

2011/2012



North Down and Ards Women's Aid

Annual Report 2011/2012

women
abuse
men
Violence
Domestic

women's aid

North Down and Ards

Chairperson's Report

The work of North Down and Ards Women's Aid continues year by year as we try to raise awareness that domestic violence is a crime that reflects on the whole community. The power and control of the perpetrator destroys the life and personality of the victim and has a damaging effect on the development of their children. It causes anger, heartache and resentment in families, and deprives the wider community of the valuable contribution the victim might make. Domestic violence is a financial burden on the whole of society.

The staff team, volunteers and management committee continue to invest their time and expertise to support the women and children in the North Down and Ards area who experience domestic violence. This is a very difficult time, with so much of the funding for the voluntary sector being stretched, but the work of the organisation continues with great enthusiasm. We are currently working with Supporting People and other partners to secure funding in order to bring our services up to date to meet the emerging needs of the women and children in the area.

I am very proud of all the staff and volunteers who carry out this difficult work in very challenging times. A special word of thanks must also go to the management committee, who have tirelessly worked to ensure the future of the organisation. They have been a great support to me throughout the year.

Lesley Mackie

Management Coordinator's Report

The year 2011/2012 has been challenging and demanding for North Down and Ards Women's Aid. We have continued to work at full capacity to meet the needs of women and children through the provision and development of a range of support services delivered by experienced and skilled staff members.

The external environment has changed significantly for Women's Aid across Northern Ireland. Such changes are reflected at both government and community level in relation to strategy, policy and service provision. To meet these changes, North Down and Ards Women's Aid recognises the need to develop a robust financial and strategic approach to sustaining core services with the potential to build capacity in the future.

This year has seen a continuing increasing trend in the demand for refuge services with an overall average occupancy rate of 86%. There continues to be a slight decrease in number of children coming into refuge.

Again this year there has been an increase in referrals into Floating Support Services, resulting in this service operating at full capacity. The demands for this service resulted in the need for a staff to manage the waiting list through assessment appointments with a focus on risk assessment, needs assessment and crisis intervention work.

As we continue to have a waiting list for this service, many women will receive support from Journey to Freedom support groups while waiting for Floating Support services. All three weekly Journey to Freedom support groups have operated at full capacity for the year.

As in previous years staff members have continued to remain committed to providing high quality, professional services to all service users. I would like to thank all staff for their continued hard work and dedication.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the management committee for their commitment, professionalism and dedication during a very active and productive year.

Beth Scott

Treasurer's Report

Funding is always an issue with North Down and Ards Women's Aid and in these very difficult and lean times we have had to apply stringent measures to ensure continuing delivery of our much needed services. Careful financial management throughout the year and, where possible, further paring down of running costs has resulted at the end of the financial year in a deficit of £10,000 and given the restraints, we feel this is acceptable. However funding shortages have had serious impact on staffing, training, prevention work and courses for children and young people. Floating Support continues to make high demands on staff and there is an urgent and increasing need for additional staff in this essential service. Unfortunately our funding for Floating Support and Supporting People has been without increment for four and five years respectively. On the positive side we have been successful in our funding application to Children In Need for a three year post for a much needed Children and Young Person's Coordinator. Our search for new sources of funding continues to be a priority and we are currently pursuing possible opportunities.

We have also been very grateful for the generous financial support from local churches, schools, business and professional clubs and private donors, without which our task would be very difficult indeed. Additionally we received an anonymous and substantial cash donation, stipulating that it was to be spent on activities for children throughout the year. This funding provided places in council run summer schemes, bus trips, pantomime, cinema, and Santa's Cottage to name a few. Everyone who benefited, without exception, greatly appreciated these special treats. We wish to extend a big 'thank you' to our anonymous donor and to everyone who supported us throughout the year. Your support is essential at these difficult times.

2011/2012 Performance and Achievements

187 referrals were assessed in the Bangor Centre this year.

73 women engaged in the Floating Support service this year.

41 women and 24 children were accommodated and supported in Refuge this year.

53 women attended the 'Journey to Freedom' programme. The attendance is up by 12.7% up on last year and is now running over 3 days per week.

The 'Heading for Healthy Relationships' programme was delivered to 6 senior schools in the Newtownards area with 632 individual pupils taking part in a total of 96 sessions.

The 'Helping Hands' programme at the Bangor Centre for mums and their children consisted of a 6 week course accommodating 14 mums and children, over 3 courses throughout the year.

The 'Helping Hands' programme was delivered to 16 primary schools in the North Down and Ards areas with 595 individual pupils taking part in a total of 170 sessions.

Two workers from North Down and Ards Women's Aid provided Social Guardian Training to a total of 30 teachers from 22 local primary schools. This training 'Developing Social Guardians to deliver Helping Hands' was provided in 2 groups over 4 days in January and February of this year. A representative of the Department of Education also attended one of the groups.

Transformers Stage I - 8 children successfully completed 2 courses this year, Transformers Stage II - 4 children completed the course this year, Teenage Transformers - 5 young people completed the course this year.

Refuge Report

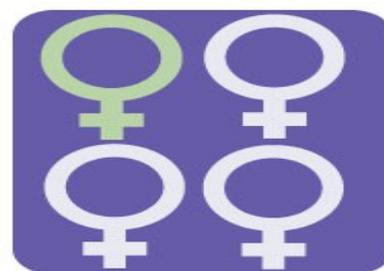
The refuge team comprises a Refuge Team Leader, a Refuge Worker, 3 Night Workers and a Children and Young Person's Worker. This dedicated, skilled team provides support and advocacy to women and their children who find that they are in need of the temporary, safe accommodation. Often when families present at refuge, they have complex needs which require significant individual support.

The majority of referrals from external organisations are:
The 24hr Domestic Violence Helpline, Social Services and PSNI

Support services provided in Refuge include:

- Risk and Needs Assessments
- Support planning
- Support in achieving goals/outcomes
- Support and practical assistance in establishing and stabilising benefits
- Support and assistance in identifying individual needs
- Application for permanent housing accommodation
- Liaising/working closely with Social Services, PSNI, Solicitors and other external organisations

A total of 41 women and 24 children were accommodated and supported in the refuge this year.



One in four women
experience domestic
violence world wide

Reach out. **Help is at Hand**
24 Hour

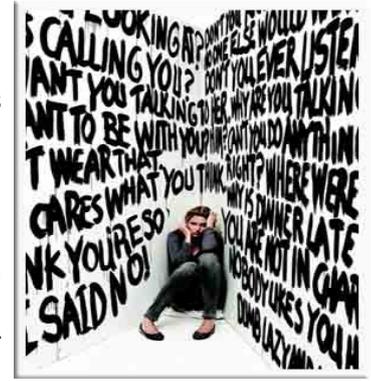
Domestic Violence Helpline
0800 917 14 14

Open to anyone affected by domestic violence

Floating Support

services are delivered by a team of 3 part time staff members. This team provides support on a 1-1 basis for women, offering appointments from our offices in Newtownards and Bangor with home visits offered as required.

This service continues to operate at full capacity as the demand for the service increases again this year. Extra support to the Floating Support team has been introduced this year to assist in managing the number of requests for services. This staff member will meet with each woman at the initial point of contact and will provide assessment and crisis intervention support through robust risk and needs assessment. Practical support for safety issues/safety planning is a large part of this role. This year 73 women engaged in the Floating Support 1-1 services this year.



One woman's comments about the service was; ***"After being to Women's Aid everything began to become so much easier. I didn't feel so helpless and alone as before. Even just speaking and being helped along the way helped me and my family a great deal. Our lives have now been transformed so much for the better now with all thanks to Women's Aid"***

Journey to Freedom

programme is a personal development group process for women who have experienced, or who continue to experience, domestic violence. This programme was originally developed by staff in North Down and Ards Women's Aid in 1997, as a positive response to women, to enable them to address their experiences of domestic violence, move on and create positive change for themselves. This year 53 women attended 'Journey to Freedom' support groups in North Down and Ards Women's Aid.

Anticipated outcomes for women:

- Increased confidence/self esteem
- Establishment of peer support
- Clear understanding of domestic violence
- Improved awareness of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships
- Reduction in feelings of isolation, guilt and shame
- Increased ability to process thoughts and understand experiences
- Improved access to information, advice and support
- Provision of opportunities to access other services within Women's Aid and with other agencies
- Increased skills and abilities
- Development of a more positive outlook for themselves and their children
- Improved relationships and attachments with children
- Increased confidence in parenting role and abilities

Anticipated outcomes for children:

Children are safer and supported as a direct result of the above outcomes for mothers. As mothers become more aware of the impact domestic violence has had upon the whole family, they can begin to put in place the safety and support strategies to enhance the safety and well-being of their children. Women who have participated in the Journey to Freedom process report increased confidence in their parenting and a range of benefits for the whole family such as:

- A safer environment
- The existence of a support framework for the whole family
- A clearer understanding of the impact of domestic violence on children and how they can be supported



Staff Training

Name of course	Provider	No of Staff/Volunteers
Journey to Freedom	WAFNI	1
Lone Worker Training	Guardian 24	7
Basic Drug Awareness and Mental Health	ASCERT	1
Suicide Intervention	ASIST	2
Sexual Orientation	Rainbow Project	3
Sudden Death Trauma	Eastern Trauma Advisory Panel	2
Helping Hands Train the Trainers	WAFNI	3
Incredible Years	S E Trust	11
Adult Safeguarding	NDAWA	11
Basic First Aid	Bluelight Medical Ltd	15

Childrens' Services

Centre –The Playroom in the Bangor Centre has been very busy this year and buzzing with lots of activities for all the children aged from 0-4 year olds. A total of 32 children were supported over numerous weeks to enable mums to avail of the group sessions and/or one to one support with the floating support workers

Refuge—Over the last year we have had 24 children who participated in the playroom activities and childcare support from the Children and Young Person's Worker. The Playroom was refurbished by two volunteers and was completed in January 2012. The Playroom looks amazing and all the children and young people have commented on the new artwork. The Helping Hands Programme has been introduced to families within the refuge and will continue to be developed throughout the year.

Transformers—Transformers is continuing to grow and we receive referrals from a number of external agencies including Social Services, YMCA and The Simpson Centre. Transformers is also recognised within the Family Support, Court Services and has also been recommended through Social Services Case Conferences.

Primary Schools -The 'Helping Hands' programme was delivered to 16 primary schools in the North Down and Ards areas with 595 individual pupils taking part in a total of 170 sessions. This year was the second year that North Down and Ards Women's Aid provided the Social Guardian Training for Helping Hands. Two staff members provided the training to a total of 30 teachers from 22 local primary schools. This training – 'Developing Social Guardians to deliver Helping Hands' was provided in 2 groups over 4 days in January and February of this year.

Senior Schools - The Heading for Healthy Relationships' programme was delivered in 6 senior schools in the Newtownards area with 632 individual pupils taking part in a total of 96 sessions.

Christmas 2011

Hampers and Gifts—This year we received support from many local church charities and personal donations of gifts and hampers for our women and children which helped cater for 70 families over the Christmas period.

The Giving Tree at Bloomfield Shopping Centre—Once again we have received great support from the Giving Tree which has provided gifts for 120 children. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the public and managers in the Bloomfield Shopping Centre for their support.

Trips—Santa Cottage in the Mourne Mountains

On 3rd December, 36 children and 2 staff and their mothers left the Bangor Centre to travel to Newcastle to visit Santa's Cottage. All the families arrived at Newcastle and the children enjoyed time at Coco's Play Centre followed by lunch and then back on the bus to travel to Santa's Cottage. The children loved the Cottage and watched Santa come down the chimney and gave all the children presents. The children spent time in Santa's Cottage and barn meeting the reindeer and Santa's cats.

Trips—Streamvale Open Farm

On the 13th December, 13 children, 7 mothers and 2 staff set off from the Bangor Centre to the Christmas event at Streamvale Open Farm. The trip started with a tractor ride to visit the reindeer and all the children and their mums had the opportunity to feed to reindeer. The families then walked back with their torches wearing Santa hats to the farm to visit the mice, puppies, chickens and donkeys. The trip finished with a visit to Santa's Grotto when all the children received a present from Santa and an ice-cream.

Thank You

North Down & Ards Women's Aid would like thank all our donors for their on-going support and acknowledgement of our work and for enabling the continuation of all our vital services.

Ards Community Safety
Awards for All
Eastern Health & Social Services Board
NIHE Supporting People Programme (including Floating Support & Housing Management)
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust
Sure Start

In addition to the above named organisations, we would like to thank:

Individual members of the community, statutory and voluntary agencies, local businesses, community groups including local church groups and volunteers for their continued support and donations throughout the year.
