

West Cork Whisper

West Cork Women Against Violence Project Newsletter

47th Edition

April, May, June 2012

Financial cuts lead to even more pressure on women

Budget 2012 delivered several blows to many women and their families who are already finding financial management difficult.

The nature of Budget 2012 saw cuts across a number of areas such as child benefit, one parent family payment and rent allowance. In addition, the amount of disposable income available to families who are already struggling has been significantly reduced given increases in living costs. The choices are incredibly difficult for those who want to do the best for their children, and for many it will seem like the Government are pushing them further into the welfare trap.

In healthy relationships, most couples will work together to find solutions to their financial problems, and share the worry and stress. Where abuse is present, however, there may be no shortage of money coming in, but the abuser controls it as part of his means of retaining control over his partner or spouse, and as a source of power within the relationship.

Financial abuse often occurs as part of a pattern of other abuse, such as physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Sometimes it is the dominant form of abuse. The aim is to make you feel dependent, to humiliate you and embarrass or shame you. It includes:

- Making you ask for money for essential items such as food, clothing and heating or for personal items such as sanitary napkins.
- Not letting you know what the family income is.
- Making you pay for all the essential household bills, such as electricity, rent or mortgage, while he spends all his money on wide-screen TV, expensive cars, buying drinks for all his friends etc.
- Taking your money.
- Not giving you money.
- Not allowing you to work.
- Making you account and justify for every cent that you spend.
- Giving you an inadequate allowance, not taking current costs into account.

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Break the Silence on Domestic Violence

**West Cork Women Against
Violence Project,
Harbour View,
Bantry, Co. Cork.**

**Freephone Helpline:
Tuesday 10am - 4 pm
Tel: 1800 203 136**

**Office: Tel: 027 53847
Open: 10am-1pm,
Monday - Friday**

**Website:
www.westcorkwomensproject.ie**

Email: admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie

Reform of Immigration Rules Needed to Protect Migrant Women from Domestic Violence

Irish service providers continue to highlight gaps in Irish law which impact daily on women experiencing domestic violence.

Nine Irish NGOs have united as part of The Coalition on Domestic Violence to host a number of events to explore the effects of domestic violence on migrant women in Ireland. The Coalition believes that Ireland should introduce a legal provision to allow non-Irish women to safely and expeditiously remove themselves from situations of domestic abuse.

Currently, if a woman enters the State on the basis of her relationship with a spouse or partner, she remains dependent on him for her permission to remain here. In cases where such women are victims of domestic violence, there is no provision to allow them to become independent of their abusive spouse or partner. As a result, many women and their children remain trapped in abusive and violent homes in Ireland.

Sinéad Harrison of Women's Aid stated that "Unfortunately, all too often, we come across situations where, even when the woman has built up the courage to leave an abusive home, she is forced to return due to an inability to access support services for herself and often, her children."

Catherine Cosgrave, Solicitor with the Immigrant Council of Ireland said, "Ireland needs a statutory provision for the granting of an independent residency permit to bring the law in line with what is now the recognised international position."

The member organisations of the Coalition on Domestic Violence are: Longford Womens' Link, Sonas, the Immigrant Council of Ireland, AkiDWA, the Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, Womens' Aid, and Doras Luimní.

More information can be seen by logging onto Womens Aid's website

Alla Dulohery

The staff and volunteers of West Cork Women Against Violence would like to extend our sincerest condolences to the family of Alla Dulohery, who recently passed away. In 1997/98 Alla was among a group of women who identified that women experiencing domestic violence needed a safe place to talk about what was happening, and she was among the first volunteers to complete Helpline training in 1999. She was also instrumental in setting up the Helpline Service which still operates today. Alla served as the Project's Secretary for several years.

Alla's belief was that the service should focus on a woman's right to be listened to, to be believed and to be respected. Our four core values reflect her belief and will continue to do so.

- Confidentiality
- Belief in the woman
- Non Judgemental
- Respect for the woman's choice

Alla will be greatly missed by all at West Cork Women's Project.

May She Rest In Peace



We offer an appointment and court accompaniment service

THE 'KILLING ME SOFTLY WITH HIS WORDS' CAMPAIGN

The Sonas poster campaign 'Killing me Softly with his Words' aims to raise awareness around verbal abuse which entails name-calling, insults, humiliation, intimidation, threatening comments and mind-games. The campaign aims to highlight the damage and the continual 'chipping away' of a person that results from receiving constant negative messages.

"Verbal abuse can in effect slowly deaden someone from the inside out," said Rachel Mullen, chairperson of Sonas Housing. "If a woman is experiencing physical abuse she can name what is happening and there are bruises and scars to prove it. Verbal abuse can have a hugely debilitating effect emotionally and psychologically but because of the lack of tangible evidence it can be harder for women to name it or to show its impact. No one goes to A&E because they have been humiliated and ridiculed and it's difficult to file a complaint to the guards to say that your partner isolates you from your friends."

Continual verbal abuse can be just as destructive as physical abuse, with victims saying that because of its hidden nature it can actually be worse. Reports show that psychological abuse, particularly ignoring and ridiculing victims, contributes to depression and low self-esteem. Psychological abuse has also been linked to anxiety, panic attacks and suicidal thoughts. This is consistent with evidence from Sonas Housing which shows that 35% of domestic violence victims who apply for a Sonas house experience mental health problems as a result of living in abusive situations. The stress caused by living with long-term abuse can also have long-term health consequences such as high blood pressure and asthma.

According to Women's Aid one in five

women experience domestic abuse in Ireland, with this figure considered to be an under-representation given the hidden personal nature of the issue and the fact that, according to the HSE, a woman experiences at least 35 separate incidences of abuse before disclosing to another person.

"It is important for victims of domestic violence to recognise verbal abuse as a part of the overall pattern of abuse they are experiencing" said Deirdre Murphy, manager of Meath Women's Refuge. "Women living with controlling partners may have internalised a lot of the verbal abuse and believe they are the problem because they have been continually told that by their abusive partner. What makes it even more difficult to recognise is that often an abusive perpetrator may quickly switch between verbally abusive and more caring behaviour which means the woman is often unsure of what to expect and continually off-balance."

At West Cork Women Against Violence we recognise that verbal abuse is one of the more insidious tactics employed by abusers to emotionally cripple the woman and ensure that she does not reach out for support. We understand what it is like for women and can be contacted on

1800 203 136 or 027 53847.



We offer an appointment and court accompaniment service

Financial cuts lead to even more pressure on women (continued from page 4)

With the risk of job losses and financial uncertainty, financial pressure has escalated for many women. We hear from women who are experiencing financial abuse that if she tries to address her concerns with her partner, he may react as if their demands are unreasonable, may get angry or just walk away. The escalation of financial difficulties can result in an escalation of both emotional and physical abuse.

Working with a diverse range of women we know that they attempt to make the best of every situation for their families, no matter how hard the struggle. Women often give up trying and do without themselves to make sure children are fed and clothed leading to a culture of survival rather than living. We see many women who disclose their feelings of stress, exhaustion and hopelessness which can result in ongoing psychological stress and trauma.

Some women who have left the abusive relationship say that, although their income is far lower, they can manage better because they know what is coming into the house and can budget accordingly.

We at West Cork Womens Project can support women in the difficulties they are experiencing. Citizens' Information Service can advise on eligibility for welfare benefits and MABS can assist with budgeting and money management.

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR WOMEN:

West Cork Women against Violence Project,
Bantry **Freephone 1800-203 136**

Women's Aid Freephone..... **1800-341 900**

Cuanlee Refuge, Cork **021-427 7698**

Legal Aid Board, Cork **021-455 1686**
021-427 5998

Mná Feasa
(Domestic Violence Project) **021-421 1757**

OSS Cork **Freephone 1800-497 497**
(Domestic Violence Resource Centre
for men and women)

Sexual Assault Treatment Unit. **021-492 6297**

Sexual Violence Centre..... **Freephone 1800-496 496**

Domestic Violence Social Work **021-492 1728**

Y.A.N.A. North Cork **022-53915**

Kerry

Kerry Women's Refuge and Support Services
(ADAPT) **066-712 9100**

Open Door Network **066-718 5472**

Kerry Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre **1800-633 333**

Legal Aid Board..... **066-712 6900**

Tralee Women's Resource Centre **066-712 0622**

New Project Co-ordinator

As of mid-April Rita Kearney will be taking up the position of Co-ordinator with West Cork Women Against Violence Project.

We welcome Rita to the WCWAVP team and look forward to working with her.

WEST CORK CITIZENS' INFORMATION SERVICE

The Square, Bantry. Ph: 076 1078390
South Square, Macroom. Ph: 026 42179

West Cork Citizens' Information Service can provide you with information, advocacy and advice on all your rights and entitlements. The service is free, confidential and independent. Open daily, please call for times.

LEGAL AID BOARD

3rd Tuesday of month 10.30am – 4.30pm

For an appointment with the Legal Aid Board please phone the Legal Aid Cork office on:
021 4551686.

FREE LEGAL ADVICE CLINIC (F.L.A.C.)

1st Tuesday of month 6pm – 7pm

Appointments for F.L.A.C. are made by contacting the West Cork Citizens' Information Service via drop in or telephone **076 1078390.**

MABS OUTREACH CLINIC:

Each Friday 10 am – 11.30 am

Phone MABS at **023 55155** for an appointment.

THESE ARE CONFIDENTIAL SERVICES

We offer an appointment and court accompaniment service.