

West Cork Whisper

West Cork Women Against Violence Project Newsletter

49th Edition

September, October, November 2012

16 DAYS OF ACTION

The 16 Days of Action is a global international campaign that highlights the prevalence of violence against women in our society through protest and political activism by symbolically linking violence against women and human rights and to emphasise that such violence is a violation of human rights.

Internationally each year the period 25th November to 10th December is designated as the 16 Days of Action to raise awareness of the issue of Domestic Violence throughout the world. West Cork Women Against Violence will be marking the 16 Days of Action with a number of activities and events – information on these will be available in the local press and the WCWAV website in the next few weeks.

Each voice has a hugely important role in calling for the eradication of violence. Domestic violence remains a serious problem in society and the 16 Days campaign gives us all a chance to stand up and say:

STOP!

How we work as Support Workers

As Support Workers we are often told by clients that the listening part of the service is of great benefit to them.

For many women it is the first time that they are given an opportunity to speak about their experiences in safety and confidence. Sometimes, during her first session with the service, a woman is unsure of what she wants to do or if she wants to do anything. She will be given the time to talk and to explore what options are open to her.

There are occasions when it may take several sessions before a woman reaches any decision. Whatever decision she makes our Support Workers at West Cork Women against Violence Project will continue to provide a listening ear and any other support or information necessary. We understand that being listened to, being believed, not being judged, and having her decision respected is empowering for a woman.

The key values in our listening and information service are the:

- Provision of a non-judgemental, confidential listening service
- Belief in and respect for a woman's choices about her own life

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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

Outreach in Skibbereen:
every Friday 11am to 2pm
Tel: 028 23607

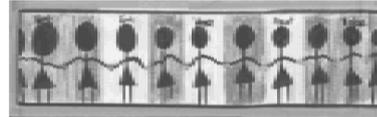
Website:
www.westcorkwomensproject.ie
Email: admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie

Your local domestic violence service is **West Cork Women against Violence Project** based in Bantry, Co Cork. We provide a free confidential listening, support and information service to women in the West Cork area who are presently experiencing domestic abuse or who may have in the past experienced abuse.

This service can be either face to face or over the phone on the helpline. You can use our Freephone number; contact the office for our appointments facility; or drop in, on Tuesdays to the main office or on Fridays to Skibbereen outreach.

We can also meet clients at safe locations throughout West Cork. Our area covers from Bandon to Macroom, up to the border with Kerry, to the Beara peninsula, the Sheep's Head and Mizien peninsulas and all the area in between, and includes the islands.

LIFT THE SILENCE, USE THE FREEPHONE NUMBERS



Volunteer with West Cork Women against Violence

We are looking for women to help out with distributing leaflets and newsletters; research and editing of the Whisper; helping to plan and organise events; and more! Whether you'd like to put stamps on envelopes / design a poster / write an article / run the mini-marathon we have something for you to do! If you can give a few hours a week or every month or even just occasionally that's okay with us.

We'd love you to come along to our Bantry Coffee Morning on Wednesday, 24th October, 11am-1pm to meet us and find out more about the Project.

We will be holding more Volunteer Information Coffee Mornings in other parts of West Cork during the 16 days of action, November 25 to December 10. Please phone or e-mail us for details of these.

Contact information on front page.

Children's Rights Referendum

For the first time in the State's history, we are being asked to vote on an amendment to the Irish Constitution (Bunreacht na hEireann) to enshrine the rights of children.

The first part of the proposed amendment reads: "The State recognises and affirms the natural and imprescriptible rights of all children and shall, as far as practicable, by its laws protect and vindicate those rights."

The proposed amendment is supported by the Children's Rights Alliance, an umbrella organisation of 100 NGOs dedicated to the protection and support of children and includes organisations like Barnardo's, the National Parent's Council and various teachers' organisations, as well as many others. This week, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin expressed his support for the referendum. It has also been unanimously supported by ALL political parties in the Dáil - another rare event in our history that every party, despite their many differences on almost every other issue agree that this amendment is one which is much needed and will fundamentally improve the recognition and protection of children's rights in Ireland.

The referendum takes place on **Saturday, 10th November** and it is so important that we should all make it our business to inform ourselves to ensure that not only do we vote but that we make an informed decision about how we vote. In the words of Fergus Finlay CEO of Barnardo's writing recently in support of the referendum in the *Irish Examiner*:

"They're our kids, and they're the future. Of course they should have rights – the right to be loved, the right to grow, the right to be educated, the right never to be exploited, abused, or neglected. Above all maybe they should have the right to an identity – to be whatever they can be, and to be proud of it."

The following are information sites which may help you to understand what you are being asked to vote on and why:

www.childrensrights.ie

www.oco.ie (Office of the Children's Ombudsman)

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/mediazone/pressreleases/name-1547-en.html>



We offer an appointment and court accompaniment service

JUST IMAGINE!

IMAGINE: You are curled into a ball on the floor. You are bruised and aching all over from the kicking. You are afraid to move in case it starts all over again, but you have to check if the baby in your womb is alright. How will you know? He has left the room and the rage seems to have gone with him. What happened? You were so delighted leaving the Doctor's surgery earlier today, you could hardly wait for him to come home from work to tell him the wonderful news. You didn't see the first slap coming, its force knocking you to the ground. Despite the force of his foot making contact with your back and head, some instinct took hold of you and you curled into a ball to protect the baby that he seemed determined to destroy.

IMAGINE: He drops a box of groceries on the table. This is the pattern each week, however this week the box is heavier. He says "there's chops for myself and make sure yourself and the children have eaten before I come in for dinner" A two pound bag of cheapest mince meat and a pound of sausages is the same as every week: Dinner for you and the children. You divide the mince in two. You will make a Bolognese sauce with one lot and a cottage pie sauce with the other. With pasta and potatoes you hope you will get four days dinner for the children out of that, the sausages will stretch to the other days. The children accept your explanation that you prefer to have your dinner earlier than their father. You don't want them to see that most of your meals consist of tea and bread and jam. How could you explain to them that you have asked their Dad to bring more food as they are growing and need more? How would you tell them that he said "No"? You explain that Dad likes pork chops and that's why he always has a different dinner to them.

How could you expect anyone to understand that your husband does all the shopping, even for your most intimate personal hygiene items, that you never have any money, not even enough to buy a postage stamp? Who would listen if you tried to explain how your husband, a wealthy farmer, a pillar of society in the community, controls the entire family by keeping total control of the family finances?

IMAGINE: The children aren't screaming. Everything is quiet, except for a tiny whimper. It's your youngest child, huddled with his brother and sister's in an upstairs bedroom. Even at 4 years of age he has learned not to draw attention to himself by crying out loudly. They should be used to this by now but every time it happens it seems to affect them more. You have always tried your best to reassure them, you hide the bruises, tidy the place up and tell them that Daddy isn't cross with them, that he is angry with you because you forgot to do something he'd asked you to do. One of the children is also angry with you. "It's all your fault, why don't you do what he wants so he won't be angry?" she shouts.

You realise it's time for you and the children to leave in order to protect them. He has threatened that if you ever tried to leave he would tell the Social Workers that you are an unfit mother and that he will make sure he gets custody of the children. You know that he can afford the best solicitor money can buy. You have 4 children, no transport, no where to go, and no money for food. You feel trapped.

Imagine that you are the abused person in any of the stories. These stories are about real women and children.

*Thankfully West Cork Women Against Violence Project is able to provide support and information to women in such situations. Imagine how important the support and information they received was in enabling them to make decisions about their and their children's future. This is where **YOU** can make a difference. You can make a difference as Fathers, Mothers, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters. **We can all make a difference by challenging violence against women whether it is physical, mental, financial or emotional.** As a community we can break the silence that has condoned abuse. You can help by lobbying local politicians to put pressure on the Government to put funding in place to enable services like the West Cork Women Against Violence Project to continue their services to vulnerable women and children.*

WOMAN PROTECTION IS CHILD PROTECTION

We offer an appointment and court accompaniment service.

Women's Aid 2012 campaign

On 10th September 2012, Women's Aid marked the 20th year of its National Freephone Helpline by launching its new '**Don't Be Afraid**' national public awareness advertising campaign. This four week campaign encourages women living with domestic abuse to speak up and encourage women to call the Women's Aid National Freephone Helpline on **1800 341 900**.

One in five women in Ireland is affected by domestic abuse but a third of those will never tell anyone what is happening to them. Women's Aid hopes that the new campaign will show women that they do not have to suffer domestic abuse in silence.

Don't suffer domestic abuse in silence

**We're ready
to listen even if
you're not ready
to speak.**

New INIS Guidelines for Immigrants Experiencing Domestic Violence

The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) has publicised new guidelines which contain information on dealing with cases where a person who is the victim of domestic violence wishes to obtain immigration status independent of their relationship with the perpetrator.

The guidelines provide much-needed clarity for victims of domestic violence and those who advocate on their behalf. This will go some way towards removing the element of control that can arise in an abusive relationship, where abusers often tell women they will be deported if they leave them.

More information on these new guidelines can be sourced from <http://www.inis.gov.ie> under documents/information leaflets and victims of domestic violence.

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**

WEST CORK CITIZENS' INFORMATION SERVICE

The Square, Bantry Ph: 076 1078390
South Square; Macroom. Ph: 076 1078430

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.

CIS Outreach in Dunmanway every Wednesday from 10am to 1pm.

Legal Aid Board

Monthly on 3rd Tuesday 10.30am – 4.30pm

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

Free Legal Aid Clinic (F.L.A.C.)

Monthly on 1st Tuesday 6pm – 7pm

Appointments with F.L.A.C. are made by contacting West Cork Citizens Information Service via drop in or by phone.:
076 - 1078390

MABS outreach clinic:

Each Friday 10 am – 11.30am

Phone MABS at 023 – 8855155 for an appointment.

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