



West Cork Women Against Violence Annual Report 2019



TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Chairperson's Foreword	1
Board of Management	2
Philosophy, Mission	2
Services	3
Key Events.....	3
Surviving to Thriving.....	4
Support Group.....	5
Know Your Worth Program.....	6
The Children & Young Person's Therapeutic Support Project	7
Safe House Progress.....	8
Donations in 2019	9
Events, Meetings and Diary.....	9
Whisper Covers & Synopsis.....	10
Statistics.....	12
Finances	20
Thanks	back cover



Chairperson's Foreword

I am happy to report on another significant and demanding year for the West Cork Women Against Violence project.

During 2019, West Cork Women Against Violence continued to work with women survivors of domestic violence. The service provided telephone support, court accompaniment, and counselling referrals to an increased number of clients, and with an increase in contacts to the service. Court accompaniment appointments showed another rise in requests and the number of hours involved. Thirty-six women sought support from the project with housing and/or homeless issues as a result of domestic abuse.

We had a slight increase in our statutory funding during 2019, which enabled the project to progress through the final year of our current three year plan. We hope to commence the next three year plan during 2020, and we look forward to building on our innovative programmes and sensitive and professional support to our clients.

We continue to appreciate the financial support of our core funder, Tusla, and have welcomed the key national structure, the DSGBV unit which reports directly to Tusla's CEO, and which provides for a national and regional coordinators for Domestic Violence. This gives a national profile to the DSGBV sector, while providing a platform for raising both regional and local concerns and issues.

We also acknowledge the generosity of donations and support from many individuals and agencies, which affirms the work of the project.

During 2019, work continued on acquiring a property that will be suitable for our Safe House initiative. The chronic lack of safe emergency accommodation in Ireland is an ongoing issue, and in rural West Cork it is a huge barrier to women who wish to leave an abusive partner. The recruitment process for a Safe House Support Worker is planned for the end of the year, and will provide a local response to women in West Cork who are out of home or homeless as a result of DV.

WCWAV continues to network with local organisations and initiatives, raising awareness of the issues of domestic violence and its devastating impact on individual women and children whose lives are affected by this. WCWAV stresses that violence against women is a fundamental human rights violation, and recognises that legal and political recognition at the highest level is required in order to make the significant changes that are needed in order to challenge attitudes and end the cycle of violence in our culture.

The announcement by the Gardai of a new Divisional Protective Unit for West Cork, in Dunmanway was a welcome development during the year. The unit provides specially trained Gardai who undertake certain types of investigations, including DV, in a sensitive and appropriate way.

Part of the complexity of providing our services is directly linked to the rural nature of our location, as it places specific demands on our service delivery and can have a profound impact on the isolation and marginalisation of the women we support. Their experience informs our evidence-based best practice guidelines. The need for coordinated, accessible services throws up particular challenges in the rural context. We constantly work to ensure that our services are responsive, and respectful of a woman's circumstances. The organisation has developed strong links with Health and Mental Health services, Social and community services, An Garda Síochána and court services and community and voluntary organisations. We continue to identify and highlight gaps in services, and to work towards equitable outcomes for all women, no matter where they live.

I want to thank our many volunteers, and my fellow members of the voluntary Board of Management, whose commitment supports the governance of the organisation. The skills, expertise and experience of our staff team continue to enhance the capacity of the organisation in its work. Finally, I want to acknowledge the resilience and strength of the women who seek support from our organisation and who are at the heart of the work of West Cork Women Against Violence.

Kathleen Harnedy, Chairperson

Board of Management & Staff

Our project is run by a Voluntary Board of Management (VBOM) comprised of community representatives and activists, partnership organisations, legal, financial and mental health professionals, who give of their time and commitment freely.

WCWAV has a staff of five - one full-time and four part-time - who between them have over 60 years of experience in delivering support to women in crisis and in promoting the issues of violence against women and gender equality.

The Board of Management are all volunteers who give of their time, expertise and insights to ensure the development and good governance of the Project without remuneration. In addition, volunteers help in producing, designing and distributing West Cork Whisper as well as helping out with fundraising and generally making themselves available whenever additional help is needed. Without their dedication and generosity WCWAV would be unable to provide the wide array of activities and services which it currently delivers.

Philosophy

West Cork Women Against Violence believes that Domestic Violence is both a serious crime against women and a dangerous expression of gender inequality. We believe all forms of Domestic Violence, from the everyday to the most extreme expressions, are unacceptable.

Mission Statement

West Cork Women Against Violence provide a safe and confidential listening, information and support service to women and their children in West Cork experiencing domestic violence, while also challenging social, political and judicial tolerance of violence against women.

Services

WCWAV provide the following services:

- A crisis helpline
- 1-2-1 support and appointments
- Drop-in service
- Outreach service
- Court and other appointment accompaniment
- Counselling programme
- Free national newsletter, *The West Cork Whisper*
- Awareness-raising and training to community groups, young people and professionals on domestic violence
- Parenting Programme for women who have experienced DV
- Children and Young People's Therapy Programme



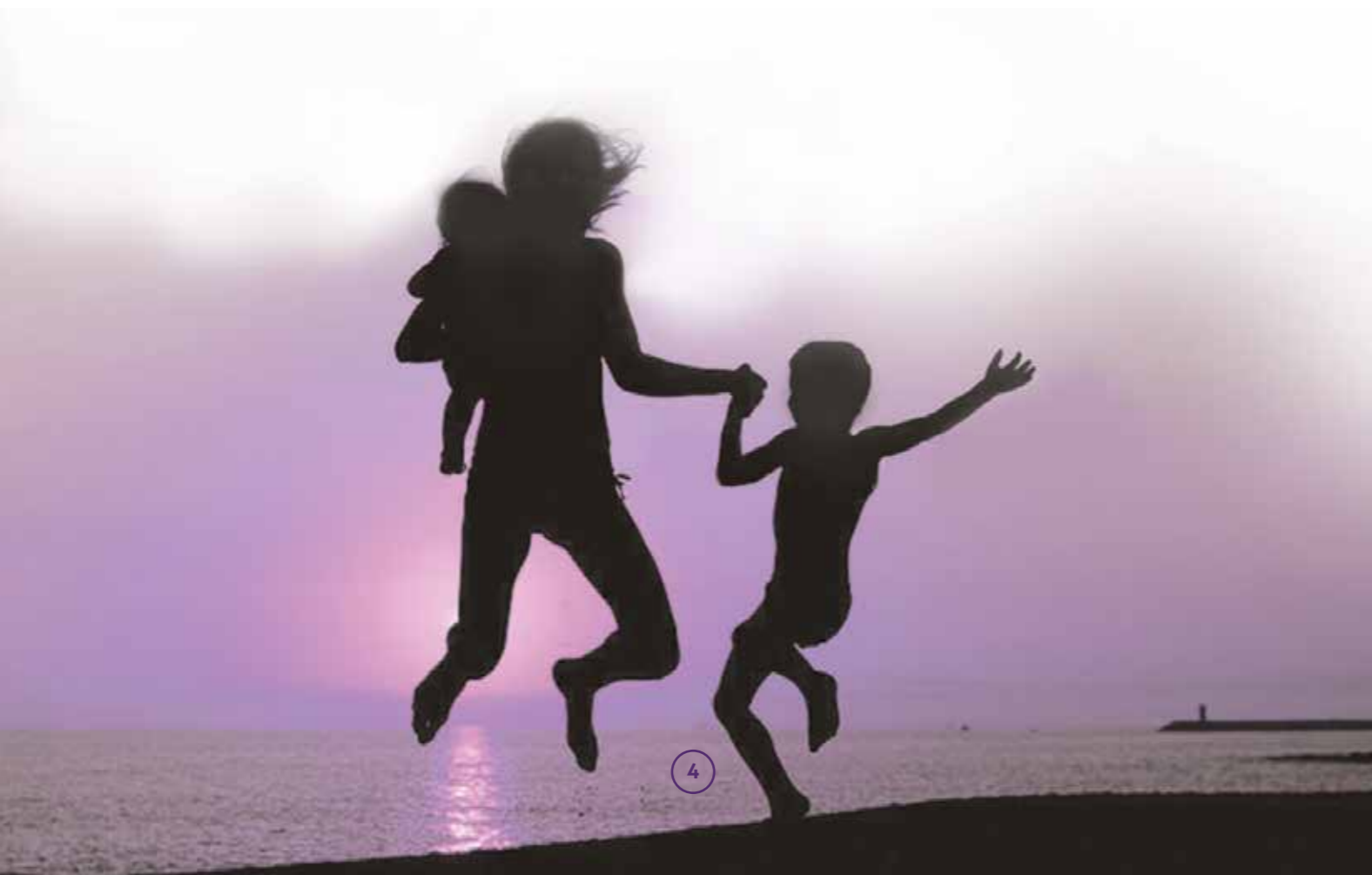
key events of 2019

Surviving to Thriving

From Surviving to Thriving parenting program was developed in 2018 by the West Cork Women Against Violence Project. While parenting programs are not anything new, the program is unique in terms of its approach and how it works. The aim of the program is to provide in-depth support to women navigating life and parenting after separation from an abusive partner. Traditionally, responses to domestic violence were and continue to be crisis driven, focusing on when women need to flee the home. However, too often it can be forgotten that domestic violence never stops, particularly for women with children. Even when you can leave a relationship physically the long-term impacts on survivor's health can be huge and varied, coupled with having to co-parent with the person who caused these impacts.

An external review of the program was completed by an independent consultant in 2018 and these informed the changes made to the 2019 program. The feedback from the 2019 participants was extremely valuable in understanding their journeys. Participants named, amongst other things, feeling worn down, not having confidence in their parenting and feeling disillusioned by the court process. After completing the program, participants felt their confidence levels had increased, they were less critical of their parenting, they understood the value of peer support and realised the extent of the impact an abuser can have on a family.

The program runs over eight weeks and covers various topics. These include the impact of domestic violence on mothers, on children, family dynamics, navigating access and much more. A senior clinical psychologist also provides a session exploring the impact of trauma on children. Central to the program was the focus on empowerment and the importance of mother and child healing together. For this reason, instead of an overt focus on parenting techniques, the group offers a space for mothers to explore the layered and long-term impact of domestic violence on them not only as mothers but as individuals.



Support Group

West Cork Women Against Violence Project has been running a monthly support group, facilitated by a support worker, since January 2018. The purpose of the support group is to provide a safe, confidential space for women who have experienced domestic violence and are separated from their abuser. Through attendance at the group women benefit from a space to empower themselves, express their feelings, increase self-understanding and build peer support.

An empowerment approach has been adopted towards the facilitation of the group, where eventually it is hoped the group will develop to the point where it will be led by the women themselves. Throughout the sessions, women have been gaining confidence in shaping the space as their own and identifying emerging needs for the group. As a group, they have taken control of the direction of the sessions, emphasising the need for a reflective space but also outlets for personal development, self-care and peer bonding. WCWAV has provided a small budget to fund sessions focused on the themes above identified by the women. At the last support group meeting the women designed the programme they want to follow in the coming year 2020. This includes; therapeutic sessions involving an art therapist, informational sessions on budgeting and will-making and peer bonding sessions, a trip to local Liss Ard gardens and a local pottery studio. To have women feel that they are back in control of their own needs was a hoped-for outcome as this is a capacity often lost for most women who experience domestic violence.



Know Your Worth Programme

Our **Know Your Worth** teenage dating abuse programme aims to inform young people, in a school setting, what dating abuse is and explore their own attitudes towards the topic. The programme was developed in 2018 and is provided to secondary schools in West Cork.

The programme commenced roll out in a number of schools across West Cork in 2019 and involved delivery of sessions to over 160 students. We had new interest from schools in Skibbereen, Clonakilty and Bandon. In November 2019 *The Southern Star* ran an article on **Know Your Worth** helping to boost awareness of the programme.

The programme aims to create a healthy, accurate discussion of dating abuse in a safe environment. Each student also receives a 11-page educational pack that expands on all the topics touched on in the session as well as a list of resources.

Here is some of the feedback from students at our sessions:

Very informative

I learned a lot about what domestic violence really was

The handouts were very good as they helped me understand what I learned and remember it more

The group work allowed us to discuss the topics in an interactive way



The Children & Young Person's Therapeutic Support Project Supporting Children to 'feel Sparkly' again

We were excited to begin our new Children and Young People's Therapeutic Support programme (CYP) in early 2019. The programme provides external therapeutic support to children and young people up to 18 years of age who have 'lived experience' of domestic abuse. This therapy can take the form of art, play or talking therapy, depending on the age of the child as well as other factors like availability and location of therapists. Ten sessions per child is provided, and priority given to children of women who are already linked in with the WCWAV service.

We recognise that children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse have specific needs and experiences and we aim to offer a safe space to these children and young people, a space where they can feel free to express and process their feelings. Our hope is that the sessions will be a support for the child or young person. As the sessions are the child's own space, we encourage the parent/guardian to respect their child's privacy about time spent with their therapist.

Nevertheless, parental involvement is a very important part of the process. The programme makes available two additional sessions for the mothers of children referred. This is to ensure that important information is shared between the child's mother and the therapist and vice versa. These sessions are an opportunity for the mother to explore useful ways of supporting her child's therapeutic process, manage any difficulties, and ensure that the child's best interests are being met. During the period that the child or young person is engaging in therapy, a support worker from WCWAV also offers support to the mother. We try to ensure that both the child and mother are best supported throughout this process. Both parents are encouraged by the therapists to engage with the process, with sessions also offered by the therapist to the child or young person's father. These sessions are the father's responsibility to finance.

WCWAV would prefer that therapist are not requested to provide court reports or to give evidence in court, although we recognise that the parent retains the right to apply to the therapist for such actions. This reticence is based on a belief that report writing for the court requires breaching the privacy of the therapeutic relationship and instead places the focus on the conflictual arena of the court rather than on the child/ young person's unfolding process.

The CYP project is still in its infancy. Representatives from WCWAV, the therapists and an external supervisor/ advisor meet regularly to review the therapeutic support programme and plan for its future. The feedback to date indicates that so far it is perceived to be a valuable support. We hope to see it continue to grow. If we can enable even a few children to begin to 'feel sparkly inside' again (as one of our young clients put it), to reconnect with the lighter side of childhood, and begin again to flourish, then it will be time and money well spent.



Safe House Progress

Sometimes miracles do happen!

Early in 2019, WCWAV was invited to put a proposal into the Community Foundation for Ireland (CFI) for a capital project. This was to be a short submission. The Safe House initiative was the obvious choice for us and after a few weeks, we heard back from CFI, inviting us to put together a more detailed submission as we had been shortlisted from a longer list of organisations who had applied.

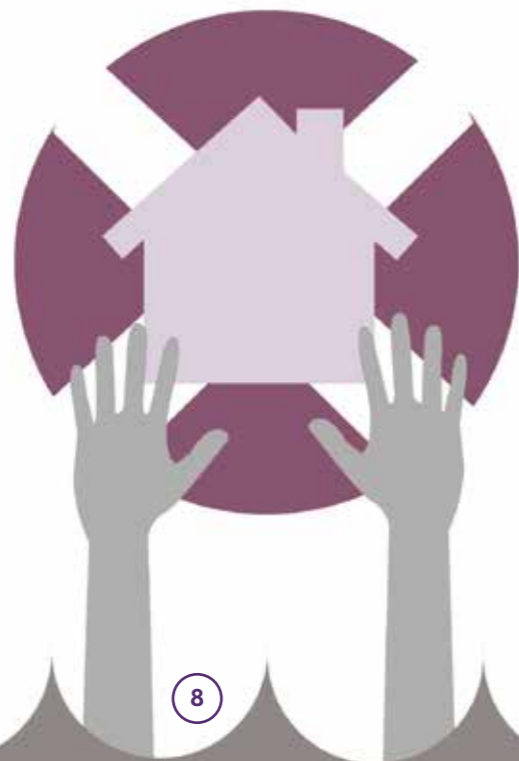
Having produced a more detailed proposal, we were informed that our proposal was now one of two being looked at by CFI's donor. In due course, we met with CFI's CEO and the donor who wishes to remain anonymous and were interviewed about our plans and how we would take those forward if we had the financial means to do so. Having been an ambition of ours for several years, we had done a significant amount of research on Safe Houses and learned from others who had developed similar models for women and children seeking safety, so it was a welcome opportunity to share our vision and the practicalities of how that might happen.

Some weeks later, in June 2019 our Co-ordinator and Chairperson were invited to the CFI offices in Dublin to learn that WCWAV had been awarded enough to purchase a sizeable property in West Cork for the express purpose of opening up a Safe House for women and children escaping domestic abuse.

After the initial shock and delight, an advisory group was formed to help us identify the criteria for the safe house's location and the search for a property. The Advisory group is made up of members of the West Cork Protective Services Unit, the office of the Chief Superintendent, West Cork Division, NOVAS- the tenancy and sustainment service, members of the WCWAV Board of management who are also key personnel in West Cork Development Partnership and Good Shepherd Services, Cork and bring a range of expertise to the advisory group.

In late summer, we invited an independent consultant to produce a Business Plan for the Safe House focusing on the costings of running and maintaining the project. This plan was key to seeking the additional resources necessary to the ongoing support of the Safe House. As part of that support, the DSGBV Unit of Tusla agreed to fund a new post for the Safe House initiative to work with the families and individual women who will need its support.

At the time of writing, WCWAV are actively looking at suitable properties to make the Safe House a reality in 2020.



A Massive Thank You

Over the year, we received donations amounting to **€31,141.27**.

Thirteen donations were for €1000+

At the time of writing we are still looking for the right property for the Safe House and these donations will allow us to furnish, equip and secure it as a safe and welcoming space.

There were a number of small personal donations paid directly to us and for these we are especially grateful because of the individual commitments they represent. These donations go directly into our counselling budget and our crisis fund for women and children who need to escape their family homes.

As ever we are touched and deeply appreciative of the continued support and enormous generosity shown by the community of West Cork to our organisation and the women and children we work to protect.



Work, activities, meetings and networking 2019

Awareness Raising

- Training delivered to West Cork Citizens Information Service and Edel House staff Cork city, engaged with Social Workers and trainee Public Health Nurses,
- Media: 2 radio interviews and 2 newspaper interviews,
- New website developed,
- Presence at Emerging Social Enterprises event in Skibbereen.
- Briefing with author, Louise O'Neill,
- Met with local TDs Margaret Murphy O'Mahony and Charlie Flanagan, Minister for Justice.
- Met with Councillor Holly Cairns

Education, Prevention & Support

- 'Know Your Worth' programme delivered to 8 schools.
- Surviving to Thriving-weekly sessions x6
- Peer Support Group- monthly sessions x6
- Children & Youth Therapy programme development meetings x10
- Meitheals attended x5

Governance

- 1 AGM held
- 7 full Board meetings
- 2 Finance Sub- group meetings
- 2 staffing sub group meetings.

Staff Training & Information

- Adverse Childhood Experiences,
- Designated Liaison Person,
- Intimate Abuse Intervention,
- Non-Violent Resistance
- Safer Spaces, Safe Talk,
- Homicide Reviews and Risk Assessments,
- WRAP
- Trauma Informed Care.
- Hurt to Hope Conference- Family Justice Centre
- CVSO seminar.

Sexual Violence Research Project:

- 3 x planning meetings
- 2x presentations of data

Tusla meetings

- 2 x to support development of East Cork Service
- 2x policy, procedure and review meetings
- 2 Needs Analysis project meetings

WCWAV representation on other fora:

- West Cork Counselling Support Services Board meetings x4
- ASOne (Support services to Clonakilty Lodge Direct Provision residents) x4
- West Cork Child & Family Support Network x12
- West Cork Homeless Forum x4
- West Cork Divisional Policing Plan x2

Whispers in 2019



Whisper #73

Whisper #73 set out to identify the 3 known victims of DV killed in Ireland in the first 8 days of 2019. We highlighted the Women's Aid Femicide watch, and the lack of training about the new DV bill. We introduced the Know your Worth School Program and published a beautifully written story from Elizabeth Power, Co-Ordinator of our sister organisation, Domestic Violence Response in Galway.

Whisper #74

Whisper #74 led with Not Even Counted, Marie's comment on the amount of people who don't feature on the lists of homeless in this country, including women and their children in hostels and B&Bs who have had to flee their own homes for safety. We celebrated 20 years of providing support and gathered up a collection of photographs to pay tribute to past and present board members and volunteers who built this service into what it has become. We included some information on how coercive control makes parenting harder, and how gaslighting works.

Whisper #75

Whisper #75 launched our 'Know Your Worth' program. Aimed at teenagers to help them identify and avoid Dating Abuse, and to help them learn to build healthier relationships. WCWAV worked with a graphic designer and a local youth group to produce a vibrantly illustrated, useful booklet. We included an article on dating for adults too, as well some information around a new App that was launched to help track and provide evidence of abuse.

Whisper #76

Whisper#76 broke the news that we have been selected to receive private funding to provide a Safe House in West Cork! We also included an important information piece on the little-known signs and effects of strangulation and choking. Jane Monkton Smyth's 'Homicide Timeline' gave us some stark reading showing direct links between DV and femicides and finally, we were delighted to at long last announce that a Special Protective Services Unit for West Cork was to be established in Dunmanway.

statistics 2019

237 clients were supported

236 individual women and
one man supporting a woman friend

195 of these were new clients.
42 were repeat clients

23 clients phoned about friends or family.

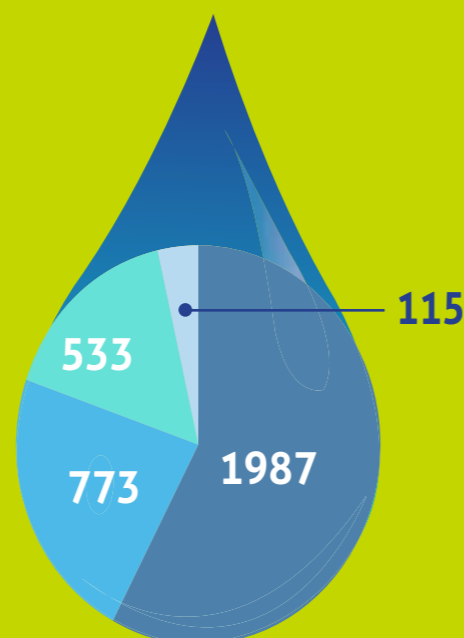
2 professionals phoned for support

There were 2068
instances of contact

Types of abuse (per contact)

Many women experience more
than one type of abuse

Emotional.....	1987
Physical.....	773
Financial.....	553
Sexual.....	115



Location and number of contacts

The majority of contacts came from West Cork.

Two were from England and two from the United States.

The location of thirty-seven contacts were unknown

We also received a number of contacts from the following regions:

Youghal.....1 Leitrim.....2 Limerick.....1 Dublin.....2



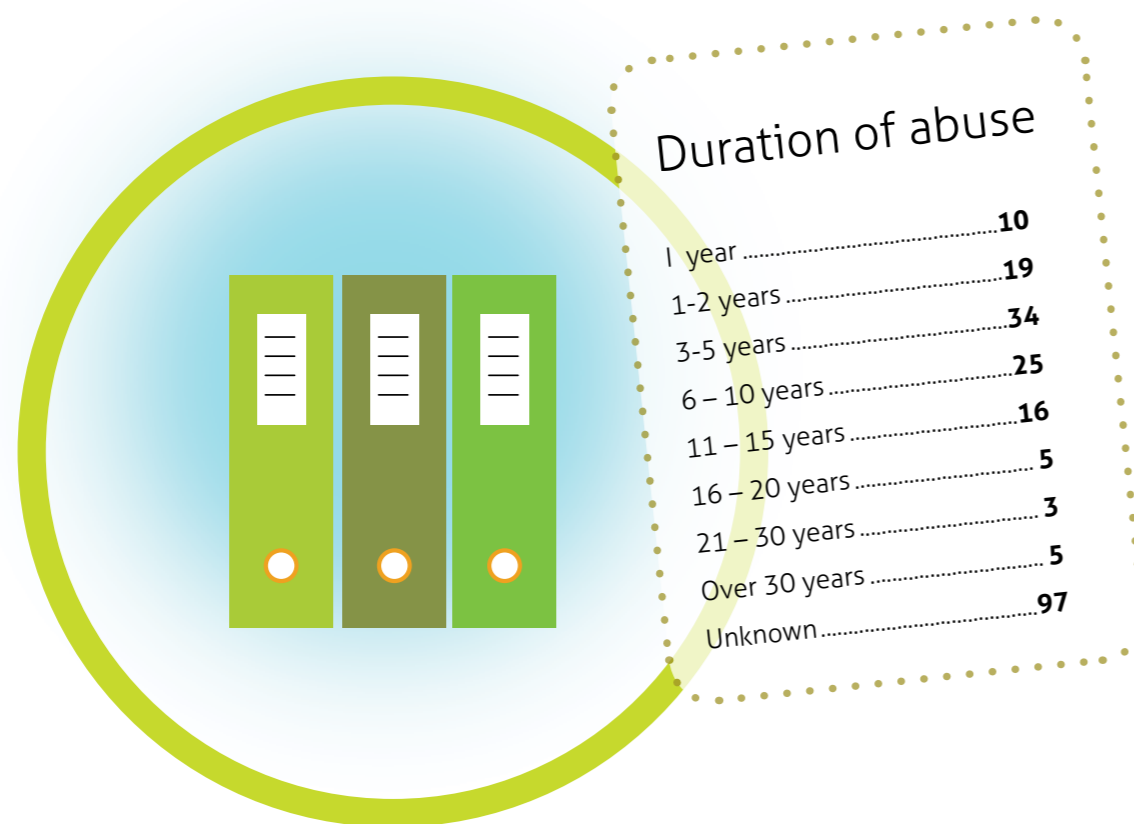
How contact is made - 2068 instances

Bantry office line.....	940	Mobile.....	414	Facebook.....	3
Helpline.....	31	Child Protection		B&B.....	2
Written correspondence	52	case conferences.....	2	Street.....	1
Email.....	323	Strategy meeting.....	3	Direct Provision centre	2
Bantry office drop in.....	36	Meitheal.....	1	TD office	1
Bantry appointments.....	72	Child Protection office	2	Psych unit.....	1
Skibbereen outreach calls ..	34	Clients' house.....	19	Playground.....	1
Skibbereen appointments ..	28	Public café / hotel.....	11	Court.....	53
Skibbereen office drop in.....	6	Support / parenting group.....	6	Client at court.....	3
Clonakilty appointments	1	Citizens Information Service.....	5	General accompaniment.....	8
Clonakilty mobile calls	4	Family Resource Centre.....	3		



117 referrals **from** professionals

Child Protection Social Worker.....	19	Domestic Violence		Clonakilty Direct Provision	
Gardai	12	Social Worker.....	2	Centre	2
Counsellor	11	Volunteer	2	Social Worker Autism Services ..	1
Citizens Information Service.....	9	Teacher.....	2	Housing.....	1
Child & Family Support		Ability Programme.....	1	Hospital	1
Network Co-ordinator.....	7	Employer.....	1	West Cork Travellers.....	1
GP	6	Social Worker.....	1	Family Resource Centre	
Court Clerk	5	Society of St Vincent de Paul ..	1	Skibbereen.....	1
Solicitor.....	4	Legal Aid.....	1		
Drug & Alcohol Services	3	Mental Health Nurse	1	Other Domestic Violence Services :	
TD.....	3	Psychologist	1	Womens Aid	3
Community Welfare Officer.....	2	Family Hub	1	Adapt Kerry	2
Novas.....	2	Social Worker CUMH.....	1	One Stop Shop, Cork.....	1
		Educational Welfare Officer	1	Mna Feasa.....	1
				English refuge.....	2



Age Range of Clients

Under 18 years	1
8 to 20	2
20 to 24	11
25 to 29	7
30 to 34	19
35 to 39	14
40 to 44	17
45 to 49	19
50 to 54	14
55 to 59	12
60 to 64	4
65 to 69	2
70 +	2
Unknown	90

Race/ethnicity

White	175
Asian	4
Black	3
Mixed race	4
Traveller	4
Unknown	24

Legal status

Irish Citizen	122
Other EU citizen	49
Non-EU Migrant	13
Asylum seeker /Refugee	1
Unknown	32

Relation to abuser

Spouse	75
Ex Spouse	7
Partner	27
Ex-partner	62
Boyfriend	1
Ex- boyfriend	7
Father	1
Stepfather	1
Son	9
Brother	1
Sister	1
Cousin	1
Grandnephew	1
Stranger	4
Unknown	16

Children

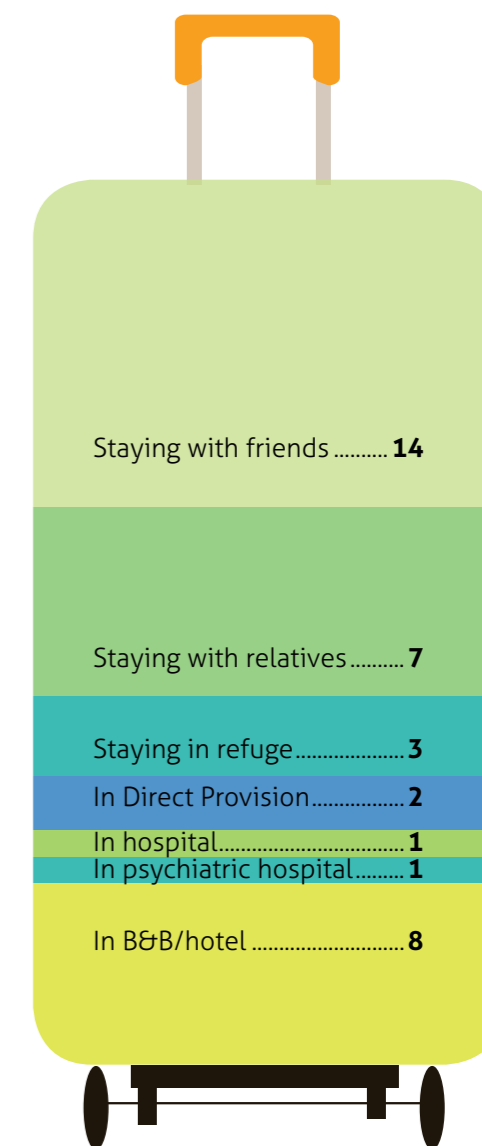


Child protection

Child protection discussions	4
Child protection referrals	2

Homelessness

36 clients with 25 children



Other issues presenting

Medical needs	9
Mental health	40
Suicidal ideation	13
Substance use issues	11
Disability	9

General accompaniment

14 requests from 8 clients
All were fulfilled



Reasons for accompaniment

Accompany to solicitor appointment.....	5
Accompany clients to Garda station to make statement re breach	3
Give legal orders and summons papers post court to Gardai	3
Take client from psych unit to friend on discharge	1
Take client from court to home	1
Accompany for housing application	1

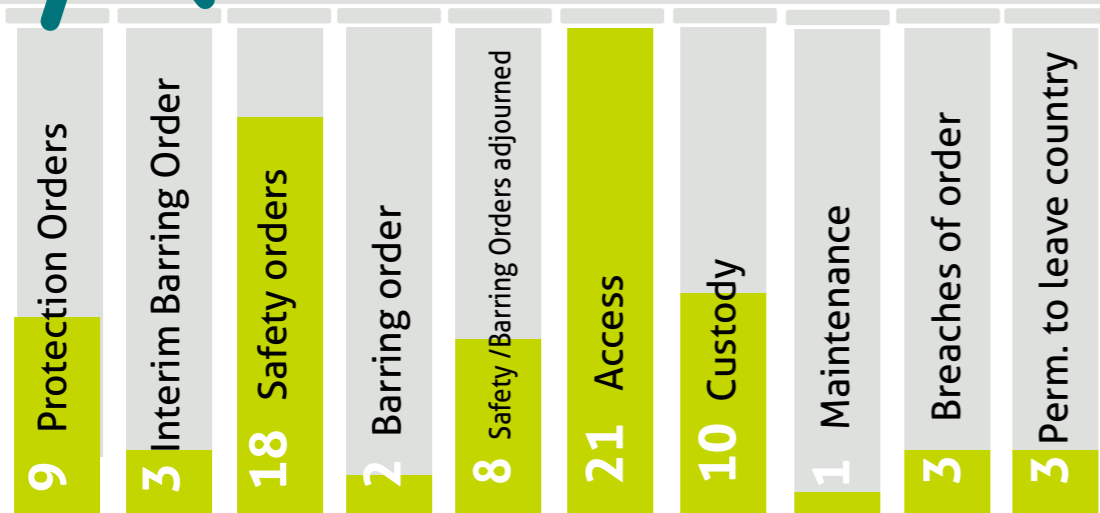


Court accompaniment

62 court accompaniments requests received
57 fulfilled



cases were adjourned



383 referrals to professionals

Garda.....	40	Mediation.....	7	Art / play therapist.....	2
Solicitor.....	38	Children & Young People's therapy programme.....	5	Elder Abuse Social Worker.....	2
Counsellor.....	32	B&B.....	5	Child psychology	2
Court clerk.....	32	NASC.....	5	MOVE.....	2
Legal Aid.....	26	PASS.....	4	Meitheals	2
Free Legal Advice Centre.....	18	Drug & Alcohol Services	4	Victims of crime.....	2
Housing.....	18	Family support Family Resource Centre.....	4	Housing Assistance Payment.....	1
Other Domestic Violence	17	Society of St Vincent de Paul.....	4	Couple counselling.....	1
Community Welfare Officer.....	16	West Cork Counselling & Support Services.....	3	Edel House	1
GP	13	Child & Family Support Network Co-ordinator.....	3	Psych service	1
NOVAS	12	Hospital	3	Public Health Nurse.....	1
Citizens Information Service.....	11	Homeless Person Unit.....	3	Money Accounting and Budgeting Service.....	1
Child Protection Social Worker.....	11	Protective Services Unit.....	3	Educational Welfare Officer	1
Cuanlee.....	8	Mental Health Social Worker.....	2	Non Violence Resistance Programme.....	1
Dept Social Protection.....	8			Disability services	1
Rape crisis	7				

finance 2019

The following has been taken from:

West Cork Women Against Violence Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee without a share capital)
supplementary information relating to the financial statements
detailed income and expenditure account
for the year ended 31st December 2019

income

	2019 €	2018 €
Tusla core funding	240,523	233,524
Tusla once off funding	11,646	-
Other income	39,730	6,222
	291,899	239,746

expenses

	2019 €	2018 €
Wages & salaries	163,232	154,356
Social welfare costs	17,472	16,204
Staff defined contribution pension costs	11,299	10,710
Staff training and support	2,628	2,086
Board expenses and training	897	1,318
Rent & rates	19,880	20,128
Insurance	1,478	1,478
Light and heat	1,483	1,678
Repairs & maintenance	2,386	1,557
Office expenses	6,620	5,331
Advertising	2,555	1,495
Telephone	4,198	4,694
Computer costs	1,279	918
Staff travel expenses	9,648	6,801
Professional fees	2,230	1,230
Bank charges	282	219
General expenses	204	164
Volunteer expenses	440	171
Client support expenses	231	511
Client support	17,431	5,115
Other programme costs	12,993	4,652
Subscriptions	327	280
Auditor's remuneration	1,599	1,169
Depreciation	296	441
	281,088	242,706
Net (deficit) /surplus	10,811	(2,960)



Thanks to the member of the support group who gifted this beautifully crafted diamond painting picture of Rosie the Riveter for the WCWAV office, you know who you are..

jennydempseydesign.com

Our thanks

West Cork Women Against Violence wish to thank the following people and organisations:

An Garda Síochána, West Cork Division

The Community Foundation for Ireland, especially CEO Tina Roache and our anonymous donor who is making the possibility of a Safe house in West Cork a reality

And to our good friend and colleague Dr Caroline Crowley for her support, insight and continued expertise.

All who have donated, organised a fundraiser and generally helped to keep us afloat,

To Dairine Cross, Tusla regional coordinator for DV for her support and assistance

And to all of our partner organisations in the statutory, community and voluntary sectors,

THANK YOU

And as ever to our volunteers and supporters, we couldn't do it without you

Marie Mulholland, Co-ordinator

published by West Cork Women Against Violence Project
at Harbour View, Bantry, Co. Cork
www.westcorkwomensproject.ie
email: admin@westcorkwomensproject.ie