



Brent Irish Advisory Service



# Information Pack



Brent Irish Advisory Service

BIAS provides a range of innovative and high quality advice, information and specialist support services to the Irish community in Brent and Harrow primarily, with some services London-wide

## Current services provided by BIAS include:

- ☐ Generalist Advice & Information
- ☐ Housing Advice & Support
- ☐ Children & Families Social Work Project
  - ☐ Transition To Old Age Project
  - ☐ Elders Community Care Project
  - ☐ Opportunities for Volunteering
  - ☐ Travellers Youth Project
  - ☐ Youth Peer Mentoring Project
  - ☐ Group work in Prisons

BIAS  
The Old Library Building  
Willesden Green Library Centre  
95 High Road  
London, NW10 2SF  
Tel: 0208 4659 6655  
Fax: 0208 459 6699  
E-mail: [bias.brent@btconnect.com](mailto:bias.brent@btconnect.com)



Brent Irish Advisory Service



Embracing the Diversity of  
Irish Culture and Identity ....  
Promoting Empowerment  
and Independence

1978 to 2003

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## **BIAS Mission Statement**

**"To provide accurate, skilled and impartial advice, information and support services to all sections of the Irish community in Brent primarily and London generally"**

## **BIAS Vision**

**"Embracing the Diversity of Irish Culture and Identity ....  
Promoting Empowerment and Independence"**

## **BIAS Aims and Objects**

- ☐ To promote the social and cultural welfare of Irish people and to improve their position in society through equality of opportunity
- ☐ To co-ordinate existing resources and groups within the Irish community and to encourage and support the development of new resources and groups if necessary
  - ☐ To co-operate and liaise with statutory and voluntary bodies with a view to improving the services offered
- ☐ To create an awareness of the socio-cultural background of Irish people and to promote a better understanding of their needs
- ☐ To work for the elimination of racial discrimination and disadvantage within a multi-racial and multi-cultural society





## MESSAGES FROM BIAS FOUNDING MEMBERS

A Chairde,

Ta an-bhrod orm agus ta se d'onoir orm an talt beag seo a scriobh dhaoibh. It is a great honour to be invited to contribute to the BIAS 25th anniversary report. I have lived in Brent since 1972, when I first migrated to London with a simple five-year plan. My plan was to gain experience working in social services, to become a qualified social worker, and to return to work in my native Dublin. I achieved the first and second parts of my plan. After working for Brent social services from 1972-76 I was awarded a one-year government grant to train in social work and I qualified in 1977. But the third part of my plan - to return to Dublin - has yet to be achieved!



After first coming to London I observed and experienced how Irish people were treated, or should I say mistreated, by the public services that we pay for through tax. It was (and is) what is now called institutional discrimination. So during my year's social work training I decided to explore this whilst on my student placement at the Carlton Centre in south Kilburn. Very soon I was bombarded with one local case after another concerning Irish people's experiences with housing, jobs and social security. Their needs seemed great. And there was no Irish community organisation that could respond to those needs. I compiled statistics that showed Irish people over-represented among homeless, unemployed and those with mental health problems - but under-represented within the services dealing with those issues.

Notices were placed in the Irish Post and Kilburn Times inviting local Irish people to meetings in the Carlton Centre to discuss issues of concern. Increasing numbers of people attended the meetings, which were always lively and interesting, and it became clear that

people wanted to act together for future change. Eventually it was agreed to call a public meeting in January 1978 to discuss and agree a way forward. At the public meeting it was agreed to set up the Brent Irish Steering Group comprising five members elected from the floor of the meeting. The north of Ireland was in turmoil at this time and never far from our minds so many different political views were voiced at the meeting. The elected Steering Group represented all those views and its members always showed mutual respect for each other's political and religious views.

The Steering Group produced a report on the need for Brent Irish Advisory Service. Advice sessions run by trained volunteers were launched and those sessions generated much evidence of housing and care needs among Irish people in the Brent area. The management committee applied to Brent Council for funding to employ a paid worker. With Brent Council's support the committee invited me to act as temporary organiser from June 1979 until a permanent worker was found. But I stayed for over eight years, until October 1987. For the first five years I was the only paid worker, but thanks to the hard work of the committee, the volunteers, and the staff we continued to develop a range of services for those most in need. Much more has been achieved since then as you will read in this report. And there is so much more yet to be done. Ni neart go cur le cheile. Go raibh mile maith agaibh as bhur gcunamh.

Beir bua is beannacht, Donal Mac Craith  
(Donal McGrath)

## MESSAGES FROM BIAS FOUNDING MEMBERS

A Chairde,

It is extraordinary. A quarter of a century has flown by since we and others joined together to attempt to provide some kind of service that would address the complex needs of Irish migrants coming to Brent. We are privileged and proud to have been associated with and involved in the development of BIAS. Against so many odds and so many struggles to survive, BIAS has grown, beyond our initial expectations and today can proudly state that thousands of first and second-generation Irish

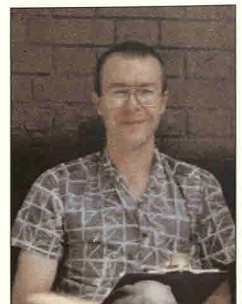
people are enjoying a lifestyle that without BIAS would have been beyond their reach. Customer and service user feedback of an unqualified nature regarding the relevance of BIAS is continuously gratifying and rewarding. We look forward to many more years of service to our community and are delighted to have provided 25 years of continuous voluntary service to BIAS and the Irish community it serves.

Go raibh mile maith agat, Marie Dalton and Margaret Gallagher.



*Some of BIAS Founding Members*

*Various former BIAS Staff*

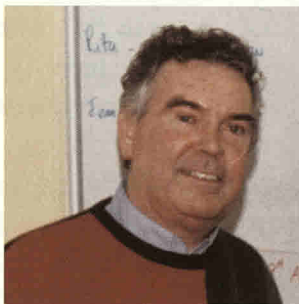




## CHAIRPERSONS REPORT - COLUM MOLONEY

**This report is dedicated to the current, previous and future users of BIAS services, also to our founding members.**

In any review of 25 years it is only possible to focus on a few of the key milestones, however we have cheated by drafting a brief diary of our work over the years! There have been so many milestones and achievement to date and we wanted to share all of them with you! **We hope will enjoy reading this report as much as we enjoyed writing it!**



I am now in my 20th year as Chairperson of BIAS I am delighted to be part of this grass roots, innovative, dynamic and caring organisation. I never thought when I joined BIAS Management Committee in 1983 that I would be the Chairperson celebrating our 25th anniversary this year. Like many Irish people coming to London, my plans were to get work experience and return to my native Longford to live, the latter has not been realised ... yet.

For the past 25 years BIAS has been providing culturally sensitive advice, information and specialist support services to the Irish community in Brent primarily and London generally. The organisation was the brainchild of a group of concerned Irish people who wished to respond to stark need in the Irish community in Brent at that time. They believed a culturally accessible organisation providing advice and information was the best way to achieve this aim. We owe it to the founding members who had the conviction and vision to establish a community based and independent voluntary organisation, which was non-religious, non-sectarian and non-political. Because of the values held by founding and existing members, BIAS has an "open door policy" and embraces an all-inclusive Irish community.

Originally operating in the Brent area of London, BIAS now provides services in many other boroughs with some operating across the whole of London. Since formation we have grown from a small organisation providing a generalist advice service by a group of volunteers, to become a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity with a much wider range of services. We now have fifteen staff members and in excess of twenty volunteers.

BIAS has made dramatic inroads into improving the welfare of Irish people locally and elsewhere. We have been able to adapt to the changing face and needs of the Irish community and now have a proven track record of high quality service provision. BIAS has published many reports over the years, was instrumental in the establishment of a number of independent organisations, taken on a representative role for the Irish community while at the same time providing caring and high quality services.

The Irish community forms a substantial proportion of London's resident population. Irish emigrants are the largest group originating from a single overseas country. It is a fact that the Irish community has contributed immensely to the development of industry and commerce, social infrastructure and to health and education provision in the Britain. Irish emigrants have also had a major impact on the British social and cultural life, making positive and lasting contributions to the artistic, creative and sporting worlds.

Sadly to say some Irish people have great difficulty in adjusting to British society and there are distinct groups of Irish people with particular needs and experiences, which impact negatively on their capacity to have secure and happy lives in England. A significant and



disproportionate number have experienced disadvantage, ill health and exclusion from mainstream services. High rates of unemployment, homelessness, suicide drug and alcohol problems and a poor community mental and physical health profile have been well documented in local and national research reports. This is why there is a need for an organisation such as BIAS.

Demand for services at BIAS has significantly increased and continues to increase year after year. Sadly to say in 2003, the situation of Irish people has not changed, in fact the disadvantage, poverty and ill-health increases each year as does the demand for our services.

We look forward to the challenges and struggles of the next .. 25 years!



*Ministerial visit to BIAS*

*Current BIAS Staff & Volunteers with The Mayor of Brent Cllr Peter Lemmon  
December 2003*

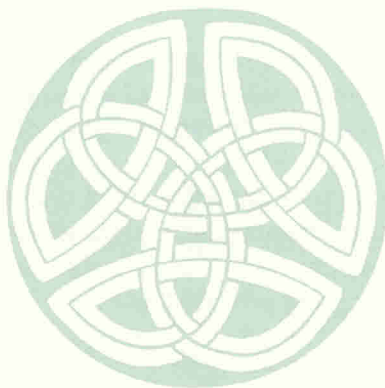




Brent Irish Advisory Service

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 11<sup>th</sup> 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
- ☐ 1<sup>st</sup> 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
- ☐ 2<sup>nd</sup> 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
- ☐ 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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
- ☐ 4<sup>th</sup> 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**

- ☐ 5<sup>th</sup> 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 (3<sup>rd</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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**

- ☐ 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003 Karen Mc Hugh (4<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

Tel: - 0208 459 6655; 0208 459 6699; e-mail: - bias.brent@btconnect.com.

Compiled and edited by Karen Mc Hugh (BIAS)

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## QUOTES FROM SOME OF OUR SERVICE USERS

### STILL HERE ... THANKS TO BIAS

#### **"7.30 ARRIVED AT EUSTON"**

That's what an old diary, I found lately, says. I was looking for it for some time as I was wondering when exactly I came to live in London.

#### ***The date was 30th October 1980***

Then I was off on the whirlwind of living in the big city. This involved living both North and South of the Thames ... Hither Green, Herne Hill, Sydenham, ..... then to Finsbury Park, Highbury, Haringey, Wood Green Alexandra Park.

"Sometimes life was good – other times more difficult"

I had worked on the building in Kilburn in the late 70s as a student, so coming to Queen's Park from a stay at Sydenham allowed me to revisit the old haunts on the High Road and compare notes. The area was fine but a little bit older (and hopefully wiser) – *I have not the same energy for flat land.*

Contacting BIAS – they proved helpful, letting me know the housing options that might be available. I joined a Co-op for a short while - moving to Wembley. BIAS then assisted me with getting more permanent accommodation. With the Neasden Temple on one side, and the Harlesden area the other side and some Irish people still around – I feel a lot more settled than I have been for some time. Strolling down Harlesden High Street is a lot more pleasant than many people realise.

As the heavy traffic goes up and down the Willesden High Road, it is reassuring to know that BIAS and its' excellent staff, based in that red brick building at the Willesden Green



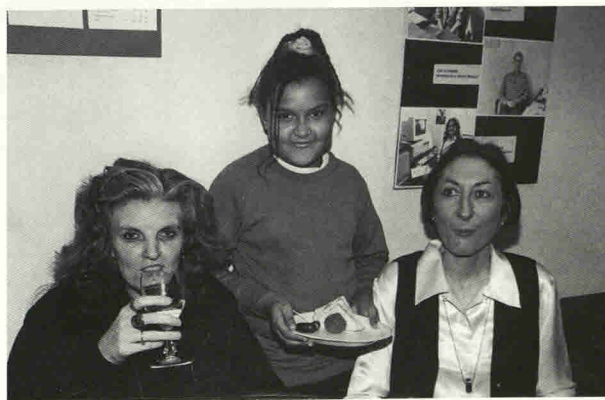
Library Centre are there to provide help and support to Irish people in the area.

***"My diary might say when I got here but thanks to BIAS am still in the race with lots of Career options"***

*by Liam Hogan*

I am 49 years of age and first made contact with BIAS in 1993 when my marriage broke down. I was in an awful state and did not know what to do. Having 6 children at that time, BIAS Social Worker got me re-housed in a Bed & Breakfast. I spend almost 7 years in B&B's, hostels and other temporary housing in Brent and Harrow. I finally got permanent housing last year in Harrow. It has been a long and hard road but BIAS helped me get my life back together again. BIAS is like my extended family. I have 7 children and 11 grandchildren. One of children did a placement in BIAS and thoroughly enjoyed it. I don't know where I would be today if BIAS did not exist.

"I was vulnerable but am now stronger .... thanks to BIAS" *by Monica McLeod*



"I have been with Brent Irish Advisory of nearly 15 years now, and they have helped me wonderfully. I have always, and still do look forward to going to the Tuesday Luncheon Club when I feel well enough to do so. We used to have a week's holiday twice a year, and we went to Ireland for a wonderful holiday. If BIAS were not there, there would be no place for Irish elderly like me to go for advice and help. The staff from BIAS take us to hospitals, and visit us when we weren't well. We've had a lot of parties, good lunches and bingo – and still do. BIAS has, and continues to make a difference in my life" *by Anne McGloin*



## QUOTES FROM SOME OF OUR SERVICE USERS

"I find BIAS excellent in dealing with any problems and questions that people go to them with – they sort out **everything** for them. Every one of the staff are friendly, helpful, and are sensitive to the way Irish people are"  
by *Ann Cahill*



"I have only been with BIAS since September last year (2003), but I think they do a great job for Irish people here in London. I would never have been "sorted" if it was not for BIAS as I hadn't a clue where to start when I had to leave work because of illness" by *Tony Carolan*



I have gained a lot by coming to BIAS, the staff are very helpful and polite. I don't know what I would have done without BIAS help. I would have been at deaths door" by *Sylvia*

".... I think it is really great that an organisation (BIAS) are considering Travellers needs ... nobody really cares about Irish Travellers .... "



"Their knowledge of the system and experience is second to none. The service provided was excellent and professional"

"I have been going to BIAS for almost a year now, and they have been wonderful – it has made such a difference to my life as I am sure I would not have got help in the way I have got it from BIAS had I gone somewhere else. I have recommended Irish people to go to BIAS if they have any problems and still do – I feel confident that they can help with any problems. My life has improved since going to BIAS" by *Margaret Brophy*

".... my social worker (from BIAS) really helped me a lot to cope with looking after my three kids under 5 years of age. I had just come from Ireland. I knew no-one and had no where to live ...."

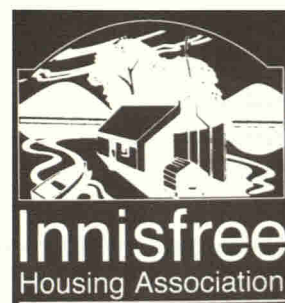


## ORGANISATIONS WITH LINKS TO BIAS

### Innisfree Housing Association

Extract from Innisfree 2002 Annual Review and 1988 Factsheet

"Innisfree Housing Association Limited attained registration as an Industrial and Provident Charitable Society on 8th May 1985. The Association was formed on the initiative of members of the Brent Irish Advisory Service (BIAS) to help to meet the needs of the growing numbers of homeless and inadequately housed Irish people in Brent and elsewhere



Housing Associations have often been criticised as being dominated by "middle-class do-gooders". By contrast, the seven founder members of Innisfree, all of them Irish, are very much representative of the community they wish to serve. ... Innisfree has been formed to meet the housing needs, which are currently overlooked by Brent and other Councils and by existing bodies."

Innisfree Housing Association is a leading housing provider in London now. It employs in excess of 18 staff and has over 300 Homes in ownership, with many more in the pipeline. We are delighted with Innisfree's achievements since 1985 and delighted to be so closely involved with the organisation to this day.

### Age Concern Ealing Borough Irish Advice Service

Extract from BIAS Annual Review 1997/98

"We are proud to announce a joint initiative with Age Concern Ealing borough, which began in January 1998. The main objective in spearheading the Irish Advice Service was to make available to the Irish elderly in Ealing an Advice Worker of their own origin and background, who could make a culturally sensitive service responsive to their specific needs as a separate ethnic group. With a population of 16,504 (Census 1991), Ealing is rated as having the second largest Irish population of all London boroughs. There is no other Irish specific service in Ealing."



We are delighted that this service secured funding from The Irish Government through the DION Committee and now employs two part-time workers providing advice, information and day-care service to Irish elderly in the borough.

### The Irish Traveller Movement

Extract from Inaugural Steering Group Meeting Minutes

"The first meeting of the new UK based Irish Travellers' support group took place at the BIAS office's in Willesden Green on 21st January 1999. The meeting was convened in response to a series of meetings organised by BIAS in 1998, which highlighted the need for a nation-wide organisation that could act as an advocate for Travellers' rights and needs. .... The meeting highlighted the many areas where Irish Travellers's need support, advocacy and representation. The list includes social exclusion, welfare benefits, vocational training, anti-discriminatory practices, youth, housing, health et al.... In order to take the new group forward, members agreed that funding for a Development Worker was necessary.... In order to ensure the widest possible membership of the ITM, all Travellers Sites and appropriate organisations need to be notified of future meetings."



We are delighted to say that the ITM is now registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee and is awaiting Charitable Registration. It also employs a full time Project Worker and hope to expand once additional funding is secured.



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS, STAFF, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS 1978-2003

### Chairpersons

Noel Moynihan	(1977 – 1979)
Padraic Kenna	(1979 – 1982)
Kevin McCarthy	(1982 – 1984)
Colum Moloney	(1984 – present)

### Co-ordinators/Directors

Donal Mac Craith	(11th June 1979 – 1st November 1987)
Padraic Kenna	(1st November 1987 – 1st December 1988)
Stan Quirey	(1st February 1989 – 1st December 1997)
Karen McHugh	(1st December 1997 – 31st March 2002)
Peter O'Callaghan	(31st March 2002 – present)

### Committee Members

Catherine Coleman, Francis Corr, John Leonard, Marie Dalton, Kevin McCarthy, Margaret Gallagher, Eamon Reidy, John Clarke, Agnes Lewis, Kieran Bradley, Padraic Kenna, Tony Donnellan, Michael O'Callanain, Stan Quirey, Tim Hartnett, Donal McGrath, John Keene, Helen McCarthy, Mary MacNamara, Louise McKeon, Jim Smith, Jim Glackin, Des Nugent, John Healy, Ursula Taylor, Agnes O'Connor, Kathryn Maguire

### Staff Members

Donal McGrath, Jim Smith, Maria Power, Padraic Kenna, Jim Glackin, Nora O'Donnell, Maria Maguire, Geraldine Vessey, Patricia Gormely, Stan Quirey, Jeanne Dermody, Jonathan Moore, Patricia Kennedy, Karen McHugh, Peter Hickey, Rita Rafferty, Anne-Marie Keaney, Dee Mulgrew, Carol Coulton, Karen Brown, Catherine Mulvenna, Catherine, O'Reilly, Sean McCollum, Susan Russell (The Trasna Project), Mary O'Dwyer, Theresa, O'Meara, John Fay, John O'Gorman, Marian O'Donoghue, Rita Mooney, Michael Connors, Patricia Carey, Elizabeth Farrell, Anthonia Marchington, Richie Butler, Irene Gaffney, Mary McLoughlin, Anne Nagle, David Augusta, Patsy Twomey, Geraldine Clancy, Leanne O'Leary, Veronica Kemp, Margaret Sellars, Christine Chapman, Edmund O'Brien, Peter O'Callaghan, Michelle Cawley, Oonagh Honeyman, Georgina O'Donoghue, Karen Gilchrist, Patricia McCrossan, Danny McCloskey, Theresa Ryan, Tracy Ann Thomas, Maureen Conway, Sarah Healy, Aidan Ryan, Maire O'Neill, Una Halpin


### Students

Patricia Cyhan, Stan Quirey, Catherine Monaghan, Eileen MacKay, Carol Patterson, Linda Beard, Mary Moss, Riaz Syed, Sharon Cole, John Ryan, Nora O'Loughlin, Roisin McKeon, James Quinn, Des Nugent, Liz Grace, Elizabeth Farrell, Deirdre Reynolds, Marian O'Donoghue, Hussain Saheh, John Fay, Mandy Woods, Mary McLoughlin, Nathan Quigley, Ann Daly, Patricia McCrossan, Julia Grey, Michelle Cawley, Oonagh Honeyman, Mary Quinlan, Gerry Kelly, All other students not mentioned above

### Volunteers

All founding member volunteers (1977-1983), Chris Mullen, Delma O'Connell, Richie Butler Natalie Brash, Mary Gormely, Malcolm, Chris Kerrigan, Carol Patterson, John Keyes, Andrew McHugh, Nora Jones, Ellen Sheehan, Marie Dermody, John Plank, Cheryl Plank, Joanne Henry, Bridget Timlin, Gerry Cougan, Carmel Murphy, Kelly Brown, Nino Bryan, Bridget Quirke, Myra Scanlon, Mary O'Connor, Jim Donnelly, Ellen Nolan, Tom Traynor, Martin O'Toole, Michael O'Donoghue, Michael O'Keefe, Sean Gorman, Phiroza Gan, Peter Coleman, Les Roberts, Tessa Abrahams, Bridget A. Barry, Anthony McMahan, Abi Oyepitan, Laura Giaconi, Juji de Sousa, Thomas Borg, Caroline Teehan, Danielle Foley, Theresa Perera, Caroline Ann Hardnick, Davin Gunning, Christina Nolan, John Telfer, Geraldine Burke, Anne Keane, Marie Hughes, Samantha Brien and all other volunteers not mentioned above

## BIAS PUBLICATIONS 1978-2003



1979/80	1st Edition of The Irish in Britain Directory
1980/81	2nd Edition of The Irish in Britain Directory
1981/82	3rd Edition of The Irish in Britain Directory
1982/83	Four-page supplement to the 3rd Edition of Irish in Britain Directory
1985/86	Report on Mental Health and the Irish Community
1988/89	Report on the Irish Community and Mental Handicap
1988/89	- The Irish in Ealing - Irish Homeless Families in London - 4th Edition of The Irish in Britain Directory
1992/93	- Moving to Ireland - Moving within the European Community - Who Cares for the Irish Community?
1993/94	5th Edition of the Irish in Britain Directory
1994/95	Alcohol and the Irish Community in the London borough of Brent
1996/97	- Irish Travellers Health Access Profile - Transnational Community Care Project Action Report - The Hidden Minority – Mental Health and the Irish Experience in Brent (BIAS and Equal Access) - Teach na nGael – Proposal for an Irish Mental Health Resource in Brent (BIAS and Equal Access) - Irish Health Profile - An investigation into the health needs of the Irish Community in Brent and Harrow (BIAS and Equal Access)
1997/98	Homes for Young Irish People in London – handbook on housing options
1999/2000	Irish in Harrow Needs Analysis – An Assessment of the Community Care Needs of the Irish Community in the London borough of Harrow

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.

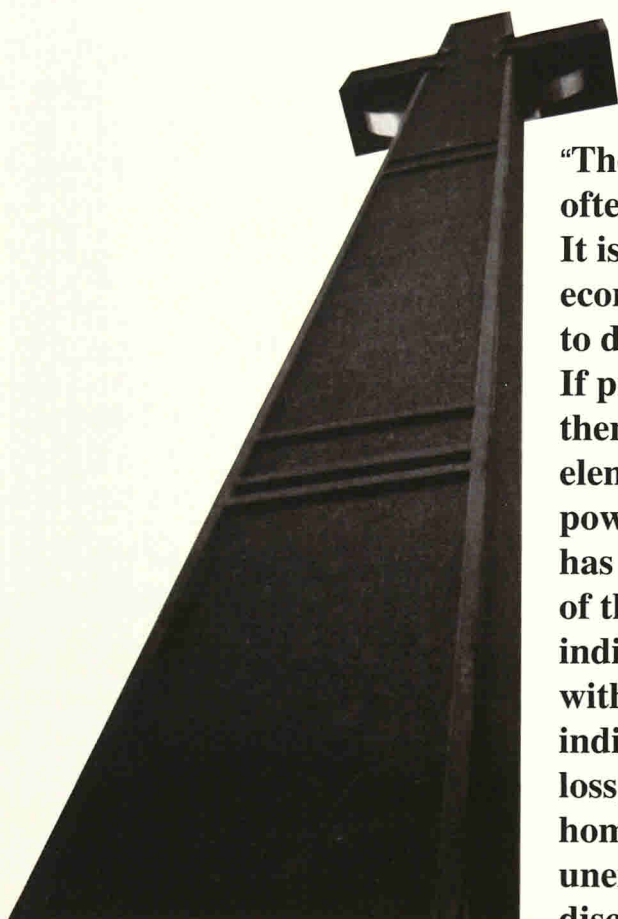
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Tel: - 0208 459 6655; 0208 459 6699; e-mail: - bias.brent@btconnect.com.

Compiled and edited by Karen Mc Hugh (BIAS)

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**"The Irish Experience in British society is often not appreciated nor understood. It is important to bear in mind how social, economic and political structures continue to disadvantage and oppress Irish people. If practitioners ignore anti-Irish racism then they fail to take into consideration key elements of organisational and professional power. An understanding of Irish culture has to be integrated with an understanding of the social conditions which disabled individuals experiencing mental distress within the Irish community. Stress indicators such as emigration, loneliness, loss, isolation, poverty, the myth or return, homelessness, sub-standard housing, unemployment, exclusion and discrimination have to be taken on board as casual factors in the Irish mental health experience. Mental ill-health is sometimes the price they have to pay for adaptation to a society which is accepting only on racist terms." Elizabeth Farrell**