



Chairperson's Foreword

I am delighted to report on another impactful year of the West Cork Women Against Violence Project.

Over 2016 we again saw an increase in the demand for our services. We worked with 204 clients, supporting them through 1195 contacts over the year. This is a marked increase on 2015 (when we had 1056 contacts with 180 clients) and a dramatic rise from the 889 contacts with 167 clients in 2013.

Our statutory funding for 2016 remained static for the third year running (and at a level lower than 2012) hence we have continued to be challenged to respond to this greater demand and level of need with resources that are considerably over-stretched.

Despite these resource constraints, we have continued to innovate and to make impressive progress towards the outcomes set out in our 2013 - 2016 Strategic Plan. Indeed an important milestone in 2016 was the independent evaluation, conducted by Dr. Caroline Crowley, which included comprehensive surveys with our clients, frontline staff from other agencies and groups who come into contact with the Project. The resultant report, *"Someone To Turn To, Somewhere To Go"* was launched in September 2016. Key findings from the evaluation included very high levels of satisfaction with the Project reported by clients, agencies and other groups using or referring to our services; requests for an extension to the hours and locations of our services and requests that over the next plan period (2017 – 2020) we address the chronic lack of safe, emergency accommodation for women experiencing violence in West Cork. We aim to investigate this possibility over 2017.

2016 saw a number of high profile cases of DV which raised the visibility of the issue whilst shining a light on the lack of capacity within the media, garda and many other agencies and sectors to recognise and deal sensitively with Domestic Violence. Within WCWAV we well recognise that in order to effectively tackle the problem of DV we must positively influence the discriminatory attitudes and beliefs that underpin it. Regrettably this was one intention in our Strategic Plan that we have not been able to achieve, having to set aside our preventative work with young people to focus our limited resources on direct services to women experiencing violence.

Over 2016 we also came to understand the appalling situation of women and children living in Direct Provision, as we engaged with women in Clonakilty Lodge Direct Provision Centre. This is an unacceptable scheme across the country, one which robs asylum seekers of their dignity and rights and which urgently needs to be overhauled. In a very modest way we brought some laughter into the lives of residents of Clonakilty Lodge by helping to facilitate Zumba classes to help promote wellbeing. We have since had a number of referrals from DP Centres and hope to encourage more women in Direct Provision to recognise the violence they have, or are, experiencing and to reach out for support.

We have appreciated generous financial support over the year from individuals and agencies touched by our work, including the people of Bantry's twin town, Lacrosse, Wisconsin, USA, and those who made generous donations after meeting us at the West Cork Literary Festival.

We continue to appreciate the financial support of our core funder, Tusla (the Child and Family Agency) and have particularly welcomed the implementation of a regional co-ordination structure, giving us a direct and effective channel through which we can engage with the agency. Going forward, we remain hopeful of a positive change in the funding climate as the issue of Domestic Violence remains highly visible, as the demand for our service continues to increase and as our clients and other agencies with which we interact, continue to value our work. Clearly we could not do what we do as well as we do it, without the enormous capacity and commitment of our staff, volunteers and my fellow Board members and without the resilience of our clients who understand better than any of us the courage that is needed to stand up against Domestic Violence. My sincere admiration and thanks to all who are part of the West Cork Women Against Violence Project.

Allison Aldred, May 2017

Someone to Turn To, Somewhere to Go *Evaluation & Review of* *WCWAV Services 2016*

In January 2016, WCWAV staff and board members reviewed the progress and challenges of the last three years of our work covering the period of our Strategic Plan 2013-2016.

We began with an internal review examining what were the issues as we saw them from the position of service providers, the changes in policy context and provision for domestic violence services nationally and locally.



Our internal review highlighted our concerns about:

- the lack of affordable and emergency housing for women and children experiencing domestic violence;
- the difficulties in accessing resources to fund new initiatives and funds to maintain existing supports such as support groups and subsidised counselling for clients;
- the increasing costs of travel and transport to ensure that we could meet with clients and cover the basics like court accompaniment, to engage with women and others throughout West Cork and beyond;
- the difficulties for clients in accessing Legal Aid and its long waiting lists;
- the need for a wider understanding among legal and judicial sectors of domestic violence and its impact.

In the plus column, we found that we were:

- reaching and supporting more women every year;
- we had built strong and positive working relationships with other agencies and organisations that are necessary to the support and survival of our clients and despite the human resource limits on our service;
- we had managed to juggle the staff hours available to ensure that our helpline was operating five days a week.

Having looked at ourselves from the inside, we decided that we should now ask others what they thought of the service we offered and how we could improve the service. The most important voices we wanted to hear were the women who used the service and secondly the organisations who referred women to us. Dr. Caroline Crowley conducted an independent evaluation of WCWAV by surveying clients and frontline staff from other agencies and groups who use or come in contact with our services.

The resultant report, '*Someone To Turn To, Somewhere To Go*' was publicly launched in September 2016 in Uillinn Arts Centre, Skibbereen.



"In domestic violence you lose everything. WCWAV have helped me get my life back"



A Safe House for West Cork

Widespread media coverage followed the launch of our report, *Someone to Turn to, Somewhere to Go* with particular interest generated by one of its key findings- the need for safe, emergency, accommodation in West Cork for women and children. Currently, the nearest refuge is in Cork City and the demands on the refuge are such that as a service we have been unable to find places at the refuge for our clients in crisis for almost two years. The location of the refuge in the city also requires that women and their children in West Cork have to relocate up to 60 miles away in some cases, with removal from schools, workplaces and communities. A constructive response to the need for a safe house which has clearly been articulated in the feedback from clients and support agencies will now become a central objective of WCWAV's work over the next three years.



"For me it was a vital service. There aren't many places to turn to when you're in despair and they gave me the support and information to keep my daughter and I safe."



Other News

Support Group

A group of women who have left abusive relationships but who are still dealing with court, access and custody issues continued to meet once a fortnight with facilitation by one of our volunteers, a retired counsellor. Several of the support group provided feedback for the WCWAV evaluation, *Someone to Turn To, Somewhere to Go*. The cost of running the support group was minimal but the small budget we had raised became exhausted by June 2016 and the group has not formally met since that time. WCWAV has been working hard to access specific funds for support groups and aftercare programmes for women who engage with our service and it is hoped that 2017 will see a stable funding source assigned to this element of our work.

Gloria Steinem in West Cork

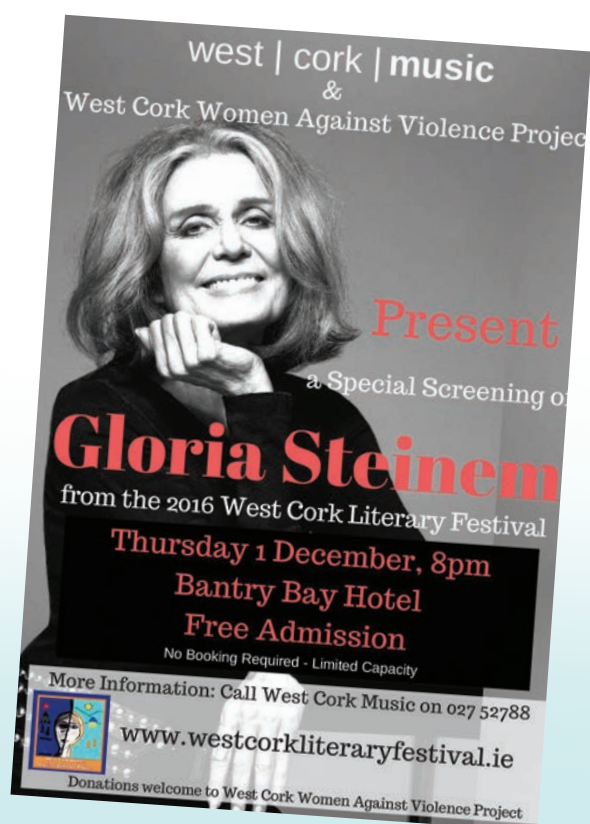
West Cork Literary Festival pulled off a major coup in July when it hosted feminist icon and renowned US activist for women's rights, Gloria Steinem. Ms Steinem at 82 has rarely been to Ireland and her event in Bantry saw women from all over Ireland attend this once in a lifetime discussion with one of the founders of the women's movement. In a jam-packed Maritime Hotel, Ms Steinem invited women to speak of their experiences and priorities in Ireland today. WCWAV board members and staff were in attendance and were able to speak of the work of our service. There were a number of highly beneficial spin-offs resulting from that event for our service; several generous donations to WCWAV were made by individuals present, and later in the year, the filmed proceedings of Steinem's talk were given a public showing by West Cork Literary Festival to raise awareness during the 16 days of Action Campaign to raise awareness of Violence Against Women.

West Cork Traveller Support

We continued to build our relationship with West Cork Travellers Centre, and re-stated our commitment to meeting the needs of Traveller women in West Cork who may be experiencing domestic abuse. In November 2016, WCWAV, West Cork Travellers and the Southern Traveller Health Network (STHN) came together to re-launch *Rings of Hope* in West Cork as part of the 16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence.

Rings of Hope is a graphic novel and animated DVD about Traveller women and their experience of domestic violence developed by Traveller women involved in the STHN. The DVD was shown and copies of the book were available to women on the day.

WCWAV gave a presentation on the service we provide and invited Traveller women to help us look at what changes we could make that would assist them to access our service and help us identify the challenges Traveller Women face within a DV situation. It is hoped that this ongoing contact and learning process with WCTC, will inform possibilities for an Outreach Service for Traveller Women.



“Lack of understanding of Traveller culture and stereotyping of Traveller women...can negatively affect a woman’s self confidence and ability to make safe choices”



Friends in New Places

An unexpected call from Lacrosse, Wisconsin USA to our offices in early 2016 informed us of that town’s twinning with Bantry. The caller, Linda Pfaff was a key mover and shaker in Lacrosse’s relationship with Bantry and West Cork. She informed us that Lacrosse intended to have a fundraising ‘hooley’ with proceeds going to support a local initiative in Wisconsin for children and adults affected by abuse and the fundraising committee would like to share the proceeds with WCWAV as a Bantry-based initiative. The result was a cheque to our project and a new friendship with our supporters in Wisconsin.

Staff Changeover

2016 saw the departure of Eithne, our long serving administrator of 11 years, who is pursuing a new career in which we wish her every success.

Court Accompaniment Volunteers

Several new volunteers were trained by WCWAV to provide support to women attending court. Reluctantly, we have to sometimes turn down requests for court accompaniments because we do not have available staff. Attendance at court can be anything from an hour to a full day depending on the location of the court, the length of the court list and the complexity of cases. Additional volunteers who can make themselves available to our clients for court, increase the likelihood that clients will have our support for most of their court dates. Court accompaniment provides clients with a ‘buddy’, someone to lean on, get them a cup of tea and help them get through the experience.

Direct Provision

Direct Provision is a system whereby Ireland warehouses people who are refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants, keeping them in an institutional limbo. Many of those in the system have fled war, famine, economic deprivation, tribal conflicts and states where women are at risk from brutality and violence.

WCWAV reached out to women in Direct Provision at Clonakilty Lodge in West Cork to ask how our service might support them. Many of the individuals and families we encountered in Clonakilty have been in Direct Provision for over 5 years with one woman having spent 11 years in the system.

Although Clonakilty Lodge have tried to provide a more humane and compassionate environment through some of its staff and volunteers in the surrounding area, the fact remains that the system itself is neither of those things. Women with small children have been living in one room for years. They have fled their homelands and are suffering trauma, isolation, grief and the pain of separation from other family members. Those in Direct Provision (until early 2017) were prohibited from cooking for themselves or their children and are expected to subsist on €19 per week, a sum which has not changed in over a decade. Ireland does not allow refugees & asylum seekers to work and so thousands of people are locked into a nightmare of containment prohibited from exercising basic rights to build a new life for themselves and their families.

WCWAV like the vast majority of Irish NGOs and rights organisations condemns the system of Direct Provision and is particularly concerned for the emotional and psychological well-being of women and children within that system, many of whom have already suffered violence and abuse either in their home countries or in their journeys to reach Ireland. WCWAV have provided some assistance to individual women who have needed our particular service, but mindful of the many others who had no reason to trust us or be aware of us, we met with some of the women





in Clonakilty Lodge to ask how we could best help. The answer came as a surprise- ZUMBA. But having heard what life was like for them, we soon realised that something that offered them the chance to get out of their rooms, to have fun together and to exercise made perfect sense. With a very small budget from WCWAV and the generosity and commitment of Bernie Godwin, a local Zumba teacher, Zumba classes at Clonakilty Lodge became a roaring success, providing laughter, community and reviving sagging spirits several times a week. An additional children's class was also provided, courtesy of our Zumba teacher's generosity.

WCWAV is delighted to report that the classes have continued, resourced by the management of Clonakilty Lodge when they saw the beneficial impact on the residents. Zumba is an hour of relief and escape from the reality of Direct Provision- it is not the solution. Providing residents of Direct Provision with their basic human rights and treating them as willing and potential contributors to Irish society is the only answer.





An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Tusla Development

Tusla, the Child & Family Agency which took over responsibility for core funding and support of the domestic & sexual violence services in Ireland in 2014, put in place at the beginning of 2016 a new support structure for the services. Each region now has a Tusla co-ordinator for DV and one for SV with an over-arching national coordinator for the sector.

WCWAV welcomes the appointment of Dairine Cross as the regional co-ordinator for our area to assist us with any concerns or issues which we may have in relation to funding and Tusla policy. Dairine now provides a direct and effective channel where we can engage with the agency and where Tusla can be kept apprised of our priorities within the DV & SV sector.

West Cork Child & Family Support Network members, including WCWAV staff, took part in Meitheal training in early 2016 as part of Tusla's national strategy to develop collaborative, client-led support interventions for families who may be on the threshold of risk. In early 2016, WCWAV and Dunmanway Family Resource Centre made a combined approach to the Network for specific parenting support for families in Direct Provision in West Cork and this was positively approved and has been developed by the Child & Family Support Network.





"I have been seeing the 'Whisper' all over the place for years. Please continue as this made contact easy for me. It was already in my head before I ever needed it."

West Cork Whisper

The research done for our evaluation report, *Someone To Turn To Somewhere To Go* found that 'West Cork Whisper' was the second most common means by which information on West Cork Women Against Violence and its service was accessed by women and staff of other agencies. This proves that the publication of Whisper is a vital means of promoting and informing the public about domestic violence and the range of supports provided by WCWAV.

The four issues produced over the last year have, as always covered a range of themes and articles, providing both information and insights; Online Stalking & Digital Abuse, Court Accompaniment; Coercive Control and Guardianship Rights along with a short story written by a survivor, a children's story explaining the effects of DV, articles on charities and fund raising, International Women's Day, Safe Ireland and events of interest taking place.

Location of clients

The majority of our clients reside in West Cork.

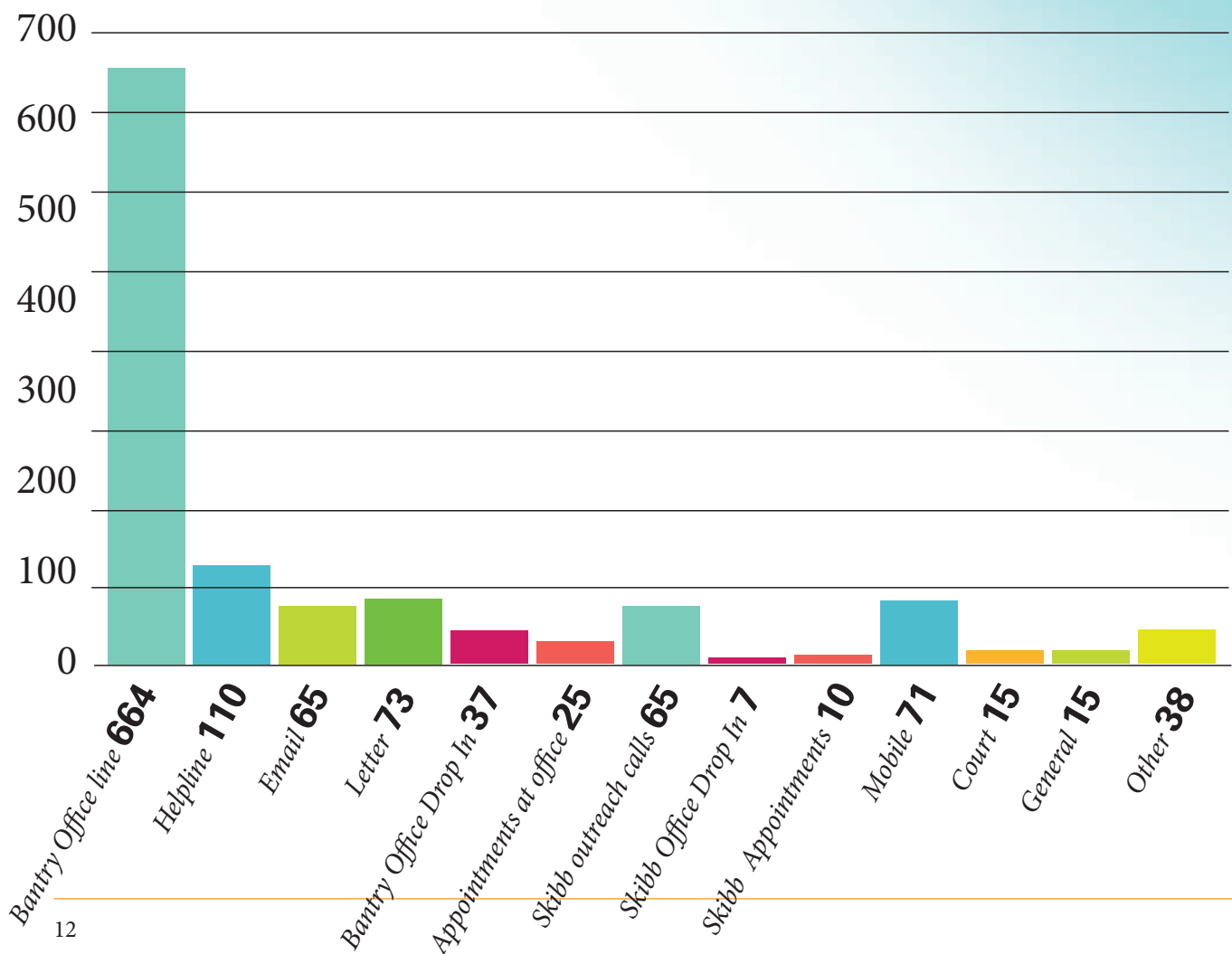
We have also received contact from clients in North and East Cork, Cork city, Dublin, Drogheda, Kilkenny and Sligo. Contact has also been made from clients in England and Australia. In these situations, clients are always informed of their local service provider in their area.

How contact is made

 phone contact

 email/letter

 face to face contact





Statistics

204 individual women were supported in 2016

There were 1,195 instances of contacts
173 of these were new clients. 32 were repeat clients

15 people phoned about friends or family.

16 professionals phoned around professional support

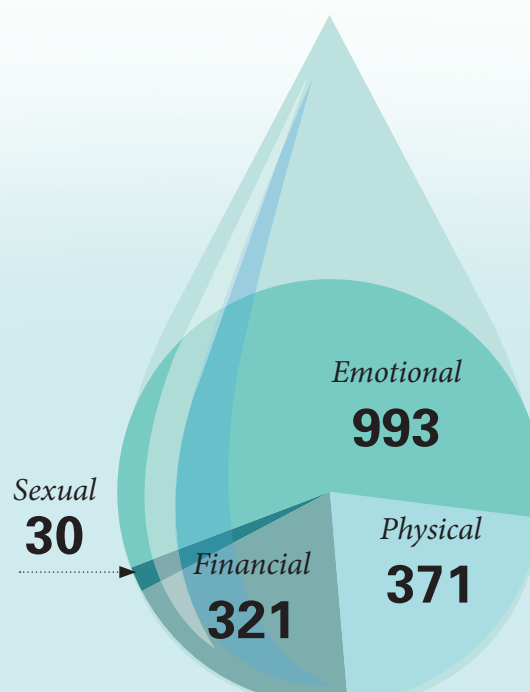
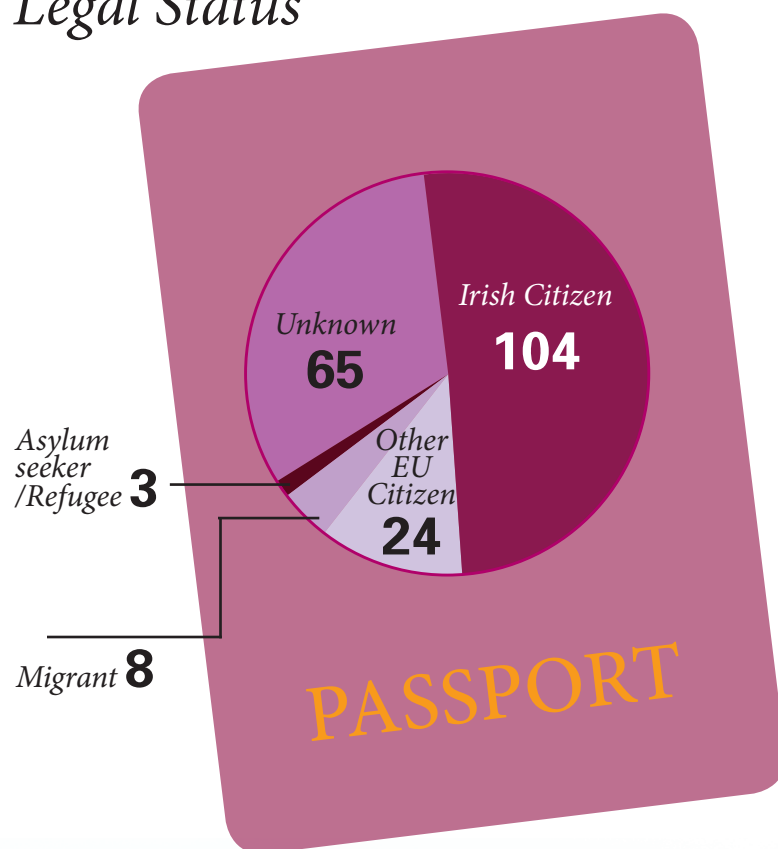
race/ethnicity

White European.....	130
Asian.....	2
African	4
Mixed race.....	2
Irish Traveller	5
Unknown	61

Age Range of Clients

Under 18.....	1
18 to 25	7
26 to 30	30
31 to 45	40
46 to 60	29
61 to 70	9
70+	3
Unknown	102

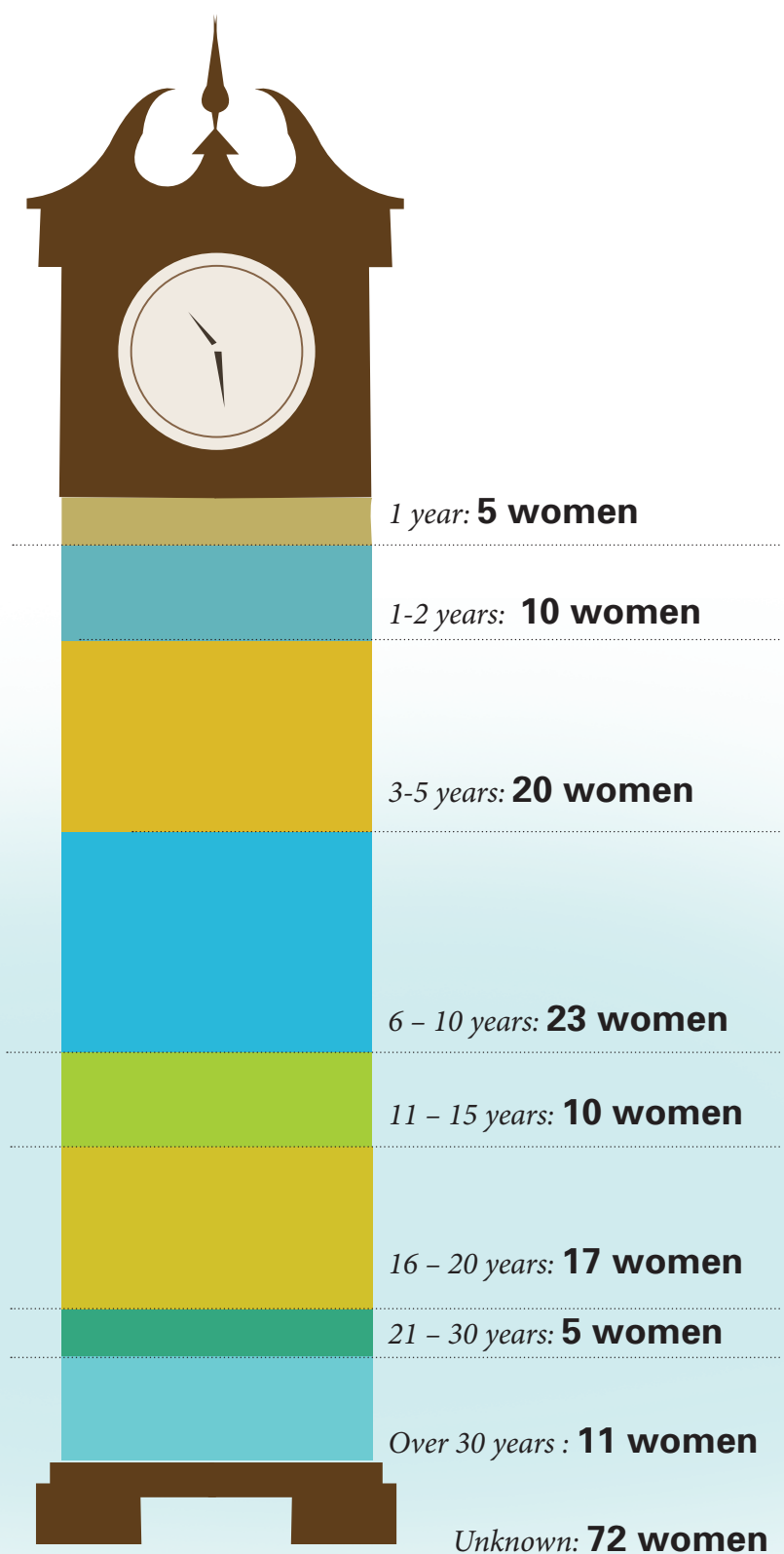
Legal Status



Types of Abuse and Number of incidents*

*Many women experience more than one type of abuse

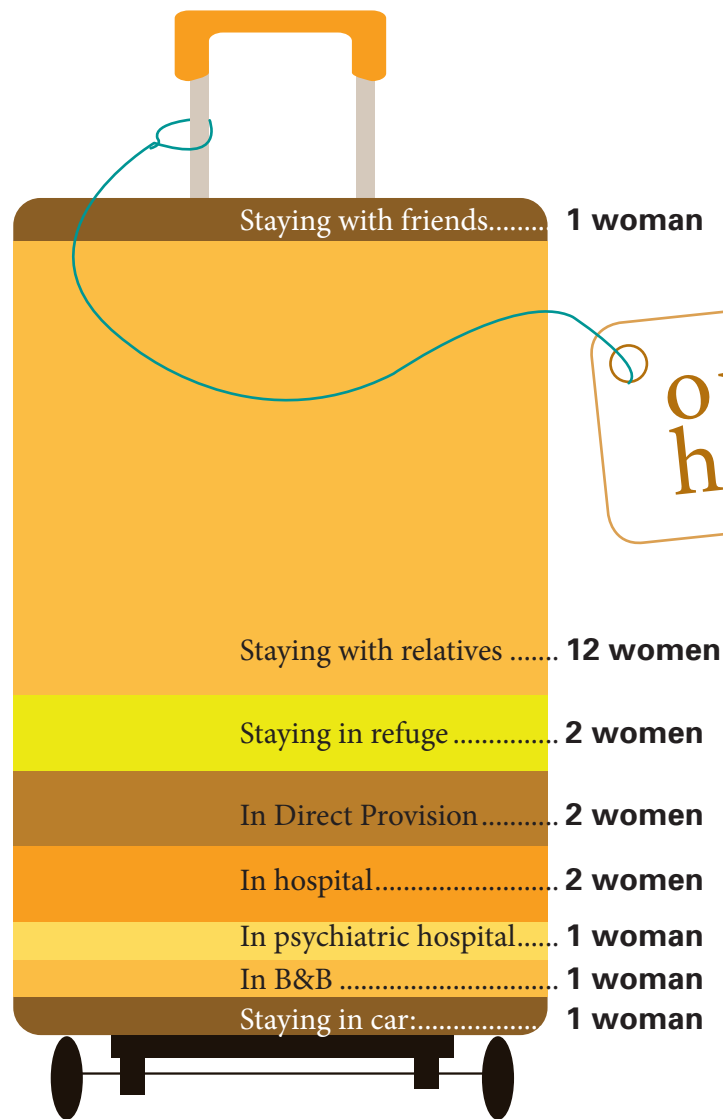
Duration of abuse



Referrals from

Self	47
Unknown	38
Family/Friends	34
Publicity	23
Child Protection Social Worker	12
Gardai	7
Citizens Information Services	6
Mental Health Team	5
Family Resource Centres	4
Hospital Social Worker	4
Direct Provision Centre.....	3
Counsellor.....	3
Court Clerk.....	1
Tusla Social Worker	2
School.....	2
Refuge	2
Dept Social Protection	2
Other DV Organisation	2
GP.....	2
West Cork Traveller Centre.....	2
Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service	1
Education Welfare Officer	1
TD	1
Occupational Therapist.....	1
DV Social Worker (Cork)	1

Court accompaniment



out of home

Financial Assistance and Emergency Accommodation provided by WCWAVP

One client and her child were accommodated in B&B.

One client and three children were financially subsidised and given transport to relative in Cork.

Other issues presenting

Mental health..... 17 clients

Suicidal ideation:..... 2 clients

Substance use 3 clients

Disability 6 clients

Child Protection

Child Protection Discussions 6

Child Protection Referrals..... 3

Advocacy:

23 advocacy representations x 16 clients

Community Welfare Officer 8 clients

Social Welfare Dept 4 clients

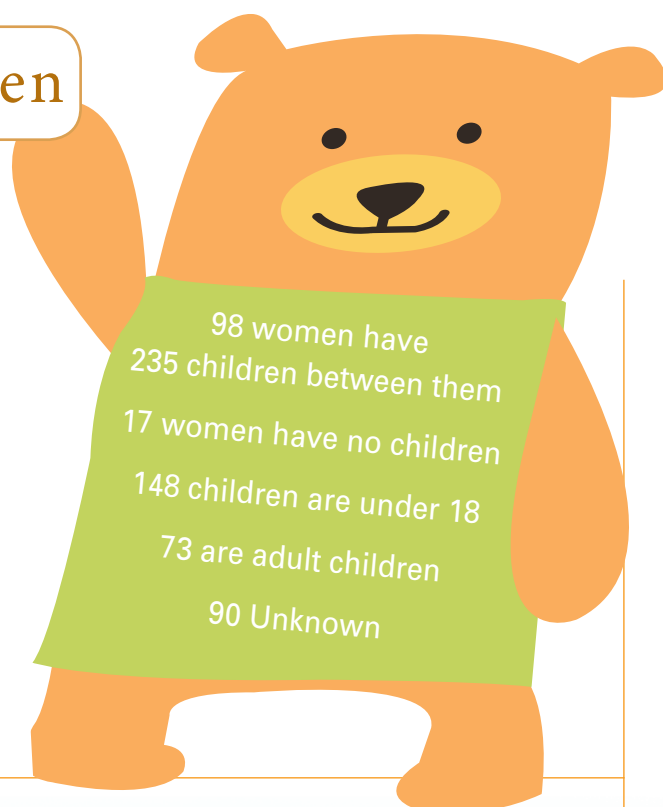
Legal Aid..... 4 clients

Housing 4 clients

Gardai 1 clients

St Vincent de Paul 2 clients

Children



Court accompaniment

20 court accompaniments requests received

15 completed



Orders granted

Interim barring order: **1**

Barring order: **4**

Protection order: **2**

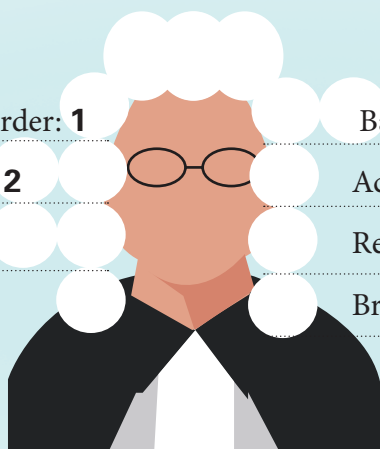
Access: **1**

Undertaking: **3**

Review of access: **1**

Safety order: **1**

Breach of order: **1**



Adjourned: **1**

General / advocacy accompaniments

15 requests received and completed:



Referrals to

Other DV organisations 18

Solicitor..... 16

Counsellor..... 16

Garda 15

West Cork Counselling
Support Service 5

Housing 4

Mediation..... 3

Court Clerk..... 10

Legal Aid..... 8

GP..... 8

Child Protection Social Worker 7

Free Legal Advice Centres 6

Citizens Information Services 6

Novas* 6

Community Welfare Officer 5

Samaritans..... 2

Dept Social Protection 2

Mental Health Social Worker 2

Sexual Violence Centre..... 1

Domestic Violence Social Worker..1

Child Psychology 1

*Novas - Tenancy Support &
Sustainment Service

Finance

The following has
been taken from:

West Cork Women
Against Violence Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee
without a share capital)

supplementary information
relating to the financial statements
detailed income and
expenditure account
for the year ended
31st December 2016

income

	2016 €	2015 €
Tusla Core Funding	191,310	191,310
Other grant funding		2,000
Other Income	5,465	1,771
	196,775	195,081

expenses

	2016 €	2015 €
Wages & Salaries	120,193	117,986
Social Welfare Costs	12,383	12,464
Staff defined contribution pension costs	8,334	9,854
Staff training and support	1,333	3,927
Board Expenses and training	327	1,695
Rent & Rates	17,333	17,280
Insurance	1,468	1,328
Light and heat	1,757	1,594
Repairs & Maintenance	1,569	1,283
Office expenses	4,386	4,958
Advertising	1,257	1,686
Telephone	3,515	3,685
Computer Costs	845	370
Staff Travel Expenses	6,489	6,274
Professional fees	1,230	1,230
Bank charges	315	289
Volunteer expenses	602	33
Client Support expenses	1,968	610
Client Support	2,220	2,460
Relief Worker	3,318	3,950
Other programme costs	3,990	-
Subscriptions	130	403
Auditor's remuneration	1,181	922
Depreciation	744	744
	196,887	195,025

Meetings, Trainings and Networks

January

Chairperson & Co-ordinator Update meeting (Bandon)
Support Group Facilitation meeting (Bantry)
Strategic Evaluation Day (Bantry)
Citizens Information Services (CIS) Board meeting (Bantry)
Child & Family Support Network (CFSN) (Dunmanway)
West Cork Traveller Centre (WCTC) meeting
Safe Ireland Empowerment Workshop (Athlone)
Homeless Forum (Clonakilty)
West Cork Development Partnership (WCDP) Board meeting (Clonakilty)
Failte Refugee meeting (Dunmanway)

February

Family Support Network (Bantry)
Wellness Schools Project (Clonakilty)
Evaluation Research Consultation (Bantry)
WCWAV Board meeting (Bantry)
Bantry Garda Station (Bantry)
Ireland Funds (Drimoleague)
Wellness Schools Project (Bandon)
Tusla – DV Co-ordinators (Dublin)
Evaluation Research Consultation
WCDP Board meeting
Safe Ireland Empowerment Workshop (Athlone)
CFSN (Dunmanway)
Wellness Schools Project (Clonakilty & Bandon)
Trauma Informed Care (Clonakilty)
Failte Refugee meeting (Dunmanway)

March

CIS Board meeting (Macroon)
Meitheal Training 2 days (Bantry)
International Women's Day event (Dunmanway)
WCWAV Board meeting
Evaluation Research Sub Group

April

Tusla meeting
CIS Board meeting (Dunmanway)
Evaluation Research
Asylum Seekers Project (Bandon)
WCTC
CFSN (Dunmanway)
Funding Application meeting
Tusla meeting

May

WCDP Board meeting (Clonakilty)
CIS AGM (Macroon)
Social Policy Forum (Bantry)
Evaluation Research (Survey & Case Studies)
Tusla (Bantry)

June

Designated Liaison Person Training (Cork)
Evaluation Research
CFSN (Dunmanway)
Homeless Forum (Clonakilty)
WCWAV Board meeting
Tusla SLA Review (Killarney)
West Cork Carers Support Group Launch
Women's Aid (Dublin)
Tusla Commissioning meeting (Limerick)

July

WCDP Board meeting (Clonakilty)
West Cork Coordinators meeting
CIS Board meeting (Dunmanway)
WCWAV Board meeting
CFSN meeting (Dunmanway)

August

WCDP meeting
Cheque presentation Bantry Lacrosse

September

CIS Board meeting (Dunmanway)
WCWAV Board meeting
C103 interview
Evaluation Seminar Planning
Skibbereen Resource Centre AGM
Peninsula Human Resources Workshop (Bantry)
Launch of 'Someone to talk to, somewhere to go' (Skibbereen)
Safe Ireland (Dublin)
96fm Interview
CFSN (Dunmanway)
WCDP Board meeting (Clonakilty)

October

CEDAW Consultation (Tralee)
CIS Board meeting (Bantry)
WCDP Board meeting (Clonakilty)
YANA Training (Mallow)
Social Policy Forum (Bantry)
Skibbereen FRC Board meeting
WCDP Board meeting (Clonakilty)
WCWAV Board meeting (Bantry)
Tusla Data Workshop (Dublin)
WCTC meeting (Clonakilty)

November

WCDP Board meeting (Clonakilty)
Traveller Awareness Training, WCTC (Clonakilty)
Chair & Co-ordinator meeting (Bandon)
Skibbereen FRC Board meeting
Tusla SLA Review Meeting (Bantry)
Safe Ireland Conference (Dublin)
Children First Training (Cork)
Homelessness Forum (Clonakilty)
WCTC meeting (Clonakilty)
Skibbereen FRC Board meeting
CFSN meeting (Dunmanway)
Board Governance Training (Bantry)
DV Workshop at WCTC (Clonakilty)
Tusla Training SLA & Commissioning (Dublin)
Newstalk Interview

December

Gloria Steinem Viewing (Fundraiser) (Bantry)
CIS Board meeting (Macroom)
WCWAV Board meeting
WCWAV AGM
Lighting the Way launch (Bantry)
Meeting with funders
CFSN Subgroup (Bantry)
Women Coordinators meeting

Our Thanks

As always the work that we do is made more effective and sometimes a little easier because of the support and assistance we get from a number of individuals and organisations. We particularly want to thank the local District Courts Service and their staff for their professional support and the information they provide to our Support Workers and clients.

West Cork Whisper is reliant on our volunteers throughout West Cork who help with its distribution, from packaging to delivery- without them our costs would be prohibitive- thank you to all of you.

There are a number of people whose individual generosity has made it possible to continue with various initiatives and projects because of the donations they have given. We deeply appreciate all of you and often your donations have been the difference between failure and success.

Dr. Caroline Crowley who undertook the evaluation of our services, travelled so much more than the extra mile with us and her continued support for our work continues to deliver in terms of knowledge and contacts which she freely shares with us.

Tusla, the Child & Family Agency have demonstrated in the last year their commitment to our work with advice, direction and most importantly maintaining our core funding without further cuts.

The successes in our work are also due to the array of partner agencies and community organisations who collaborate with us to find ways to improve responses and services to vulnerable women and children. Those relationships are central to providing the best possible outcomes for our clients and in developing better services for all in West Cork.

And finally to our clients, the women who teach us every day about courage, tenacity and honesty; women who deserve more respect, more support and most of all deserve a future free from abuse and control.

Thank You to All of You from All of Us at West Cork Women Against Violence.