

The Core System - More Irish Neglect?

A proposed ethnic classification system for all housing associations being devised jointly by the National Federation of Housing Associations and the Housing Corporation excludes the Irish community.

The Core (continuous recording system) is an information collection system designed to assist Housing Associations with the collection and recording of key information about the people they house.

One of the key household characteristics that the core system is concerned to collect is information on ethnicity. In the proposed Core ethnic classification system "standard" ethnic categories have been devised but only three minority ethnic groups are being catered for while the Irish community is excluded.

Clearly, information obtained from this new system will help to establish what patterns of housing need are emerging in the country and help to identify the appropriate resources which will be required to meet these needs. Without the recording of Irish ethnicity this information will not be available and Irish housing needs and the services provided to the community by Housing Associations will remain neglected.

Following the last meeting of the London Irish Youth Forum, AGIY have written to the Housing Corporation, the National Federation of Housing Associations and the Commission for Racial Equality to express concern at the proposed ethnic classification system. AGIY hopes to have a response from these organisations by the time of the next Forum meeting.

Irish Homelessness - A Disturbing New Report

The recently launched Single Homeless in London Working Party/London Research Centre Report "Move On Housing - The Permanent Housing Needs of Residents in Hostels and Special Needs Housing Projects in London" provides further evidence of the increasing rate of Irish homelessness in the city.

The hostel survey carried out in 1987/88 covered 350 agencies of which 134 projects (69%) kept ethnic records of clients. Approximately 21,000 people stayed in projects which carried out ethnic monitoring of which 31% were Irish. The report states *"the proportion of Irish hostel users is significant and tends to confirm other findings by housing groups that Irish people face particular problems of homelessness in London"*.

The report also provides information on access to permanent move-on housing for ethnic minority homeless people.

Of 148 projects in the survey which had access to move-on housing 85 (57%) said they kept ethnic records of nominations. Only 6% of nominees from those projects who did keep records were Irish while an even smaller number of Irish people (4%) found permanent move-on accommodation.

The report states *"Irish people appear to be seriously under-represented in nominations to permanent housing, given the high proportion of hostel users from an Irish background"*.

Irish Youth Employment in London

The AGIY has recently received a grant of £10,000 from the Ireland Fund of Great

Britain towards the costs of researching The Educational, Training and Employment Situation of Young Irish People in London.

Over recent months there has been great concern among London agencies about the employment patterns and experiences of young emigres. For many young men work in the construction industry is often an early route into the employment market and one that usually leads to both casual and non-unionised labour in somewhat dangerous and tough conditions. Low-paid part-time casual work in the service sector tends to be characteristic of the employment pattern of many Irish women newly arrived in London. In addition many are forced to take "live-in" positions on arrival in London to solve their accommodation crisis and this inevitably leads to difficulties later of having to find an alternative place to live if they change or lose their jobs.

There is also concern that many young people experience "under-employment" in London and that their jobs do not reflect their educational achievement gained in Ireland.

In an attempt to address and explore these issues for the first time AGIY has just started to survey a sample of 200 young Irish people in London which will attempt to analyse their work, training and educational experience since they have come to London and see how it relates to the educational, training and work experience gained before their emigration from Ireland.

AGIY has employed a researcher, Geoffrey Randall, to undertake the fieldwork and when this is completed and the data finalised, a report based on the findings will make policy recommendations to London employment, education and training bodies. The report will attempt to highlight the role these agencies have to play to respond to the current needs of Young Irish People so that the experience of disadvantage of Irish people in the employment market can begin to be redressed and that

training and the provision of further education can take cognisance of the skills, training and educational achievement Irish people already have and they can provide a more sensitive, suitable and responsive service to Irish emigrant needs.

The report findings will also be directed at education, employment and training authorities in Ireland and the patterns it will identify should be of direct interest and benefit in helping to provide information about the relevance and adequacy of courses in meeting the demands of young people in Ireland.

This project is unique in that it is the only recent occasion that the specific education, employment and training experience of young Irish people will be researched currently rather than retrospectively and its particular value should be in providing up-to-the-minute statistical data on the first hand experience of young people as they seek to fulfill the very reason and ambition that many of them emigrated for in the first place - to get a job.

Regular updates of the research project's progress will appear in future AGIY-INFOs.

Funding News

DION Decisions

AGIY have learned that DION the Irish Government Committee for Welfare Services Abroad hope to announce shortly decisions on the results of funding applications made by previously funded groups. DION intend to make first payments to previously funded groups in August.

As we reported in the last edition of AGIY INFO we hope to provide further information about the procedures involved for making funding applications to the National Lottery. With the Coalition Government and a new Cabinet now in place we

intend to have this information for the next edition of AGIY INFO.

London Irish Women's Conference

The fifth Irish Women's Conference will take place in November of this year. The first conference planning group meeting will meet on **27th July 1989 at 11.00 a.m at the London Irish Women's Centre, 59 Stoke Newington Church St., London N16.** A creche can be made available and the Centre is wheelchair accessible. If you can't make the first meeting ring the Centre on 249 7318 to find out dates of future meetings.

London Travellers Forum (LTF)

Since the first meeting of the LTF in April the Forum has been meeting regularly and attempting to fundraise monies to employ two full time workers and pay running costs for a project that would seek to raise awareness and campaign on issues affecting travellers in London. The Forum is also actively seeking premises at the moment and until such time as one is identified the LTF can be contacted c/o **Camden HASSLL, 5 Britannia St., London WC1 Tel. 837 1436.**

Agency Profile

Cara Irish Homeless Project

Cara is a secular association established in 1984 with the aim of providing single homeless Irish people with a period of supported housing. This might mean a room in a house shared with other Irish people, or a self-contained bedsit flat. Residents have access to staff who provide advice and information on a range of practical issues as well as help with more personal support

needs. Support is offered within an ethos which is positive about Irish culture and traditions. The aim of each project is to enable homeless people to acquire the skills and confidence they need to move towards an independent and settled way of life.

Cara works with other housing associations to buy and convert suitable properties using grants from central and local government. Cara has three existing projects in Hackney, Islington and Haringey; a further project for young Irish women has just recently opened in Finsbury Park and another new project for men is nearing completion.

The women's project is located in Victoria Terrace and provides accommodation for four women. It consists of four large bedsits with each bedsit containing a bedsitting room and a separate kitchen. Bathroom facilities are shared between two residents on either floor.

The second new project in Woodstock Road is for four men and consists of a ground floor self-contained unit. On the first floor is a living room, kitchen and bathroom to be shared by three residents. All the men have their own bedroom and both houses have laundry facilities and gardens.

The scheme has one full time manager who will offer support to the residents and assistance with finding permanent housing, employment etc. The Manager will be based in an office in Woodstock Road house and is available to residents from both houses on a Monday-Friday 9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. basis with a contact number for evenings and weekends in case of an emergency.

It is expected that residents will stay for an average of between 12 and 18 months before moving on to independent accommodation. Access to permanent self contained housing is being negotiated with Haringey Council and with local Housing

Associations. There are increasing problems in securing move-on nominations, and firm guarantees cannot be given to applicants.

All residents of the scheme are classed as boarders for DSS purposes and the weekly charge is therefore £40.60 inclusive of heat, light, hot water and rates.

Referrals

Referrals to the project will come from the local authority, Irish welfare agencies and short term emergency accommodation. The project is for single Irish women and men aged between 18 and 26 who are in housing need. This is defined as follows:

sharing temporarily with friends/relatives; staying in a night shelter, hostel, hotel or institution; squatting or literally homeless; under threat of eviction with no grounds to resist; living in poor, unsanitary or intolerable conditions (e.g. severe disrepair, lack of standard amenities or harassment).

Applicants should be in need of support and assistance to move towards living independently. The project cannot offer accommodation to people who are unable or unwilling for any reason to lead independent lives, and hence should be able and willing to look after themselves and their accommodation. The project is not appropriate for women or men who require support with problems of alcohol/drug abuse, severe mental ill health or a recent serious history of violence.

Application forms for referral and further information is available from **Ann McCarney, Cara, 140 Amhurst Road, Hackney, London E8 Tel. 241 6650.**

AGIY INFO IS A SIX WEEKLY PUBLICATION. SHOULD YOUR GROUP WISH TO PUBLICISE ANY EVENTS, NOTICES ETC. SEND DETAILS TO EITHER JOAN OR DAVE AT THE ACTION GROUP FOR IRISH YOUTH ON TEL. 278 1665

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London Irish Youth Forum

(LIYF)

The date of the next LIYF meeting is

Thursday 3rd August 1989

at 2.30 p.m.

Irish Centre

50 Camden Square

London NW1

THE MAIN AGENDA ITEM WILL BE

The Implications of the Poll Tax for young Irish people.

Speaker: Lorna Reith, CHAR, Housing Campaign for Single People.