



# West Cork Whisper

WEST CORK WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE PROJECT NEWSLETTER | ISSUE 74 | MAY, JUNE, JULY 2019

## Not Even Counted

The minimum of places required under the Istanbul Convention is 27 family units.

The ever-growing number of people homeless has now reached over 10,000. It most likely reached that staggering figure some time ago but government sleight of hand and cowardice in admitting the scale of the problem has kept the numbers at four figures and not well into five figures as we know them to be. One of the ways government has attempted to suppress the real extent of homelessness, is that it does not count the numbers of women and children who are in emergency accommodation in refuges because of domestic violence.

However, that is not the whole story, thanks to the journalist, Ellen Coyne, in The Times (Irish Edition). She has been exposing Ireland's failure to provide enough refuge spaces to meet its obligations under the Istanbul Convention which it signed last year. West Cork Women Against Violence spoke to the Times to highlight the problem and our co-ordinator, Marie Mulholland was interviewed on Drivetime, RTE Radio 1 in April about the profound need in West Cork for safe emergency accommodation for women and children escaping domestic abuse. Marie has pointed out that:

"It's not just a case of there being no room at the refuge, but a case of not enough refuges."

There is one state-funded refuge in the whole of Cork County, the largest County in Ireland and it is located in Cork City. It has places for 6 families. The very minimum (and it is the **very** minimum) of places required under the Istanbul Convention would be 27 family units. In West Cork, we are forced to place women and children escaping domestic violence into B&Bs and hotels - that's if there are any rooms available. That availability becomes increasingly unlikely when the tourist season starts in West Cork and the search for emergency accommodation becomes both frantic and frustrating. The trauma of homelessness because of domestic violence, the fear and vulnerability experienced by women and children forced to flee their own homes is further exacerbated by Community Welfare payments for accommodation which in West Cork, no longer take into account the appropriateness of the accommodation, but only the economics. When community welfare is only prepared to pay €30 per night for accommodation, it forces DV victims and their children to stay in B&Bs that are unstaffed at night time, in towns where there is no Garda presence in the evenings and where the other residents are primarily single men passing through the area. This is how we treat the women and

children of West Cork who need safety, security and respite from violence and fear. There is only one immediate solution to this - we must have our own Safe House/ Refuge in West Cork.

There is only one immediate solution to this - we must have our own Safe House/ Refuge in West Cork.

West Cork Women Against Violence have made this a priority and have been working with a range of organisations, services and individuals to progress the issue.

If you want to help us, there are a number of things you can do:

- 1 Please put pressure on your local political representatives;
- 2 Organise a fund -raising event (contact our office and let us know what you would like to do);
- 3 Donate to West Cork Women Against Violence - PayPal.Me/WCWAV.



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# 8 Ways Controlling Men make Mothering Even Harder

which may add to a child's fear, uncertainty and trauma

Being a mother is the most challenging job in the world, even with the help of a loving partner or other family member. We must recognize the additional difficulties facing mothers in abusive and coercive control relationships so we can give them the support they need to parent successfully.

Most mothers who are being controlled by their partners make heroic efforts to keep their children safe and raise them well, despite the abuser's interference.

Shown here are some of the other ways a controlling partner might make the job of mothering so much harder.

## 1 CREATING DISTANCE

Connecting with their children makes many women feel stronger. If the mother's partner is controlling, he will drive a wedge between the mother and her children. He might oblige the mother to work extra hours so she has less time with her children.

He might try to persuade the mother that her attachment to her children is unhealthy or unnatural.

## 2 MAKING HER CHOOSE

A controlling man often forces his partner to choose between siding with her child and siding with him, or between spending time with her child and spending time with him. He might deliberately schedule "couple time" for moments when he knows she wants to be with her child. Women sometimes retreat under all this pressure and their relationships with their children deteriorate.

## 3 UNDERMINING HER PARENTING

Controlling men undermine women's parenting by finding ways to become the only authority in the house and by encouraging children to disrespect their mother. They may do this subtly by breaking the mother's rules. Or they may do this overtly by calling her names, criticizing her, or physically abusing her in front of the child. Sometimes controlling men will tell children to respect their mother, while at the same time doing whatever they can to reduce her influence in the home. Children come to see the abuser as the source of "real" power and their mother as weak. Children then cease to follow the mother's instructions and seem out of control, making her feel less and less capable.

## 4 THREATENING THE CHILDREN

An abuser often controls a woman by threatening her children's well-being. The father or father figure may refuse to spend money on a child's medical treatment, clothing, or other expenses, or make the child's mother do specific things if she wishes to support these necessities. He may threaten to hurt the children, take the children and disappear, or report the mother to child protective services for imagined offenses. He may throw things, stomp around, drive too fast, or threaten violence including suicide. Mothers often give in to their controlling partners, to protect their children.

## 6 SEXUALIZING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH A CHILD OR TEEN

Some controlling men flirt with their partners' daughters (and sometimes with their own daughters). This flirting alienates a woman from her daughter if it makes one or both of them uncomfortable. A woman's partner should not flirt with her daughter, and an adult man should not flirt with a teenager. The adult is always responsible for keeping this relationship non-romantic and non-sexual.

## 5 OVERLY HARSH DISCIPLINE

Controlling men often tell a mother that she is too "soft" with her children. He might oblige a mother to use harsher discipline than she thinks she should. Or if the children are frightened of his discipline, they may blame the mother for not shielding them from this mistreatment.

## 7 SEXUALLY ABUSING A CHILD OR TEEN

An abuser will create rifts between a woman and her child if he plans to sexually abuse that child. The more strained the relationship between the mother and child, the greater the likelihood that he will be able to sexually abuse the child (or teenager) undetected. The child feels forced to lie to the mother to cover up the abuse and then grows angry with the mother for failing to protect him or her.

## 8 TURNING CHILDREN AGAINST THEIR MOTHER

Children learn to accommodate the behaviours of a controlling man as a survival strategy. To satisfy the adult they perceive as powerful and possibly dangerous, children often laugh at a controlling man's putdowns of their mother and gang up with him against her. Children may be bribed, pushed, or just inspired into degrading or spying on their mother or even hurting her physically. In effect, the children are forced to extend the reach of the controlling man.



celtic symbol  
for mother

Whether he is the biological father, stepfather, or the mother's boyfriend, a controlling or abusive man poses a risk to the well-being of any children in the couple's life. If he uses physical violence, he might directly assault the child, emotionally or physically injure the child while assaulting the mother, or even oblige the child to hurt his or her mother.

Even without physical violence, when a controlling man deprives a mother of the resources she needs to protect and provide for her child properly, he is placing her children at risk. For instance, her children suffer if he denies her access to education, transportation, or a job.

The eight points shown here are meant to improve understanding of the predicament of women who are dominated by their partners and stimulate commitment to providing them with the safety, resources, information, and support they need to break free. Of course, most men are not controlling in this way, and abuse can occur in same-sex relationships, too. This list is not exhaustive.

If you feel that any of this applies to you or someone you know, you can get help at

027 53847

For more information see: [www.domesticshelters.org](http://www.domesticshelters.org) -

8 ways controlling men make mothering even harder

By Lisa Aronson Fontes





## West Cork Women Against Violence twenty years supporting the women of West Cork

Twenty years ago, a small group of volunteers, a dedicated committee of activists and a nineteen and a half hour per week Community Employment scheme worker began to devise a response to the need they had identified, which was supports for women who were living within abusive relationships in West Cork.

WCWAV went live in 1999 with Catherine Casey, (a part time development worker) and a group of dedicated volunteers whose focus was to set up a crisis helpline for women experiencing domestic abuse.

If women wanted to talk about their situation and the abuse that they lived with every day, they faced many potential challenges. Given the largely rural nature of West Cork, a woman with no car of her own might not have any access to transport if she needed to leave the family home. Her isolation could be heightened if she had no sympathetic family or neighbour who would support her, often the case in very traditional areas, where there was stigma and disbelief attached to victims of domestic abuse. Services were often

nonexistent or not available locally. Often, there was an impact on the mental health of women dealing with abuse on their own, without support.

Over its twenty year history strong linkages have been fostered between WCWAV and health and mental health services, social services, the County Council, an Garda Síochána, the Court services, and many community and voluntary organisations.

Like many developments that begin as a response to local needs, twenty years after it started, West Cork Women Against Violence continues to provide a quality, consistent service to the women of West Cork, and many of the challenges facing those women remain the same. Over the past twenty years, WCWAV has consistently highlighted the issue of the lack of accommodation for women in emergency and crisis situations, and the absence of any refuge spaces in West Cork, since the service started.

WCWAV has developed some recent responses, including a service to support children who

are exposed to and traumatised by DV in the home, and an aftercare support group for women who have left abusive relationships. More recently, we have been vocal in our support for the establishment of a Protective Service Unit in West Cork, so that there is a dedicated and adequately resourced Garda service with appropriately trained personnel available to victims of DV in West Cork area.

In 2019 the phone line, drop in service, outreach offices, court accompaniment, quarterly newsletter and awareness raising in the community continue to form the core of our quality, consistent service.

The organisation that had its modest beginnings in 1999 has grown, with five staff members and a voluntary Board of Management. Twenty years later, it is true to its original mission, to continue to provide a service to those women who are affected by Domestic Violence and who seek its support: they are at the very heart of the work of WCWAV.

*Kathleen Hornedy*

# WCWAV 20 KEY MOMENTS

### 2 2000

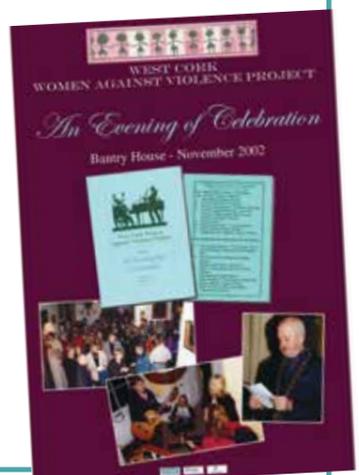
RTE Nationwide program broadcast on 30 April 2000, "Tonight in the first of two reports, we focus our attention on the whole area of domestic violence in Ireland.... Maria Mullarkey takes a look at violence against women, which unfortunately is a harsh and sad reality in many families throughout the country. However, women need to realise that there are many groups willing to help. A new one just launched is the West Cork Women Against Violence Project which aims to provide support for women and children who are victims of domestic violence."



### 3 2002

#### An Evening of Celebration at Bantry House

Featuring John Spillane along with other local musicians, poets and dancers, as part of 16 Days of Action. That evening a candle was lit for every woman who had been killed in Ireland at that time. The evening is still remembered as having had a profound impact on all who attended.



### 1 2000

#### Once is Too Much.

The formal launch of the service on 8th April, 2000 at Bantry Courthouse. The launch involved an exhibition entitled *Once is Too Much*, developed by the women of St. Michael's Estate, Inchicore, Dublin. Speakers at the launch included Nell McCafferty and featured 52 lilies which commemorated individual women who at the time of the original exhibition had died in Ireland as a result of violence.



### 4 2005

#### From the Dark to Light

Exploring Rural DV was a national conference held in 2005 by WCWAV. The day-long conference was attended by over 130 delegates (both national and international) focusing on key issues surrounding DV in rural Ireland. Some key recommendations included the need for affordable housing, supported move-on housing, training delivered to front line services and enhanced inter-agency co-operation



**5 2006**

**In Her Shoes** - To mark the *16 Days of Action Opposing Violence Against Women 2006* the West Cork Women Against Violence Project put together an exhibition entitled *In Her Shoes*. The exhibition comprised 125 pairs of shoes, each pair representing one woman who had been murdered in Ireland since 1996. A date of death for each woman who had been killed was written on a label on each shoe alongside the name of a woman who donated a pair of shoes in that woman's remembrance. A number of prominent women (including Miriam O'Callaghan) donated shoes for this purpose. The exhibition was on display in four different towns in West Cork - Bantry, Macroom, Castletownbere and Dunmanway.



**6 2009**

**10th Anniversary Tree of Intentions** - In 2009 WCWAV celebrated ten years of supporting women experiencing DV in West Cork. The project worked with artist Marie Brett to create a 'Tree of Intentions'. Intentions were hung on the tree for women and girls and a minute's silence observed. Over 1500 women had sought support from WCWAV in ten years. The tree and the intentions were later planted in Patricia Moynihan's garden, where it still thrives.

**7 2010**

**One in 5 campaign** highlighting that one in five women in Ireland are living with domestic violence, staff and board members launched balloons from the square in Bantry in March 2011



**8 2012**

**St Brigid's Day - Take My Eyes**, a Spanish language film was shown at Cinemax Bantry. After the showing, doves were released to honour the memory of Alla Dulohery, one of WCWAV's founder members.

**9 2013**

**West Cork Whisper #50** goes glossy and full colour, January 2013



**10 2013**

**Youth Rap Project** - WCWAV partnered with Dunmanway Family Resource Centre in 2013 for the Youth Rap Project funded by COSC. The aims of the project were to help young people develop their own understanding of what makes a non-abusive and abusive relationship as well as learning about supports that are available for young people. Using their new knowledge, they wrote a rap on DV, recorded it and performed live with Temper Mental MissElayneous at WCWAV's 2013 conference. A recording of the song is available on our website: [www.westcorkwomensproject.ie](http://www.westcorkwomensproject.ie)



**11 2013**

**The Personal & Public Cost of Domestic Violence.** WCWAV's conference in 2013 focused on the cost of violence against women in terms of not only the impact on victims but the toll on health services, courts, policing and social services. A line-up of national and international speakers addressed the failure to adequately examine the causes of DV and to make perpetrators accountable.



**12 2013**

**One Billion Rising - V Day.** On the morning of 14th February, Wolfe Tone Square in Bantry was thronged with over 150 women and children dancing their resistance to violence against women and girls as part of the Global Billion Women Rising Protest. To view the performance see [www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn2JGAg8N4o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn2JGAg8N4o)



**15 2015**

**DVRIM training brought to West Cork:** The Domestic Violence Risk Index Matrix was developed by Maddie Bell of Barnardo's in Northern Ireland. It had been rolled out to police forces and social services in N. Ireland and in several regions of the UK. This co-ordinated agency response to DV allows key actors to come together to assess the risk and formulate co-ordinated responses to incidents or individuals that are of concern. The training was brought to West Cork by WCWAV in October 2015 and attended by Gardaí, Public Health Nurses, Social Workers and many other professionals.

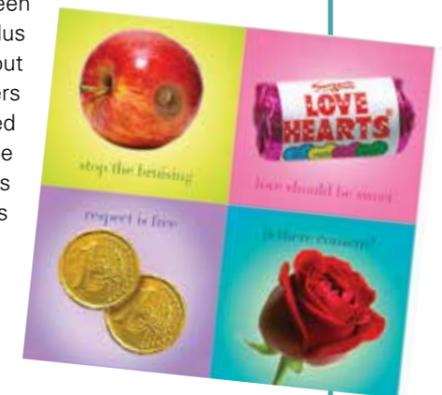
**13 2014**

Eilish O'Carroll, Better known as Winnie McGoogan of Mrs Brown's Boys fame, was our guest speaker at 2014 AGM held in Dunmanway Family Resource Centre. \*photo featuring Jodie Curtis, a dedicated Mrs. Brown's Boys fan and volunteer at Dunmanway Family Resource Centre.



**14 2014**

**Love is Sweet** - *16 Days of Action* saw a campaign in Bandon, Dunmanway, Castletownbere and Skibbereen outside the local SuperValu where volunteers gave out symbols of love and reminders of how it is manipulated in domestic violence relationships. The volunteers also took up bucket collections for WCWAV.



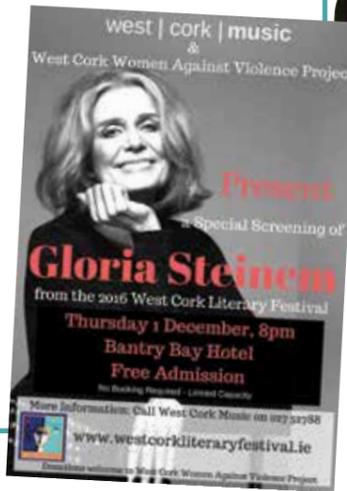


### 16 2016

**Somewhere to Turn To, Somewhere to Go** - In 2016 WCWAV commissioned an evaluation of the impact and importance of DV services in West Cork. Completed by Dr. Caroline Crowley the report surveyed clients of our service and the views of frontline staff in other professional agencies. The report gives a rare insight into the trauma and danger many women and children experience in West Cork. Copies of Somewhere to Turn To, Somewhere to Go can be requested by emailing admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie

### 17 2016

**Gloria Steinem** appeared at West Cork Literary Festival and invited members in the audience to speak about the realities for women locally, an opportunity that WCWAV's co-ordinator could not resist. Marie's words that day led to an increase both in clients and donations to the project. WCWAV were given permission to show a video of the event as a fundraiser later in the year.



### 18 2017

**International Women's Day** - WCWAV received an invitation from President Michael D. Higgins to participate in Aras an Uachtarain's celebration of the 8th March. A representation of both our staff and Board members were honoured to attend.



### 19 2017

**Mary Daly Fund** - WCWAV were selected to be the final recipient of the fund with a grant of \$100,000. We are proud to honour the memory of Mary Daly and her love for West Cork



### 20 2018

**The Voice of the Child & DV** - In December 2018, following on from her impressive seminar in 2017, WCWAV was delighted to host Professor Stephanie Holt of Trinity College Dublin to deliver a seminar on Post-Separation Conflict and its Impact on Children.



## wonder women of west cork



In honour of our 20 years' anniversary we celebrate **Patricia Moynihan, WCWAV Co-Ordinator in the early years**

**Where are you from?** I was born in the UK to Irish parents, who later moved back to Ireland. I have been living back in Ireland full time since 2003.

**Job Title:** I was Co-Ordinator/Manager of West Cork Women Against Violence from November 2003 to August 2011. This involved project management under the direction of the Board, staff and client support, training, awareness raising and networking with local and national women's organisations.

**What does your work entail?** See above.

**Why and how did you get involved in West Cork Women Against Violence?** I have always been committed to women's equality and became aware of how prevalent domestic violence is when I worked in housing at local government level and for a national organisation supporting lone parents. I was fortunate to be able to return to work with women in West Cork when a post became available

**Since your first involvement with WCWAV do you feel things have improved for women experiencing DV?** It's difficult to answer that. Since becoming involved with WCWAV, I have become more and more aware of how common domestic violence is and how little funding is given to attempt to eradicate it. This is something that needs to change. However, the new bill about coercive control and the possibility of a local safe house in west Cork give me great hope. I am constantly impressed by the work that is done by the women at the WCWAV, how determined they are, and how they keep fighting on behalf of us all.

**Since your first involvement with WCWAV do you feel things have improved for women experiencing DV?** There is more open discussion of DV, some improvements in legislation, but still not enough places of safety. There is a great need for more education of professionals dealing with women experiencing DV, from Gardai to the Courts system.

**How do you relax?** I have a large garden, sing in a choir, read a lot, and am a voluntary shop keeper for the Sheep's Head Producers Co-Op. I am an Air BnB host. I am also currently very involved in campaigning against the mechanical cutting of the underwater Kelp Forests in Bantry Bay, which I believe will destroy the natural balance of the eco-system and affect traditional seaweed hand harvesting and fishing rights along the Atlantic Coast.

**What changes would you most like to see for women?** Better and more affordable childcare, flexible post-school learning, pay equality and more public sector housing. Women and children are adversely affected by homelessness, unaffordable rents and insecure private sector housing

### WCWAV recent initiatives

In 2016 the project commissioned an evaluation of its services, carried out by an independent researcher. That report, entitled *Someone to Turn To, Somewhere to Go*, showed a demand for a safe house in West Cork. We hope this year to see significant developments to in our efforts to make a safe house here in West Cork. Currently the only refuge space available to women in need is in Cork city, and as you can imagine that is limited and in high demand, so we are often faced with finding B&B for women in crisis.

In 2017 an outreach service was established in Clonakilty, where a support worker is available by appointment on Thursdays.

We continue to drive new initiatives, seeking new ways to provide support where it's needed within the scope of our mission statement. Our newest initiative has been putting in place a system of therapies for children of women who have lived with abusive relationships. This has been new work in so many ways and we are proud to have made new links with therapists and organisations to find a way through the ethical and legal obstacles to provide a reliable, measurable support to those children.

Over the years we have been saddened by the passing of some of those women without whom the project could not have become what it is today. We remember Alla Duloherly, Caroline Dare and Lee Snodgrass with respect and love.

Take one day at a time, remember today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday



# [almost] 20 years of Whispering

In September, 2000, the quarterly newsletter West Cork Whisper was launched. It provides information on legal issues, articles on social welfare rights, women's own personal stories from across the globe, information on domestic violence services and activities, useful telephone numbers and contact details for the Project itself. 2000 copies of the West Cork Whisper are printed and distributed nationally and locally every three months. For this we rely heavily on our network of volunteers; we thank Brid Ryan in particular for her longstanding commitment in Clonakilty, we thank Helena in Macroom, Deirdre in Skibbereen, Carmel in Castletownbere, Louise in Bandon (and the many other volunteers who turn up when we need them) for their continued support and assistance without whom we'd be scuppered. Also to Jenny Dempsey, who with every edition performs magic on the pile of papers we provide to transform them into the bright and glossy newsletters you see.

## cork

**West Cork Women Against Violence**  
Freephone 1800 203 136

**Cuanlee Refuge, Cork**  
021 427 7698

**Free Legal Aid Clinic**  
Locall 1890 350 259  
Information and referral

**IRD Duhallow Domestic Violence Support**  
Helpline 087 7733 337  
from Monday to Saturday 10am - 10 pm or office at 029 60633

**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)

S.A.T.U. 021 492 6100

**Sexual Violence Centre**  
Freephone 1800 496 496

**Domestic Violence Social Work**  
021 492 1728

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

## kerry

**Kerry's Women's refuge and Support Services (Adapt)**  
066 712 9100

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

**Legal Aid Board** 066 712 6900

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

## national

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

## Citizens Information Service West Cork

Citizens Information Service West Cork 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.

**Bantry** The Square, 076 107 8390  
Daily from 10am - 5pm  
(Fridays until 4pm, closed 1pm-2pm  
Mon, Tues & Thurs)

**Dunmanway**, Ross House,  
The Square, Dunmanway  
Every Monday 10am-1pm

**Macroom** South Square Macroom,  
0761 078 430  
Mon, Tues, Weds, Thursday  
(Closed Friday)

**Bandon**, c/o St Michael Centre,  
South Main Street, Bandon  
Every Thursday from  
10am - 1pm & 2pm- 4pm

**Castletownbere** c/o Beara West  
Family Resource Centre, Unit 1,  
Knockanroe House, Bank Place,  
Castletownbere, Beara, Co.Cork.  
Monthly 2nd and 4th Thursday 10am-  
1pm

**Clonakilty**, c/o Employability Service,  
16 Rossa Street, Clonakilty  
Every Wednesday from  
10am - 1pm & 2pm- 4pm

**Free Legal Aid Clinic**  
Monthly on 1st Tuesday 6pm - 7pm  
For an appointment please contact  
Citizens Information Service West  
Cork by either dropping in or phoning  
076 107 8390.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

West Cork Women's Project assures all women contacting us that four core values underpin our service:

- Confidentiality
- To be listened to
- To be believed
- Respect for her choice

Speaking to someone, perhaps for the first time, about experiencing violence or abuse in the home is never easy. Placing your trust in a stranger on the end of a phone or meeting someone for the first time face to face takes courage. These first stages of seeking support can be a time of stress and fear for women.

It is important that women understand that they have the right to remain anonymous when contacting the service. If a woman is comfortable with giving identifying details, these details are not passed on to any other agency except at her request.

There are two exceptions to confidentiality:

- If a disclosure raises concerns with regard to Child Protection issues
- If a woman discloses that she intends to harm another person.

**Bantry Office:** 027 53847 Mon to Friday: 9.00 am to 5.30 pm

**Helpline:** 1800 203 136 during office hours

**Skibbereen Outreach:** 028 23607 Fridays 11.00 am - 2.00 pm

**Clonakilty Outreach** Thursdays by appointment

[www.facebook.com/westcorkwomenagainstviolence](http://www.facebook.com/westcorkwomenagainstviolence)

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email: [admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie](mailto:admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie)

We're here to support you

**FREEPHONE**  
**1800 203 136**

**Office 027 53847**  
Mon to Fri: 9 am to 5.30 pm