

Lewisham Irish Community Centre

OUR 2030 STRATEGY

Our roadmap

Charity Est. 1992

lewishamirish.org.uk

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Letter from the CEO & Board

Dear friends, partners, and members of our community,

As we present the Lewisham Irish Community Centre's 2030 Strategy, we do so with immense pride in how far we have come — and with real optimism for the future we are building together.

The past few years have marked a period of renewal and transformation for our organisation. With the security of a 25-year lease, and strengthened long-term funding, we are entering a new era defined by stability, ambition, and a deep commitment to the people we serve.

This strategy sets out our shared vision for the next five years. It reflects the voices of our community, the dedication of our staff and volunteers, and the insight of our partners across Lewisham, Bromley, Croydon and beyond.

Together, we have identified the areas where our work can have the greatest impact: supporting those facing hardship, reducing isolation, celebrating the diversity of Irish identity, preserving our living heritage, and building an organisation that is resilient, inclusive, and future-ready.

At the heart of our mission is a simple belief: everyone deserves to feel connected, supported, and valued. Whether we are offering welfare advice, reaching isolated older people, supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families, or creating spaces for cultural expression and community pride, our purpose remains constant — to be a place of welcome and belonging for all.

We are proud of the partnerships we have built with the NHS, Lewisham Council, the voluntary sector and business and we are committed to deepening these relationships as we grow. Our strategy is not just about what we do, but how we do it: with integrity, with compassion, and with accountability to the communities who trust us.

As we look ahead, we are confident that the Lewisham Irish Community Centre will continue to be a beacon of solidarity and service rooted in Irish heritage, open to all, and driven by the belief that stronger communities are built through connection.

Ar aghaidh le chéile,



Kathleen Sheridan
CEO

Colum Mackey
Chair of Trustees

Our Community

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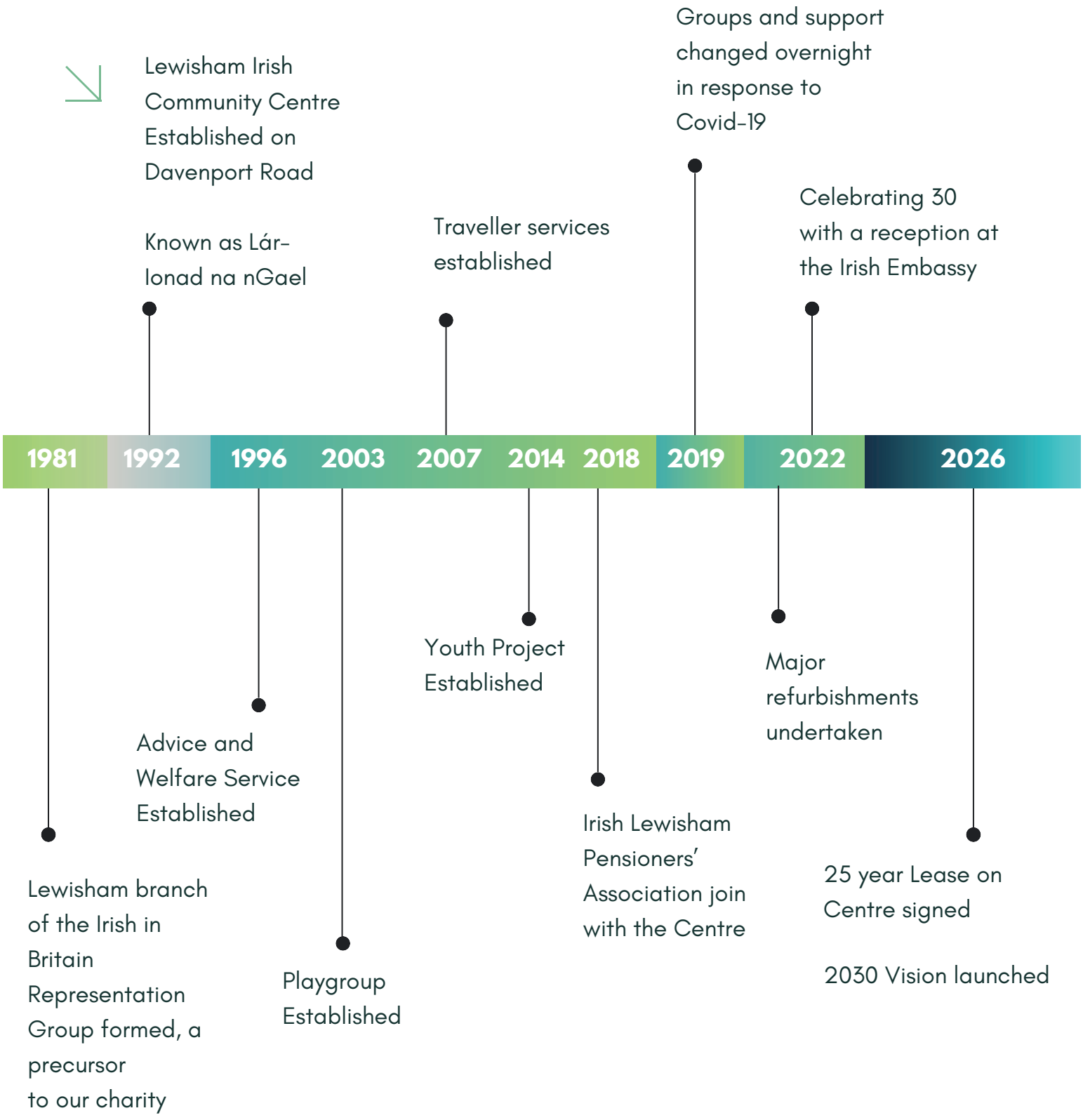
Established in 1992, Lewisham Irish Community Centre is a registered charity rooted in the heart of Rushey Green, developing into a key community hub for Irish, Gypsy Roma Traveller and wider Lewisham residents. Over the years, the Centre has strengthened its role through meaningful partnerships with local organisations, enabling us to broaden our services and ensure that culturally sensitive support is accessible to all who need it.

As the designated Neighbourhood East Community Hub, Lewisham Irish Community Centre has become a vital point of connection for residents seeking welfare advice, social inclusion activities and community-led programmes. Our building now serves as a welcoming space where diverse communities come together, reflecting our commitment to collaboration, heritage and shared belonging.

This five-year plan outlines our vision for deepening partnerships, enhancing services for Irish and GRT communities, and strengthening our capacity to support the wider borough.



Our History



Our Vision

A confident, empowered Irish community thriving in an inclusive and supportive environment.

Our Mission

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To enrich lives by delivering accessible, culturally relevant services and facilities that promote wellbeing, social connection, and community development.

Our Values

Community

Serving Lewisham's residents with openness and respect.

Inclusive

Welcoming people from all backgrounds and generations.

Empowerment

Enabling individuals to gain confidence and opportunities.

Cultural Integrity

Celebrating modern Irishness and preserving our heritage.

Collaboration

Leading in the community, bringing residents and organisations together for real impact.

Compassion

Providing empathetic, culturally sensitive services.

Accountability

Ensuring transparency and quality in all we do.

Our Priorities

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We will deliver for the community through five priority areas.

Promoting the welfare of the community

Enhance wellbeing, reduce isolation, and improve access to rights

Celebrating the diversity of the Irish community

Promote inclusivity across Irish generations and underrepresented groups

Expressing and sharing our living Irish heritage

Celebrate modern Irish cultural identity and history whilst preserving our heritage

Collaborating for connection and impact

Strengthen partnerships and embed the charity within the wider Lewisham community

Further developing our organisational capacity

Build operational excellence and long-term resilience

Promoting the welfare of the community

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Deliver tailored welfare, health, and advocacy services that address the evolving needs of the Irish and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, with a focus on older adults, mental health, and housing insecurity.



- Strengthen housing and welfare advice services
- Expand support for elderly Irish residents and unpaid carers
- Offer specialised support to individuals living with dementia and their carers.
- Provide therapeutic mental health programmes and wellness workshops
- Promote digital inclusion through training and technology access
- Launch outreach programmes for isolated individuals and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families across Lewisham, Bromley and Croydon.
- Develop inclusive social activities
- Create concise guides on moving to London for young Irish people, including students

What success looks like

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- 2000 advice sessions delivered annually to 400 clients
- 150 older Irish residents engaged in social activities regularly
- Retention of Advice Service Quality Mark with casework
- Establish weekly satellite pop-up advisory sessions in Croydon and Bromley
- 90% satisfaction rate in annual client feedback survey



2000



advice session appointments

400



individual clients access advice and support

150



older Irish residents engaged in social activities

90%



satisfaction rate in annual feedback survey

Celebrating the diversity of the Irish community

12

Champion inclusivity by recognising and celebrating the full spectrum of Irish identity, including mixed-heritage, generational, and the LGBTQI+ community.



- Host Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month and cultural events
- Host LGBTQ+ History Month and pride events
- Host event to celebrate St Brigid's & International Women's Day
- Host events to recognise disability history month
- Promote awareness of mixed-heritage diversity through campaigns and storytelling
- Celebrate Irishness across all generations

What success looks like

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- 25% increase in participation from underrepresented Irish
- Reaching new audiences through our community engagement metrics
- Establish a reminiscence project, creating a collection of personal stories from community members to preserve local history.
- Create weekly groups to improve access for underrepresented people.



12



annual events celebrating diversity

47%



Increasing website traffic

10



new groups established from the diverse Irish communities

25%



Increase in participation from under representative groups

Collaborating for connection and impact

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Leverage partnerships and local engagement to enhance service delivery, increase funding opportunities, and strengthen community cohesion.



- Maintain our close relationship with the Irish Government, Irish Embassy in London, and Lewisham Council
- Formalise partnerships with local charities and service providers
- Expand outreach through joint initiatives and shared resources
- Enhance digital presence and stakeholder communications
- Increase social media presence
- Host six monthly Neighbourhood Open Days
- Provide affordable Shared Space Access for local groups
- Partner with schools and youth services for cultural education and mentoring
- Create a Community Volunteering Scheme with training and recognition

What success looks like 15

- Enhancing existing partnerships and establishing new ones
- 250 local residents engaged weekly in collaborative programmes
- 500+ Lewisham residents participating in community integration activities annually
- 200 local residents accessing health and wellness classes, clubs and activities.
- 10+ local groups using LICC facilities annually
- Monthly newsletter and quarterly website updates
- Attendance at 12+ external events per year
- Increase volunteer uptake by 50%
- Volunteer satisfaction rate of 90% and retention of 75%



250



Local resident engaged in weekly activities

500



Individuals participating in community integration activities

10



Local groups using the Centre weekly

50%



Increase in volunteers

Expressing and sharing our living Irish heritage

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Protect and promote Irish cultural heritage through education, storytelling, and community celebration.



- An Irish language programme
- Irish music classes
- Irish dance classes
- Heritage documentation project focused on Irish elders
- Celebrating Irish Traveller Heritage through the programme
- Annual St. Patrick's Festival and cultural club series
- Annual St Brigid's Day celebration.
- Integrate cultural sensitivity into elder-focused programmes

What success looks like 17

- 300+ participants in Irish cultural programmes annually
- Development of Irish Heritage Archive project by 2028
- Representation at national Irish cultural events
- 8 monthly cultural club events delivered annually



8



monthly Irish cultural clubs and classes

300



individuals participating in Irish cultural events

Further development of **18** our organisational capacity

Modernise internal operations, enhance staff capacity, secure long-term sustainability, and broaden the reach and impact of welfare services to better serve the local community.



- Retain quality marks for welfare and youth services
- Implement structured performance management and supervision systems
- Develop a recruitment and retention strategy
- Invest in staff training and leadership development
- Expand welfare services to provide comprehensive advice and support for local residents

What success looks like

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- 100% of staff appraisals completed annually
- Staff retention rate of 85% or higher
- Achievement of external quality accreditations
- Annual training plan for all staff and volunteers
- Increased number of residents accessing welfare advice and support each year



AQS

advice service quality mark



85%

staff retention rate



100%

staff appraisals completed



400+

individuals accessing advice service

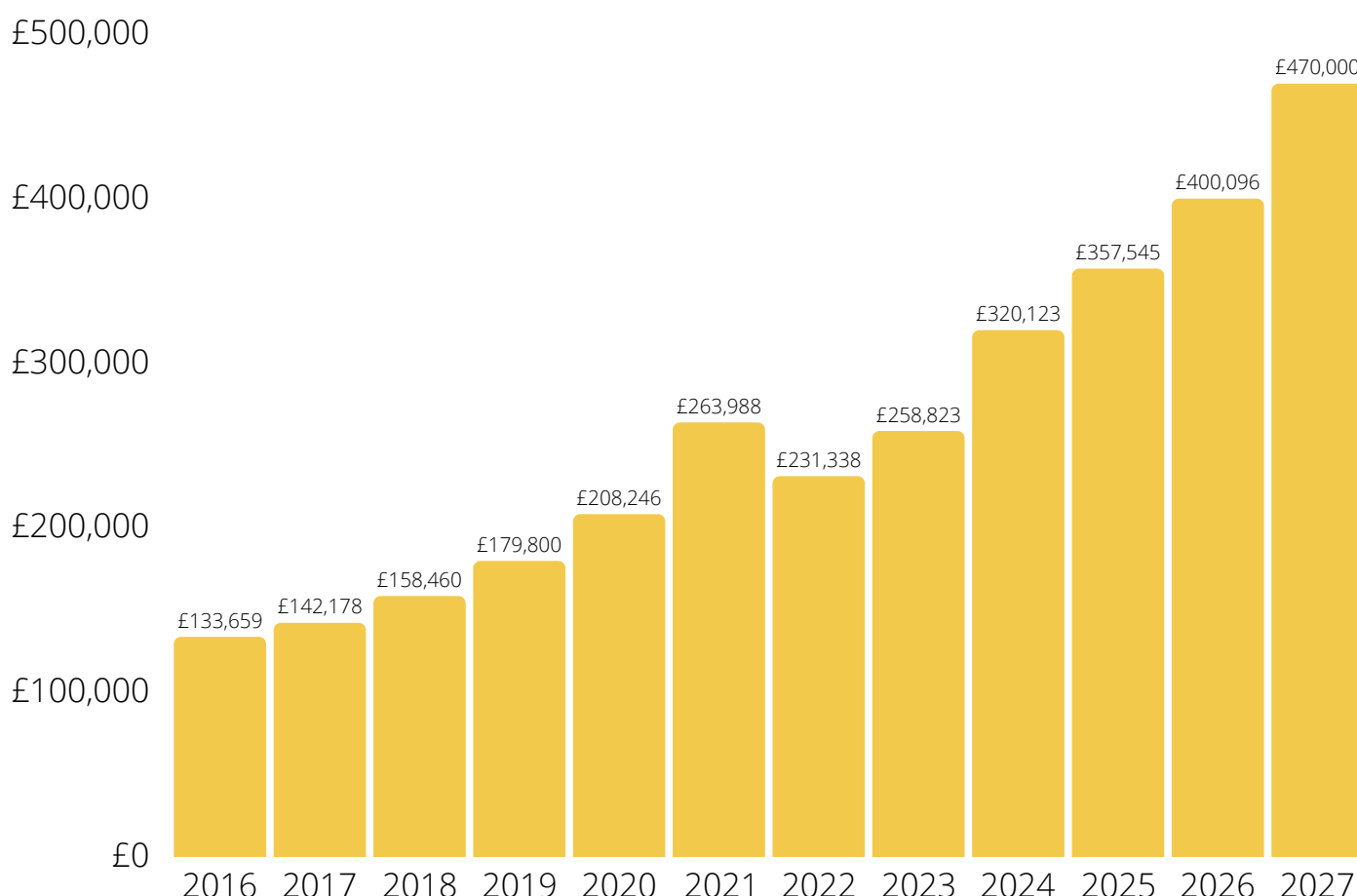


Our Financial Outlook

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Four principal funders support our welfare and advice services: The National Lottery (Reaching Communities, 2024-2027), City Bridge Trust and Lewisham Council (five-year funding to March 2028), and the Irish Government's Emigrant Support Programme (July 2025-June 2028). Additional support comes from Merchant Taylors' Company (Playgroup, three-year grant) and the Ireland Fund of Great Britain (annual). Over the next four years we will focus on long-term funding streams, partnerships and building unrestricted income for greater sustainability.

Our income has grown steadily since 2021, rising from £264k to £357k in 2025. Draft 2026 figures show £401k, with £470k forecast for 2027.



Note: 2026 figures are draft. 2027 figures are forecast.



Governance and Sustainability

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The Board of Trustees will oversee the strategic implementation, ensuring alignment with charitable objectives and regulatory requirements.

We will pursue a diversified funding approach including grants, earned income, and donor engagement to support long-term sustainability.



Monitoring and Evaluation

We will implement a performance framework to monitor progress towards strategic goals. Quarterly reviews, stakeholder feedback, and annual impact reports will guide continuous improvement for the community.

Our Centre

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We are committed to improving our building so that it better represents our charity's values and supports our strategic objectives. By enhancing the front of the premises, we aim to create a more attractive and welcoming environment, making the facility more accessible and inviting to members of the local community.

We are committed to investing in the internal infrastructure to ensure it appropriately accommodates the evolving needs of our residents and growing staff team.

These improvements are intended to encourage greater engagement and ensure that our space is inclusive and open to all residents.



Our Staff

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We've a fantastic dedicated team supporting the community:

Kathleen Sheridan	CEO
Pete Smith	Advice and Wellbeing Team
Deborah Browne	Outreach Team Manager
Vincenza Della Camera	Youth Club Coordinator
Jack Edsmen	Wellbeing Officer
Brian Hughes	Adviser / Caseworker
Eden Lowe	Playgroup Coordinator
Doreen Loughney	Finance Officer
Frances McAuley	Outreach Caseworker
Caroline Murray	Wellbeing and Advice Worker
Calum O'Keeffe	Community Engagement Officer
Tomas Reidy	Youth Worker

Our Trustees

Colum Mackey	Chair
Michael McDonnell	Treasurer
Karen Duggan	
Thomas Murphy	
Ross O'Neill	
Anne O'Rorke	
Martina O'Sullivan	
David Wilson	



Our Partners

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Lewisham Local
Lewisham Foodcycle
Lewisham Council
Age UK Southwark &
Lewisham / Community Connections
Irish Counselling & Psychotherapy Services
Irish Chaplaincy
Irish in Britain

Our Funders

National Lottery Reaching Communities
City Bridge Trust
Lewisham Council
NCIL
Irish Youth Foundation
Ireland Fund of Great Britain
Irish Government – Emigrant Support Programme
Merchant Taylor Trust
Jack Petchy Foundation

Our Accreditation

Advice Quality Standard Quality Mark
Pride in Practice
London Youth Quality Mark
London Living Wage



Lewisham Irish Community Centre

Registered Charity Number : 1014852



**2A Davenport Rd,
London SE6 2AZ**

Address

020 8695 6264

Phone

**manager@
lewishamirish.org.uk**

Email

lewishamirish.org.uk

Website