

IRISH HEALTH NEEDS, FINALLY ON THE AGENDA?

After years of denial and neglect the Health Needs of the Irish in Britain finally appear to be getting some recognition.

On June 26, 1992 James Raftery from the Dept. of Clinical Epidemiology and Social Medicine, St. George's Medical School, London, gave a talk at the King's Fund Centre on "The Forgotten Minority - The Health Needs of the UK's Largest Immigrant Group."

The talk looked at Standardised Mortality Ratios (SMR) and showed that not only have Irish born people in Britain the highest SMRs but that this excess mortality persists into the second generation Irish in Britain.

The necessity to continue promoting the health needs of the Irish and arguing for acceptance by the Dept. of Health of a separate Irish classification in ethnic monitoring was expressed by those present.

There was also a proposal that a Working Group to focus on Irish health needs should be established.

Three other conferences on Health and the Irish are coming up in the next two months which further highlight the specific needs of Irish people and the essential need for an Irish dimension to health care in Britain.

On 26 October 1992, also at the King's Fund Centre, Innisfree Housing Association with the National Schizophrenia Fellowship are hosting **De Noscadh (The Double Bind), a National Conference on Mental Health and the Irish in Britain.**

It is intended that the conference will inform participants and generate an awareness of the extent and nature of the Irish experience of mental health in Britain. Areas to be covered will include Housing-Irish disadvantage and its relationship to mental health, Irish womens' experience, Alcohol, and British psychiatry and Irish mental health.

A second conference on **Mental Health and the Irish** is to be held in **Leeds on 11 November 1992** and will look at topics such as Ethnicity, Women, and Housing. Irish groups participating include AGIY, CARA, Innisfree H.A., Islington Irish Womens' Counselling Centre and Liam Greenslade from Liverpool University.

The third conference is a Training Day organised by AGIY and Positively Irish Action on Aids for the **Irish Drugs Forum (IDF)**.

The IDF comprises representatives from over 65 agencies in Britain who work with Irish drug users and the Training Day on **2 November 1992** will focus on how these agencies can incorporate an Irish dimension in their work.

Hopefully these initiatives will just be part of an ongoing strategy to highlight Irish health needs and to effect change in the delivery of personal health and social services.

The physical and mental well-being of Irish people in Britain has, for too long, been ignored and overlooked by health authorities and service deliverers.

It is time that the Dept. of Health, health authorities and agencies like the King's Fund understood the demand for correct ethnic monitoring of Irish needs and serious research, appropriately funded and supported.

Without monitoring and research Irish health needs cannot be correctly addressed.

"MOVING TO IRELAND" INFO SESSIONS

A SERIES OF 3 INFORMATION DAYS AIMED AT PROVIDING IRISH PEOPLE WITH INFORMATION ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF MOVING TO IRELAND WILL BE HELD IN LONDON ON OCTOBER 6TH, 7TH AND 8TH.

Staff from the Information Service of the Department of Social Welfare, Dublin will be available all day to deal with queries. Information will be available on topics such as housing options in Ireland, services in Ireland, travelling there and welfare benefits and entitlements.

The information days will be held as follows:

TUES. 6TH OCT. 1992

BRENT IRISH CENTRE, 76/82
SALUSBURY ROAD, LONDON NW6
FROM NOON - 7 P.M.
(NEAREST \oplus & BR: QUEEN'S PARK)
TEL. 081 451 6286

WED. 7TH OCT. 1992

IRISH SUPPORT & ADVICE CENTRE,
55 FULHAM PALACE RD.,
HAMMERSMITH, LONDON W6
FROM 11 A.M. TO 5 P.M.
(NEAREST \oplus : HAMMERSMITH)
TEL. 081 741 0466

THURS. 8TH OCT. 1992

LONDON IRISH CENTRE, 50-52
CAMDEN SQUARE, LONDON NW2
(NEAREST \oplus : CAMDEN TOWN)
TEL. 071 916 2222

SCHEDULE OF UK CENSUS RESULTS

ETHNIC GROUP QUESTION

The Office of Population and Census Studies (OPCS) have indicated that summary information tables for London, based on the ethnic group question in the 1991 UK Census, will be available on 29th September. The information will be published on a borough by borough basis and is known as the "*County Monitor*".

However, data on the Irish in Britain will not be provided because a separate Irish category was not included in this section of the Census.

HEAD OF HOUSEHOLDS INFORMATION

Data based on head of households on a borough by borough basis will be published by the OPCS at the end of October.

This will include data on those "*born in Ireland*". This will include data on those born in the Republic of Ireland and N. Ireland.

While guaranteeing to provide a wealth of new information, particularly in relation to the increased numbers of young Irish people who emigrated to Britain throughout the 1980s, the data will almost certainly under-represent the experiences of Irish women.

In particular, the experiences of Irish women who are in households where the male is head and not "*born in Ireland*" will be rendered invisible.

IRISH "WRITE-INS"

In the run-up to the 1991 Census a number of Irish organisations led a campaign to encourage Irish people to identify their ethnicity in the "Other" category of the ethnic group question by writing in "Irish". This information will not be available until December 1993 when the OPCS publish the "*National Report on Ethnic Group and Country of Birth*". The data pertaining to the Irish however, will not be automatically available from the OPCS publication and will have to be commissioned.

"YOUTH MOBILITY" SCHEME LAUNCHED

The National Council for YMCAs of Ireland has publically launched a new scheme designed to encourage intending emigrants to plan their move from Ireland to London.

The scheme is called "Youth Mobility" and is aimed particularly at 18-25 year olds.

In advance of emigrating, the scheme provides the young person with a structured advice and information programme about their intended destination and also counsels on the implications of their decision to emigrate.

On arrival in London the scheme provides a guarantee of secure accomodation for the initial months as well as offering help and up-to-date information on training, education and employment oportunities.

There is also practical assistance in obtaining social security benefits and entitlements.

WHO TO CONTACT

Referrals to Youth Mobility can be made directly to the Youth Mobility Co-Ordinator. Following completion of an application form a meeting will be then be arranged between the young person and the Co-Ordinator.

REFERRALS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact: Cesca Tyrrell, Youth Mobility
Co-Ordinator, YMCA Development Office,
Station House, Ballincollig, Co. Cork.

TEL. 010 353 21 873 580

EMIGRATION HASN'T STOPPED!

In the first 3 months of 1992 a study by the National YMCAs into Migration from the South-West of Ireland concluded that there were at least 3 young emigrants on every coach bound for London.

The study was carried out on one of the long established coach routes to and from London via Rosslare and surveyed young people as they travelled.

The main study findings were:

- 55% were men; 45% were women and most were from urban backgrounds;
- Most were aged 18-21 although amongst returners most were aged between 22-25;
- Almost half had received further training since leaving school;
- Over half cited employment as primary reason for leaving;
- Contacts (family/friends) was the most important factor when deciding which part of Britian to emigrate to.

LEVELS OF PREPARATION

- 23% of those leaving carried no ID;
- Of those who sought pre-emigration advice, the overwhelming majority used informal networks of family/friends, TV/radio and or newspapers;
- Over two-thirds did not have pre-arranged employment in London;

EXPERIENCE IN BRITAIN

- Over 70% said they encountered anti-Irish feeling including verbal and physical abuse;
- Only 17% visited an information/advice organisation after emigrating and they became aware of these through personal contacts.

• **COPIES OF THE STUDY ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE YOUTH MOBILITY CO-ORDINATOR (SEE OTHER COLUMN FOR ADDRESS)**

Ruth
Can you get a couple of copies?

REFORM OF THE CARAVAN SITES ACT 1968

The Dept. of the Environment published a Consultation Paper in August which lists proposals to reform the 1968 Act which put a duty on councils to provide sites for Travellers.

The new proposals include repealing this duty, ceasing to fund capital costs of new sites, giving councils extra powers to move on Travellers, and "encouraging" Travellers to move off the road, off sites and into permanent housing. This is a real threat to the traditional culture and lifestyle of Travellers.

The paper can be obtained from the Homelessness Policy Division, Room N13/20, 2 Marsham St., SW1P 3EB.

Comments must be returned by 13 November 1992 to Charles Harkness, Room N12/20, Dept. of the Environment, 2 Marsham St., SW1P 3EB.

AN TEACH SECURES FUNDING

An Teach Irish Housing Association whose funding by the London Boroughs Grants Scheme was threatened has won the day and recently secured its grant-aid of £16,000.

Following extensive lobbying in support of maintaining the grant award, An Teach workers Mary McDonnell and Eileen Devenney, welcomed the decision as a "substantial boost at a time of rapid expansion". An Teach is developing permanent as well as short-life housing for young single emigrants and recently opened a new shared property for 8 people in Shepherd's Bush, West London.

RETURNED EMIGRANTS NOT CAUSE OF RISING IRISH UNEMPLOYMENT

Figures just published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in Ireland for the year ended April 1992 contradict the claims from some quarters that Irish emigrants returning from Britain and the USA were "contributing to an increase in unemployment".

The CSO information also highlights that Ireland has experienced its first recording of "net immigration" since 1981, but at a rate significantly lower than forecast.

The net immigration figure for 1991/91 was 2,000 people. This has fallen short of the predictions of some economic forecasters who were suggesting an inflow of up 10,000 people.

Significantly, the trend of a falling population in the Rep. of Ireland between 1988-90 has been redressed with preliminary estimates indicating an increase of 24,000 last year following an increase of 20,000 the previous year.

The fall in those years was a consequence of high levels of emigration and was contrary to the pattern between 1962-87 which showed a population rise each year.

While the CSO has yet to publish its figures for employment levels as of last April, there are some suggestions that job numbers have actually fallen by 7,000-10,000 in the year to last April.

Overall, employment levels appear to be - at worst - on a downward trend or - at best - stagnant. In either case, the lack of employment opportunities for young people in Ireland - be they returned emigrants or school-leavers - continues to be worryingly apparent.

AGIY IS FUNDED BY THE LBGS, THE IRISH GOVERNMENT AND CITY PAROCHIAL FOUNDATION.

FUNDED BY

