

Hate mail sent to Irish Forum

HATE-MAIL has been the price paid by one group for standing up for Camden's Irish population.

Since taking on both the government and Labour for supporting a tightening of immigration rights, Camden's Irish Forum has received anonymous letters stating: "Go back to your own country, you parasites, go home, get out."

The Forum had warned that up to a third of Irish people in Camden could be forced onto the streets and into a life of poverty under the government's plan to impose "habitual residency", that is, three years, in order to receive benefit.

But that threat will not materialise for the Irish, thanks to a reciprocal

agreement with Britain dating from 1948.

"But because the lash will not fall on our back does not mean we should not stand up for others," said Pegeen O'Sullivan, secretary of the Forum.

She said the Forum was against the agreement per se which would only increase the numbers of homeless and hungry from ethnic minorities on London's streets.

Angie Birtill, chair of the Forum, said the legislation was extremely discriminatory and ignored the fact that Britain benefited from qualified labourers using their skills here when their education had been paid for by the Irish state.