



Leeds Irish health & homes

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT : 1996/7

REGISTERED AS AN INDUSTRIAL & PROVIDENT
SOCIETY WITH CHARITABLE
STATUS : 28320R

170-172 ROUNDHAY ROAD
LEEDS
LS8 5PL

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1. Who are Leeds Irish Health & Homes?

Leeds Irish Health & Homes (LIHH) are providers of a culturally sensitive housing service to single Irish people in need of support. We recognise how this community's experience of factors such as homelessness, poor quality and transient housing, discrimination, isolation and heavy manual labouring have contributed to a marked deterioration in Irish peoples' mental and physical health in Britain.

The Project has developed from a steering group set up in 1992, which was made up of service users, and professionals from the voluntary and statutory sector working in mental health, housing, and community research and development.

Formed in an attempt to respond positively and innovatively to 'The NHS and Community Care Act' (1990) and the Government document 'Health of the Nation'(1991), LIHH was officially constituted in 1996 as a member of the National Housing Federation and as an Industrial & Provident Society with charitable status.

Since September 1996, we have been successfully working in partnership with the Riding's Housing Association to provide 8 quality supported housing units to members of the Irish community of Leeds.

Specifically, Leeds Irish Health & Homes are responding to:

- The high number of homeless Irish people in Leeds;
- The over-representation of Irish people in Leeds admitted to hospital and referred for assessment under the Mental Health Act 1983;
- The lack of culturally appropriate support and services to Irish people in the community setting.

2. Aims & Objectives

- We will provide supported accommodation to single people of Irish heritage who are homeless or potentially homeless, experience or have experienced mental or physical ill-health
- We will support and assist our tenants to develop their skills for independent living
- We will raise awareness within the public and voluntary sector to the specific needs of Irish people in terms of their housing and health needs
- We will bring to the attention of the wider public, the needs of vulnerable Irish people
- We aim to establish a network of Irish people who are interested in the need for culturally sensitive support and mental health issues surrounding Irish homelessness
- We have a commitment to lobbying for an Irish category in all ethnic monitoring. We will act as an information exchange, providing a network for the various agencies concerned with Irish mental health issues
- To work in counteracting direct and indirect discrimination in the mental health service.

OUR PURPOSE AND HOW WE WORK

Our purpose is to manage supported housing for single homeless, or insecurely housed Irish people, and to offer related services to meet a range of their needs.

In our work we will:

- ⇒ Endeavour to achieve high standards
- ⇒ Behave with integrity and foresight
- ⇒ Demonstrate a commitment to Equal Opportunities
- ⇒ Respond with sensitivity to everyone with whom we deal
- ⇒ Encourage people to contribute and develop
- ⇒ Encourage partnerships to uphold and further our purpose

3. Chair Of Management Committee Report

There is no doubt that this first year of operations has been a very positive time for all of us. We have forged good relationships with Social Services, The Ridings Housing Association and the Irish Centre. By working together we are making an impact on the unacceptable levels of homelessness and poor housing conditions faced by single Irish people with mental and physical disabilities.

I pay tribute to the collective energies of my fellow committee members. All have given a great deal of time to the organisation despite having busy working lives. Irish Health & Homes are fortunate in having an enthusiastic and caring staff team who have done a great deal more than was expected of them.

Finally, we will continue to try to make a difference to the lives of Irish women and men who seek our services.

MARY SHEARD
CHAIR

4. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER'S REPORT

This has been a most exciting first year for myself as I have been part of the development of an idea into a reality. The hard work of the management committee to realise a culturally sensitive housing support service for single Irish people has at last paid off. Our aim for the forthcoming year must therefore be to build on this success and develop further a service which not only provides cultural sensitivity and quality housing management, but also seeks to build even stronger links with other services which can support our tenants in to develop opportunities for independence in the community.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING:

The ethos of the project is to provide an effective housing management service to our tenants, whilst recognising their different individual needs. I believe the key to partnership working is to understand where responsibilities begin and end. At LIHH we have been keen to develop working relationships with other service providers to ensure our tenants receive services they are entitled to. We regularly meet representatives from the Housing, Health and Social services, as well as being in contact with many voluntary organisations to ensure tenant's welfare.

As part of our commitment to raising awareness of the need for culturally sensitive practice with Irish people, I have given training to social work students, Approved Social Workers, social science students, mental health advocates and nursing students. This will continue to be a strong aim of the project throughout the next year.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT:

We have been able to provide 8 units of high quality accommodation through the Riding's Housing Association which have allowed us to illustrate that we can manage housing stock efficiently, effectively and responsibly. The statistical information will support this in relation to voids, arrears and response to tenant queries..

We are currently developing 'surgeries' at appropriate venues throughout the city which will make our service more accessible to referrals. The location of our offices make them inaccessible to disabled people, or those with with mobility

5. WORKING WITH THE RIDINGS HOUSING ASSOCIATION

The Ridings Housing Association welcomes opportunities to work with voluntary organisations such as Irish Health & Homes to provide supported housing to people with a variety of housing and support needs. As part of our commitment to Equal Opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice, we were particularly interested in working with Irish Health & Homes to address the needs of the Irish community in a culturally sensitive way.

The Ridings has experience of supporting community based initiatives and organisations, and, as such was prepared to "risk" working with a brand new organisation. Our assessment that Irish Health & Homes was an organisation which could deliver a quality service to tenants has been justified by their performance during 1996/97, in letting and managing 8 new 1 bedroomed flats which the Association made available to them in September 1996.

We look forward to an equally successful 1997/98.

Helen Lennon - Supported Housing Manager

problems and therefore many of our potential referrals cannot easily get to see us.

A number of policies have been developed which are underpinning the quality management of the service; these have been a Financial, Confidentiality, Equal Opportunities, Referral and Allocations, Finance Policy and Procedures, Rent Arrears and Support Plan. We are also in the process of developing our initial Tenant Participation Policy which is currently being assessed by our Tenant's group.

DEVELOPMENT

We welcome the Housing & Community Care Strategy document which has been produced this year through the JCC. This has recognised that people from black and ethnic minority communities clearly prefer to have services delivered to those communities by people from those communities. LIHH will seek to build upon this premise, to increase its referral base and reflect the needs of the people we were set up to provide a service for.

This next year will see us increasing our housing stock with 12 local authority properties which should put us in a stronger financial position for the years to come.

Our aim is to strengthen our partnerships, with further opportunities to provide training for workers, in addition to continue practical working together procedures.

All of these developments have the aim of providing the best service we can to our tenants. A service that is both sensitive and responsive to their individual need.

For any organisation to succeed requires hard work, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sharon for her commitment and effort, to the Management Committee for their original vision and commitment to the project, to The Ridings Housing Association and finally, to our tenants for their ideas and input.

Anthony Hanlon : Project Development Manager

6. STATISTICAL INFORMATION

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

LIHH acknowledges that in society certain groups and individuals are unfairly discriminated against. We are committed in taking positive steps to help to redress the effects of unfair discrimination and disadvantage in order to ensure that equality of opportunity becomes an integral feature of all its activities. LIHH aims to eliminate discrimination on grounds of race, colour, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, Aids/HIV status, disability, age or history of mental health or addiction problems. The Equal Opportunities Policy of this project is applicable to all Tenants, Committee Members and Staff. We also aim to encourage co-operation from consultants, suppliers and associates.

Within LIHH, we monitor gender, ethnicity, sexuality and disability. We will endeavour to balance access to housing for men and women and ensure that a percentage of our stock meets disability standards.

Tenant gender at present is 50% women and 50% men.

SERVICE DELIVERY

LIHH is committed to providing the best service it can to meet the individual needs of its tenants. Since September we have developed some of the policies which will ensure that our service delivery is monitored, evaluated and enhanced. An aim for the forthcoming year is to have most housing management policies in place by March 1998.

Current policies in place, or awaiting approval are :

- Equal Opportunities
- Referral and Allocations
- Finance
- Confidentiality
- Arrears
- Support Plan

We have also developed a tenant's induction package to foster our tenants with quality and accessible information about housing related matters and local

resources. We have also developed a Tenant's handbook which supplements this, as well as providing information on tenant's rights and emergency procedures.

We are currently one of the only housing projects which is actively pursuing a Tenant Participation Policy. This is being developed through our recently established Tenant's group. We believe that in order to provide a quality service to our tenants, we need to give them as much information as possible and to encourage them to be involved in the running of the Project. This is an ethos we hope to actively develop in all aspects of our work.

Our voids figure during the year stood at 11%. This figure represents voids incurred between handover of the properties in September and the final tenant being in place by 4th November. The target for next year is to keep voids below the 5% maximum set by the Housing Corporation.

After the voids figure has been taken out, 100% of the rental income due in 1996/7 was collected. This is a very clear indication of our aim to secure a firm financial basis for the Project's development.

Our response rate to requests or repairs from tenants has been both effective and efficient with the support worker ensuring those responsible for the appropriate queries were informed and monitored for their response.

REFERRALS

Since our referral book opened in September 1996, we have had a steadily rising number of people referred to us. Much of our efforts this year have been centred on making potential referral sources aware of our existence, and ever increasingly, heightening people's sensitivity to the cultural needs of Irish people, which most have acknowledged that they had never considered as different from British people.

We have also spent time developing trust within the local Irish community that we were delivering an appropriate service for their needs, when many services in the past have been insensitive to their culture and life experiences.

I feel that 1997/8 will find us with an ever increasing demand for our services and expertise.

7. ACCOUNTS

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 1997

£

FIXED ASSETS

Tangible fixed assets

2503

CURRENT ASSETS

Balance at bank and cash in hand

10635

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Creditors - amounts falling due within
one year

(6805)

NET CURRENT ASSETS

3830

6333

REPRESENTED BY

ACCUMULATED FUNDS - General

6333

Income & Expenditure Account for the period ended 31 Mar 97

£

INCOME

Rent receivable

18640

Less voids

(2160)

16480

Grant - LCC, Social Services

21000

Donations

850

Bank interest received

448

TOTAL INCOME

38778

EXPENDITURE

(48566)

DEFICIT FOR YEAR BEFORE SNMA

(9788)

SNMA receivable

16121

SURPLUS FOR YEAR AFTER SNMA -

Transferred to accumulated funds

6333

Expenditure details for the period ended 31 Mar 97

£

Salaries	21177
Employers NIC	2153
Staff recruitment costs	1103
Training costs	592
Subscriptions, books and publications	1140
Printing, stationery and postage	1049
Office rent	800
Telephone	396
Repairs and maintenance - office	1234
Housing Association management charge	11549
Travel and car expenses	724
Insurance	256
Audit and accountancy	564
Secretarial services	115
Furniture and equipment - Housing units	4061
Clients welfare	421
Management committee expenses	261
Payroll administration costs	113
Depreciation of fixed assets	625
Sundries	233
	<u>48566</u>

8. PERSONNEL INFORMATION : 1996-7

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR	MARY SHEARD
VICE-CHAIR(S)}	CLODAGH MURPHY MAUREEN SHERIDAN
SECRETARY	AGGIE NOTHARD
TREASURER	PATRICK O'CONNOR (to December 1996) MEL NALLY (from March 1997)
	JOHN MELAUGH GARY BURNS PETER McHALE MAGGIE GILES-HILL (resigned July 1996)

STAFF MEMBERS

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT
MANAGER ANTHONY HANLON

HOUSING SUPPORT
WORKER SHARON MURPHY

AUDITORS

I M E OMAR & CO
Chartered Accountants
St Alban's House
577/587 Harehills Lane
Leeds
LS9 6NQ

BANKERS

BANK OF IRELAND
31 King Street
Leeds
LS1 2HL

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the year, we have worked closely with the following:

Leeds Irish Centre
Leeds Irish Welfare Service
Leeds Social Services
Leeds City Council
Ridings Housing Association
English Churches Housing
St Vincent de Paul Society
Action For Gipton Elderly
Richmond Hill Elderly Aid
Leeds Community And Mental Health Trust
St Anne's Shelter & Housing Action
St Augustines RC Church
St Patricks RC Church
St Nicholas' RC Church
Help The Aged
London Irish Housing Forum
Federation Of Irish Societies
Cllr Patrick Hennigan
Cllr Maggie Giles-Hill

Our Funders this year have been :

Leeds Social Services
Housing Corporation

We would also like to thank those who have supported us through donations and kind word during this first year. Slainte.