

CRE Discussions Gather Pace

Representatives from several Irish community organisations will be meeting **Dr. Peter Sanders, Chief Executive of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)** and other senior officers on 2nd November 1990 to persuade the CRE to address Irish community concerns in Britain. This will be the third meeting between Irish community groups and the CRE during the past year.

As we reported in "AGIY-INFO" (Issue No.13) the first meeting took place last December when the CRE were asked to address the following issues:

- the explicit acknowledgement and recognition of the Irish as an ethnic group by the Commission with a resultant change in the Commission's recommended ethnic classification system to include the Irish as a distinct separate category;
- the commission of a full scale study and production of a report on the Irish community in contemporary Britain under the auspices of the CRE; the explicit recommendation to all relevant bodies of the need to monitor Irish ethnicity;
- the need to include the Irish community as a matter of course in any of the Commission's general writings, reports or research on racial equality and ethnic minority concerns in Britain;
- the need for the Commission to address the absence of Irish staff employed by the CRE.

The CRE prepared a report on these issues which was considered by their Board of Commissioners in May this year and the following recommendations were conveyed to representatives of Irish community groups at the second meeting held with the CRE on 13th July 1990;

- the Commission to make a formal report to Race Equality Council's (formerly CRC's) to take positive steps where appropriate to secure the participation of Irish organisations at local level;
- the Commission to stress that it would seek to assist as appropriate members of any ethnic minority group who complained of racial discrimination;
- the Commission to inform the Irish organisations of the CRE's intentions to sponsor a national complaints aid agency which they would be able to link into;
- the Commission to undertake to include the Irish in any future deliberations which affect minorities nationally e.g the ethnic question in the Census.

All of these recommendations were agreed with the important proviso that they were subject to any budgetary constraints!

The Commission also agreed to set up a meeting (which hasn't happened yet!) between the Centre for Ethnic Relations at the University of Warwick and the CRE at which representatives of Irish community groups would be represented to discuss the research study referred to above. When the Commission considered the community groups' central request to include the Irish as a separate category in its recommended system of ethnic classification it was agreed

that Irish should be included as a separate category but only "where appropriate." i.e. discretion could be used by users of the system to include/exclude the Irish category as they saw fit.

Clearly, if we are to obtain a more accurate picture of Irish community needs at both a local and national level it is essential that the CRE recommends to all users that there should be a separate Irish category in its ethnic classification system.

TICC Campaign Continues

In an associated development, TICC, the Irish Community Census Campaign is responding to the decision of the Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys not to include an Irish category in the ethnic origin question in the 1991 Census by mounting a campaign to urge Irish people "not to be censored by the Census."

Information obtained from the Census will be used by the Government and by local authorities to identify what the populations' needs are and where they are to be found and information obtained from the **CONFIDENTIAL** ethnic origin question will be used to ensure that everyone has a fair and equal chance to have their own needs met.

ethnic group

Please tick the appropriate box

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| White | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Black-Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Black-African | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Black - Other (please describe) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pakistani | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Any other ethnic group (please describe) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

IRISH

If the person is descended from more than one ethnic or racial group, please tick the group to which the person considers he/she belongs, or tick the other box and describe the person in the space provided

TICC believes that the format of the ethnic origin question means that the Irish community could lose the opportunity to find out more about our needs. This can be avoided if enough Irish people identify themselves when answering the question.

Irish people who want to maintain their identity, help those in need and those working for people in need can tick the "Any other Ethnic Group" box and write in IRISH.

If enough people do this then the answers will be coded separately for the Irish which will provide the most accurate picture ever of the Irish community in Britain. TICC will be campaigning up to Census day itself to get this message across.

TICC has now constituted itself and comprises organisations and individuals who support the rights of the Irish community to information and to equal treatment with all other sections of the population. **If you would like to affiliate to TICC or would like further information about the campaign please contact: TICC, c/o 72 Stroud Green Road, Finsbury Park, London. N4.**

Forum File

In a new regular feature "AGIY-INFO" will be reporting news of **London Irish Youth Forum (LIYF)** meetings to keep agencies informed of issues addressed at the Forum and provide updated bulletins on any developments arising from the meetings.

Representatives from 13 agencies attended the last meeting of the Forum on 20/9/90.

The meeting focussed on prioritising the issues which affect young Irish clients attempting to claim social security benefits

from the DSS. The Forum agreed to establish a **DSS Monitoring Group**, comprising a sub-group of member agencies, which would compile relevant case histories, seek representation at different levels within the DSS and trade unions organised in the DSS, provide an Irish dimension to London wide welfare campaigning groups and persuade the DSS to address Irish community concerns within the context of their equal opportunity policies.

The first meeting of the DSS monitoring group will take place on 4th December 1990. For further information about the group please contact AGIY.

CAB Developments

Following the March meeting of LIYF which was addressed by the Greater London Citizens Advice Bureaux, AGIY have been invited to make a presentation to their Social Policy Development Group next week on welfare issues affecting the Irish community in London.

LIYF Fee Reminder

Fees for the current year are now overdue!

AGIY will be contacting groups over the coming weeks to chase payments. The subscription contributes towards the cost of servicing the Forum and enables groups to receive free copies of information publications.

Subscription rates are *Voluntary Organisations £20 and Statutory Groups £30.*

Charges are kept to a minimum and the Forum would particularly welcome the participation and membership of new agencies.

New Information Leaflets

Enclosed is a new information leaflet **"Young and Irish: AIDS Know the Facts."**

AGIY and Positively Irish Action on AIDS have jointly produced this leaflet to provide young Irish emigrants with basic information on HIV/AIDS and on HIV risk related behaviour.

The leaflet outlines steps that can be taken to avoid exposure to the virus and describes how the virus is transmitted and explains how safer sex practices and safer drug use (for injecting drug users) can help prevent transmission of the virus.

National support services and appropriate services in London are listed as well as specialist services for people requiring further help and advice. The leaflet also lists Irish organisations and contacts who provide a counselling and culturally sensitive service for Irish people concerned about HIV/AIDS.

Funding for the project was provided by the **London Borough of Haringey.**

The leaflet is available from both AGIY and PIAA and there are discounts for bulk orders.

Emigration from N. Ireland

A new information leaflet **"Second Thoughts"** is now available to young people who may be considering emigrating to London from Northern Ireland. The leaflet was funded by the DSS and produced by CARA Irish Homeless Project, Northern

Ireland Association of Citizens Advice
Bureaux, Open Door Housing
Association(NI), Simon Community (NI),
the Church of Ireland Board for Social
Responsibility for N.I. and the Presbyterian
Church in Ireland Board of Social Witness.

Young people will be able to obtain the
leaflet at advice centres, CAB's and from
local libraries in Northern Ireland.

**Bulk copies of the leaflet can be obtained
from Mairead Gilheany, Social Policy
Officer, Northern Ireland Association of
Citizens Advice Bureaux, 11 Upper
Crescent, Belfast BT7 1NT. Tel. 0232 231
120**

"Working on the Buildings"

AGIY are also producing an information
leaflet called **"Young and Irish: Working on
the Buildings"** which will detail young
people's rights and responsibilities while
working on a site and provide them with
information on health and safety and where
they can obtain further help. It will also
provide information on where to go for
further training if a young person wants to
acquire a skilled trade.

AGIY still have copies of our information
leaflets

- Young and Irish: The Poll Tax and You
- Young and Irish: An Experience of the
Social Security System -To Benefit or
Not To Benefit?

Please contact AGIY if you would like
more copies.

Presidential Candidate in London

On 3rd October AGIY hosted a one day
visit to London by **Mary Robinson** one of
the three candidates in the forthcoming
Presidential election in Ireland who came
to appraise herself of issues affecting Irish
emigrants.

In the morning Ms. Robinson met with
representatives of several agencies working
in areas of specialist service provision for
young emigrants.

Agencies who attended the meeting
included *Centrepont Soho, Camden Careers
Service, Positively Irish Action on AIDS,
Brent Irish Advisory Service, Rugby House
Alcohol Project, CARA and Glor an Deorai*
who are campaigning for the right to vote
for Irish emigrants.

In the afternoon Ms. Robinson visited the
*Irish Centre in Camden, the London Irish
Womens' Centre and met young people living
in a property managed by An Teach Housing
Association.*

Ms Robinson said that emigration was "a
form of compulsory economic extradition"
and proposed the establishment of an ad
hoc Emigrants Rights Council comprising
of emigrant groups, semi-state bodies and
other public and private companies and
organisations which she as President would
convene on a regular basis. Although such a
Council would not have any statutory or
executive role she said that "it would be
instrumental in increasing public awareness
and act as a catalyst to address specific
issues where emigration is concerned".

Agency Profile

Rugby House Project

The Rugby House Project consists of a 13 bedded drink crisis centre with detoxification facilities for men and women in Holborn which will be fully operational by the end of the year and five move-on houses which are due to open in 1991/92 and the mobile alcohol service.

The Mobile Alcohol Service

This service is funded by various charities and trusts with one post being funded by the Irish Government through the DION Committee. The service is seeking to raise general awareness around alcohol misuse and to provide a range of services to statutory and voluntary agencies who need help and advice in working with people with alcohol related problems.

The services provided range from alcohol training and education for probation officers, youth workers, social workers, employers, primary health care workers, along with case consultation, counselling and assessment, support for workers and general referral advice.

Overall the service aims to network agencies into using the existing alcohol agencies. The project operates within central London which includes working in daycentres, street agencies, hostels, community groups, drop-in centres and work places.

The mobile alcohol service is presently looking into ways of establishing whether the needs of Irish problem drinkers are

being met by the existing network of alcohol agencies.

Breda Grey in her article in the Alcohol Concern journal "Irish Drinking Breaking the Silence" stated that very little research has been done in this area and that the conclusions are conflicting. Within the alcohol field there has been little discussion about problem drinking within the Irish community. The Mobile Alcohol Service is planning on working closely with various Irish community groups and welfare organisations to generally raise awareness around alcohol misuse and to ensure that these organisations are networked into the existing alcohol services, so Irish people with alcohol related problems have better access to services and also to establish what percentage of people are presenting themselves to these agencies with alcohol related problems.

It is hoped that ultimately a move towards developing a strategy can be made which meets the needs of those Irish people who may be experiencing problems with their drinking and perhaps lead to more detailed research on drinking within the Irish community.

The Project have already carried out alcohol training for staff at one Irish welfare centre and intend to develop this service further in London and other areas of Britain.

The Mobile Alcohol Service welcomes comments from Irish agencies about its work and further information about its service can be obtained by contacting them on: 071 837 9323.

**London Irish Youth
Forum (LIYF)**

**The date of the next
LIYF meeting**

is

**Thursday 1st
November 1990**

at

2.30pm

in

**The Irish Centre,

50 Camden Square,

London NW1.**

AT 3.30 p.m.

Invitation to:

**Launch of
Information Leaflet**

**Young and Irish
AIDS Know the Facts**

Speakers:

Siobhan Riordan, Positively Irish Action
on AIDS

Stuart Watson, Community Affairs Dept.
London Borough of Haringey

**AGIY INFO is a six weekly
publication.**

Should your group wish to publicise any
events, notices, etc. send details for the next
issue before **4th December** to AGIY at 5-15
Cromer Street. London. WC1H 8LS. Tel.
071 278 1665.

AGIY is funded by the LBGS and DION