

THE LONDON IRISH CENTRE

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024/2025

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**The Irish Heart of London**  
Celebrating 70 Years of  
Irish Culture and Community

# Annual Report

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**Rosaleen Blair CBE,**  
Chair

### Introduction from our Chair and CEO

This Annual Report covers the period from October 2024 to September 2025.

During this time, we marked a significant milestone at the London Irish Centre: our 70th anniversary year. We were proud to celebrate this landmark with you, our valued community of supporters, partners, artists and friends. This milestone gave us the opportunity to launch our strategy to propel us over the coming decades.

We continued to lead the Irish Diaspora in Britain in culture and heritage programming, launching several new initiatives, while deepening our ties with key cultural partners in Ireland.

In summer 2025, we relaunched Scoil na Gaeilge, our Irish language school, to extraordinary demand, becoming the first and only Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG) exam centre in Britain.

We extend our sincere thanks to the Irish Government for its continued support through the Emigrant Support Programme, including the welcome award of three-year grant funding from 2025. This investment in our mission enables sustainable long-term planning, as we enter an exciting period of redevelopment for our home at Camden Square.

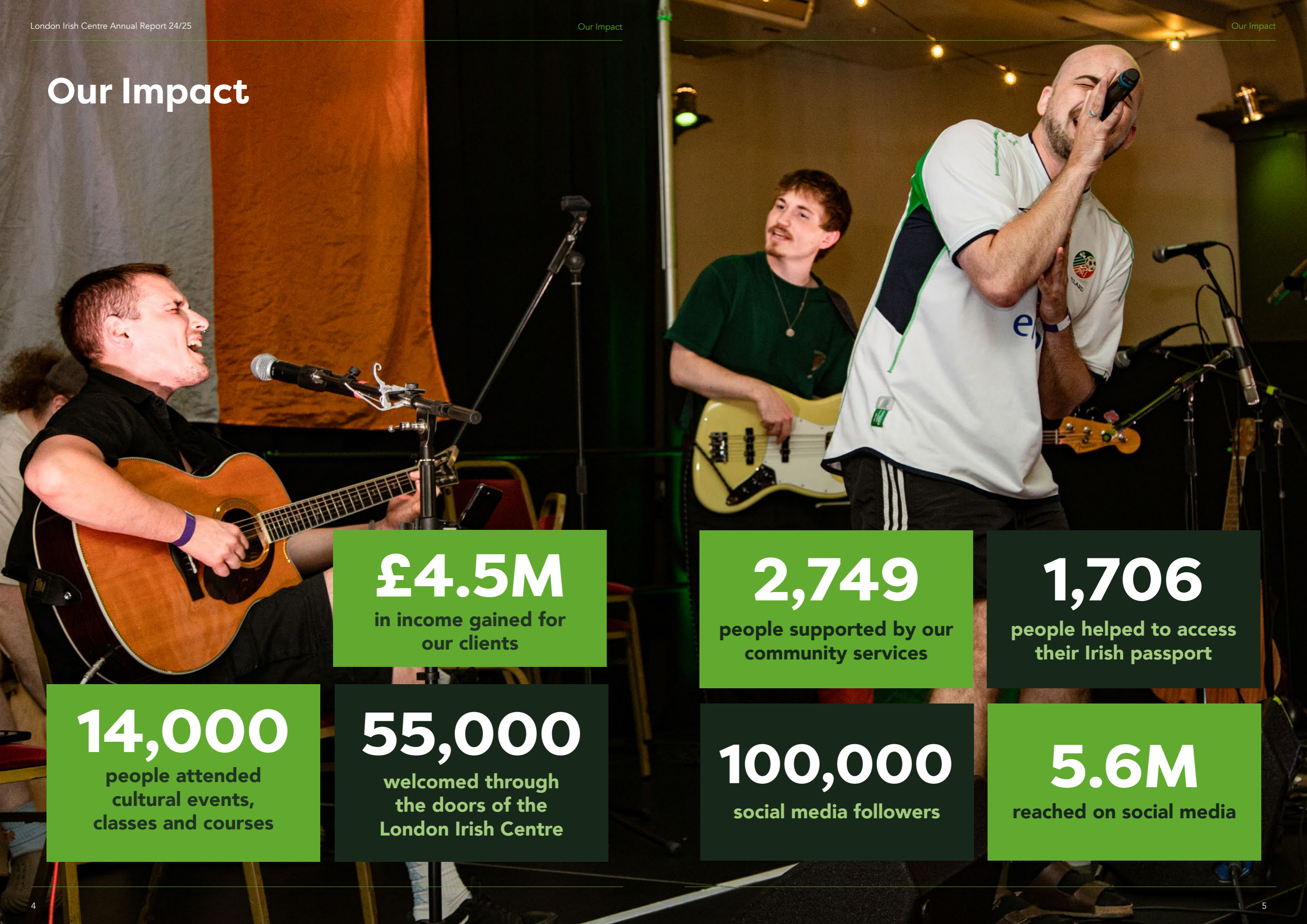
We are also deeply grateful to the many donors, foundations and trusts who sustain our work financially, and to the individuals who generously give their time through volunteering, pro-bono advice and consultancy.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to evolving our services and programmes to meet the changing needs of the Irish community in London, broadening our reach and deepening our impact.



**Séamus MacCormaic,**  
CEO

# Our Impact



**£4.5M**

in income gained for our clients

**2,749**

people supported by our community services

**1,706**

people helped to access their Irish passport

**14,000**

people attended cultural events, classes and courses

**55,000**

welcomed through the doors of the London Irish Centre

**100,000**

social media followers

**5.6M**

reached on social media



# Celebrating 70 Years of the London Irish Centre

In September 2025, the London Irish Centre marked a milestone anniversary, celebrating 70 years at the heart of Irish life in the capital city. We were delighted to mark the occasion with our wide network of supporters, friends, clients and volunteers, in a month-long celebration of Irish community and culture.

Highlights included a 70th Anniversary Celebration at the Embassy of Ireland, where we gathered to mark our progress and commemorate our past, enjoying live performances from BOLD LOVE and An Chéad Ghlúin Eile. This event also saw the launch of our strategy for the next 10 years, setting out our ambitious vision for the future of the London Irish Centre.

Created through months of archival research, a heritage photography exhibition was launched at the Centre, telling the story of our community and the organisation's history. A community-focused Family Day showcased the rich diversity of our cultural programme and partners, while our annual fundraising evening with Dermot O'Leary completed the celebrations as another resounding success.

During this time, we were delighted to run a special raffle and small silent auction to fundraise for our community services. We are hugely grateful to Lewis Capaldi for donating an exceptional prize, including a private meet-and-greet, and tickets to his sold-out Dublin show.

**Together, these events honoured our past while looking confidently toward the future.**



# Culture & Venue

From October 2024 to September 2025, the Culture & Venue team at the London Irish Centre delivered an ambitious, inclusive, and high impact programme that strengthened our role as a leading home for Irish arts, culture, education, and community in London.

Through innovative programming, strategic partnerships, and strong commercial performance, the Centre continued to grow its reach while deepening connections across both London and Ireland.

Across the year, we welcomed over 14,000 attendees to our cultural programme, a testament to the diversity and appeal of our events. This figure does not include the 50,000 people who attended the Mayor of London's St Patrick's Day Festival in Trafalgar Square, which we proudly programmed for the fifth consecutive year. Leading the cultural content of such a high-profile international celebration reinforces our position as a trusted curator of Irish culture on a major civic stage.

Over

# 14,000

people attended cultural events, classes and courses

## Building Strategic Partnerships

We also made significant progress in building strategic partnerships with world leading organisations in Ireland, including the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA), Photo Museum Ireland, EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum, Dublin City University (DCU) and Maynooth University.

These collaborations are designed to be mutually beneficial, enabling the sharing of expertise, creating new event opportunities, and raising organisational profiles in both Ireland and Britain.

Most importantly, these relationships will enrich our future programming and ensure that our audiences continue to experience work of the highest calibre.

# 36%

of those surveyed were attending a cultural event at the Centre for the first time



## Reaching New Audiences: Sunday Seisiún

A standout moment this year was the launch of Sunday Seisiún, a vibrant new music event dedicated to showcasing emerging talent from Ireland. Designed as a welcoming platform for artists taking their first steps onto the London stage, the event quickly captured the imagination of audiences and performers alike.

Our debut Sunday Seisiún and each subsequent edition has sold out, reflecting both the appetite for authentic live Irish music and the Centre's reputation for quality programming. The success of this event has made it a regular fixture in our programme, nurturing new voices, while strengthening London's connection to Ireland's evolving music scene.





### Education

Our education programmes went from strength to strength, particularly through growing engagement with Storíní, our early years initiative for preschool children. The programme continues to support families in connecting younger generations with Irish culture through creative, accessible learning.

This commitment to education was further demonstrated with the launch of Scoil na Gaeilge, our new Irish language school. Developed in collaboration with Maynooth University, we now offer an accredited Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG) Irish language programme course and examination, making the LIC the only provider of its kind in the country.

Demand has been extraordinary, with over 2,000 people joining waiting lists and courses selling out in less than 24 hours. Beyond the classroom, Scoil na Gaeilge is evolving into a vibrant social and cultural brand, fostering language focused events and opportunities that encourage learners to live the language as well as study it.

# 50%

of our learners are in the 25–35 age range

# 50%

are first-generation Irish

# 40%

are second-generation Irish

## The Venue

The Venue team played a crucial role in supporting the charity’s financial stability by exceeding income targets during this period. Their proactive approach to securing new business, combined with excellent hospitality and a strategic focus on dry hire opportunities, has generated repeat bookings and strengthened our relationships with new and prospective clients.

The use of the Venue as a rehearsal space and filming location expanded, welcoming new clients such as BBC’s Strictly Come Dancing, West End theatre companies, BBC’s Kitchen Cabinet and Netflix, among others.

live music, we created lively, communal experiences that brought people together. Partnerships with Irish food providers also ensured that London-based Irish businesses were supported and showcased.

Outside of our cultural programme and regular events, the Venue hosted some of Ireland’s most exciting emerging and established music acts, staging the sold-out launch of KingFislr’s Gloria EP, and Boyzone’s press conference in September, at which they announced their 2026 ‘Two for The Road’ gigs.

Finally, the London Irish Centre further established itself as a home for Irish sport in London. By programming major sporting moments on the big screen alongside

# 55,000

welcomed through the doors of the London Irish Centre



**“Great nights in a great venue, and we really appreciated the hospitality shown to us. We hope to return again sooner rather than later.”**

# Community Support Services

## Community Support Programmes

Our community support programmes continue to go from strength to strength following a strategic review and standardising our approach across all of our locations. We held 516 community connection and wellbeing activities across our social groups in Camden, Croydon, Ealing and Hammersmith during the reporting period, with over 15,000 attendees.

In developing our Social Groups, there has been an increased focus on integrated delivery of externally-led health and wellbeing sessions, alongside a larger, more structured food offering at social groups, strengthening holistic support for our clients' physical, social, and emotional wellbeing.

We have developed stronger Community Voice and co-production approaches, with the introduction of Community Voice meetings for clients and volunteers creating a formal platform for feedback and shared decision-making. These mechanisms ensure that services are shaped by lived experiences and identify and address needs in the community.

There have been many new activities integrated within our social groups and community café to increase the diversity of our offer. These include dancing groups, photography projects, chair yoga, film screenings, cinema trips, zoo trips, and an increase in creative and art sessions.

**£4.5M**

in income gained for our clients

**857**

activities and events held

**2,749**

people supported by our community services





## Advice and Support

We continue to deliver high quality, person-centred services which consistently demonstrate positive impact for our clients. We provided advice and support to 2,527 clients. Those accessing our Advice and Support Services include people with long term health conditions and disabilities, poor housing conditions and homelessness, those experiencing poverty, crisis and often presenting with complex experiences of abuse (both current and historic).

Due to challenging external factors, the scale of problems and demand for services are increasing, and we have helped many individuals at the point of crisis. This includes the housing crisis, cost of living crisis, increases in mental health issues as well as reduced welfare support and reductions in social housing.

With Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance being replaced by Universal Credit by March 2026, this has presented significant risk and anxiety for our most vulnerable clients. Our Advice and Support team has provided high quality and compassionate support to clients navigating this complex landscape.

During this reporting period, we distributed hardship grants of over £90,000, £41,000 of which was funded by the generosity of the Benevolent Society of St. Patrick (BSOSP).

Our partnership work across the community continues to benefit our clients and members, examples including our Advice outreach to food bank users in Castlehaven Community Centre that supported 100 individuals; a Safe Home Ireland event at the LIC in March 2025 which supports repatriation; developing bespoke referral pathways to debt advice organisations such as Rooted Finance, C4WS Night Shelters, and Camden Street homeless outreach team among others.

We supported our clients in gaining £3,610,857.56 of benefit income – an incredible 50% increase of over £1.6 million pounds on income gained in the previous year. This increased access to the relevant welfare benefits can be life changing for our clients.

**"I still can't believe how my luck has changed. I really didn't know how I was going to move forward with my life in so many ways.**

**I'm now living in the very flat you described to me over the phone when we chatted. I'm slowly catching my breath, and I think I might be able to start piecing my life together again. I thank you from the very bottom of my heart."**

**“The day you held my hand and said to me ‘Everything’s going to be alright, I believe in you’, was the day everything changed for me.”**



## Health Navigation

Our Health Navigation service, overseen by a qualified nurse, continues with a holistic, preventative focus on increasing our community members access to health support and services. It covers observing for early signs of dementia, mobility issues, social isolation and digital exclusion, amongst other things. It includes both ongoing individual support, as well as health promotion within our social groups. We have seen particular increases in need for support relating to Care Needs Assessments, Health Advocacy and Palliative Care Co-ordination.

There have been significant developments in our work with key health partners. We have focused on providing support for community members managing long-term health conditions, such as heart conditions, diabetes and dementia, and empowering them to access health support at the right time.

We held a very successful Health and Wellbeing Fayre in September 2025. A drop-in clinic on the day provided Healthy Heart and blood pressure checks and First Aid demonstrations. Excellent work is taking place relating to how we support community members with Dementia and Alzheimer’s – including plans to develop a Dementia Café/Hub.

The Health Navigation service worked alongside our Survivors Integrated Service and North London Hospice to curate a pilot “Living Well” Course for clients who have been diagnosed with a life-limiting condition. There has been a focus on developing strategic partnership with Camden and Islington Public Health teams, supporting development of our health offer and opportunities for collaboration.

# Survivors Integrated Service (SIS)

Throughout the reporting period, the Survivors Integrated Service sustained a strong commitment to in-person and outreach work. We continued to provide high levels of emotional support and effective engagement with statutory and voluntary services, including successful engagement with other LIC Community Support Services for their expert support.

The service has a continued focus on planning and refining events and activities that promote health and wellbeing, integration, and inclusion. Taking a co-production approach, we ensure that activities are responsive, accessible, and effective in reducing social isolation.

We delivered 39 Health and Wellbeing sessions and 26 Community Connection Activities, with 781 Survivors' attendances across these events. Our monthly Cara Peer Storytelling programme continued into its fourth year and remains extremely popular, and our monthly Survivors' luncheons maintained strong engagement, offering free nutritious meals alongside a welcoming safe space for survivors to come together, socialise and simply enjoy being present within a safe and confidential space. Development of these peer group spaces continue to attract survivors who may not otherwise engage in individual support.

A significant success during 2024-25 was the quality of support provided to survivors applying to the Mother and Baby Homes Payment Scheme. The service achieved an incredible £915,766 in income gained for Survivors through this work.

**"Thank you so much for all you've done, I can't thank you enough for all your patience and the time you have given to me. It's such a relief to have it all done."**

Recipient of support from Mother and Baby Home Payment Scheme

**£915,766**  
income gained for Survivors from the  
Mother and Baby Home Payment Scheme

**"Thank you so much, I am very isolated where I live and could never have managed any of this without your tireless efforts. It's good to know you're on the other side of the phone to support me and others who need it."**

Recipient of support from the Mother and Baby Home Payment Scheme



Survivors were supported through an often complex and emotionally demanding process, including support in access to records and the emotional support in following up on completion of the application. We have continued to raise awareness of its work at a strategic level, both within England and beyond, through sharing best practice and survivor-informed approaches. The service has become a recognised point of reference nationally, with other organisations seeking guidance and expert input on effective service and trauma-informed delivery.

The service experienced a noticeable rise in complex cases involving mental health challenges and dementia. These needs required enhanced levels of support, advocacy, and coordination with external services. The emerging themes from this work have informed key areas of learning, highlighting the importance of ongoing staff training and increased awareness across services engaging with older survivors and those experiencing cognitive decline.

During 2024-25, an increasing number of survivors and family members reached out to the service regarding support for End-of-Life Care. We responded by providing outreach support, advocacy and guidance, while highlighting the specific needs and vulnerabilities of survivors within Health and Care settings. Particular emphasis was placed on raising awareness of Irish Survivor histories and the risks of re-traumatisation and fears of re-institutionalisation.

This work involved close collaboration with statutory Health and Care services in the UK and partner organisations to ensure involvement is survivor-centred with dignified care.

**210**  
survivors supported by our  
Survivors Integrated Service



## Volunteering

Our volunteers play a crucial role in each and every part of the London Irish Centre. The impact which they make to support our services and our clients cannot be understated.

During 2024-25, our volunteers supported across a wide range of services and projects including:

- Befriending
- Community Café
- Digital Inclusion and Adult Education
- Community Events & Workshops, Social Groups, Reception
- Survivors Integrated Service
- Cultural events
- Venue events

**“The London Irish Centre is a fantastic hub for both members and volunteers. We are one big, happy family.”**

Befriending Service

**“I’m so grateful to have been placed with someone so kind and gentle, good company and fun. Thank you for your patience and understanding, waiting to start everything when I was out of hospital. It was the best gift.”**

## Befriending Service

Our Befriending service continues to provide vital and consistent support to community members across London, significantly reducing experiences of loneliness and social isolation. We have seen an increase in those experiencing social isolation and loneliness due to change of health circumstances, particularly a decrease in their mobility and ability to access previous community social outlets, which reinforces the importance of this service.

We were thrilled to secure the Befriending Networks re-accreditation of the Quality in Befriending Award at the new level of Excellence – the highest standard. We were delighted to co-host Befriending Networks “Journey Across Befriending 2025 Roadshow” in February. The event was highly successful, attracting participation from various organisations including NSPCC/Childline, Age UK, Jewish Care, ScotsCare, Time to Talk Befriending, and the Southwark Irish Pensioners Project.

We continue to develop strong partnerships, with referrals coming from Age UK, Adult Social Care Services, Islington Memory Service and Islington Bereavement Support. We hold an important role within the Befriending Network, where organisations exchange good working practice and development ideas. We were proud to launch our Befriending Service Newsletter in Spring 2025, further connecting the befriending community and sharing the positive impacts of the service.



Oscar & Marion



Pearse & Befriending Client



## Citizenship and Identity

Our Citizenship and Identity service is primarily aimed at community members who need additional support in processing and accessing their Irish identity documents.

During 2024-25, systemic factors including post Brexit issues and the growing third-generation Irish population saw increasing demand for support with passport applications and passport witnessing. We have been extremely responsive to this demand, supporting 1,706 community members during this time.

The service has developed a strong partnership with the Irish Passport Office in London. These significant increases in referrals are also due to consistently reported high-quality service delivery and service responsiveness.

**1,706**

people supported through our Citizenship & Identity service

**535**

new passport applications completed

**615**

passports witnessed

## Finances

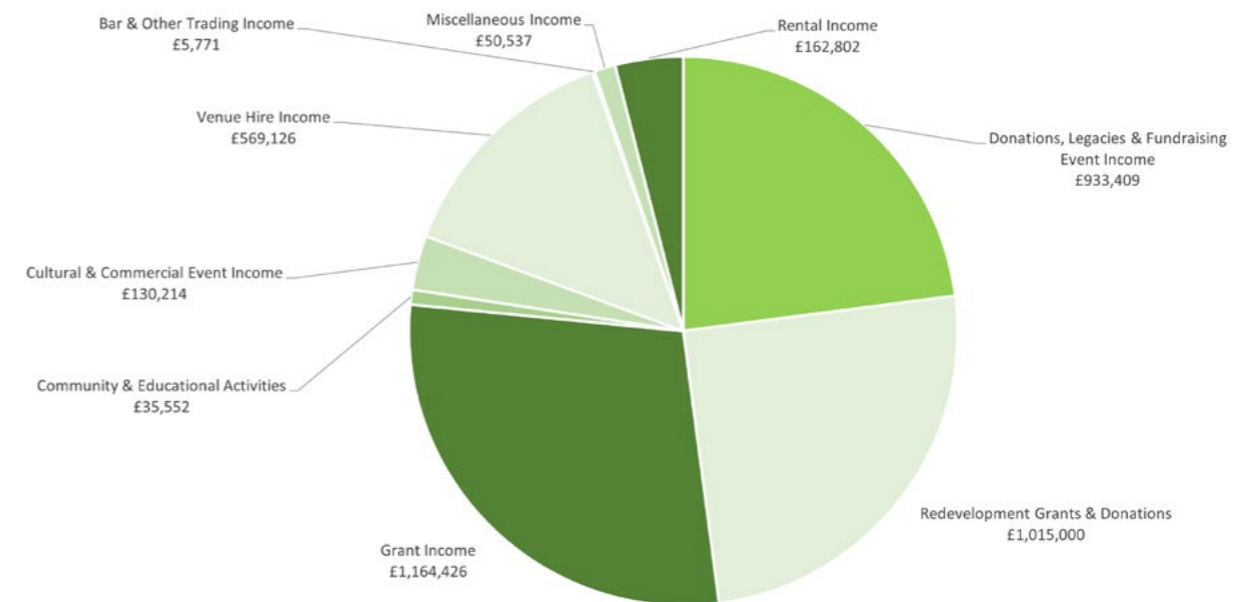
Our largest grant is given by Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs' Emigrant Support Programme (ESP). This support is crucial for the continuation of core services within the organisation.

During this reporting period, we were delighted to be notified that the London Irish Centre has secured 3-year funding from the ESP programme, allowing us to plan sustainably for the years ahead. We are deeply grateful for the longstanding support of the Irish Government.

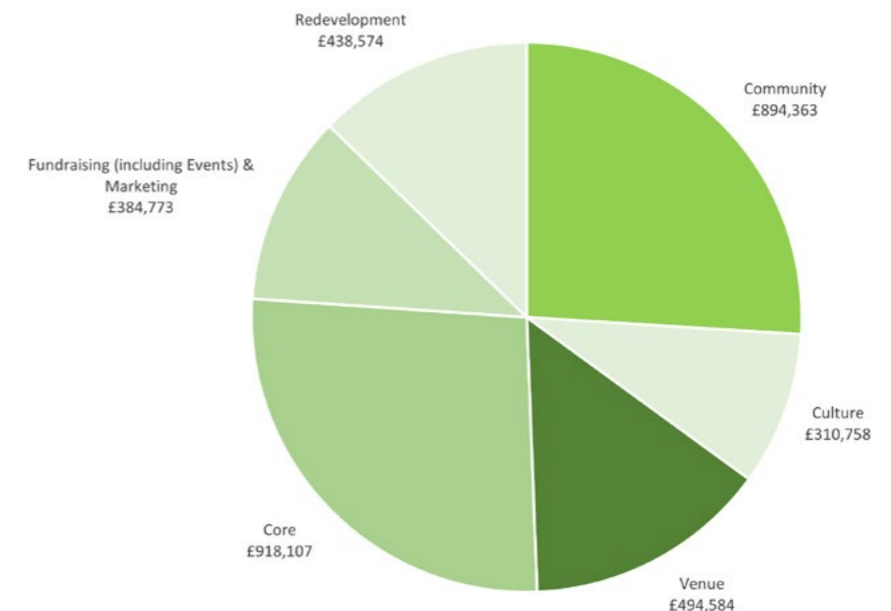
We received a number of further grants throughout the financial year from other organisations including:

- Culture Ireland
- Trust for London
- Camden Council
- Benevolent Society of St Patrick
- Islington Council
- Society of the Sacred Heart
- City Bridge Trust

### Total Incoming Resources



### Resources Expended by Area



# Fundraising

We are proud to report that the London Irish Centre raised £933,409 gross through fundraising activities between October 2024 and September 2025. This is a fantastic achievement and would not have been possible without the extraordinary generosity of our donors, supporters, funders, partners, and volunteers, whose commitment continues to sustain and strengthen our work.



## BITA Awards Evening

In October 2024, the London Irish Centre was honoured to be selected as one of the charity beneficiaries of the BITA Awards Evening. This event made a significant impact to our fundraising income for the year.

We extend our sincere thanks to Paul Whitnell and the entire BITA team, who generously chose to support the London Irish Centre for a second time through this prestigious event. Their continued commitment reflects a strong belief in our mission and the importance of the services we provide to the Irish community in London.

## Christmas Appeal

Our annual Christmas Appeal provides vital, unrestricted income to support our services through the winter period and beyond. These funds played a crucial role in helping us deliver community support, connection, advice, and care at a time of year when demand is particularly high.



## The Big Night Out

In February 2025, we welcomed over 230 guests to our flagship charity gala, The Big Night Out. The evening was a huge success, bringing together supporters for an unforgettable night of fundraising, food, drinks, and entertainment. The amount raised represented a significant increase on previous years and reinforced its importance as a cornerstone of our fundraising programme.

## Golf Days

Our charity golf days in the United Kingdom and Ireland continue to be a vital source of support for the Centre. We are incredibly grateful to long time supporter and former trustee Mick Roddy, who organises two events each year; one took place in May at The London Club, with the second hosted in Ireland at the K Club.



## St. Patricks Lunch at the Rotunda

We were honoured to be selected by John Nugent as one of the charity beneficiaries of the St. Patricks Day Lunch at the Rotunda in March 2025.

The proceeds were shared equally between the London Irish Centre and Hospitality Action. We are deeply grateful to John and his team for their generosity and continued support.

## Carols and Craic

Our Carols and Craic event is a combination of festive fundraising and community celebration. A heartfelt thank you goes to our event partners ODPR, the O'Donovan family, and Fónua UK for their support in making this special evening possible.




## Dermot O'Leary and Friends


We closed the fundraising year with another outstanding Dermot O'Leary and Friends event. Our incredible patron once again brought together some of the very best Irish talent for a beautifully intimate and memorable evening.


We are immensely thankful to Dermot, the performers, sponsors (Carey's and the Bugler Group), and supporters who made the night such a success.




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