she needed following the operation. This and other equipment for the house, to enable her to cope better due to restricted mobility, was arranged through a government grant. A benefits check was also conducted in the initial interview and it was discovered that applying for Disability Living Allowance could significantly increase Kathleen's income. This application was successful and follow up work included amending her Income Support, leading to an increase in the family's weekly income of £130. The London Irish Centre was in constant contact with the local council throughout this time as notifying them of changes to her income was essential for Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit purposes.

The London Irish Centre also organised for Social Services to visit her home and complete an assessment on her needs within the home environment. The results of this assessment lead to the installation of support rails around the house and a new shower being installed.

The result of the on-going work with the client has lead to a vast improvement in her circumstances and her quality of life has improved since initial consultation.

VOLUNTEERS

There are currently dedicated and loyal volunteers who donate their time and skills in the London Irish Centre. The appointment of a Volunteer Organiser to the Kilburn Elders Outreach Project ensures a planned extension of the volunteer service. The volunteer project been funded by the Consortium on Opportunities for Volunteering.

The Volunteer Organiser will ensure the volunteer service is planned, developed and evaluated.

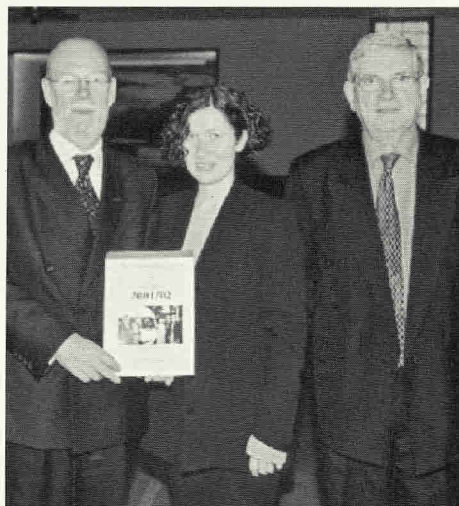
Volunteers complement the work of paid staff and extend the services that are provided. Their diversity and talents mean they make a real difference to the lives of the elderly Irish.

Time is valuable, and the London Irish Centre

aims to maximise volunteers time by providing them with worthwhile work. There are many elderly Irish living in the Kilburn area that needs volunteers to visit them. The Kilburn Elders Outreach Worker will identify elders who need befriending and help support volunteers within the project.

At the London Irish Centre we only want the best volunteers to work with Irish elders. The London Irish Centre welcomes and treats all volunteers as real staff. We have high expectations of volunteers and utilize volunteers to their best potential.

The London Irish Centre is indebted to the many volunteers who give their time to the organisation. We are confident that throughout the next year there will be a rapid rise in the number of volunteers who join the London Irish Centre.



Opening of new office in Kilburn: Irish Ambassador, Mr Daithi O'Ceallaigh, Patricia McDermott, Volunteer Co-ordinator and Mr John Higgins, trustee.

Quotes

"I came here because the staff understand."

"The Irish Centre arranged the holiday for me. It was my first time home after 44 years."

"I was homeless, I was desperate and the Centre got me accommodation."

"There is no place on earth like it."

- This project aims at maximising the; housing, benefits and welfare rights opportunities for our client group, (18-25 year olds.)

- We work to assess the client's situation and needs to be addressed and contact the relevant government departments to arrange help in the matters outlined above. We always help the clients to navigate the benefits system to ensure they receive all the help that they deserve.

- We also arrange referrals to outside services such as counselling, detoxification or rehabilitation centres should the client wish to pursue these avenues to improve their circumstances, something we always strongly advise.

- In some cases, when the clients display acute distress and vulnerability, (e.g. under 18's, victims of abuse,) and no longer wish to stay in London, preferring to return to Ireland to be with family/friends. Through the invaluable funding of the IYF, (Irish Youth Foundation,) we can then fund the cost of the ticket to return home. This is often a huge boost to our clients, who feel that they have nowhere to turn in order to get back to a safe environment.

- A significant part of the project is aimed at helping young single mothers to secure council accommodation in order to stabilise their lives and provide a suitable environment to raise their children. We also discuss training opportunities to enable them to return to work.

- It is always an ongoing endeavour to encourage our clients to seek careers advice from Job Power House, an excellent service within the Irish centre. JPH helps to enhance the clients self-belief and confidence as well as valuable knowledge of the employment options available to them.

There is also an ongoing task of expanding the number of hostels we are able to refer clients to, enabling us to house more clients in need at a faster rate. An example of this is Centrepont Safe stop, which specialises in housing young rough sleepers and now works in conjunction with us to help our clients maximise their opportunities and develop a sense of self worth and purpose.

PREMISES

During the past year many of the facilities of the Centre were upgraded, particularly the reception area, conferencing facility and main hall.

- Upgrade the facilities in the Centre and to improve accessibility particularly for people with disabilities.

- To research the history of the Centre

- To publish research commissioned by the London Irish Centre on the mental health and the Irish Community

- To extend the Elders Outreach Services, particularly in the Borough of Islington

- To encourage greater participation of the Irish Community in the formation of policy and decision making at a local and London wide levels ensuring that Irish issues are being properly addressed.

- In partnership with other charities the Centre provided holidays for over 80 people.

- The Centre's Outreach Service visited, assessed and arranged for additional care for over 100 housebound persons.

- 50 persons per week attend our High & Dry Club.

- Over 800 people visited our information on website each day.

- The Centre made 35,192 telephone calls on behalf of service users.

- The Centre received and dealt with 19,000 telephone enquiries.

- In excess of 3,000 participated in the Return to Camden, festival of traditional Irish culture.

- The Centre hosted some of the key cultural and social events in the Irish community.

PERFORMANCE

At the beginning of each year the Centre sets itself very clear and ambitious performance targets. This enables us to evaluate our service in relation to our targets.

- The London Irish Centre enabled Irish elders to secure benefit entitlements, care and additional pension income in excess of £1.5 m.

- The Centre enabled children, families and single parents to obtain an excess £750,000 in additional benefits and support.

- 600 people attended our welfare advice service and 20,000 pieces of advice were given.

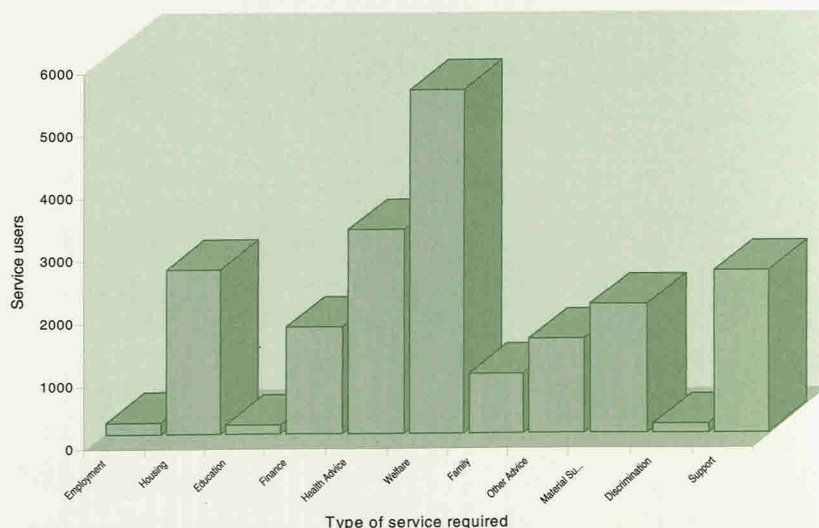
- The Centre secured housing and accommodation for 300 homeless persons.

- The Centre's Luncheon Club provided 100 dinners per week for elderly people.

Network

The Centre is grateful to the various agencies that supported us and our work during past year – Camden Voluntary Sector Unit, Camden BME Alliance, Irish Centre Housing, Cara Housing, An Teach, Innisfree Housing, ICAP, Camden Elderly Irish Network, London Irish Elder's Forum, Kiaros, Camden Social Services, Camden Homeless Persons Unit, Aisling Project, Kerry Emigrant Association, Job Powerhouse, Solas Anois, Voluntary Action Camden, Camden Volunteers Bureau, Camden Itec, London Arts, Quex Road Parish, Irish Chaplaincy, ICPO, Federation of Irish Societies, Irish Travellers Movement and Chaplaincy, The Passage, Arlington House, Rugby House, Alcohol Recovery Project, Age Concern, Camden Central Partnership, Faith Regen SVP, Kings Cross Furniture Unit, The Shaftsbury Society, Irish Voluntary Agencies.

Category Of Services Provided



Cultural Programme

The highlight of our cultural programme for 2002/03 was the **Return to Camden Town Festival**. This year the Centre was able to invite some of the internationally known musicians, singers and dancers to Camden. Our cultural programme in 2002/03 was as follows:

Monday

Irish music classes (fiddle, whistle, flute, banjo etc.) The music classes are organised by Karen Ryan and Kathy Walton.

Irish Step Dancing Classes for adults by Maire Clerkin.

Tuesday

Set dancing co-ordinated by Geoff Holland.

Wednesday

Tea dance organised by Molly Ormonde

Thursday

Irish language classes were co-ordinated by Donal Kelleher

Friday

Friday night dance organised by the Social Committee.

Members of Conradh na nGeilge and Comhluadar Ui Neill meet in the Centre.

Sunday

Ceile, old time and sets organised by Anton Coyle.

Organisations Based at the Centre

Irish Centre Housing

Tel: 020 7485 8889

Job Powerhouse

Tel: 020 7916 2725

Irish Chaplaincy in Britain

Tel: 020 7482 5528

Irish Commission for Prisoner's Overseas

Tel: 020 7482 4148

Camden Irish Elder's Network

Tel: 020 7428 0471

London Irish Elder's Forum

Tel: 020 8493 8222

Travelers Chaplaincy

Tel: 020 7482 5525

Comhaltas Ceoiltoiri Eirann

Tel: 020 7916 8727

Federation of Irish Societies

Tel: 020 7916 2725

Camden Safety Net

Trustees

Rev. P. Byrne OMI. OBE.

Mr. J. Higgins.

Mr. P. Fitzpatrick

Mr. J. Quinn

Mrs. M. Allen

Mr. S. McGarry

Photographers

Mel McNally

Paul Murphy

Tony Gay

Welfare Committee

A. Finan

T. Gallagher

A. Watson

F. Thornton

J. Coote

T. Ganley

C. Miedziolka

A. Glover

M. Lyons

T. Ganley

Staff Team

J. Kivlehan OMI Director

J. Twomey Co-ordinator

T. McEneaney Manager

P. Murphy Development Worker

C. Flanagan Administrator

P. McDermott Volunteer Co-ordinator

B. Folan Elder's Outreach

M. Ward Elder's Outreach

M. Black Advice Worker

R. Mahon Advice Worker

A. M. O'Rourke Advice Worker

R. Farrell Advice Worker

J. Duffy Youth Resettlement

M. O'Brien Survivor's Service

P. Morgan Survivor's Service

A. McDonnall Aisling

M. Heath Luncheon Club

B. Boylan High and Dry Club

L. Ryan Advice Worker

Cultural Programmes

Irish Music – Karen Ryan

Irish Music – Cathy Walton

Set Dancing – Geoff Holland

Step Dancing – Maire Clerkin

Ceile Dancing – Anton Coyle

Irish Language – Donal Kelleher

Social Club – Mary O'Brien

Elder's Tea Dance – Molly Ormonde

Comhaltas – Jim Myers

Council of Irish Counties – Mary Allen

Return to Camden Town Festival

Karen Ryan / Geoff Holland

Additional Services

Missing Persons – A. Slavin

Elders Keep-Fit – C. Nolan

Elder's Art Class – J. Bennet

Legal Advice – D. Long

Auditors

Allen Tully & Co.

156 Harcourt Ave

Sidcup,

Kent DA15 9LW

Volunteers

M. Kenny

E. Horacek

E. Malone

T. Lynagh

Sr. H. Bohane

Sr. C. Smyth

B. Brennan

S. Cummins

M. O'Reilly

P. Kelly

M. McCready

K. O'Neill

M. Smith

T. McEntee

M. Geiger

P. Roper

Funders

Grants List Received (Non Lottery), Dion (Irish Government) 3 Applications, Dept. of Education and Science (Irish Government), Dept. of Health (Irish Government), Bridge House Estates Trust Fund, Irish Youth Foundation, Nuffield Foundation/Phoenix Fund, City Parochial Foundation, London Borough of Camden, Cork County Council, Offaly Association, Wicklow Association, Clare Association, Ireland Funds, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Benevolent Society of St. Patrick, London Irish Festival, Family Welfare Association, Hunt Foundation, Allied Irish Bank, Campden Trust, The Irish World Newspaper, London Arts Board, Council of Irish Counties, Private Donations, Cavan Association, Irish Centre Social Club, Comhaltas Ceiltoiri Eireann, Bank of Ireland, Camden Central Community Chest, Lloyds TSB Foundation, Durkan Group.

Social and Cultural Committee

T. McAsey

M. Allen

P. Hynes

P. O'Brien

M. Sills

M. O'Brien

M. Fitzsimons

D. Kelleher

M. Kenny

J. O'Donohue

Bankers

Allied Irish Bank

629/634 Holloway Road

London N19 5SS

Bank of Ireland

43-45 Seven Sister Road

London N7 6BA

Annual Accounts 2002/03

	2002/03	2001/02
Fixed Assets	1,864,627	1,899,042
Debtors	117,089	119,916
Cash in Bank	186,231	143,569
Creditors	81,491	80,552
Net Current Assets	221,829	182,933
Total Assets less Liabilities	2,086,456	2,090,529

The London Irish Centre

50-52 Camden Square, London NW1 9XB

Tel: 020 7916 2222 (Community Services)

020 7916 7272 (Social and Cultural)

Email: info@Irishcentre.org

www.Irishcentre.org

Solicitor

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