

Childrens' Services Statistics

Age range of children in Refuge

Age range	Number
0-5	17
6-10	9
11-16	5

women's aid
until women & children are safe

Refuge sessions and trips

Number of 1 – 1 sessions held in refuge	8
Number of play sessions facilitated in refuge	80
Number of trips/outings/ events organised for children in refuge	8

Bangor Centre Crèche

Number of children	49
Number of crèche sessions	217



Christmas 2012

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 a growing number 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 over 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

At Christmastime, children who accessed our services and their mother plus staff 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

In December, children, mothers and 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 Policing Safety Partnership
Awards for All
Health & Social Services Board
NIHE Supporting People Programme (including Floating Support & Housing Management)
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust
Sure Start Ards
Henry Smith Charitable Trust
Lloyds TSB

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.

WORKING TOGETHER TO
END VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN

2012/2013



North Down and Ards Women's Aid

Annual Report 2012/ 2013

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 2012/2013 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.

Refuge remains exceedingly busy with women and their children being subject at times to a significant wait for a bed space. Twelve women and seven children were unable to access our refuge due to lack of bed space.

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

Women
abuse
men
violence
Domestic

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.

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.

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.



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 57 women and 15 children were accommodated and supported in the refuge this year.

Reach out. **Help is at Hand**
24 Hour
Domestic Violence Helpline
0800 917 14 14
Open to anyone affected by domestic violence

2012/2013 Source of Referral To Refuge

Referral source <i>*i.e. the person who actually makes initial contact</i>	Number of women
Self	13
24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline	11
Internal (through own group)	1
PSNI	4
Social worker	6
Community mental health	1
Housing Executive	9
Friend/relative	3
Referral from other women's aid group (N.I.)	4
Other voluntary organisation	2
Other	3

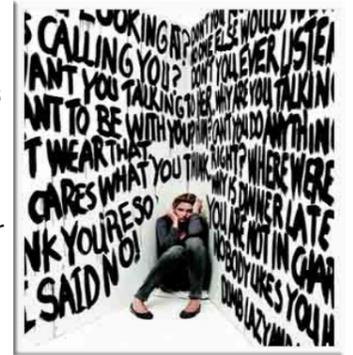


Floating Support

services are delivered by a team of 2 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 was introduced last year to assist in managing the number of requests for services. This staff member meets 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 30 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



Floating Support Statistics

Age	Number of women
18-25	7
26-35	22
36-45	25
46-55	14
56-65	4
66- 75	1

Relationship	Number of women
Husband	37
Boyfriend	0
Live-in partner	1
Ex-husband	9
Ex-partner	26