



Federation Northern Ireland

The Department of Education

Response to: Draft Budget 2011 - 2015

February 2011

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland

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24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline - 0800 917 1414

Core Work of Women's Aid: Background Information & Statistics

1.0 Introduction

Women's Aid is the lead voluntary organisation in Northern Ireland addressing domestic violence and providing services for women and children. We recognise domestic violence as one form of violence against women. Women's Aid seeks to challenge attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate domestic violence and, through our work, promote healthy and non-abusive relationships.

2.0 Core Work of Women's Aid

The core work of Women's Aid in Northern Ireland, including Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland and the 10 local Women's Aid groups is:

- To provide refuge accommodation to women and their children suffering mental, physical or sexual abuse within the home.
- To run the 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline.
- To provide a range of support services to enable women who are leaving a violent situation to rebuild their lives and the lives of their children.
- To provide a range of support services to children and young people who have experienced domestic violence.
- To run preventative education programmes in schools and other settings.
- To educate and inform the public, media, police, courts, social services and other agencies of the impact and effects of domestic violence.
- To advise and support all relevant agencies in the development of domestic violence policies, protocols and service delivery.
- To work in partnership with all relevant agencies to ensure a joined up response to domestic violence.

3.0 Women's Aid Statistics (2009 - 2010)

- 12 refuges with 300 bed spaces, playrooms and facilities.
- 1077 women and 854 children sought refuge.
- 15 resource centres for women seeking information and support; group work and training.
- 2,938 women and 3,617 children accessed the Floating Support service enabling women to access support whilst remaining in their own homes and communities.
- Move-on houses for women and children leaving refuges.

- In 2009/10 the 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline, open to anyone affected by domestic violence, managed 32,349 calls. This represented an increase of 17% on 2008/09.

4.0 Additional Women's Aid Statistical Data

- Since 1999, Women's Aid across Northern Ireland gave refuge to 13,656 women and 13,602 children and young people.
- During the last 15 years Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland managed 244,564 calls to the 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline.

5.0 Statistics: Domestic Violence & Violence Against Women

- Domestic violence is a violation of Article 5 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights – that “no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”;
- The joint NIO, DHSSPS Strategy “Tackling Violence at Home” estimates that the cost of domestic violence in Northern Ireland, including the potential loss of economic output, could amount to £180 million each year.
- UNICEF research released in 2006, showing per capita incidence, indicates that there are up to 32,000 children and young people living with domestic violence in Northern Ireland.
- Where the gender of the victim was known, 75% of adult victims of domestic crimes recorded by the PSNI in 2009/10 were female.*
- Over 30% of all domestic violence starts during pregnancy. **

6.0 Domestic Violence: Crime Statistics

- Domestic Violence is a crime. PSNI statistics for 2009/10 indicate that there were more recorded crimes with a domestic motivation (9,903) than the combined total of all the following crimes (9,864). These include all recorded sexual offences (1,944), robbery (600), armed robbery (557), hijacking (119), theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle (2975), arson (1980) dangerous driving (865), handling stolen goods (226) and offences under anti-terrorism legislation (7).
- PSNI Statistics for 09/10 indicate that they responded to a domestic incident every 21 minutes of every day of the year.

- The total of 9,903 crimes with a domestic motivation in 09/10 represents an average of approximately 1 domestic crime every 53 minutes in Northern Ireland.
- The number of all recorded offences of murder in Northern Ireland in 09/10 total 18. Those classed as having a domestic motivation total 7. Therefore, 38.9% of all murders in Northern Ireland in 09/10 had a domestic motivation.
- There were 461 rapes (including attempted Rapes) in Northern Ireland in the period 2009/10.

(Source: PSNI Statistics 2009/10)

- Official sources (NISOSMC) estimate that up to 80% of sex crimes are not reported.
- Violence Against Women is not limited to domestic violence, it includes amongst other crimes murder, rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, trafficking, sexual stalking and sexual harassment.

(*Findings from the PSNI Crime Statistics Report 2009/10 N.B. "Adult" defined as aged 17 and over)

(** Women's Aid Federation NI)

7.0 General Comments

- 7.1 Women's Aid Federation NI welcomes the publication of the Department of Education's Draft Budget 2011-2015 and the opportunity to comment upon the document on behalf of our ten local groups. The following comments reflect their collective views.
- 7.2 Our organisation notes with grave concern the extent of the cuts to the Department's budget and the stated requirement for savings of £300 million to be made by 2015.
- 7.3 We note the Department's overarching vision to, "ensure that every learner fulfils her or his potential at each stage of development" and this is supported by five priorities for the education sector, specifically raising standards for all, closing the performance gap, increasing access and equity, developing the education workforce,

improving the learning environment and transforming education management.

- 7.4 Women's Aid has been enormously grateful to the Department for the financial support our organisation has received for the vital pilot preventative education work being carried out in schools across Northern Ireland, (Helping Hands, at primary level) and specifically for the capacity building of teachers to deliver our age appropriate programmes.
- 7.5 These programmes are delivered to both boys and girls and represent an enormously valuable commitment to creating a supportive learning environment for children and young people, which recognises the enormous impact of factors outside the classroom, such as their domestic circumstances, on their ability to be effective learners.
- 7.6 Women's Aid believes that preventative education work with all children and young people in schools and community settings is essential to ensure that attitudes within society are changed to the point where domestic violence is considered unacceptable and that no child or young person is left without information or support.
- 7.7 The funding particularly in respect of capacity building and innovative approaches such as Social Guardian Training has been essential to our ability to extend the scope of our work and to ensure that greater numbers of children are able to access the programmes and the accompanying support.
- 7.8 It is essential that this pilot is continued and completed, with a strategic objective to roll out to all primary schools in Northern Ireland.
- 7.9 Further, this essential capacity building (Social Guardian Training) needs to be incorporated into secondary school development.
- 7.10 It is in this context that we are deeply concerned by the proposal to cut the Capacity Building Budget by £4.8 million.
- 7.11 This move runs contrary to the stated commitment in the budget document to protect Early Years and Special Needs, particularly as the Capacity Building Budget facilitates the integration of Special Needs Pupils.
- 7.12 Similarly, in keeping with views expressed by UNISON, the 15% cut in the budget of every school in Northern Ireland over the next

4 years, will have unplanned and uncontrolled outcomes as a result of local school autonomy.

- 7.13 Women's Aid is deeply fearful that it is initiatives such as our preventative education programmes which are likely to suffer as a direct result.
- 7.14 The education of children and young people in Northern Ireland represents an investment not only in their individual futures but in the future shape of our society.
- 7.15 To fail to protect preventative education work is to fail to capacity build within the next generation, specifically in this case to understand their own right to express their concerns however small they may seem and their right to their own physical and emotional integrity and the necessity to respect that of others.
- 7.16 It is essential to create an educational environment in which all children and young people are fully supported to have the best possible outcomes.

For further information about this response contact:

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