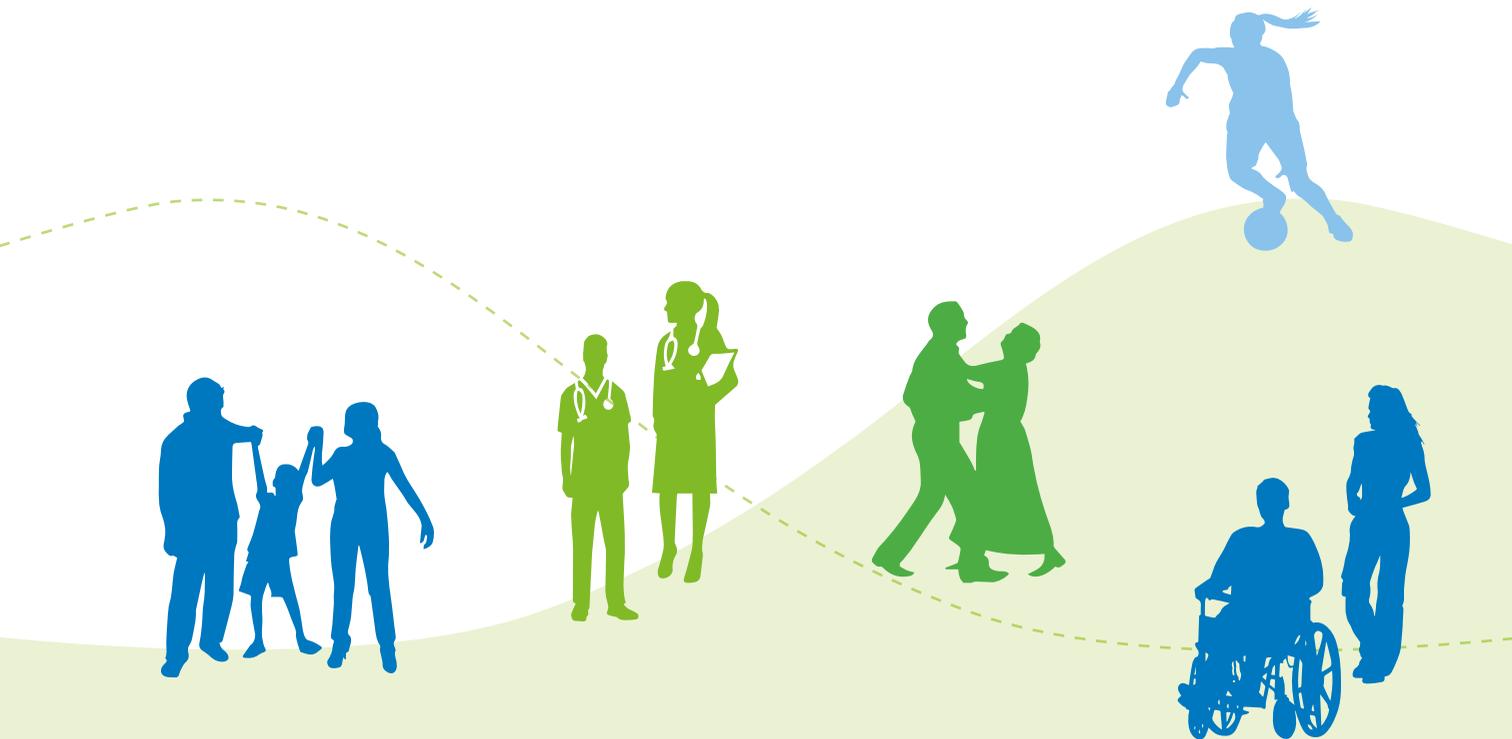


Irish in Britain

Annual Report
2016 / 2017



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Irish in Britain

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Our work is made possible through the continued support of our funders, to whom we offer sincere thanks.

Our primary funder continues to be the Irish Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Emigrant Support Programme.

Funders



Supporters

Sisters of Mercy Union | TLICN | O'Donovan Waste

With thanks to Gerry Molumby for photographs.



Message from Ciarán Cannon

As Ireland's Minister for Diaspora Affairs, it is my job to work to ensure our connection to our global nation remains central to Government policy. I am proud that the Government remains as committed as ever to the enhancement of our connections to our vibrant and diverse diaspora. I am very pleased to have this opportunity to reinforce my support and gratitude for the work done by Irish in Britain, its members and affiliates over the past 12 months. I want to acknowledge and pay tribute to the community groups, organisations, and individuals, who have worked hard throughout this past year, and indeed their entire lives, to encourage and promote Irish community support, culture and heritage throughout Britain.

The work of the members of Irish in Britain to meet the evolving needs of the Irish diaspora is ongoing and I am proud that the Government is committed to supporting this work. The Irish community in Britain has made an incredible journey over the last few decades and there is virtually no aspect of British civic or political life that has not been enriched by contributions from the Irish community. The value of this community has only been heightened as we face into challenging and uncertain times.

The need remains to protect and support the most vulnerable in the community, and to highlight and promote the needs and concerns of the Irish community at the highest levels. As we work hard to address the changing political landscape in Britain, I can assure you that the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy in London are doing the utmost to ensure that relevant, real-time information is being communicated to the community here.

It is clear that the UK's departure from the European Union will have significant economic, political and social implications for Ireland. It is the Government's aim to minimise the implications for the Irish community based here in Britain. We remain focused on listening to and addressing the concerns of the Irish community and ensuring that these concerns continue to be a priority. The work of Irish in Britain and its members remains as vital and essential as ever in this regard.

As the Minister with responsibility for the Emigrant Support Programme worldwide, I am very appreciative of the work you undertake and proud that the Irish Government has provided more than £68 million in funding to Irish community groups in Britain since 2004.



Ciarán Cannon,
Minister for the
Diaspora & International
Development, Ireland



Chair Statement

The Irish community here in Britain has always been diverse, energetic and committed to improving the lives of Irish people whether they have just emigrated or have been in Britain for many years. We are a community who speaks with one voice but tells many stories. It is this diversity rooted in a common cultural heritage which brings us strength. Today, we see the community here in Britain linked evermore closely with Ireland and integrated into the global Irish family. With increased technology and globalisation, we can sometimes feel the world is getting smaller but with this brings new challenges and new pressures to divide us.

Now, perhaps more so than ever, we need to work together with cohesion in partnership. Irish in Britain cannot sustain a community alone, we cannot be everything to everyone. That is why we are constituted as a member organisation and that is why we remain with our members at our heart. Through the strength of our members, with Irish in Britain supporting, sharing, networking the community, moulding us into a strong powerful voice, we can continue to build on the successes of the past.

We have had to make changes, we have had to adapt as many of our members have done, but I am confident that through the hard work of our staff team, our volunteers and our membership, we are poised to embark on a new era for Irish in Britain and for the community. We have a reinvigorated energy, clear goals and the strength to support our membership so each and every person in the community can stand with us, raise their voice with ours in unison and tell our story.



Patrick Morrison,
Chairman



CEO Statement

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It's been a year of change at Irish in Britain. This has presented the organisation with challenges as the new team structure has settled in. I joined the organisation in May this year and have been on the road meeting and listening to our membership, understanding the work of our team and the history of the organisation. My primary task is to refocus the organisation's mission and profile, support our new team to meet the diverse needs of our membership, and orientate Irish in Britain as a resource for all aspects of the Irish community. Despite the challenges that accompany periods of change, Irish in Britain has had a busy year, working with community organisations to build sustainability, making representations on behalf of our community at local, national and parliamentary levels, the Global Irish Civic Forum and acting as a platform to disseminate research, policy and information within and across our networks. Across all our projects we have sought to bring value to our members as an advocate to ministers, policy makers and influencers and this work will continue to be a key component as the political and commissioning landscape changes.

I understand the challenges facing many of our members responding to the needs of our community, but have also been deeply moved by the dedication, innovation and adaptability of our community organisations to anticipate and meet this need. It represents the best of voluntary sector action and defines the Irish capacity to reach out, adapt and sustain the values that make our contribution celebrated across the global community, no less so than in Britain. Our members represent a diverse and important constituency in Ireland's global community and we are proud to showcase the value and effectiveness of their work. We will continue to connect organisations with the people, partners and resources they need to deliver services. Our ongoing commitment is to champion our voluntary sector by connecting, representing and supporting our membership to make the biggest difference they can. We look forward to working with you all over the next year as we refine member support, communications and our website. I would also take this opportunity to thank our staff team for their commitment and dedication to our membership and all our funders, supporters and advocates. We particularly acknowledge the Irish Government for their enduring support.

Le deá mhéin



Brian Dalton,
CEO



Highlights of the Year



Supporting Our Members

Overview

This year we have focused our resources on areas our members have told us they have concerns around, including:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Brexit
- Representing Gypsies, Roma and Travellers
- Supporting our members' work
- Sustainability

We developed initiatives to help support our members to remain sustainable and continue providing good quality services in an uncertain economic climate. We achieved this by:

- Creating IIB Solutions Ltd, a not for profit trading arm offering exclusive discounts for members on running costs, goods and services.
- Running sustainability and fundraising workshops.
- Organising an introduction to social media workshop for clubs and centres to recognise the cost-effective benefits of digital communications.
- Inviting the Heritage Lottery Fund to run workshops on how to apply for HLF funding.
- Developing a running list of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) workshops for members to avoid penalties.

Our new Member Support Officer has been working to support members in a range of areas, including capacity building, sustainability and staying abreast of key compliance issues.



Member Forums

We held member forums in Leeds and Birmingham for national clubs and community centres, providing an opportunity to share best practice and keep updated with the new pension auto-enrollment scheme, changes to business rates and copyright laws. We also arranged consultants to help members handle complex management issues covering theft, misconduct, and dismissal issues, ensuring members remained compliant in the challenging field of HR law.

IIB Solutions Ltd

The set-up of a trading arm for IIB is a key piece of work which aims to provide good quality services to our members and the community that will save them money whilst raising an income for IIB charity; which will in turn feed back into the service the charity provides to its members. We have negotiated a wide range of discounts for members, from energy bills and office supplies, to telecom solutions and professional support. The website (www.iibs.co.uk) features a comparison function for energy prices nationwide.

"After years of sticking with the same old energy supplier year in year out, we decided as a Member of IIB, to see what they could do for us. The process was extremely easy and in-fact was worth it. We actually saved money! I would definitely recommend Clubs to at least give it a try, you'd be surprised on savings you can make."

Andrew Murphy,
Secretary Batley IDLC



Step UP Framework

We have developed and launched, in conjunction with Diane West, Management Consultant, 'Step UP', a quality assurance framework to help groups build and strengthen their foundations to deliver high quality services.

The idea came from many of our smaller member organisations who told us they found current quality assurance systems too complex and expensive. As a result, we secured funding from the Big Lottery Fund Awards for All Programme to design our own framework.

Step UP is divided into 12 categories, each with a set of standards that organisations need to meet, and includes resources such as templates to help groups achieve these. The resources will also help groups identify any gaps and potential weaknesses while working through their current structures.

The framework is particularly useful for small groups, clubs and societies and its flexible design means groups can conveniently fit the framework around their schedules. It is also designed to be compatible with other quality systems, enabling groups to use it as a stepping stone. Groups who successfully meet all the standards receive a completion certificate.



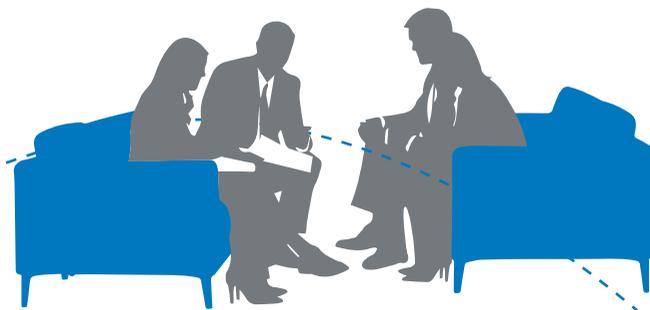
Partnership Working

In partnership with Crosscare Migrant Project, Safe Home Ireland and the London Irish Centre, we ran an information session on returning to Ireland, providing practical information to support Irish groups in Britain to respond to general queries from Irish emigrants considering a return to Ireland. The session included topics on:

- Social Welfare Payments
- Housing
- Healthcare
- Useful resources
- Homelessness and returning in crisis
- Immigration requirements for non-Irish family members
- Referrals to Crosscare Migrant Project and Safe Home Ireland

The session was followed up by a busy Q&A with Sarah Owen of Crosscare Migrant Project and Karen McHugh of Safe Home Ireland.

In collaboration with the University of Birmingham and local Irish organisations, we facilitated a creative engagement project where youth aged 16-19 had the chance to work with new research on the Birmingham Pub Bombings. Through exploring the impact of the bombings, participants gained a greater understanding of how ethnic groups come to be labelled as 'suspect communities', and the effect that labelling can have on an individual's life. This project would not have been possible without the financial support of the Irish Youth Foundation, and the hard work of our partners.



Research

The IIB research bibliography is a collation of research, scholarly work and evidence from community organisations about the Irish community in Britain. It brings together material from different sources, perspectives and disciplines and is intended as a resource for those wishing to know more about this ethnic community.

The focus of the bibliography is on the most contemporary evidence and aims to capture the expanding body of scholarly work which has emerged since the year 2000. However for the sake of completeness, a small number of earlier materials have been included, because of their seminal nature and significance.

We updated the research bibliography in May 2017 with a significant number of additions to the previous edition, including almost 100 new entries. We will continue to update the bibliography as new resources come to light. We welcome suggestions, comments and feedback via email.

info@irishinbritain.org

"Thank you very much, the bibliography was invaluable to my research at Leeds Beckett University around Irish health inequalities and its link to poorer wellbeing. The length and the breadth of the bibliography allowed me to efficiently assess the gaps in the research, which, coupled with a needs assessment on community leads, revealed topics still needing to be addressed. I very much encourage anyone else interested in the Irish in Britain to use this resource."

Stephanie M. Dwyer,
BSc (Hons), Dip, MSc, MBPsS



Sustainability

Heritage Lottery Fund Workshops

A representative from the Heritage Lottery Fund led our members through the mechanics of an HLF application, giving tailored advice and feedback on potential projects. They covered common mistakes that applicants make, assumptions to avoid, and how to ensure that a project is relevant and original. Attendees said that the workshop was extremely helpful, and several have begun to plan their proposals with direct support from the HLF representative.

Fundraising Workshops

Expert fundraisers Diane West and Dave Oldroyd, each ran a series of successful, hands-on fundraising workshops for our members. The workshops covered the criteria funders use when evaluating applications, and included practical tips for applying to specific funds. Members who attended the workshops left with a better understanding of the funding system, and several have already used what they learned to apply for funding.

"Inspired presentation. Very encouraging and helpful!"
— Workshop Participant

Our two ESP information sessions gave us the opportunity to facilitate sustainability workshops from members showing very different ways of supporting their own members.

Elaine Connolly Irish Network Stevenage (INS) Members Saving Club advised members to work with local Credit Unions so that savings collected are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, and the Prudential Regulation Authority, as they have all the relevant insurance and policies in place to deal with a saving club.

Helen Jones CEO Leeds GATE gave tips on their successful experience of applying for a Reaching Communities grant from the Big Lottery Fund. These included: strong and inclusive planning processes starting from where you want your organization to be in 5 years' time and working backwards from that point, ensuring good governance, financial recording, and getting to know your Big Lottery local funding officers.



The Cuimhne Irish Memory Loss Project

This year we ran 12 dementia awareness workshops through the Cuimhne project, funded by City Bridge Trust, for member organisations and the Sisters of Mercy Union. Around 150 volunteers and staff members participated. We held an advanced training day for Cuimhne Champions to support member organisations in London to develop cognitively stimulating, culturally sensitive, enjoyable activities for people with dementia. We published detailed online guidance to help organisations feel more confident when setting up support groups.

“The Cuimhne training was really useful; it helped me understand that people are different and that there may be a range of ways to stimulate their memory.”
— **Carmel Murphy, Cuimhne Champion,** interviewed for **Volunteers Week**

Since the training:

- Two organisations have established services for people with dementia.
- One organisation has expanded by offering a further service in another venue.
- Four organisations have developed plans to support people with dementia and family carers.

Dr. Mary Tilki wrote the feature “Forgotten but not gone: older Irish with dementia in England” for publication in the Dementia Journal.

We have been active in progressing Community Action on Dementia Brent (CAD Brent) with our members Ashford Place and Innisfree Housing Association.

Ambassador Dan Mulhall and his wife Greta hosted a lunch during Dementia Week for 12 people with dementia and their carers at the Embassy of Ireland in recognition of the Cuimhne project. This was followed by an event for policy makers, health and social care providers and researchers as an opportunity to showcase our work.

During this event we launched the Emerald Island Discs project, which we worked on with Irish Community Services in Greenwich, Bexley and Lewisham.



Richard Lucas, Cuimhne Champions Steering Committee member and founder of the Emerald Island Discs, meeting with **Greta Mulhall** at the Embassy during Dementia Awareness Week.

“A huge thank you everyone, our steering committee, for sharing time and skills to champion our work with Irish groups around memory loss. It is really wonderful to hear the diverse positive impacts volunteering activity has on volunteers’ own well-being.”
— **Zibiah Loakthar, Cuimhne Volunteer Coordinator**

The Cuimhne Cup Family Fete with St Finbarr’s Coventry was a great success. Dan Mulhall and Lord Mayor of Coventry Cllr Tony Skipper kicked off the walking football tournament. The event raised awareness of vascular dementia as well as other health issues relevant to the Irish community. Special thanks to Gerry Molumby and Rose Thompson, BME Cancer for supporting the event again this year and the 13 local health and wellbeing agencies that participated in the day.



Referee for the U15 game and coach at St. Finbarr’s is Waterford born **James Ogundare**, who went to the same school as **Ambassador Mulhall**, **Cnoc Sion** in Waterford.



Community Health & Wellbeing



The Health Calendar

While memory loss and dementia were priority areas, we also focused on other health issues relevant to our community. We created a health calendar to ensure we were covering national awareness events and developed key content such as news, guidance and lists of UK-wide health services throughout the year.

Our communications included information on preventing heart disease during Men’s Health Week, encouraging women to go for a cervical screening test during Cervical Screening Awareness Week and producing a campaign around Ash Wednesday encouraging people to quit smoking. We also covered prostate cancer, ovarian cancer, hemochromatosis, Ethnic Minority Cancer Awareness month, Alzheimer’s month, Parkinson’s disease and encouraged Irish communities to get involved in the ‘One You’ healthy lifestyle quiz which was a nationwide NHS campaign.

“We remain grateful and privileged to be part of such a community and to have representation from Irish in Britain. I personally take inspiration from their features and literature which we use to link with our own calendar of events surrounding public health issues, with a particular emphasis and understanding on the health needs of the Irish community.”

Thank you to all the team at Irish in Britain, we at Leeds Irish Health & Homes look forward to continuing to work with you in the future and thank you for your support so far.”

Shelagh Dixon, Communications Officer, Leeds Irish Health and Homes

“Irish in Britain highlighted the problems the Irish community were having with cancer, and it made us think and look at our data more and get more involved in it. Their encouragement to dig deeper into the impact of cancer in ethnic communities was what motivated the team to start the Irish Community Services Self-Help Group Project for people with cancer.”

Ellen Stafford, Director of Irish Community Services in Greenwich, Bexley and Lewisham

Cancer in the Irish Community

We promoted the huge increase in survival rates when cancer is spotted early, for example how cervical screening tests save 5000 people a year.

“Rates of death from cancer are going down in the UK, but rates amongst Irish people are decreasing more slowly, some are even rising.”
— For World Cancer Day we published detailed guidance by Dr. Mary Tilki.

Our information and development forum ‘Cancer Does Not Discriminate’ was designed to encourage people to recognise the prevalence of the disease in the community and the need to share experiences. Maria Caulfield, MP and oncology nurse, provided an excellent overview on the topic, while Rose Thompson of BME Cancer Communities, spoke about cancer in the Black and Irish communities. This was followed by personal experiences of two cancer survivors, one from each of these communities.

This event was supported by the APPG on Ireland and the Irish in Britain.





Representing Our Community

Brexit

IIB updated the community with embassy discussions, which received high levels of engagement through social comments, likes and shares, demonstrating the information was highly relevant. We noticed that during an uncertain time updates were helping to reduce worries and as a result we developed a dedicated Brexit area on our website for our readers. We updated our readers with letters from former Ambassador Dan Mulhall, advice and guidance documents from the embassy and other events.

Our Facebook Live event, which featured Dan Mulhall speaking to the community with Liam Fogerty about Brexit, reached over 50,000 profiles, generating 11,000 views with over 70 shares and comments. This engagement demonstrated the significance and impact of this subject within the community.

Public Engagement

- Represented the community at the ONS Census Advisory Group Meeting, responded to ONS on 2021 Census with our initial view of content for England and Wales.
- Attended pre-ONS Census meeting to review the usefulness of a tool developed by UCL to estimate ethnicity from names.
- Wrote a letter to the First Minister, Northern Ireland re failure to introduce Same-Sex Marriage in Northern Ireland, October 2016.
- Published an update to the community on the Census.
- On the case of Cllr Nick Harrison, Warwick Council, who sent a racist Irish tweet, we released an official press statement, wrote to the APPG on the Irish in Britain and the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), and followed up with social media and website pieces.
- Represented the Irish community at AGE UK, Experiences of Older Private-Renters in London, organised by London Age UK and Nationwide Foundation, 9 October 2017.

- We published a reactive article encouraging people to reflect on discrimination against Travellers and to report hate crime.
- We published articles written by Sean Hutton and Rebekah Franolich (IIB intern) on a range of policy issues.
- Raised parliamentary questions via the APPG on Ireland and the Irish in Britain on the high incidence of cancer and poorer outcomes for the Irish community.

Global Irish Civic Forum Report

We submitted a report to the Global Irish Civic Forum that represented the findings of a 2016 survey of IIB members who were asked to express their views on the top three concerns around organisational sustainability they faced in maintaining services for their local community. The responses were segmented according to our six main categories of membership so that we could represent the challenges currently faced by diverse member organisations. The report also included a submission from the Irish Support Partnership, which consists of 8 partner agencies set up to share good practice and be a support network for Chief Executives with shared ideals.



Our Diverse Community

Irish in Britain was pleased to organise, in partnership with Association of Mixed Race Irish (AMRI), a book reading event and talks to celebrate the launch of the book "Mixed Blessings from a Cambridge Union" by Professor Dame Elizabeth Anionwu DBE CBE, who is Irish Nigerian born in England. This well attended event was part of the 1916 Centenary Commemorations reflecting on the past for this minority group of Irish people and the next decade as part of the UN's International Decade for People of African Descent. Speeches were also given by Ruaidhri Dowling, First Secretary / Community and Cultural Affairs, Professor Bryan Fanning from UCD and historian Dr. Joseph Healy. Music was played by Comhaltas na Breataine.

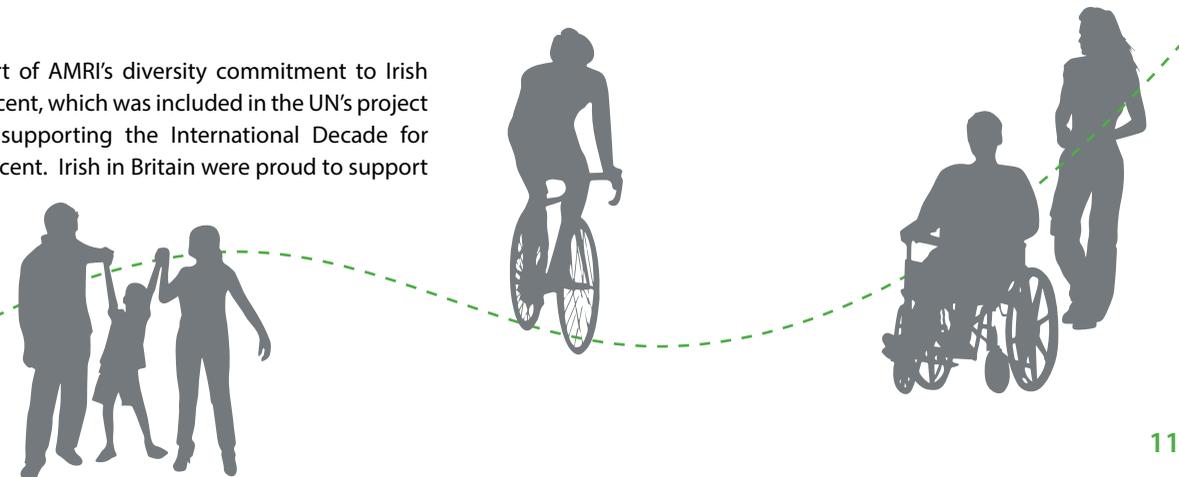


This event was a part of AMRI's diversity commitment to Irish people of African descent, which was included in the UN's project team list of events supporting the International Decade for People of African Descent. Irish in Britain were proud to support this event.

We worked with Leeds GATE and the London Irish Centre to provide case histories illustrating the benefits of culturally sensitive care for Irish people, Gypsies and Travellers with dementia. We led quarterly meetings, annual conferences, helped with the recent launch of the Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) for "seldom heard" groups and facilitated two round tables on Gypsies, Travellers and Irish people with the help of Irish Community Services in Greenwich, Bexley and Lewisham.

Dr. Tilki presented a paper on dementia among Gypsies and Travellers at the Plymouth International Dementia Conference in March 2017 and led a workshop at the Leeds GATE Health on the Margins Conference in June. She has since been approached by researchers about a relevant study in the West of England.

We have promoted the work of GRT groups such as Traveller Movement, Leeds GATE, Herts Gate and London Gypsies and Travellers (LGT). This included conferences on working with GRT groups, the Traveller Movement's submission to the UN Human Rights Council, #operationrephate by the Traveller Movement, and the LGT's 'We are all so many things' campaign to promote the similarities between GRT and other communities and to challenge the stereotypes.





Connecting Our Members

Promoting

Our What's On pages continue to be popular, showcasing culture and heritage events by our members across the UK. We published over 160 events during this reporting period, created a special events page for St Patrick's Festival and a UK-wide list of services for Dementia Awareness Week by our members. We produced an interview feature capturing the challenging experience of memory loss for stroke survivor and Cuimhne Champion Seonad Dason.

We supported the Celtic and Irish Cultural Society to promote their 21st Crawley Irish Festival with a promotional advertising package pre and post event, which we shared via our strongest channels. We also promoted our members' key achievements and newsletters, including for Irish Network Stevenage, Manchester Irish Language Group, and Safe Home Ireland.



Analyzing Our Communications

We successfully reached current and new audiences this year via online channels such as email, social networks and newsletters.

Our newsletters have achieved an average open rate of 35%, which is more than 10% above the average for non-profit organisations*. This is followed by up to 10% clicks through to our website, which is three times the average. In addition to the growing subscriber rate and increased positive feedback, these figures show that the topics covered are relevant.

We have over 20,000 followers across our social networks: Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, which is the result of publishing consistent meaningful content that resonates with communities. We know this because we've received over 10,000 engagements across the networks.

We gained nearly 90,000 visitors on our website, 25% of which were new, with the average session time doubling to two minutes, which showed increased reach, relevance and resonance.

Research we carried out identified that our users would further benefit from a member portal, online forum and a mobile responsive website. In response to this, we are redeveloping our website to support the growing needs of our community.

*Based on Mailchimp's insights

In the run up to our 21st anniversary Crawley Irish Festival and certainly the most successful to date in August 2017, Irish in Britain orchestrated a great advertising campaign. This was supported with multiple social media posts all resulting with a fantastic gathering on Festival Day, which IIB followed with a well laid out written feature.

Being part of Irish in Britain has helped the Celtic and Irish Cultural Society reach a far greater audience and facilitated cultural meet-ups with like-minded organisations."

**John Nolan, Chairman,
Celtic and Irish Cultural Society**



Financial Statement

