



West Cork Whisper

WEST CORK WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE PROJECT NEWSLETTER | ISSUE 68 | OCT. NOV. DEC. 2017

ability to enhance services thanks to

The Mary Daly Fund

West Cork Women Against Violence is delighted and honoured to be the final recipient of the Mary Daly Fund. This generous donation is all the more special because it is given in the name of Mary Daly who from everything we have learned, was a woman who shared our values of defending women's rights and protecting children. They are values

which the Trustees of the Mary Daly Fund, her family, have continued to embody and promote.

"The Mary Daly Fund grant gives us the opportunity to introduce new services and extend existing ones, allowing us to focus on the future and our vision of a safe place for women and children in West Cork fleeing domestic violence."

Ms. Kathleen Harnedy, Chairperson of West Cork Women Against Violence, in receiving the grant on behalf of the organisation has said; "With these monies, our service to women experiencing domestic abuse will now be able to develop and enhance our work with women in crisis. For some time, we have wanted to explore ways of providing a range of wraparound services to women and children by improving their access to a full range of supports. This grant will allow us to do that developmental work and provide the additional staffing it requires.

But just as importantly, this funding gives us as an organisation a much-needed breathing space in which we do not have to worry about how we can offer the level of support that women who contact us need".

West Cork Women Against Violence sincerely thank Charles Daly and his sons for this financial gift of \$ 100,000 (€83,319.00) which, through our organisation, will assist hundreds of women and children in West Cork. We will also ensure that how we use this grant honours the name and memory of Mary Daly.



Pictured: Michael Daly, son of Mary Daly; Kathleen Harnedy, Chairperson WCWAV; Sean O'Luasa, Mary Daly Fund Trustee; Charles Daly, Chairperson Mary Daly Fund; Marie Mulholland, Co-ordinator WCWAV

many thanks also to the Fit-Up Theatre Festival for making us their designated charity this year and to all other organisations and individuals who have donated and supported us over the previous months.

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housing as

The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a form of social housing support for people who have a long-term housing need. It will eventually replace long-term Rent Supplement. The scheme aims to allow all social housing supports to be accessed through one body - the local authority - and to enable people to take up full-time employment and keep their housing support.

Under HAP, local authorities pay landlords directly. The rent being charged for the accommodation must be within the limits set down for the household type in that local authority. Tenants pay a weekly HAP rent contribution to the local authority, based on their income and ability to pay.

To be eligible for HAP, you must be on the local authority housing list. You cannot transfer from any other form of social housing to HAP. Under HAP you must find your own private rented accommodation - the local authority will not source it for you. You cannot be discriminated against when renting because you are getting one of certain payments, which include HAP, so landlords cannot state when advertising accommodation that HAP is not accepted.

Although the local authority administers the HAP scheme, you will not be a local authority tenant. The rental agreement will be between yourself and the private landlord and your tenancy will be covered by the Residential Tenancies Act 2004 as amended. This means that you will have certain rights and obligations, as will your landlord. Your tenancy must be registered with the Residential Tenancies Board.

When you are a HAP tenant

The legislation states that the local authority will inspect your accommodation within 8 months of the first HAP payment to your landlord, to ensure that it meets the minimum standards for rented housing. The landlord is also required to produce evidence of tax compliance before the total of the HAP payments adds up to €10,000.

If you take up a tenancy through HAP, the local authority will consider that your housing needs have been met under HAP and you will no longer be on the local authority's housing waiting list. However, if you wish to have access to other social housing supports, such as local authority housing or housing provided by a housing association, you can apply to the local authority for a transfer. It is important that you consider making this application.

If you do apply for a transfer within 2 weeks of getting the letter confirming your HAP payment, any time that you spent on the housing list can be taken into account when your local authority considers your application. If you apply for a transfer at a later date, the time that you previously spent on the housing waiting list won't count.

Rent contribution

You will pay a weekly HAP rent contribution to the local authority, based on your household's weekly income and your ability to pay, calculated in the same way as standard local authority differential rents. This rent contribution will vary in accordance with your income and the local authority's rent scheme.

In the same way as anyone else who is paying a differential rent, you will have to notify the local authority of any changes in your income or household size, so that your rent contribution can be recalculated.

If you take up a job or increase your working hours, you will still be eligible for HAP if you fulfil the other conditions of the scheme. This is different from the rules that apply to Rent Supplement.

Assistance payment

Rent limits

In general, the rent must be within the prescribed HAP rent limits for your household size and the area you live in. However, flexibility of up to 20% may be provided, on a case-by-case basis, where a household cannot find suitable accommodation within these limits. The following are the maximum monthly rent limits for Cork City and County.

1 Adult in shared accommodation	€300
Couple in shared accommodation	€350
1 Adult in single occupancy	€550
Couple in single occupancy	€650
Couple/ 1adult & 1 child	€900
Couple/1 Adult & 2 children	€925
Couple/1 Adult & 3 children	€950

Paying your landlord

The local authority will make the HAP payment to your landlord on your behalf, subject to certain conditions:

- You must pay your weekly HAP rent contribution to the local authority – if not, the local authority will stop paying your landlord
- If you get a social welfare payment at a post office, you must pay your HAP contribution through the Household Budget Scheme
- The accommodation must meet minimum standards for rented housing
- Your landlord must have current evidence of tax compliance
- You (and your household) must not engage in anti-social behaviour

If your landlord requires a deposit, you will have to pay this yourself – the local authority will not pay it for you. In some circumstances, you may be eligible to apply for assistance from the Department of Social Protection to help with paying a deposit.

Ending a HAP tenancy

You will be expected to stay in your HAP accommodation for at least 2 years, but in some situations you may be able to apply for a new HAP payment elsewhere – for example, if you are offered a job in another town or if your family grows too large for the property. You will need to contact your local authority if you are thinking of moving. This is very important as if you leave your HAP tenancy without the prior approval of the local authority, they may not agree to allow you to continue on HAP.

If a tenant or a landlord wishes to end a residential tenancy, they must comply with the relevant legislation. If you contact your local Citizens Information Centre, they will go through this with you.

How to apply

If you are not yet on your local authority's housing list, you will need to apply for social housing support in the usual way by completing the Local Authority Housing Application.

If you are already on the housing list, you can ask the local authority for a HAP application form. This form only needs to be filled in when you have found suitable accommodation, or if you are already in private rented accommodation and eligible to transfer to HAP. Your landlord will need to complete and sign part of the HAP application form. If you are in any doubt about whether your tenancy arrangement qualifies for HAP, check with your local authority, which can advise you on this.

If you are approved for HAP, you then sign a Rent Contribution Agreement with the local authority. You may be asked for a copy of the rental agreement with your landlord. If you have been on Rent Supplement for a long time, the Department of Social Protection may ask you to contact your local authority about transferring to HAP.

Further information is available from West Cork Citizens Information Service, Wolfe Tone Square, Bantry, Tel: 0761 07 8390 or email: bantry@citinfo.ie

parenting alone after domestic abuse

For women and children who are no longer living with an abusive parent/partner, there is still often an ongoing relationship between the children and the non-cohabiting father. This can bring a whole new set of obstacles and challenges to be negotiated.

It is important to understand the emotions of children who have lived with and very possibly witnessed abuse directed at their mother often by a father that they love. Confusion, sadness, anxiety, anger, grief will be experienced to a lesser or greater extent with each child and each child will express those emotions in different ways. Some children will have adopted a protective stance towards their mother, believing that they must 'make up' for her suffering by being 'really good'. These children are taking on an adult responsibility for something they are not responsible for – mummy's happiness.

Others will be grieving for the absence of dad, who despite his behaviour towards his partner may have done a better job of fulfilling his role as father, these children will often be confused, sad and or angry that daddy is no longer living with them and some may even 'blame' mum for making their father leave.

Some children will show signs of anxiety, fear even, that daddy will come back and the shouting and abuse start over again. These emotions may also be experienced by children while also trying to cope with the adjustments of perhaps living somewhere new or just living as a smaller family unit, having to deal with questions from peers as to what's going on and why they only get to see daddy on certain days.

ACCESS

This obstacle of access as we have written about before [Whisper 63] provides a whole new arena in which perpetrators can continue their controlling and abusive behaviour helped by a courts system and social work departments where despite the fact that it is recognised that he has abused his children's mother, his rights as a father are still protected. There are a multitude of ways in which access is manipulated by abusive men to maintain their control over both their ex- partners and their children. For some men, access with their children is not even something they truly want, but it presents opportunities to continue harassing and controlling women's lives. For instance: access arrangements which are regularly cancelled at the last minute by an ex-partner, leaves mum carrying the emotional can, having to explain to a child who has been looking forward to seeing his/her father why that is not going to happen today. Continuously changing access arrangements to disrupt mothers and children's routines, making demands for more access and dragging the women through courts in order to have it, then not using the access because the aim was to upset mum as much as possible, not to have

more time with his children; interrogating children about mum when he is with them, leaving the children back late from access or too early from an access visit, all to keep mum living with unpredictability and causing her anxiety. Children who come back from access hyperactive because all they have had is junk food and too much sugar, children who return weepy or very angry at their mother because dad has been manipulating them to believe it's all mum's fault that they are not together as a family anymore. Attempts to 'buy' children's loyalty and get them on their side, through extravagant gifts or money or undermining boundaries mum may have laid down in the child's best interests such as bed time, amount of sweets allowed or with older children, curfew times.

Frequently, there are children who do not want to have access visits with their fathers and this can be a very hard time for women. Children refusing to go on access visits because they know that their dad doesn't really want to be with them or because they fear him or simply dislike him; this can result in children suddenly having tummy aches/getting angry at mum, getting distressed and begging not to go. However, because courts have ordered it, mothers are put in the intolerable position of forcing their child to do something which hurts both her and her children but if she does not she leaves herself wide open to her ex- partner taking her back to court for breach of the access order.

Mum is most often dealing with all of this alone. Even supportive friends and family do not always understand what domestic abuse can trigger in children. Women survivors have to manage children who act out their traumas and hurt through a whole range of often complex behaviours. Coping with so much is a big ask of women who already have dealt with so much. West Cork Women Against Violence recognise this, we have witnessed the lengths that women have gone to, in order to keep their children

safe physically and emotionally from their partner's abuse, we have heard women's stories and concerns about their children and women's constant self-criticism as to whether they are doing/giving enough to their children. As a result, we are designing with the help of our clients and skilled parenting facilitators a special programme for women with children who are coping alone after domestic abuse. We hope to start this programme in the New Year.

If you have experienced domestic abuse and are living alone with your children in West Cork and would be interested in this programme, please contact us. Travel & childcare expenses will be provided for those who want to participate. For more information and/or to contact one of our staff to talk about any issues arising with your children as a result of domestic abuse please call us on: 027 53847 or email: admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie



DUNMANWAY
Family Resource Centre

Dunmanway Family Resource Centre provides a range of activities and supports - open to everyone.

Activities such as a Community Choir for adults and Music Magic for children up to four years. Or how about mindful Yoga and Tai Chi to keep you active or a creative writing workshop and a monthly writer's group to explore and share writing for well being?

We offer a *Caring for Yourself* course for carers or persons with mental health issues and EmployAbility Services for persons seeking employment.

Teagasc provides a support for farmers while the Irish Red Cross offers first Aid Training. The Active Retirement Group also meets in our Centre.

We run the Free Food/Food Cloud Scheme in association with Aldi.

Low Cost Counselling is also available.

See [www. http://dunmanwayfrc.com](http://dunmanwayfrc.com)

or <https://www.facebook.com/dunmanwayfamilyresourcecentre/>

or phone 023 8856818 for further details



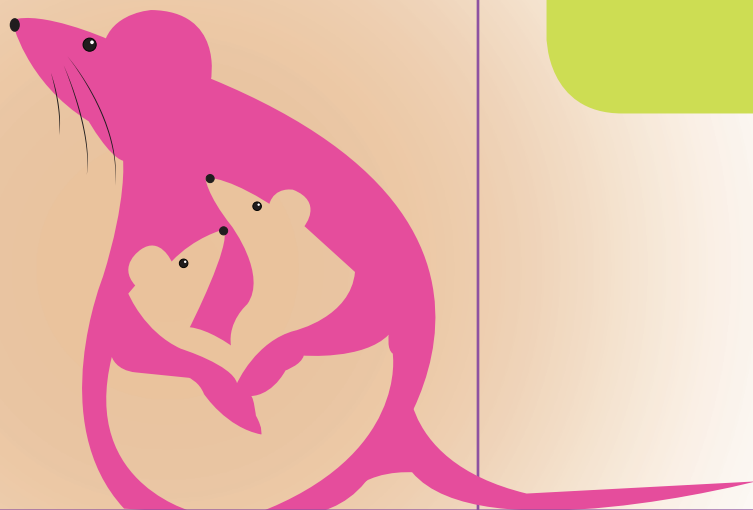
Store has surplus food they cannot sell



Food Cloud believes food should not go to waste



Dunmanway Family Resource Centre has access to a limited supply of fresh food and are making it available to people who want it



The first step towards any healing is the awareness and recognition of the effect of violence on each

individual child. Children are damaged when a parent has been hurt by domestic violence, however children have an innate ability to heal and parents are an important part of that process. Let's first imagine walking in their shoes for a little while and trying to get a sense of what it must have been like for them to live with violence and with the *threat* of violence. Children exposed to domestic violence have usually experienced many losses. They gain from learning to recognise and grieve those losses. These may include a loss of childhood, loss of a healthy safe family, loss of a parent - if the victim chooses to leave the abusive situation.

Even if they choose to stay, domestic violence often involves threats of separation from one parent or the other. Living with such threats can be an anticipated loss, with all the feelings of an actual loss. They lose a sense of safety and comfort in their own home. In dealing with these losses, ideally children need to be able to talk and grieve with someone they trust. They need to feel sad, angry etc in the face of these losses.

article taken from *Parenting after Violence*
by Darla Spence Coffey, 2009
published by Institute for Safe Families

Some essential first steps to healing are:

1 A sense of safety Healing cannot occur as long as the abuse continues. Children living in domestic violence often experience FEAR about those whom they love the most, in the place where they should feel the safest – their home. Therefore, children need to be able to talk to someone they trust about their feelings. They need to learn ways to keep safe and to know they have a plan for what to do when there is violence. This way, the child can experience a sense of control over the situation.

2 Good boundaries regarding information Children often know much more than the adults think they do, and this cannot be helped. However, it is important that the adults not engage the children in discussions of details of the abuse with which they may not be familiar. This can overwhelm their capacities to handle the information. In addition, when there is a separation between the adults because of the domestic violence, it is important that the adults handle the 'adult decisions' and not involve the children in issues related to visitation orders, finances, etc. This does not mean refusing to answer children's questions, but it does mean not initiating conversations about topics that children are unaware of in an effort to get the children 'on their side.'

3 Structure, limits, and predictability The unpredictable nature of domestic violence is detrimental to healthy child development. Either family members are extremely inhibited in their behaviour and/or emotional expression, or it is extremely chaotic. Establishing safe, clearly defined limits for behaviour is vital to establishing an environment for healing after there has been domestic violence.

4 Strong bond to primary caregiver

A child's attachment to one secure person allows them to feel secure and safe. Children are often ANGRY at the abuser for the violence, but they are just as likely to be angry at the victim for not leaving the situation. Even more difficult for the victim, children may actually become angry when she does leave. Therefore, children need to know that it is normal and okay to feel angry. Ideally they need to be able to talk about these feelings with someone they trust and to learn to express their anger in non-destructive ways. Children often feel torn between mixed feelings of anger and love towards the abuser/ and/or the victim. Complicating this, children may feel guilty for having both of these feelings. Therefore, children need to learn that it is okay for them to feel both anger and love towards their parents. Children can begin to learn that they can love a parent even when they hate his/her behaviour, and begin to understand that they are not 'bad' if they love the abuser.

5 Children's belief that she can protect them – Children need to believe that their primary parent can protect them. This can be especially difficult if there is a history of the parent not being able to do this, but it is crucial for this parent to reassure the child and take their 'job' of protecting their children seriously.

6 Not feel responsible for taking care of adults Children often take on the role of 'taking care' of the adults in situations of domestic violence. They may actually take on caretaking responsibilities, as well as feel the "pull" to make the adults feel better. This reversal of roles needs to be corrected.

7 Feel supported in being close to her Children need to be supported, by providers working with the children and/or the adults in the family, in being close to their primary caregiver. Perpetrators of abuse need to know how important it is for children to feel close to their other parent and should be instructed to support that relationship.

Supporting a child who has been exposed to domestic violence

Feel that parents are healing In order to heal, children need to know that their parents are taking care of themselves and that they are involved in a process for their own healing. Children need to know that the adults are doing what is needed to take care of their own needs.

Strong social relationships, including siblings It is important that children's relationships with others are supported. This will mean that the adults need to give the children permission to talk about their feelings with others.

Groups or specialised therapy Children may need additional help to heal in the aftermath of domestic violence. Providers need to identify such needs, communicate them to the parents, and facilitate appropriate referrals for services.

Clear social messages about responsibility for violence Everyone involved with children exposed to domestic violence needs to give a consistent message about who is responsible for the violence – the person who is violent. This helps to clear up the belief that children may have that they are responsible, as well as any misconceptions that the victim is responsible for the violence.

If safe, have contact with non-custodial parent Children usually desire to continue to have a relationship with their non-custodial parent. This desire needs to be heard and understood and, if there can be assurance that the contact is safe, that relationship to be supported. Children may feel confusion about being able to love both parents. Children who have been exposed to domestic violence often feel that they need to take sides (eg 'if I love Mom, I can't love Dad and vice versa). Therefore, children need to be told- especially by their parents- that it is okay to love both parents at the same time. Sometimes children feel the need to take care of their parents feelings at the expense of their own. In spite of the violence perpetrated by their father against their mother, children are often able to recall good times with their dad and as a family.

Children heal when..

- The violence stops;
- They ask questions that allow for the correction of misconceptions;
- They have opportunities to describe what they have experienced;
- They express their emotional distress in words, artwork, and play;
- They release their emotional distress through crying, tantrums, and laughter;
- They hear a consistent message that the abuse is not their fault, they are relieved from feeling guilty or responsible.
- They gain a sense of empowerment, through learning constructive actions that they can take.
- They overcome a sense of powerlessness and support healthy development and a sense of competence.
- They are provided with opportunities to repair the damage that domestic violence has wreaked on their relationship with their mother. They may also need help repairing their relationships with their siblings, and permission to develop close relationships with other caring, non-abusive adults, including respectful men.



**FREE
FOOD**

Food Cloud Skibbereen

Skibbereen Community & Family Resource Centre has teamed up with FoodCloud & Lidl to help stop food waste and develop creative ideas around community food initiatives.

If you sign up for this scheme surplus food donated can be collected Mondays between 4 and 5 pm from:

Skibbereen Community and Family Resource Centre, Townshend Street, Skibbereen.

Phone Susan or Helena: 028 23572 to sign up to this food collection scheme and help stop food waste.

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

Designed by Jenny Dempsey 085 7580569

West Cork Citizens' Information Service

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.

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

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

Dunmanway, Ross House, The Square,
Dunmanway Every Monday 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 West
Cork Citizens' Information Service by either
dropping in or phoning 076 107 8390.

HELPLINE

FREEPHONE:
1800 203 136

10am to 4pm Monday - Friday
If you are unable to get
through to one of our
support workers please try
again or if safe to do so
leave your number
and we will call you back.

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

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.

Published by West Cork Women
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TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

WHISPER (68) **8**