

2025 Strategy



# The next 70 years



# The London Irish Centre is driven by three values:

## Community

A gathering place for the Irish Diaspora



## Creativity

Embodying the Irish genius for invention and re-invention



## Compassion

Always a warm welcome and a helping hand



# Welcome

This year we celebrate 70 years of the London Irish Centre. 70 years of representing the best of Irish culture to the world. 70 years helping the Irish diaspora living in Britain; particularly those in danger of falling through the cracks.

We couldn't be more proud of what we have achieved. But we need to build on that heritage. To recognise that Ireland is changing. That Irish culture is changing and the Irish diaspora along with it.

As long as Irish people in Britain need a hand, we'll be there to provide it. Where once that meant, maybe a hot meal, or a trained advisor to help someone cope with historic abuse. Today it *also* means professional networking, digital skills training, or an Irish language playgroup.

Our vision for the new LIC is to create a vibrant and nurturing home for everyone with Ireland in their hearts.

This is our strategy to deliver the change that sets us up for the next 70 years. We need your help. If you would like to make a difference and get involved, then please contact our CEO, [seamusmaccormaic@londonirishcentre.org](mailto:seamusmaccormaic@londonirishcentre.org)



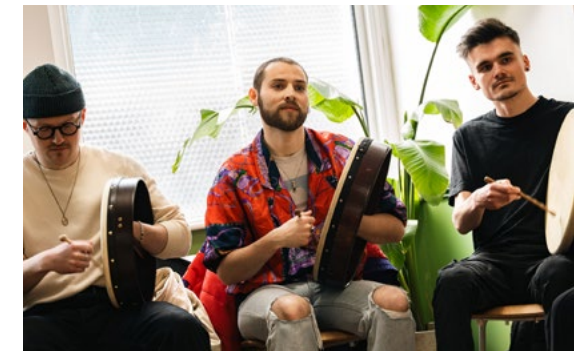
Rosaleen Blair, CBE

# The London Irish Centre now

Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann  
na daoine. / We live and thrive  
in the shelter of one another.

By some measures London is the largest Irish city in the world and we are its centre. The place people come to when they want to know their heritage, or to experience Ireland's world-class culture. We are where the Irish diaspora in London gather to celebrate... or to remember.

For decades Irish people have turned to us when they needed help. The London Irish Centre is a meeting place, the crossroads over the sea. And in time honoured fashion, all are welcome here, always.



# Our last 70 years at the heart of Irish London

1955

No. 50 Camden Square, chosen for its proximity to Euston where the train from Holyhead arrived, is purchased for £3,887.



1967

We hire the Royal Albert Hall for a major celebration of Irishness.



1979

The London Irish Community comes together to build the McNamara Hall, our last major development.



1991

Home to a number of successful civil rights campaigns and celebrations such as the Birmingham Six.



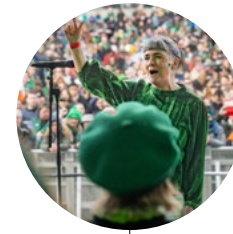
2020

We keep the centre open during COVID providing vital services to isolated members of our community.



2022

Mastermind the first Irish takeover of Trafalgar Square on St. Patrick's Day.



1964

Ted Kennedy visits the centre to view plans for the JF Kennedy Memorial Hall.



1970

Tommy Maguire starts teaching his legendary music classes for children at the Centre.



1984

The Pogues launch their reinvention of Irish traditional music with a video for *Waxie's Dargle* shot at the Centre.



2004

Publish *The Scattering*, the first significant history of the Irish in Britain.



2022

The impromptu vigil for Ashling Murphy. Thousands of people gather in Camden Square.



2024

Host a hugely successful exhibition about 50 years of the Irish in Britain.



# The London Irish Centre Strategy 2025 and beyond

## Our audiences

Ireland has a unique voice in the world. We want new generations and new audiences to hear that voice.



## Young Irish in Britain

- Recent Irish arrivals in London, second and third generations
- Looking for social, cultural and business connections

## Young families

- Families of Irish heritage
- Those interested in sharing Irish culture with their children

## Mid-life reconnectors

- Individuals in the diaspora rediscovering their heritage
- Looking to build their social and professional networks

## Irish affinity

- People with varying connections to Irish culture beyond birthplace

## Community elders

- Older Irish people who value opportunities for connection, tradition, and storytelling

## Representation

- We recognise that there is a diverse range of Irish identities including people of mixed Irish heritage and the LGBTQIA+ community. All are welcome.

Our vision is to be a vibrant and nurturing home for everyone with Ireland in their hearts.



## Our values

**Community:** A gathering place for the Irish Diaspora

**Creativity:** Embodying the Irish genius for invention and re-invention

**Compassion:** Always a warm welcome and a helping hand

## Our Strategic Objectives

1. Consolidate and expand our existing services
2. Reach out to new audiences
3. Launch new services and programmes in areas we don't currently serve
4. Forge new academic, cultural, support, and business partnerships, e.g. EPIC/DCU/Maynooth/LMU
5. Invest in staff development and skills training to enhance our capabilities and create an inspiring and rewarding workplace
6. Grow our commercial income to ensure economic sustainability
7. Support our objectives by redeveloping our building and creating a state-of-the-art global digital platform

# How we will deliver our strategy

The London Irish Centre is home to three complementary strands of activity. It's what makes us unique.

## LONDON IRISH CENTRE Arts & Culture



Re-imagining our multi-disciplinary programmes to ensure accessibility, inclusivity, and cultural leadership.

**Experience:** Audiences immersed in great Irish art and culture through performances, exhibitions, and multi-sensory experiences.

**Create:** We enable participation in Irish cultural expression through workshops, collaborative projects, and artist residencies.

**Learn:** Our programmes deepen understanding of Irish culture, language, and heritage through engaging and innovative educational initiatives.

**Connect:** Through social gatherings and shared experiences, we foster meaningful connections that enhance well-being and belonging.

## LONDON IRISH CENTRE Support Services



In responding to the needs of our community, we are always looking for collaborative ways to develop our support services. Current programmes include Accredited Befriending, Health Navigation, the Camden Café, the Integrated Survivor Support Service, and our pan-London social groups.

**Advise:** Our accredited advice service and legal advocacy service, increases access to benefits, grants, and better housing for marginalised members of our community.

**Support:** We will continue to provide both specialist and holistic support programmes to those members of our community with a diverse range of complex needs.

**Empower:** We empower clients with the confidence and skills they need to self-advocate, by offering a range of literacy, digital, mobility and other classes.

**Connect:** We create support networks inside and outside the London Irish Centre, providing warm, friendly, inclusive spaces and fostering collaborative partnerships.

## LONDON IRISH CENTRE Social Enterprise



Using our deep reservoir of contacts, goodwill and know-how, built up over seventy years, to enable social mobility and entrepreneurship.

**Network:** For people who want to move on, or move up, there's certain to be someone in our network who can help.

**Learn:** Through our partners we offer skills training from learning a trade to software programming and more.

**Create:** If you have a great idea for a new enterprise. But you're not sure where to start, start with our business hub.

**Support:** Our young entrepreneurs club will provide mentorship from people who have been there before.

# Redeveloping our home in Camden Square

The existing London Irish Centre building in Camden Square, though much loved, has become dilapidated and no longer meets contemporary access or environmental standards. Our trustees have committed to redeveloping the London Irish Centre as part of delivering the 2025 strategy.



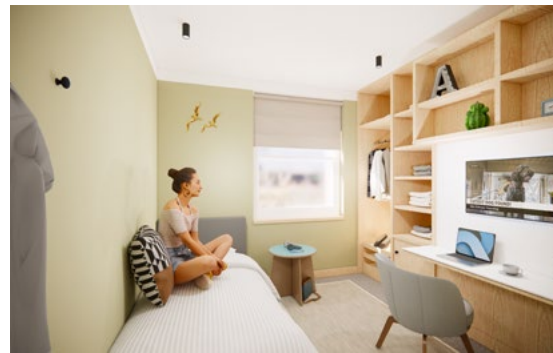
The new building will both symbolise and enable the future direction of the London Irish Centre. It will dramatically enhance our ability to host all types of events; from theatre and music to business and social. We will upgrade and modernise key facilities for the London Irish community and our vital support services.

Our new home represents our core values; Community, Creativity and Compassion. We will showcase Irish heritage, providing rooms for education and skills training, as well as archives and resources for academic researchers.

The London Irish community will enjoy bright, modern spaces, with cafes and bars for social events. The support facilities will be accessible and dignified. We will be the premier venue for Irish business in London.

The new centre will house London's first theatre to focus on Irish productions, with accommodation for artists and rehearsal rooms.

There is something here for everyone, and everyone will be welcome.



# Impact

A key objective of the London Irish Centre is to develop more robust and diverse data collection mechanisms through partnerships with academic institutions.

Understanding where we have the most impact enables us to respond more dynamically and gives us access to a broader range of funding sources.



## 2024 by the numbers

- 18,000 people attended **cultural events** in 2024
- 86% said our events give them a greater **appreciation of Irish Culture**
- 13,000 people attended **600+ community events**, a 20% increase year on year
- 92% of attendees said that our events make them **feel more connected**
- **100+ active volunteers** logged more than 6,000 hours in 2024
- More than 200 people were helped with **legal advocacy**
- Nearly 200 people were given **survivor support**
- £100,000 + was distributed in **crisis grants**



The London Irish Centre has a range of Irish language courses offered through our Scoil na Gaeilge. We are proud that we will be the first place in Britain with a TEG exam centre. TEG (Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge) is administered by the Centre for Irish Language at Maynooth University. The only certification system for adult learners of Irish, TEG offers exams at five proficiency levels, starting with complete beginner.

Tá réimse cúrsaí Gaeilge ar fáil ag an Ionad Éireannach Londain tríd ár Scoil na Gaeilge. Beimid ar an gcéad áit sa Bhreatain a mbeidh ionad scrúdaithe TEG againn. Déanann Ionad na Gaeilge in Ollscoil Mhá Nuad riaradh ar TEG (Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge). Is é TEG an t-aon chóras deimhniúcháin d'fhoghlaimoirí fásta na Gaeilge, agus cuireann sé scrúduithe ar fáil ag cúig leibhéal inniúlachta, ag tosú le bunleibhéal.



## Notes

1. The projected cost of the redevelopment is £30–£35m.
2. The anticipated higher revenue from business and social events from the new building will help to increase the range of cultural and support services that we can offer and underpin our economic sustainability.
3. We thank our talented and dedicated staff; you make a difference every day. We also thank the volunteers who give thousands of hours free to our community.
4. Our donors, large and small, are such an important part of our work. Thank you.

# Our People

## Our Staff

Maria Archer *Senior Health Navigator*, Robbie Butler *Head of Fundraising & Marketing*, Nicola Byrne *HR Manager*, Teresa Cleary *Director of Support Services*, Maria Connolly *Wellbeing Officer*, Alison Cook *Operations Assistant*, Tom Dench-Layton *Community Programme Coordinator*, Rebecca Dorothy *Education Officer*, Katie Doyle *Survivors Integrated Service Manager*, Marcella Doyle *Advice & Outreach Officer*, Matthew Hall *Legal Advocate*, Caroline Hanks *Befriending Coordinator*, Andrew Hansard *Advice & Support Manager*, Anne-Marie Hennessy, *Survivor Support Worker*, Séan Kaluarachchi *Survivor Information Adviser*, Alison Kenny, *Culture Programme Producer*, Rowan Kenny *Gateway Assessment Officer*, Claire Linton, *Finance Assistant*, Séamus MacCormaic *CEO*, Dylan McBride *Finance Officer*, Eileen McGeeney *Survivor Support Worker*, Bobby Murray *Head of Sales & Venue*, Claire Myers *Bar Supervisor*, Paula Ong *Project Manager*, Hannah Pender, *Director of Programme and Events*, Roisin Power *Survivors Programme Coordinator*, Tadhg Quigley Brennan *Bar Supervisor*, Emelye Rennards *Community Engagement & Wellbeing Manager*, Louise Rowe *Chief Finance Officer*, Aiden Stapleton *Bar Manager*, Aimee Thompson *Events Officer*, Jeff Whelan *Irish Citizen & Identity Officer*, Alec Wilson *Fundraising & Marketing Officer*

## Our Trustees

Caoimhe Benmaou, Rosaleen Blair (CBE) *Chair*, Edward Bracken, Tom Connaughton, Patrick Doherty *Executive Chair & Treasurer*, Tom Goddard, Rory Godson, Jennifer Hegarty, Declan Hunt, Mary Kerrigan, Dame Maura McGowan, Angela Murphy, Michael O'Connor (CBE) *Vice Chair*, James O'Riordan

## With special thanks to

Gary Dunne *Creative Consultant/Advisor*, Cormac Macrann *Development Advisor*, Dermot O'Leary *Patron*, Damian O'Malley *Brand and Marketing Strategy Lead*, Ed Sheeran (MBE) *Patron*

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# Our Partners

## Funders



## Donors



## Partnerships



## Accreditations



# How you can help

## There are two ways you can help the London Irish Centre



### 1. Time and Expertise

Volunteer for our community and support programmes. We need experienced and creative business people to mentor in our social enterprise programmes. We always need people who have the time and the compassion to befriend people who lack family or other essential support. Contact [volunteer@londonirishcentre.org](mailto:volunteer@londonirishcentre.org) for more information.

### 2. Donations

We welcome donations of any size to support our ongoing work. Many people give a small amount monthly through our regular donation schemes. We also benefit hugely from legacy donations. Please contact our Head of Fundraising [robbiebutler@londonirishcentre.org](mailto:robbiebutler@londonirishcentre.org) for more information.



We have just launched a capital appeal to raise funds for the redevelopment of our home in Camden Square. There are opportunities for naming rights and other benefits for significant private donations. Please contact our CEO [seamusmaccormaic@londonirishcentre.org](mailto:seamusmaccormaic@londonirishcentre.org) to arrange a discussion.