

Mission Statement

AIAC is a voluntary organisation for the independent advice sector in Northern Ireland, representing and giving voice to its members' aspirations to deliver effective and holistic, community or issue based advice through the provision of services, support and development opportunities.

Values

As a membership organisation, our values are embedded in promoting the application of creative community development approaches to advice giving, which place people and communities at the centre of the process and involves them in finding solutions and making informed choices.

AIAC believes in:

- Quality advice which is delivered free;
- Advice services which are impartial and non-judgemental and respect the individual's dignity;
- Advice which is wholly confidential and accountable to the public;
- Independent advice, which is free from statutory or private control and is both non-party political and non-sectarian in nature;
- Advice services which are aimed specifically towards overcoming social exclusion;
- Offering people choice through the provision of flexible, accessible advice services.



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Thanks From AIAC's energetic staff:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Bob Stronge | Director |
| Kevin Higgins | Membership Support Worker |
| Fiona Magee | Membership Support Worker |
| Barbary Cook | Communications Co-ordinator |
| Kathleen Mulligan | Finance and Administration Officer |
| Gill Cunningham | Membership Administrator |

Report design & layout by
 Barbary Cook

And thanks to everyone else:

Open University, Voluntary Activity Unit, Northern Ireland Electricity, FIAC, John Kyle Insurance, Shanway Printers, Dave Wall, FT International, Joe Blake Consultant, BCDA, Social Security Agency, Social Fund Inspectors Officer, ME Outreach Steering Group Project, NIACAB, Law Centre NI, OUNI, NI Anti-Poverty Network, Equality Commission for NI, NIVDA, Northern Ireland Housing Executive Independent Tribunal Service, DNA, Training and Employment Agency, NICVA, Belfast City Council, LASA, General Consumer Council, CENI, OFFREG, NEA, Help the Aged, Money Advice Trust, NUS/USI, Finegan Gibson Accountants, DHSS, NIVT, NLCB, MBW, ERDF, John Moores Foundation

Organisational Development

"AIAC will maintain and develop its organisational capacity through the efficient and effective use of internal and external resources."

Chairperson's Report

Welcome to AIAC's 5th Annual Report. This year's report reflects the key aspects of our work under each theme contained in the Strategic Plan 2000 - 2003.

Despite limited resources AIAC continues to provide a remarkable range of services and support for its members. This speaks volumes about the commitment, skill and energy of staff and management but it also reflects a growing willingness by the members to 'get involved' at all levels. We remain committed to providing the highest standards of service to members. It is therefore vital that we secure additional funding next year to maintain our core activities and take forward the development of new areas of work identified in the Strategic Plan.

The independent advice sector is growing in strength and influence, in large part due to AIAC's success in highlighting the value and importance of the sector. It is also a reflection of the quality and range of services offered by members and their unique contribution to targeting social need, which is being increasingly recognised by funding bodies and policy makers. Nevertheless many members continue to struggle for adequate resources and lack the stable core funding necessary to plan their services on a medium to longer-term basis.

Our membership continues to grow, proving our continued relevance, as we pursue a community development ethos to meet the needs of the membership. We hope to be in a position to develop new areas of work in the coming year, including the development of a new FIAC based Quality Standards Health Check, further advances in NVQs and ICT, and the development of new Money Advice Support Services.

I would like to thank the Management Committee for their wisdom, enthusiasm and dedication to AIAC. Thanks also to the staff for their tireless approach to the job in hand. I would like to pay particular tribute to our Director, Bob Stronge, who ensures that the organisation and the sector's voice is heard at strategic levels both locally and nationally and for ensuring that it remains firmly focused on the needs of its members.

I recommend the report to you and hope that you enjoy reading it.

Conor McGale
Chairperson of AIAC Management Committee

Director's Report

In this our 5th Annual Report I want to reflect on our achievements to date and to focus on some of the significant challenges and opportunities ahead.

When AIAC was established in 1995 our first chair, Katie Harlon, provided me with some sound advice which was that "AIAC will be a success if it doesn't make promises on which it can't deliver and delivers what it says it will". The significance of those words has always stuck with me and they have remained a guiding principle for AIAC.

The Management Committee at that time guided the organisation most carefully and adopted the mantra of 'stay small - be strategic'. That committee (just as the current committee is now) was very clear about the path that AIAC should take. They sought to ensure that AIAC did not duplicate work carried out by other advice organisations but rather the aim was to provide tailored services, specific to the needs of the independent advice sector. For this reason AIAC did not pursue welfare rights training but instead led the field in developing NVO's in Advice and Guidance. Did not provide advice consultancy services preferring instead to concentrate on support and development work. Did not develop information systems but provided members with guidance on sourcing and accessing information. There are other examples and most have proved to be sound judgements

Continued on P. 3

Coordination and Promotion

"AIAC will enable its membership to achieve effective coordination in areas of mutual interest and will promote the value and role of independent advice giving."

The Greater Belfast Advice Services Strategy

We have continued to support the implementation of the Greater Belfast Advice Services Strategy. Fiona, the Greater Belfast Membership Support Worker has supported the strategic development of each of the projects involved in the Strategy through participation on advisory and steering groups and through one to one meetings with project co-ordinators.

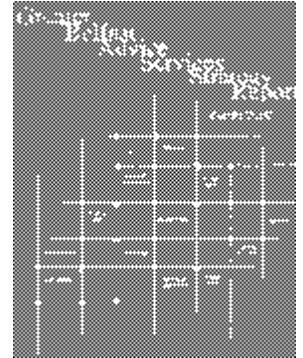
In March 2000 an evaluation report on the Greater Belfast Advice Services Strategy was launched at Belfast City Hall. The report highlighted the valuable contribution that the strategy has made to the development of advice services in the Greater Belfast area and outlined a number of key recommendations for the future. AIAC has been actively involved in lobbying funders to sustain the strategy and following negotiations with Belfast Regeneration Office have submitted a proposal for a further funding package to allow the work and achievements of independent advice centres in the Greater Belfast area to be consolidated.

Targeting Need, Serving the Community

AIAC has begun an analysis of the range of services on offer through independent advice and information providers within the Derry City Council area. Kevin Higgins, the Regional Membership Support Worker has been working with member groups in Derry to undertake a quantitative analysis on such issues as funding, staffing and statistics. This work will continue next year with a qualitative analysis on the work of the sector.

Volunteering

AIAC recognises the value of volunteering. In August 1999 we carried out a number of consultations with the membership to enhance training and support for managers in relation to volunteering. A report on developing volunteering opportunities in the independent advice sector defined the volunteer infrastructure and capacity within the membership. Since this AIAC has had a number of meetings with the Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency to discuss the best way to address the training needs identified in the report. A Good Practice volunteering pack is being developed for managers and progress has been made on developing a progression path of accredited learning for volunteers.



Front cover GBASS Report



George Mackie, Belfast Regeneration Office, Bob Stronge & Fiona Magee, AIAC, at the GBASS Launch, Belfast City Hall, March 2000



Front cover AIAC Volunteering Report 1999

Coordination and Promotion

Social Policy

Social Policy has become an increasingly prominent area of AIAC's work. Members are increasingly aware of the positive impact an individual case can have on the implementation of policy right across Northern Ireland. Issues addressed this year have included Income Support and mortgage payments, simultaneous claims for Income Support and Incapacity Benefit, the backdating of Income Support following Disability Living Allowance awards, delays regarding Severe Disablement Allowance reviews, Social Services' delays in carrying out OT assessments, postage on Social Security Agency return envelopes and the availability of Agency leaflets and forms.

Advice Services Alliance

AIAC continue to represent the independent advice sector within the Advice Services Alliance (ASA) and as part of ASA, attended meetings with other organisations including the Social Security Agency. AIAC members make up the bulk of AIAC representation on the ASA panel which meets the Agency to discuss operational issues, with the discussions and outcomes highlighted to all members electronically through the e-mail and through AIACnews.

Raising Our Profile

Over the last year we have been promoting the role of AIAC and our members in a wide range of publications including

- ✍ Irish News/ 'Know Your Rights'
- ✍ News Letter/'Care in the Community'
- ✍ Belfast News
- ✍ NI Local Community Newspapers
- ✍ The Mirror
- ✍ Belfast City Hospital Trust (Hospital Watch Booklet) for staff and patients
- ✍ ALIVE - a personal safety and information booklet for youth
- ✍ Charity Choice - the premier guide to charities in NI
- ✍ Telephone Helplines Directory
- ✍ UK Advice Finder software
- ✍ Walk on the Wise Side
- ✍ Yellow Pages
- ✍ Bryson House Directory
- ✍ General Consumer Council
- ✍ Frontline

Director's Report

As an organisation I believe we have steered a clear path in providing relevant practical and strategic support to our members. This is reflected in our annual membership evaluation - findings of which are included throughout this report.

We have come a long way since 1995 and, as you will see from reading the other sections in this report, have consolidated many of our core activities. But we can't and should not stand still. We are always seeking continuous improvement in our service delivery and in consultation with our members we have put in place a new Strategic Plan to guide us through the next stage in our development. We have also taken the step of establishing three working groups in the areas of Quality Standards & Training, Information Technology & Innovation and Organisational Development. These are in the process of identifying the key activities that will be crucial to the success of the sector over the next three to five years. We must design and deliver services relevant to the needs of members that take account of social change and a new and developing social policy environment.

"AIAC's social policy work is very effective at present".

Sean O'Farrell
Churches Advice
Centre

52% of members felt that AIAC had been good at addressing Social Policy issues presented to them.

Membership Evaluation
1999



Belfast City Hospital Trust
(Hospital Watch Booklet) for
staff and patients

Services and Support

"AIAC will continue to provide a range of high quality, effective and efficient services and support mechanisms in response to the needs of its membership."

Membership Support

AIAC's Membership Support Workers continue to contribute to the operational and strategic development needs of members. They have responded positively to member's requests and have provided both practical and technical support on a one to one basis and in group sessions. Key support work this year has focused on improving communication, raising the profile of advice services and keeping members informed of issues that has an impact on their work. Assistance has also been provided in relation to funding and recruitment and selection.

This support is backed up by the availability of any of the AIAC staff for telephone assistance on any issue that has an impact on a member organisation. In addition, as a result of technological developments, assistance via e-mail is becoming increasingly important.

Membership Support Workers

| | |
|---|----|
| Member centres visited..... | 37 |
| Meetings with other agencies..... | 29 |
| NVO meetings (group and individual)..... | 35 |
| Training/Networking attended..... | 23 |
| Greater Belfast Advice Services Meetings..... | 30 |
| Meeting with Derry City Council Area Members..... | 1 |
| Meetings with SSA and Departments..... | 20 |
| Recruitment..... | 15 |

Health and Safety

AIAC continue to address health and safety issues for the independent advice sector and liaise with organisations working in this field to highlight initiatives such as European Safety and Health Week. A regular health and safety page is featured in editions of AIACnews. This page highlights new legislation and information relevant to the sector. Updates for the AIAC Handbook are being developed and will be added in the New Year.

Information and Communications Technology

The Communications Coordinator continues to work with members on everyday IT problems, such as equipment failure and Internet access. AIAC also collaborated with NIACAB and The Law Centre NI to plan and hold a conference on information technology in the advice sector - "Meeting Social Need with New Technology".

63% of members' felt that the quality of services provided by AIAC were very good.

Membership Evaluation
1999

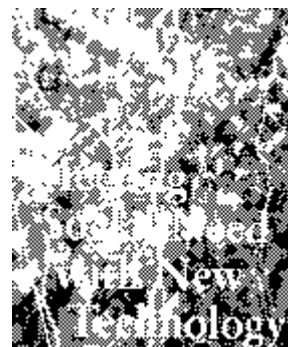


AIAC supports the development of East Belfast Independent Advice Centre

"Claudy Rural Development Ltd. have found the staff at AIAC respond very quickly to requests for assistance and have been instrumental in enabling us to secure funding for the advice service, many thanks".

Susan Tracey, Claudy Rural Development Ltd.

"Kevin and Fiona are extremely supportive".
Eugene Burns Limavady Community Development Initiative



ASA IT Seminar

Services and Support

Insurance Packages

The Professional Indemnity Insurance, which is offered in conjunction with AIAC membership through John Kyle Insurance Brokers, remains an important service for members. This package provides protection for advice organisations as they discharge their function of providing advice and information services to clients. This package is complemented by other insurance services which are available for members including office insurance and travel insurance. There are plans to make Trustee Insurance available to members next year.



John Kyle - AIAC Insurers

Newsheet

AIACnews is a publication written for and by the independent advice sector. Members have contributed over fifty of the articles published in the past year. The newsheet acts as a conduit of information to members, the voluntary sector, and public bodies keeping them informed of developments within the sector and of issues impacting on current and future work.

This year it got a new look. It has grown in length and contains more topical issues of interest to the membership. The articles are more detailed and technical and the lay-out has been changed to make it a more accessible and interesting read. An index section has been introduced and different sections have been included to reflect the diversity of work carried out by members. The readership of AIACnews has expanded to over 300 organisations and agencies and the input of readers has been valuable both in terms of feedback and in making information exchange a meaningful process.



AIACnews February 2000

"I have found AIAC News useful and informative particularly in relation to problems other advisers are having".

Margaret Smith,
Shankill Women's Centre

Director's Report

AIAC consists of organisations which have a wealth of expertise, skills and experience gained through their work with people on a wide range of social welfare issues. On a strategic level we need to put into place more formalised mechanisms to harness this talent. We have taken the view that the Internet can provide a useful platform to develop and enhance information sharing - which utilises meaningful interaction among advisors. The web-site is now fully updated and the fact that it is still receiving 13-15 thousand hits each month gives an indication of its usefulness. This potential will be built upon by adding new content and features including live social policy discussion forums and online quality standards and training programmes. The use of the Internet for doing business will continue to grow significantly and we are committed to ensuring that members are well equipped to take advantage of this medium. Our partnership with NIE has enabled us to equip 30 centres with Internet computers and it is heartening to see that members are using the group email system to provide information and support to each other

The current level and range of work undertaken by the independent advice sector needs to be defined more clearly both in terms of quantity and quality. The management committee has given considerable thought to this issue. We are considering the introduction of a yearly profile of the sector to coincide with the annual membership renewal. This would allow us to systematically quantify the work undertaken by the sector and chart any emerging patterns in provision. Based on our statistical returns and on research conducted last year by R Glen & L Lundy School of Law, Queens University - Report for the Lord Chancellor's Legal Aid Advisory Committee we estimate each member dealt with an average of 4,300 enquiries by the public. A breakdown of these enquires by category is contained on page 10.

Training and Quality Standards

“AIAC will develop and implement a range of training including NVQ Advice and Guidance aimed at facilitating the improvement of quality standards in advice services delivery.”

Meeting the Training Needs of Members

A number of training events have been delivered to members throughout the year. These reflect the diversity of issues dealt with by the independent advice sector. Training has been provided on the working families and disabled persons tax credit, NIE Codes of Practice, and money advice. We have also participated in joint seminars with other umbrella bodies to raise awareness of issues impacting on the sector. These have included seminars on Welfare Reform Legislation, on Meeting Social Need with New Technology, and on Legal Aid Reforms.

An IT survey has been carried out to analyse the level of IT skills and knowledge within the membership and work is ongoing in designing and developing training and support mechanisms to address these.



Kevin Higgins attends OUNI conference

“The course content was well structured and the exercises were useful and well explained.”

Deirdre Dobbin, South West Belfast Advice Partnership, on money advice training

NVQ

Leading the Way with National Vocational Qualifications

AIAC has been the first advice network in Northern Ireland to offer the National Vocational Qualifications in Advice and Guidance, achieving assessment centre status through the Open University in 1998. Qualifications are delivered in Service Support, Advice, Guidance and the D32/D33/D34 Assessor Awards. Accessibility is maximised through the satellite assessment centre model. Through this model, NVQ assessments are carried out by one of a number of assessors in centres across Northern Ireland, with internal verification carried out centrally by AIAC staff.

This year AIAC has assisted candidates in achieving the Assessor Awards and have registered eight candidates from the independent advice sector for the Advice and Service Support Qualifications. Candidate packs and structured support sessions have been devised for those candidates undertaking any of the awards.



Harry Smith, Gerry Tubritt, Gerard Mallaghan, Mary Larmour, Eileen Best
NVQ Assessor Meeting



Brian Fox, Roger Crowther (NVQ External Verifier), Liz Toman, Joan Mallon, Kevin Higgins
Visit to Satellite Centre

Training and Quality Standards

Legal Aid

AIAC has been involved in developments concerning the Community Legal Service in Great Britain and the consultations regarding legal aid reform in Northern Ireland. We have also been working with the Advice Services Alliance in GB with regards to defining levels of advice in conjunction with the work already carried out by the Community Legal Service for the Quality Marking of the Information, General Help and Specialist Help levels of service. This work included participation at a seminar hosted by the ASA in London and attended by advice agencies and members of the legal profession which looked specifically at advice services and how levels of advice provision could be defined and verified.

Regarding the position in Northern Ireland, AIAC have continued to represent the independent advice sector in discussions with the NI Court Service and the Law Society, highlighting the pivotal role played by the independent advice sector in ensuring access to quality, effective independent advice services.

Community
Legal Service



Quality Mark

Capacity Building

A pilot project has begun to develop a comprehensive advice centre auditing system. The audit will provide a means for members to improve their advice service. It will assess the quality of all aspects of management and delivery of services and make recommendations for action that could be taken to improve these.

“I found AIAC’s audit of Prisonlink’s advice service to be a thorough and beneficial exercise, carried out in a supportive and positive manner.”

Barry McMullan,
Advice Officer
Prisonlink

Director’s Report

On the issue of quality standards much work has already been done but new external developments will continue to highlight the importance of quality standards in service delivery. The recent Beyond the Centre Report highlighted the need for quality assurance systems. Legal aid reform, whatever form it takes, is likely to require quality standards assessments for those who wish to operate within the remit of legal services. In response to this AIAC is seeking to bring forward FIAC’s Quality Health Check which is a comprehensive self-help toolkit for advice centres. We are also involved in the pilot programme for the London Advice Services new Advice & Information Management System which should be available to all members next year.

On scanning the horizon two significant issues are likely to have an impact on the work and role of the sector over the coming years. The Social Security Agency’s new Customer Charter and the implementation of modernising government and welfare reform initiatives will have an impact on how we do business with the SSA. Whether or not it effects the levels of social security related enquires to advice centres is as yet unknown. My own view is that it will have little impact since people tend to use advice centres because they trust their advice worker and the service they get is holistic, or because they feel the agency has made a mistake in their claim.

Innovation and ICT

"AIAC will seek to encourage and assist its membership to develop innovative methods in the delivery of advice services particularly where this involves information and communications technology"

AIAC's Partnership with NIE

Working in partnership with Northern Ireland Electricity we have distributed 30 Internet ready computers to independent advice centres. These computers have assisted members to access a broad range of Internet based information relevant to their work. A survey was taken of the recipients of the first 15 of these computers and 90% of centres said that it had helped them to deliver a more comprehensive service.

70% of centres use the Internet to aid advice delivery and the survey also found that advice workers used the Internet to gather information on various issues around benefits, housing, employment etc, through government, education and consumer sites. There were also specific examples of information gathering such as researching medical conditions with regard to benefit applications and accessing Social Security Commissioners' decisions.

AIAC wishes to thank NIE for its generous support over the three year course of the Internet Pilot Project.



Maureen Delaney (NIE) & Terry Waugh (NIE),
Conor McGale Chair
AIAC Management
Committee & Bob
Stronge Director of AIAC
- Presentation of Internet
Ready computer from
NIE to AIAC

IT survey results

A survey of member's IT equipment and skills was carried out in February 2000. The results showed that 68% of advice centres/units have no more than two computers, most of which are running either Win 95 or Win 98.

71% of respondents have Internet access and 32% of respondents have Internet access for each computer. 76% say that they can use e-mail and the Internet, however 65% say that they would like training in how to use e-mail, e-mail lists and the Internet.

This would seem to suggest that advice workers have a basic knowledge but are not yet using these facilities to their full advantage. This was borne out by the limited use of the e-mail list facilities by March 2000.

"Having an AIAC/NIE computer means that we are now able to improve advice and information for clients. We now have access to information on all aspects of legal regulations and changes to the

benefits system."

John Quinn,

Falls Community Council

"In the future we would like to see more use of the Internet and e-mail, maybe even phone and video-conferencing"
Foyle Homeless Action and Advice
IT Survey, February 2000

Innovation and ICT

E-mail list on egroups.com

In December 1999 AIAC set up an e-mail list for members using the egroups.com service. Using a single e-mail address, one advice centre or worker can contact all the others in seconds. The rapid response potential offers an important resource for advice workers helping them to take advantage of the expertise of other advice workers around Northern Ireland. It is also a simple and effective way to distribute information about particular events to everyone else on the list.

It empowers advice workers to share knowledge and to develop their own expertise thereby improving the service they provide to clients. There are 61 people on the e-mail list. AIAC aims to see all members online and using the e-mail list facility.

Advice workers confirmed that they use e-mail to aid advice provision and to ask for help from other advice workers with regard to how they have dealt with a particular issue. They also use e-mail to receive updates from advice sector forums such as The London Advice Services' Rightsnet web site.

"The e-mail list keeps us in instant communication on all matters pertaining to the advice network."

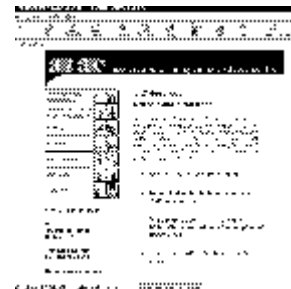
Harry Smith, Lower North Belfast Community Council

"The e-mail list provides up to the minute advice and allows for replies as soon as e-mail is received."

John Doherty and Jim Farren, Derry Community Social Service Centre

AIAC Web site

The AIAC web site continues to act as a crucial portal site for independent advice centres and as a resource for the public in search of their local independent advice centre. On average it receives between 13,000 and 15,000 hit per month. The two most requested web pages after the homepage are the "Find your local member page" and the "Links" web page.



AIAC web site
www.aiac.net

Director's Report

The proposed reform of local government, which may see a drastic reduction in the number of local councils, is an other initiative that is likely to have a significant impact on the overall funding for frontline advice agencies. We will need to keep a close eye on these developments to ensure that any reduction in council numbers does not disadvantage those centres reliant on council grant-aid.

On the organisational front we will need to look at the need for new premises, facilities and staff to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead. AIAC has a great staff-team who work above and beyond their call. I am conscious that they are working to capacity and we will need to examine staffing needs carefully over the next year. We will also need to review the suitability of our current premises in light of the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act and take appropriate measures to ensure that we are compliant with these.

Accountability and Involvement

"AIAC will ensure that it remains accountable to its membership, funders and other stakeholders and will seek to encourage maximum involvement by its membership in all its activities."

Accountability and Involvement in Action

We have sought to ensure that we have remained accountable to our members, funders and other stakeholders for the efficient and effective use of our resources. Expenditure is closely monitored and quarterly financial reports are presented to the management committee. Office systems are in place to monitor internal resources and all accounting practices are computerised.

Work planning sessions are held with staff regularly and a formal staff appraisal is conducted with each member of staff twice annually. Staff meetings are held every couple of weeks and other informal sessions are also held depending on the nature of the work ongoing. The office is fully networked and this enables a greater sharing of tasks amongst staff.

The management committee continues to reflect the geographical spread of members, however there is a gender imbalance within the current committee, which we will seek to actively address in the coming year.

In terms of our representation on external bodies, both staff and members have availed of the opportunity to sit on these which included, Social Security Agency Consultative Forums and Advice Services Alliance Working Groups. The Director is also a board member of the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action and Treasurer of Community Technical Aid NI. Members have also been represented by staff at a range of conferences and seminars throughout the year.

A membership evaluation is conducted annually which assists us in determining the views of members on the quality and relevance of the services and support we offer.

Director's Report

In conclusion I want to thank all the members for their continuing support, faith and goodwill and for the significant contribution they make to AIAC. My thanks to the staff for putting up with me, the management committee for their guidance and advice and to Conor McGale for his skilful role as chair and for his personal support. Thanks also to my colleagues in the Advice Services Alliance for their support. Finally a big thank you to our funders and everyone else who has supported us throughout the year.

Bob Stronge
Director

Calls made to AIAC from members of the public seeking advice April 1999 to end March 2000 (Total number of calls 816)

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Benefits (including housing) | 25% |
| Consumer | 10% |
| Elderly | 14% |
| Counselling/Health | 14% |
| Employment | 16% |
| Legal | 7% |
| Debt | 9% |
| Other | 5% |

Enquiries taken by independent generalist advice centres from members of the public seeking advice April 1999 to end March 2000

| | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| Benefits (including housing) | 79.5% |
| Consumer | 3.5% |
| Employment | 3% |
| Legal | 0.5% |
| Family | 1.5% |
| Housing | 5.5% |
| Tax | 1% |
| Utilities | 1% |
| Other | 4.5% |

73% of members' felt that AIAC gave them enough opportunities to be involved in shaping/deciding the future direction of our work.

Membership Evaluation
1999



Membership List

Age Concern Northern Ireland
 Age Concern Castlederg
 Age Concern Coleraine
 Ardoyne Association
 Ballynafeigh Community Development Association
 Ballysally Community Association
 Ballysillan Advice Services
 Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre
 Chinese Welfare Association
 Churches Advice Centre
 Claudy Rural Development Ltd.
 Coleraine Women's Aid - The Women's Centre
 Colin Community Groups Association
 Community Development Centre North Belfast
 Corpus Christi Services
 Craigavon Independent Advice Centre
 Creggan Community Care
 Derry Community Social Services Centre
 Disability Action (Belfast & Derry)
 Dove House Integrated Advice Centre
 Dungiven Community Resource Centre Ltd.
 Early Years Project
 East Belfast Independent Advice Centre
 Enniskillen Welfare Rights Advice Centre
 Falls Community Council
 Falls Women's Centre
 Fold Housing Trust
 Foyle Down's Syndrome Trust
 Foyle Homeless Action & Advice Service
 Galliagh Community Development Group
 Gingerbread NI
 Glenluce Quality Caring Centre
 Greater Turf Lodge Residents Association

Help the Aged
 Hillcrest House
 Housing Rights Service
 L.I.A.I.S.E
 Ligoniel Improvement Association
 Limavady Community Development Initiative
 Low Pay Unit (Belfast & Derry)
 Lower North Belfast Community Council
 Mind Yourself
 National Schizophrenia Fellowship
 Neighbourhood Development Association
 Newry Welfare Rights Centre
 NIACRO (Prisonlink) (Belfast & Derry)
 Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
 Northlands
 NUS/USI
 Omagh Independent Advice Services
 Rosemount Resource Centre
 Shankill Women's Centre
 South West Belfast Advice Partnership
 Springfield Charitable Association
 St Patrick's Community Enterprise Ltd.
 Tar Anall
 Tar Isteach
 The Blind Centre for NI
 The Link Family & Community Centre
 The Resource Centre Derry Ltd.
 Ulster Prisoner's Aid
 Upper Andersonstown Welfare and Advice Group
 Vine Advice Centre
 WAVE Trauma Centre (Belfast & Armagh)
 Windsor Women's Centre
 Women's Support Network

Thanks to the Management Committee:

Chair Conor McGale

Omagh Independent Advice Services

Vice-Chair Brian Fox

Craigavon Independent Advice Centre

Treasurer Harry Smith

Lower North Belfast Community Council

Secretary Karen McNamee

East Belfast Independent Advice Centre

Jan Wright, *Housing Rights Service*

Eugene Burns, *Limavady Community Development Initiative*

Jim Doran *LIAISE*

Cathal McElhatton *Disability Action*

Barrie McLatchie *Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre*

Barry McMullan *Prison Link*

Gerry Tubritt *Ballynafeigh Community Development Association*

Suzie Tracy *Claudy Rural Development Ltd*



From left to right, back row, Bob Stronge, Jim Doran, Gerry Tubritt, Conor McGale

From left to right, front row, Karen McNamee, Barry McMullan, Harry Smith, Brian Fox, Barrie McLatchie

Audited Accounts

The statement of income & expenditure and balance sheet set out in this report are extracts from the association's audited financial statements. The association's auditors, Finnegan Gibson, have reported on the financial statements as required by charities law and their report is unqualified.

Full audited financial statements available on request from AIAC.

Association of Independent Advice Centres Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31 March 2000

| | Unrestricted | Restricted | Total 2000 | Total 1999 |
|----------------------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Income | | | | |
| Grants received | 70,762 | 96,537 | 167,299 | 161,282 |
| Membership and insurance | 8,274 | 7,990 | 16,264 | 18,145 |
| Project income | 3,676 | - | 3,676 | 6,129 |
| Other income | 4,806 | - | 4,806 | 1,964 |
| | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| | 87,518 | 104,527 | 192,045 | 187,520 |
| | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Expenditure | | | | |
| Salary costs | 48,691 | 61,152 | 109,843 | 94,207 |
| Travelling expenses | 1,407 | 2,602 | 4,009 | 4,062 |
| Equipment | 3,531 | 1,095 | 4,626 | 22,774 |
| Premises costs | 10,121 | 2,194 | 12,315 | 11,982 |
| Telephone, postage, stationery | 3,115 | 8,694 | 11,809 | 8,466 |
| Professional indemnity insurance | 1,144 | 8,440 | 9,584 | 10,960 |
| Debt advice | - | 2,215 | 2,215 | - |
| Membership | 3,397 | - | 3,397 | 3,085 |
| Management charges | - | 3,676 | 3,676 | 6,129 |
| Removal expenses | - | - | - | 2,358 |
| Staff recruitment and training | 1,919 | 708 | 2,627 | 2,004 |
| Subscriptions and affiliations | 530 | 179 | 709 | 957 |
| Conferences and seminars | 528 | 732 | 1,260 | 757 |
| Meetings expenses | 659 | 2,338 | 2,997 | 2,603 |
| Publicity | 2,565 | 1,153 | 3,718 | 1,918 |
| Bank charges | 50 | - | 50 | 162 |
| Audit and accountancy | 963 | - | 963 | 787 |
| Consultancy | - | 2,059 | 2,059 | 6,430 |
| Depreciation of equipment | - | - | - | 1,042 |
| Sundry expenses | 1,312 | 545 | 1,857 | 1,063 |
| | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| | 79,932 | 97,782 | 177,714 | 181,746 |
| | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Surplus before transfers | 7,586 | 6,745 | 14,331 | 5,774 |
| Transfers between funds | (3,256) | 3,256 | - | - |
| | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Surplus for year | 4,330 | 10,001 | 14,331 | 5,774 |
| Balance at start of year | 4,473 | 23,372 | 27,845 | 22,071 |
| | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Balance at end of year | 8,803 | 33,373 | 42,176 | 27,845 |

Audited Accounts

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2000

| | 2000 | | 1999 | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|----------|---------|--------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Fixed Assets | | | | |
| Tangible assets | | | | |
| Current Assets | | | | |
| Cash at bank | 74,581 | | 28,058 | |
| Cash on hand | 2 | | 32 | |
| Prepayments | 2,058 | | 870 | |
| | ----- | | ----- | |
| | 76,641 | | 28,960 | |
| Current Liabilities | | | | |
| Accrued expenses | (12,499) | | (1,116) | |
| Net Current Assets | | 64,142 | | 27,844 |
| | | ----- | | ----- |
| Total Assets less Current Liabilities | | 64,143 | | 27,845 |
| Accruals and Deferred Income | | (21,967) | | - |
| | | ----- | | ----- |
| | | 42,176 | | 27,845 |
| | | ===== | | ===== |
| Represented by | | | | |
| Unrestricted Funds | | 8,803 | | 4,473 |
| Restricted Funds | | 33,373 | | 23,372 |
| | | ===== | | ===== |
| | | 42,176 | | 27,845 |
| | | ===== | | ===== |

Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to report that the Association has been able to carry forward a small surplus this year. While this looks good on paper the reality is that most of this money is restricted. The surplus on unrestricted income will be needed to ensure that we can survive next year since our European funding will end in June and Lottery funding will end in December. As with other organisations funded by European monies next year will be extremely tight and we will have to undertake some additional fundraising to ensure that our core services can be maintained. AIAC is an efficient and effective organisation and I am of the firm opinion that it represents excellent value for money.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those organisations that provide our funding: Voluntary Activity Unit, National Lottery Charities Board and Belfast Regeneration Office. My thanks also to Kathleen Mulligan for her careful handling of the organisations finance and to our auditor Des Gibson for his help and advice.

Harry Smith
Treasurer.