



women's aid

Federation Northern Ireland

Pathways to Support

ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015

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Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland

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24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline

Call: 0808 802 1414

Email: 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org

Text **support** to 07797 805 839

Freephone from all landlines and mobiles. Translation service available.

Open to *all women and men* affected by domestic & sexual violence

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Annual report 2014-2015

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland 2015

Vision and Mission

Our Vision

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland's vision for the 21st century is the **elimination of domestic, sexual and all forms of gender-based violence and abuse.**

Our Mission

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland challenges attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that perpetuate domestic, sexual and gender based violence and abuse; and, through the provision of safety, support and prevention services and the promotion of healthy and non-abusive relationships, works to end gender based violence locally and globally.

CONTENTS

Chairperson's report	5
Chief Executive Officer's report	6
PSNI statistics	7
24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline	8
Regional policy and lobbying	22
Regional training	35
Preventative Education Project	41
Journey to Freedom	43
You and Me, Mum	45
Women's Aid Groups: Regional statistics	46
Women's Aid Groups: Highlights of the year	59
Finance	66
Thank you	74
Women's Aid Federation NI Organisational chart	75

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

2014-2015 has been a year characterised by both solid achievements and difficult challenges. While the highlights of the year have been many, it has also been a tough and challenging year, where difficult but necessary decisions had to be made by the Management of Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland to ensure its strategic sustainability.

On 5th March 2015, we were delighted to celebrate the 20-year anniversary of the Helpline at the Ulster Hall. We showcased the progressive journey of the Helpline, from small beginnings in 1995, to its current position as the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline, open to all women and men affected by domestic and sexual violence. It was a poignant day as we reflected on the Helpline journey, remembering all of those who have been part of that journey and thinking about the hundreds of thousands of individuals to whom the Helpline has literally been a lifeline in helping them to build a safer life for themselves and their families. It is a remarkable achievement to note that **since 1995, the Helpline has managed 463,855 calls.**

Unfortunately, in common with other voluntary and community organisations, we are facing a challenging environment characterised by closure and funding reductions which continues to threaten our sustainability and provision of vital services. Indications from Government departments continue to suggest a difficult time ahead. In December 2014, in the knowledge that we needed to be financially fit for the future we made the tough but necessary decision to reduce

our staffing levels. As a result of this process we unfortunately had to make four posts redundant and lost valuable members of staff.

We have emerged from this difficult process and entered into the new financial year in a stronger position, and we remain secure in the knowledge that Women's Aid across Northern Ireland is literally changing lives for the better on a daily basis. We know that levels of domestic violence are not falling; indeed this year PSNI statistics continue to confront us with the stark reminder of the extent of domestic violence with 28,287 incidents with a domestic motivation and 37.5% of all murders in Northern Ireland having a domestic abuse motivation.

We remain fully committed to achieving our vision for the 21st century, which is **the elimination of domestic, sexual and all forms of gender-based violence and abuse.**

We have many supporters and partners who help us to work to deliver our vision. Thanks are due to all our funders (full list provided on page 74) who have supported our work throughout the year. Thanks are particularly due to the strategic leadership and dedication of the members of the Federation Management Board and to the commitment of Annie Campbell, Chief Executive Officer and her dedicated staff and volunteer team.

Christine Whiteman

Chairperson

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

During 2014-15 we experienced a frustrating drift in government focus on our key areas of work. The draft combined strategy, **Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland 2013 – 2020** which we had welcomed and responded to, was not signed off and strategic partnership work on domestic and sexual violence was stalled and put into limbo.

Despite this difficult environment we have continued to make progress with our core work.

We were delighted to engage in a progressive training initiative with the Northern Ireland Prison Service to deliver comprehensive training to prison officers, enabling them to support female prisoners who had experienced, or continued to experience, domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse. A tailored support programme *Pathways to Support* was also provided for female prisoners, helping them to identify support services available to them.

Our vital policy and lobbying work continues as we work to ensure domestic and sexual violence remain high on the public agenda. This year we responded to 30 government policies. We welcomed and supported Lord Morrow's Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Bill 2015, particularly Clause 15 of this Bill, which seeks to criminalise the purchase of sexual services and support women to exit prostitution safely. We provided our expertise on the issue of trafficking, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and prostitution. **Women's Aid, together with other women's human rights organisations, regards prostitution as a form of violence against women and girls,**

grounded in inequality and exploitation.

Every year we support women and children who have experienced the degradation and terror of domestic abuse, sexual violence and human trafficking and we recognise the links between all forms of VAWG.

This year we celebrated 20 years of the Helpline's existence, marking a key milestone in the Helpline's development. Throughout this year we had a difficult operational environment as our old Helpline telephone system was failing and not fit for purpose. This resulted in a significant drop in callers during this period. The Helpline telephone system, with welcome funding from NIHE, has now been replaced. In December 2014, the Helpline Manager, Deirdre Teague left her post; Deirdre had been with the Helpline for 20 years and made an enormous contribution to its development.

During this year we backed the Let's Keep On Supporting People campaign to ensure that the value of the essential life-saving work carried out by our local Women's Aid member groups was highlighted.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the committed staff and volunteers across our member groups, and the excellent WAFNI staff and volunteer team. Thanks also to the continued leadership and professionalism of the Management Board, particularly our dedicated Chairperson Christine Whiteman who showed true leadership during difficult times.

Annie Campbell

Chief Executive Officer

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland

PSNI statistics 2014-2015

The level of domestic abuse crimes and incidents recorded in 2014/15 is the highest level recorded since 2004/05 when statistics collation, in its current format, was introduced.

In the year 2014/15

- 28,287 incidents with a domestic motivation were reported to the PSNI.
- The PSNI responded to a domestic incident every 19 minutes of every day.
- 13,426 domestic abuse crimes were reported, this represents approximately 13% of the overall crime in Northern Ireland (105,072).
- The total number of all recorded offences of murder was 16. Those classified as having a domestic abuse motivation totalled 6. Therefore, 37.5% of all murders in Northern Ireland in 2014/15 had a domestic abuse motivation.
- There were over two and a half times as many domestic abuse crimes (13,426) as drug offences (5,048).
- There were more domestic abuse crimes (13,426) than burglary offences (8,937).
- There were 2,734 sexual offences recorded including 737 offences of rape.
- Since January 2010 (cumulative until 31 March 2015) 8,363 MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) cases have been discussed of which there were 10,856 children living in the household. In 7,955 of these cases the victims were female.

All data is taken from the following PSNI reports

1. Trends in Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2014/15: Annual Bulletin published 06 August 2015
PSNI Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.
2. Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2014/15: Annual Bulletin published 06 August 2015. PSNI Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.
3. PSNI MARAC Steering Group Update – March 2015

24 HOUR DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE HELPLINE

The 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline is managed by Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland and is open to all women and men affected by domestic and sexual violence. This freephone service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

This report covers the tenth year that Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland has managed the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline which is funded by the Domestic & Sexual Violence Unit, DHSS&PS, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Community Safety Unit, Department of Justice.

Social media

The Helpline has continued this year to promote itself on social media through the use of Facebook and Twitter. Our Facebook is updated regularly with interesting news articles on domestic and sexual violence both within Northern Ireland and the rest of the world. The followers continue to grow which is encouraging.

The Helpline also has a Twitter Feed @DVSVhelpline, which continues to grow.



[https://www.facebook.com/
domesticviolencehelpline](https://www.facebook.com/domesticviolencehelpline)



@DVSVhelpline

There are more than 600 likes on Facebook and a reach of over 1,000 users on some weeks.

Staffing levels

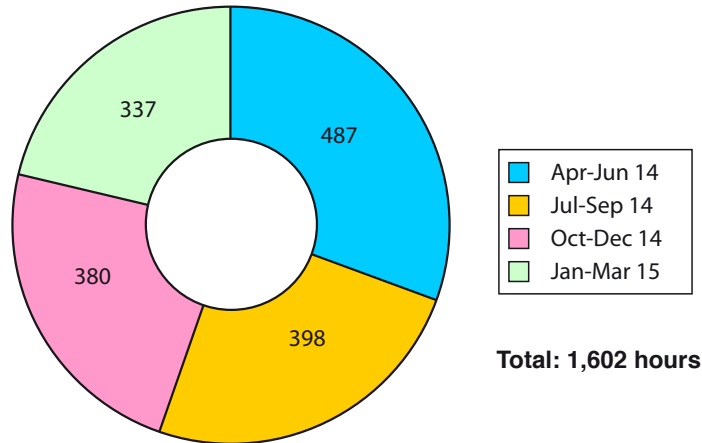
The staff team of the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline is made up of the Helpline Manager, Deputy Helpline Manager, 2 full-time and 9 part-time Helpline Workers. The Helpline also has a pool of Bank Staff to provide rota cover as and when required by the service.

In December 2014 the Helpline Manager, Deirdre Teague left her post. Deirdre had been with WAFNI for 20 years and made an enormous contribution to the development of the Helpline.

Volunteers are a core part of the Helpline team: throughout the year they contributed a total of 1,602 hours to the service, an average of 4.4 hours per day, 365 days of the year.

The total value of this contribution in kind is £20,144.19. This represents the mean average Helpline staff rate of £10.84 per hour multiplied by 1602 hours, plus associated employers costs of £2778.51. This is a major contribution to the operating costs and reflects 8% of the overall staff costs.

Volunteer Hours worked on Helpline: 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015



Helpline 20 year event!

On 5th March 2015, we were delighted to celebrate the 20-year anniversary of the Helpline at the Ulster Hall, alongside many friends and supporters.

We showcased the progressive journey of the Helpline, from small beginnings in 1995 as the Women's Aid Helpline, to its current position as the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline, open to all women and men affected by domestic and sexual violence.

Speakers on the day included Koulla Yiasouma, Northern Ireland Children's Commissioner and Professor Eileen Evason. Koulla Yiasouma was employed as the Helpline Manager with Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland in 1995 and spoke about the establishment and development of the Helpline in these early days.



Clockwise from top left, Annie Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland, Louise Kennedy, Regional Policy and Information Coordinator, Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland, Sonya McMullan, Acting Helpline Manager, Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland, Professor Eileen Evason and Koulla Yiasouma, Northern Ireland Children's Commissioner.



Helplines Network NI Launch

The Acting Helpline Manager is Vice-Chair of the Helplines Network NI and continues to be active in this role. On 9th March the Helplines Network NI had the launch of their website and promotional materials to promote helplines within Northern Ireland. This event was in the City Hall and was launched by Belfast Lord Mayor Nicola Mallon. Dr Rooney CE of the PHA also spoke at this event.

Training and supervision

All Helpline staff members are fully trained by Women's Aid Federation NI and receive on-going training, both internal and external, together with one to one line management supervision and both one to one and group practice related supervision. All our Helpline staff have attended core accredited Women's Aid training 'Understanding Domestic Violence' (Open College Network Level 3).

All Helpline staff and Women's Aid staff attend both ASIST Training and Mental Health First Aid training as part of our core training. They also have comprehensive training in the law and domestic violence, housing issues, telephone skills, listening skills, written communication skills, equality, disability, email and text communication skills. There is also core training in IT skills to facilitate the use of our online database recording and monitoring system, UKROL and our email and text service.

Staff also have attended training with external voluntary and statutory agencies which include our local Health Trusts, WAVE, Nexus, Children In Northern Ireland, the Law Centre, Barnardo's Safe Choices Training, INEQE Training on Child Sexual Exploitation and Ascert Training on alcohol and drug dependency.

All our staff and volunteers regularly attend both one to one supervision and group supervision to reflect on their practice with external counselling supervisors employed by Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland. Our external supervisors are qualified counselling supervisors with many years of experience.

Helpline outreach

During this year Helpline staff attended events and had information stalls at:

- Launch of Anti-Homophobia and Anti-Transphobia Week
- Belfast Pride and Foyle Pride
- Helplines Network NI Launch
- Quayside Shopping Centre, Derry
- Avoniel Leisure Centre, Belfast – Health & Wellbeing Event
- The Quays, Newry

The Helpline has delivered awareness raising training sessions to:

- Belfast Metropolitan College
- Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency

- Greenway Women's Centre
- Victim Support NI
- Prison, Ash House
- NIHE

Conferences attended

- Respect, London
- Contact/Lifeline Conference
- Nexus 30th Anniversary Conference
- St Mary's SARC Conference, Manchester
- Northern Ireland Council for the Homeless
- CHNI – Suicide Prevention Conference
- Self Harm Conference
- NOTA AGM and Conference
- Sinn Fein Party Conference
- SDLP Party Conference
- UUP Party Conference
- DUP Party Conference
- Alliance Party Conference

Forums

Sonya McMullan, Acting Helpline Manager sits on the Regional Strategic Group's Prevention and Support Sub-Group and the Child Maintenance Stakeholders Forum.

Sonya is also Vice-Chair of the Helplines Network NI, which is run through the Public Health Agency.

Helpline Statistics 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015

Telephone system failure

In March 2014, the Helpline telephone system (BCM 400) began to fail after experiencing a power surge during the snowfall, which affected power supplies throughout Northern Ireland.

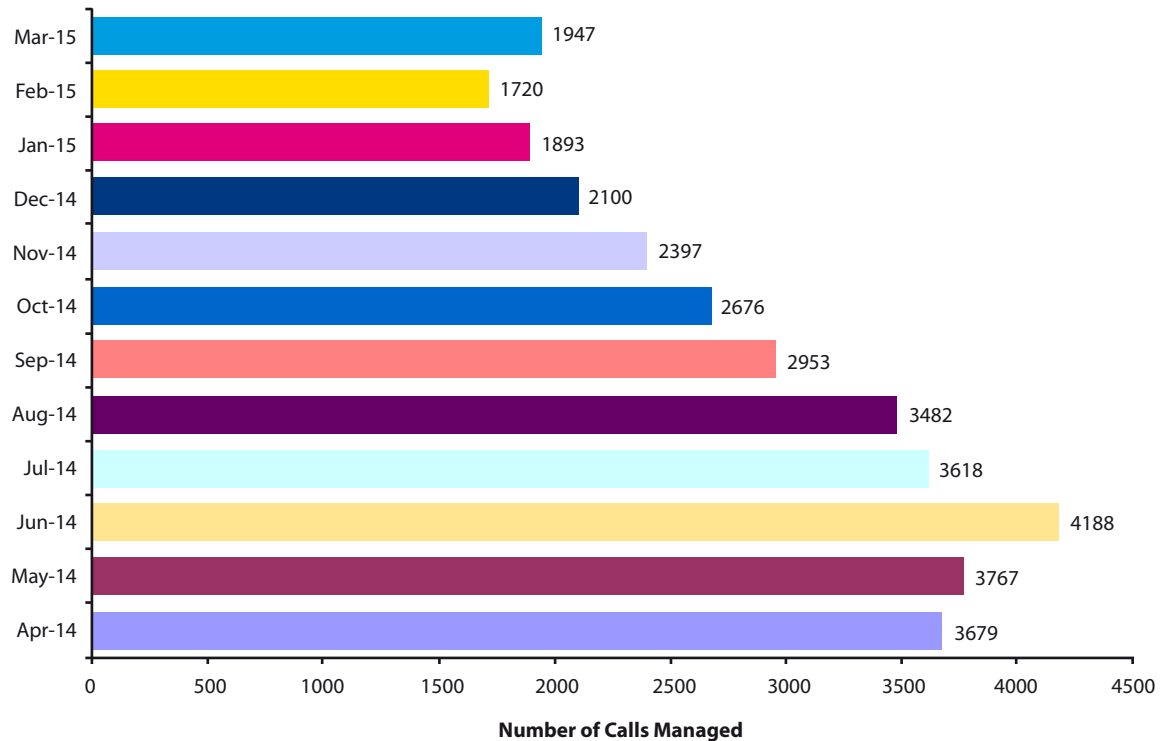
The system became increasingly unreliable throughout this period, automatically diverting some calls directly to voicemail due to an irreparable fault in the system. As a result, a number of calls each day were not getting through to a Helpline worker.

This has had a detrimental effect on the Helpline work, including a reduction in calls, with the Helpline ultimately missing thousands of calls during the year. This is reflected in the Helpline statistics that follow.

The Helpline team have worked hard to provide the best service possible during this difficult time and are working closely with the three funders to ensure plans are in place for a new telephone system.

463,855 calls managed 1995 - 2015

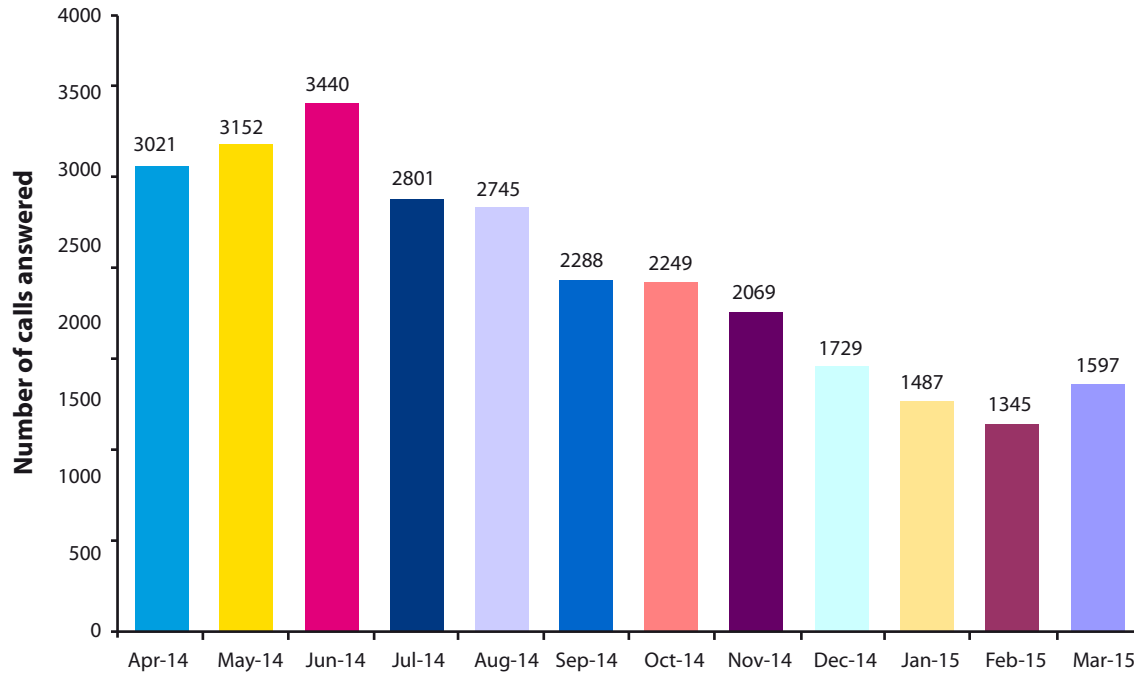
Number of calls managed by Helpline: 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015



(Calls managed include all calls answered and all calls made by Helpline staff to follow up specific support and advice. For example, arranging refuge accommodation for a woman may involve Helpline workers making a number of calls out.)

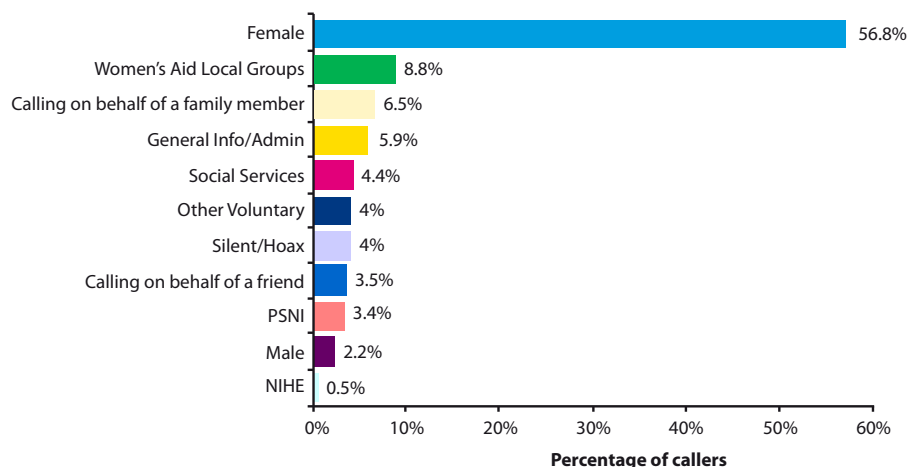
A total number of 34,420 calls were managed during the year

Number of calls answered by Helpline: 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015



A total number of 27,923 calls were answered during the year.

Breakdown of callers: 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015



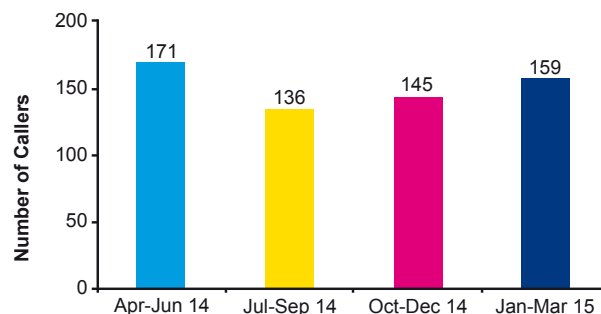
This table outlines the categories of callers to the Helpline.

The majority of calls to the service continue to be from women, which reflects the levels of domestic and sexual violence and abuse experienced by women.

The percentage of male callers this year rose to 2.2%, an increase from the previous year when the percentage was 1.5%

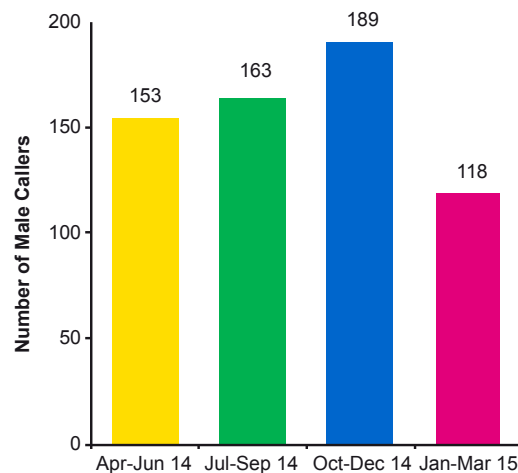
Sexual violence calls to the Helpline: 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015

Calls relating to sexual violence and abuse continued throughout the year. These calls came from women and men disclosing historic abuse as well as on-going current assaults and rapes. The total number of calls was 611.



These 611 calls came from 518 female callers and 93 male callers

Male callers: 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015

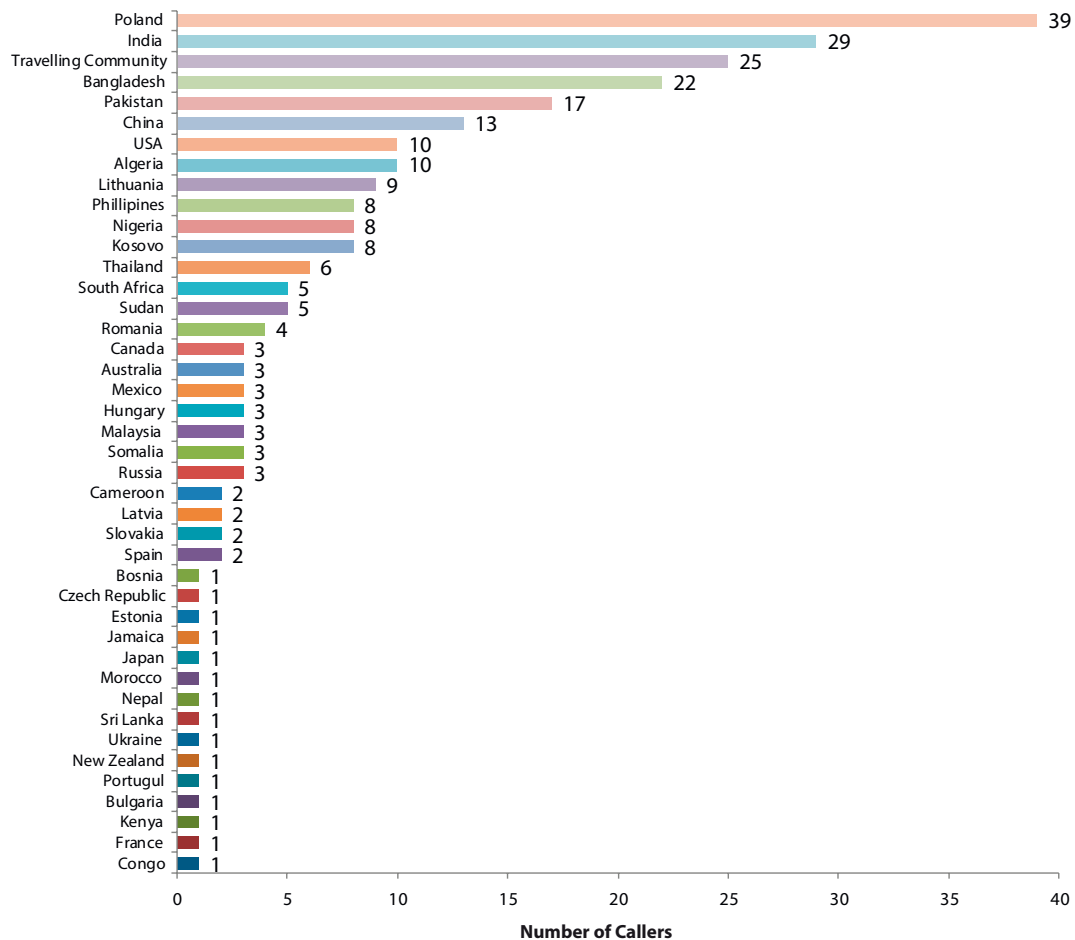


Callers who wanted to speak to someone face to face and had other issues they needed support with were signposted to a variety of agencies and services listed in the Helpline's Regional Directory of men's services. These include Men's Advisory Project, Parenting NI, men's health projects, counselling services and the NIHE. Male callers were also given information on the PSNI and legal options. The Helpline offers the same level of emotional support over the telephone to all women and men calling.

The percentage of male callers this year rose to 2.2%, an increase from the previous year when the percentage was 1.5%.

A total of 623 male callers contacted the Helpline for emotional support and information

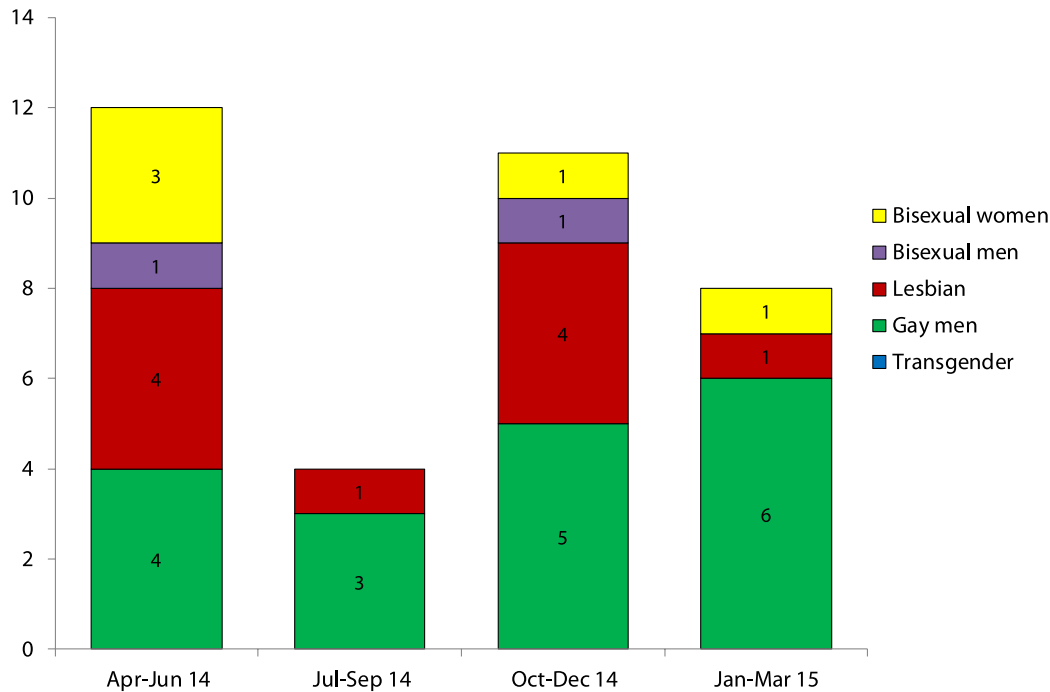
Calls from foreign nationals, BME women and Traveller women: 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015



A total of 262 calls to the service were from foreign nationals and black and minority ethnic women. This equates to 1% of calls answered, which is an increase of 0.1% on the previous year.

The Helpline uses the Language Line translation and interpretation service for those women whose first language is not English.

Calls from the LGBT community: 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015

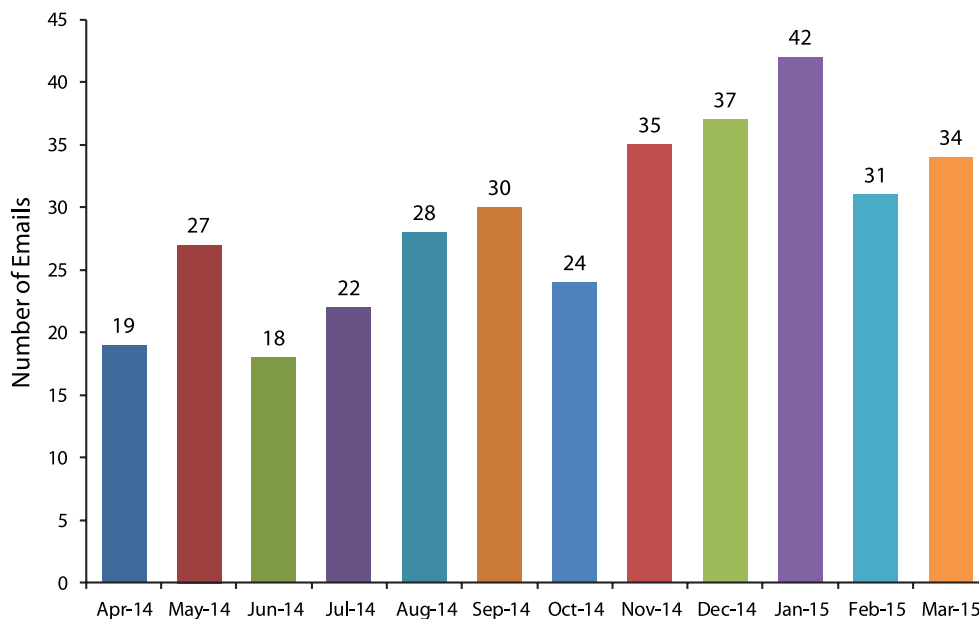


The total number of calls to the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline from the LGBT community during this period was 35.

The Helpline is aware that domestic and sexual violence and abuse is still very much a taboo subject and LGB&T people are worried they will be discriminated against if they ask for help, or may believe help is just available for heterosexual people.

The Helpline continues to forge links within the LGB&T community and work with organisations such as Rainbow, Carafriend, GLYNI, Family Ties, Lesbian Line and Here NI (formerly LASI), to increase the accessibility of the service. During this period Helpline staff and volunteers attended both Belfast Pride and Foyle Pride with our Information Stall as part of our outreach to the LGB&T community.

Email/Text support service: 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015



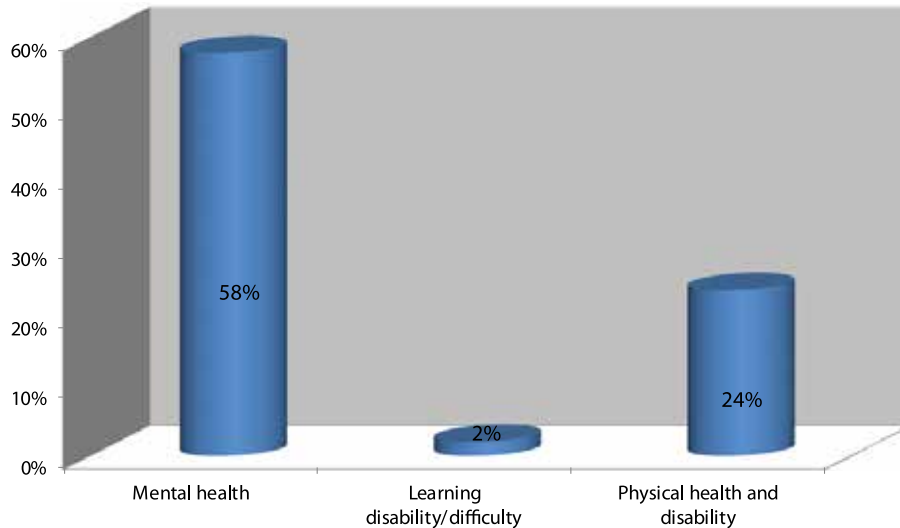
The Helpline continues to promote its multi-channel Helpline including the email and text service.

The total number of e-mails for support during this year was 347. The figure for last year was 338 showing a slight increase of 9 emails during this period.

The Helpline will raise awareness of the new text and email services over the coming year and work to increase knowledge of the service with young people and also hard to reach groups such as the deaf community.

347 email supports throughout the year

**Breakdown of additional complex needs identified by women callers contacting the Helpline:
1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015**



The Helpline continues to respond to complex cases and this is becoming a pattern within the Helpline at this time. The complex needs of service users are getting more demanding and the skills base for the Helpline is becoming more specialised to deal with the changing nature of the calls. This is reflected through good training, support and supervision practice instilled through the Helpline management systems.

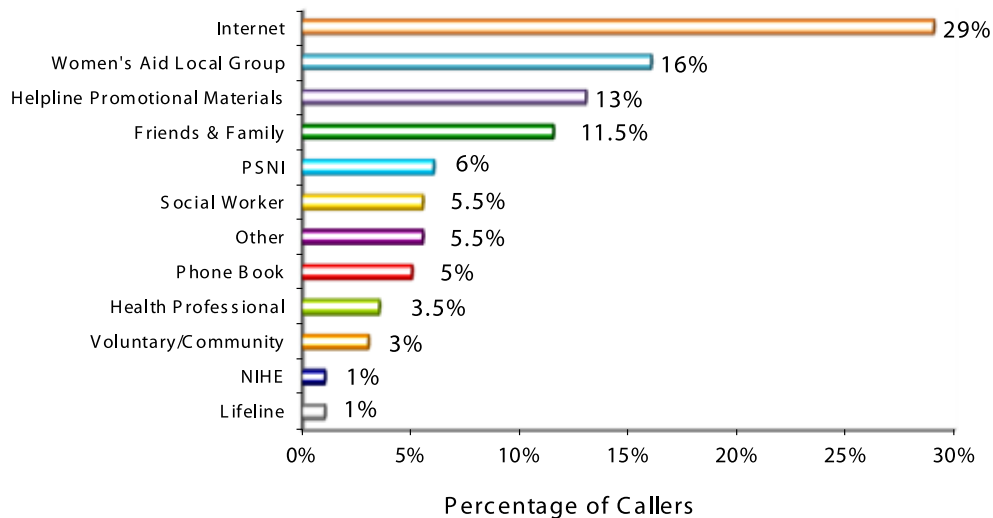
This chart outlines the percentage of women who disclosed additional complex needs to a Helpline worker.

There are a large number of women who disclose that they have mental health issues, including being prescribed stress related medication, experiencing anxiety, panic attacks and depression. This also includes women who have a diagnosis such as bi-polar and personality disorder. The figures for mental health also include addiction issues.

These figures indicate that many women who experience domestic and sexual violence and abuse also experience some form of mental health illness.

58% of women callers disclosed mental health issues

Where did callers get the Helpline number? 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015



The Internet and Women's Aid local groups are the two main sources of information on the service during this period.

There has been a marked decrease from the previous year from 9.5% to 5% in those getting the Helpline number from the phone book.

Referrals to other Women's Aid services: 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015



The total number of women referred to refuge during this period was 533, which was an increase of 79 on the previous year.

The total number of children referred to refuge was 226, a decrease of 233 from the previous year.

All women who call the Helpline experiencing domestic and sexual violence are given information on Women's Aid services across Northern Ireland and are given information on floating support services in their local area.

Floating support is an outreach service to provide support to women victims of domestic violence to enable them to remain in their own homes.

533 women referred to refuge

REGIONAL POLICY & LOBBYING

Policy and lobbying are an essential part of Women's Aid Federation NI's work to challenge the attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate domestic and sexual violence.

Throughout the year, our Regional Policy & Information Co-ordinator, Louise Kennedy, worked in consultation with local Women's Aid groups across Northern Ireland to develop policy positions. The overall policy & lobbying work is led by Annie Campbell (CEO) with lead roles on different issues assigned to Sarah Mason (Finance & Training Manager), Sonya McMullan (Helpline Manager), Anne O'Reilly (Regional Support & Development Manager), and Louise Kennedy (Regional Policy & Information Co-ordinator).

Our lobbying and policy engagement is informed by our regional lobbying strategy, which identifies

Our work for 2014/15 was prioritised under the 6 main strands of our lobbying strategy:

- Access to Justice
- Access to Welfare
- Support for Victims
- Children & Young People
- Women with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)
- All forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

key policy issues that directly impact the women and children who use our services across Northern Ireland.

Access to Justice

Women's Aid has worked tirelessly throughout 2014/15 to ensure that domestic and sexual violence remain priority issues for policing and justice agencies. Our CEO Annie Campbell continued to sit on the Regional Strategic Group on Domestic & Sexual Violence and Abuse (RSG), as well as chairing the Protection & Justice Subgroup of the RSG.

Protection of victims

During 2014/15, Women's Aid engaged with the Department of Justice (DOJ) on a wide range of justice issues that directly affect the women we support.

We called for more to be done to support domestic violence victims through the criminal justice process, including better access to special measures, better support from policing and justice agencies, and improved referrals to specialist services like Women's Aid at the earliest possible stage. We welcomed the launch of Victim & Witness Care Unit and the consultation on a new Victim Charter; however it remains to be seen whether these initiatives will translate into a better experience of the criminal justice system for victims.

We campaigned on the legal aid issue, arguing that access to legal aid for victims of domestic violence is vital to protect them from further abuse and to help them rebuild their lives. This includes both in the civil courts where victims seek protection orders, and in the family court where victims seek to extricate themselves and their children from abusive situations through divorce, child contact

and residence proceedings. We successfully opposed changes to civil legal aid, which would have required victims to prove domestic violence in order to access legal aid in family cases. Such a system, which is in place in England, would have prevented many victims from accessing legal aid and put justice and protection beyond their reach. Women's Aid believes that all victims of domestic violence should have automatic access to the courts and to legal advice and assistance, as of right and without means testing. Leaving an abusive relationship often means a step into poverty for victims and their families – accessing legal protection and assistance should not contribute to further impoverishment and victimisation. We oppose any move to restrict legal aid access for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Firearms

Women's Aid Federation NI opposes any relaxation of firearms regulations in Northern Ireland. Extensive research shows that the presence of a firearm in the home is associated with an increase in domestic homicides, and there is a strongly evidenced link between gun ownership and domestic violence. This year we opposed proposals by DOJ to lower the age of young shooters to 12, on the grounds that normalising gun use and encouraging usage and ownership of guns endangers lives of domestic violence victims.

Justice Committee

In November of this year, we gave evidence to the Justice Committee on a range of issues relating to domestic and sexual violence. We stressed that prosecutorial fines are an inappropriate alternative

to sentences in domestic violence cases, as they send a message to victims that abuse is not a serious crime and a message to perpetrators that they can abuse without serious consequence. We also raised concerns about the limitations of Violent Offences Prevention Orders (VOPOs) in protecting victims of domestic violence, and discussed the need for specialist training of judges to better understand the complex issues relating to domestic violence.

Policing

Women's Aid Federation NI continues to work with the PSNI and Northern Ireland Policing Board to improve the policing of domestic and sexual violence. This year we engaged with the PSNI and NIPB through the Strategic Consultation Group, and shared our views on the regional Policing Plan through stakeholder and public consultation.

We remain concerned about gaps that exist between the regional Policing Plan, which identifies domestic and sexual violence as a priority issue, and local policing plans and PCSPs. It is unfathomable that regionally-agreed priorities are not always reflected at local operational level. Domestic violence must be a priority issue in all police districts, as it is a problem in all districts. Although domestic violence can be a hidden problem, it is incumbent upon local police districts and PCSPs to ensure that they are taking all measures necessary to police domestic violence, protect victims and bring perpetrators to justice.

Women's Aid NI also continues to campaign for a better police response to domestic homicides. In 2014/15, 37.5% of all murders in Northern

Ireland had a domestic motivation. Every year, women are murdered by partners, ex-partners and family members in Northern Ireland. We call on the Northern Ireland Policing Board to include specific targets within the Policing Plan relating to domestic homicides, and for domestic homicide reviews to be introduced by the DOJ at the earliest possible opportunity.

37.5% of all murders in Northern Ireland in 2014/15 had a domestic motivation.

Listings Court

Women's Aid Federation NI is encouraged by the progress of the pilot domestic violence listings court in Derry and see it as a vital step towards improving access to justice for all victims of domestic violence. We look forward to seeing it rolled out across Northern Ireland in the near future.

Women's Aid strongly supports the introduction of Domestic Violence Specialist courts into Northern Ireland to enable the development of best practice in multiagency, integrated ways of working that place the victim at the heart of the process.

Access To Welfare

Welfare Reform

Women's Aid remains deeply concerned that proposed changes to the welfare system will make it even more difficult for women to free themselves and their children from abusive relationships. We have grave concerns that welfare reform measures, coupled with cuts to vital services and Departmental budgets, will narrow the options for women seeking to flee an abuser, and exacerbate the poverty already experienced by those who leave abusive relationships.

Despite promises from government about mitigations from the worst elements of welfare reform, it remains unclear in our uncertain political environment just how welfare reform will affect some of Northern Ireland's most vulnerable people, including those suffering domestic violence. It is also increasingly clear that the policy of austerity disproportionately disadvantages women, who make up the majority of victims of domestic and sexual violence. Women's Aid has already witnessed a rise in reliance on food banks across Northern Ireland, and we fear that further cuts will increase the vulnerability of victims of domestic violence and leave them without any financial safety net.

In 2014/15 we continued to lobby to mitigate the worst aspects of the proposed welfare reforms this year through the voluntary sector Welfare Reform Group, the Women's Policy Group and the women's sector activist group Reclaim the Agenda, which

organises the Empty Purse Protest and is also linked with the Trade Unions' welfare reform group.

Housing Issues

Women's Aid continued to engage on matters relating to housing in 2014/15, as it remains a key issue for women fleeing domestic violence situations.

We joined the Let's Keep On Supporting People campaign, a coalition of charities and voluntary organisations which calls on the Northern Ireland Executive to strengthen the Supporting People programme. On a single day in November 2014, Women's Aid provided emergency accommodation and support to 1,881 women and 2,063 children suffering domestic violence in Northern Ireland. This was only possible thanks to the Supporting People fund, which covers much of the cost of our life-saving services. Supporting People funding enables the women and children we work with to rebuild their lives, regain their independence and live safely in the community. It gives victims of domestic violence the chance to live a life free from abuse. In January 2015, Women's Aid met with Minister for Social Development, Mervyn Storey MLA, to put forward our case on strengthening the Supporting People programme. We continue to engage with DSD on this issue, and continue to work with DSD, NIHE and Housing Associations to ensure that all Women's Aid refugees are fit for purpose for the 21st century.

Women's Aid remains deeply concerned that the changes to the welfare system will make it even more difficult for women to free themselves and their children from abusive relationships.

Support For Victims Of Domestic & Sexual Violence

Stopping Domestic & Sexual Violence and Abuse

Following public consultation on a new joint domestic and sexual violence strategy, which concluded in April 2014, Women's Aid continued to engage with the Departments of Health and Justice on further drafts of the strategy via the Regional Strategic Group on Domestic & Sexual Violence and Abuse (RSG). Despite much discussion and revision of the draft strategy, we are disappointed that at the end of this year there was still no strategy in place. Women's Aid is extremely concerned that the excellent partnership work which had developed under Tackling Violence At Home has stalled due to the dangerous vacuum created by the absence of a strategy. The absence of any strategy to drive forward work on tackling domestic and sexual violence ultimately puts victims at risk. We call on the Departments of Health and Justice, and the Northern Ireland Executive to deliver a robust, resourced strategy to tackle domestic and sexual violence as a matter of urgency.

Women's Aid calls on the Departments of Health and Justice, and the Northern Ireland Executive to deliver a robust, resourced strategy to tackle domestic and sexual violence as a matter of urgency.

Justice Support Workers

This year we continued to campaign for the introduction of Justice Support Workers across

all police districts, as per Recommendation 12 of Criminal Justice Inspection NI (CJINI)'s report on domestic violence and abuse in 2010, and follow-up report in 2013. While Justice Support Workers are currently in place in some police districts, there remain a large number of districts where no such post exists. Dedicated support workers within police stations have proven to be an excellent method of supporting women on their journey through the criminal justice system, and the PSNI has responded very positively in stations where Justice Support Workers have been operating. Women's Aid urges that Justice Support Workers are embedded in all police districts, as a vital means to support victims of domestic violence and of achieving best evidence and securing convictions for domestic violence related crime.

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

MARACs continued to operate across Northern Ireland in 2014/15, to ensure a multi-agency joined up response to the most high risk domestic violence victims in Northern Ireland. However, MARACs continue to operate without Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), an independent advocate who represents the voice of the victim around the table at MARAC. In its report, and subsequent follow-up report, on domestic violence, Criminal Justice Inspection NI (CJINI) recommended the introduction of IDVAs "as a matter of urgency". However, by the end of this year IDVAs are still not in place. Women's Aid urges the DOJ to deliver on its commitment to introduce IDVAs to the MARAC process in Northern

Ireland in the interests of a victim-centred process of protecting victims of domestic violence.

Perpetrator Programmes

In 2014/15, Women's Aid Federation NI continued to provide support to women whose abuser was engaging in the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) through our Women's Safety Workers.

This year also saw a limited roll-out of the non-court mandated perpetrator programme. The programme was initially intended to be rolled out across all five Trusts, but disappointingly was limited to two programmes and was truncated to a one-year project instead of being established on a permanent basis.

Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland (PPANI)

This is still an area of huge concern to Women's Aid. It is well-established in research and practice that many perpetrators of domestic violence will go on to abuse more than one victim. Despite this knowledge, serial perpetrators of domestic violence remain largely unmonitored in Northern Ireland. Women's Aid continues to push for robust measures to protect victims and hold serial perpetrators to account.

Human Trafficking

During this year, the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Bill became law. The Private Members' Bill introduced by the DUP's Lord Morrow, includes provisions to criminalise the purchase of sexual services, decriminalisation of selling sexual services, and establishment of exit support services for those wishing to leave prostitution. Women's Aid regards prostitution as a form of violence against women, and strongly supported the bill throughout the

legislative process. We were joined in our support by a wide range of community and voluntary sector organisations and trade unions in Northern Ireland and beyond, including Ruhama, Equality Now, Eaves, Turn Off the Red Light, the Women's Policy Group and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU). We lobbied for all parties to support the bill and the Nordic Model for tackling exploitation in prostitution, and were encouraged by the bill's overwhelming support in the Assembly. Women's Aid continues to push for full implementation of the legislation, including funded services and support for those who wish to exit prostitution.

In 2014/15 Women's Aid also continued to provide support for all adult female victims of all forms of human trafficking in Northern Ireland. Our years of experience supporting victims of gender-based violence, including supporting victims of human trafficking, has best placed Women's Aid to advise on the way forward to improving Northern Ireland's response to human trafficking, based on best practice and using a victim-centred approach. Throughout this year we contributed to seminars and awareness raising sessions on human trafficking and remain committed to ensuring that the vital support needs of women who are victims of this modern day slavery are met. We engaged at a policy level on a number of trafficking-related issues, including the review of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive the appropriate protection and support. We also engaged on a European level, meeting with the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator Dr Myria Vassiliadou, and participating in the Brussels Call, a meeting of the European Women's Lobby together with voluntary sector organisations across Europe campaigning for a Europe free from prostitution.

Children & Young People

Women's Aid believes that every child living in a household where domestic violence is happening is a victim of abuse and is in need of protection and support services. As yet there is no sustainable regional funding for essential support work with children and young people who have experienced domestic violence in Northern Ireland, with key areas of our work under threat of closure due to lack of funding.

We continued to engage throughout the year on issues relating to children and young people through our strategic engagement with other children's charities and voluntary organisations. We also contributed to consultations concerning children and young people. Our CEO, Annie Campbell, currently sits on the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP). This key partnership brings together a range of agencies, including voluntary and community sector organisations, which aim to improve the lives of children and young people in Northern Ireland. We will work within the CYPSP to ensure that domestic and sexual violence is recognised as a critical issue blighting the lives of many children and young people.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Inquiry

In June 2014, Women's Aid gave oral evidence to the Child Sexual Exploitation Inquiry, chaired by Kathleen Marshall. As an organisation which supports women and children affected by domestic

and sexual violence, we work with young women and girls who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, either by older perpetrators or by their peers. There are clear links between domestic violence and child sexual exploitation, and Women's Aid will continue to work alongside statutory agencies and expert children's organisations to tackle child sexual exploitation in all forms.

Women's Aid believes that every child living in a household where domestic violence is happening is a victim of abuse and is in need of protection and support services.

Preventative Education

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 unacceptable and no child or young person is left without information or support.

This year, the Department of Education continued to fund the roll out of Women's Aid's Helping Hands preventative education programme to teachers across all five Education and Library Boards.

Women With No Recourse To Public Funds

Women with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) are being denied access to safe refuge accommodation because refuges are dependent on government funding. These women are not eligible for benefits, such as housing benefit whilst in refuge, and are prohibited from employment. As such, non- UK national victims of domestic and sexual violence are essentially trapped, faced with an impossible and inhumane choice between destitution and a life of violence and abuse.

Women's Aid is willing and committed to providing support, emergency accommodation and assistance for all women and children who are victims of domestic violence however we are severely limited in our capacity to do so without funding and resources.

Emergency Fund

At the beginning of 2015, a temporary emergency fund was provided by OFMDFM to assist destitute migrants in Northern Ireland who may have become vulnerable due to a range of circumstances. The fund was managed and distributed by British Red Cross.

Women's Aid Federation NI distributed £3,625 through 8 of our local groups during this two month period. These funds supported 23 women and their children and the financial support was mainly used to provide food, heat and essential clothing. Women's Aid Federation NI was the second largest distributor of the funds across Northern Ireland,

and domestic violence was highlighted as one of the major issues causing destitution.

This fund was a lifeline to women who were affected by domestic violence and had no recourse to public funds. Even small amounts of money have made a huge difference to their lives.

Women's Aid Federation NI calls on OFMDFM to establish the Emergency Fund on a permanent basis so that women suffering domestic violence are able to leave their abuser without facing certain destitution.

Research on women with no recourse to public funds and domestic violence

This year, Women's Aid Federation NI contributed to research conducted by Dr. Rebecca Dudley on domestic abuse and women with no recourse to public funds. The research concluded that "insecure immigration status shapes the abuse, increases its severity and prolongs it, across a range of different forms of violence against women and girls." Women's Aid calls on the Westminster government and Northern Ireland Executive to acknowledge the detrimental impact of the no recourse rule on victims of domestic violence and commit to implement the recommendations of this research.

All Forms Of Violence Against Women And Girls

Special Rapporteur Visit

In April 2014, Women's Aid welcomed UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Rashida Manjoo to Northern Ireland. In her report on the visit, Ms Manjoo raised concerns about the shift to gender neutrality in government policy and service provision, and the negative impact of austerity measures on services addressing violence against women and women's poverty in general. The Special Rapporteur made a number of recommendations to the UK government including:

- Full implementation of CEDAW across the UK and implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Northern Ireland;
- Regulation and restriction of harmful and misogynistic images of women in the media that condone discrimination and abuse against them;
- Introduction of appropriate and comprehensive sex and relationship education in schools as a compulsory subject;
- Changing the funding policy for specialist services addressing violence against women to ensure long-term and sustainable funding from the central Government and/or the local authorities;
- Ensuring that specialist services are accessible to black and minority ethnic women, LBT women and women with disabilities.

Women's Aid Federation NI supports the findings and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur, and urges the UK and Northern Ireland government to implement all recommendations in full.

Women, Peace & Security

In February 2015, Women's Aid took part in a consultation event on Beijing +20, a 20 year review of the Beijing Platform for Action by the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The consultation was hosted by the Government Equalities Office and attended by Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Theresa Villiers. Our CEO Annie Campbell was a speaker at the event.

During this year, we also contributed to the Irish government consultation on their second National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, urging that Northern Ireland remains a key focus in the plan.

Women's Aid urges the UK government to fully implement the principles of UNSCR 1325 in Northern Ireland, and ensure full participation of women in peacebuilding and equal participation of women in political and public life. We also urge the Northern Ireland Assembly to acknowledge the reality of gender-based violence on all sides during the conflict, and commit to seeking resolution and redress for all victims.

Gender Equality

During this year, Women's Aid continued to engage with government on gender equality. We believe

that violence against women is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality, and that violence against women cannot be eradicated until full gender equality exists in our society.

This year, we gave evidence to the Assembly & Executive Review Committee on women in politics in the Assembly. We also continued to be an active member of the Gender Advisory Panel, chaired by OFMDFM. We remain concerned that there is as yet no new Gender Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland, and have reservations over the process in formulating the new strategy thus far. We urge OFMDFM to commit to an expert-led consultation process to develop a strong, gender-specific Gender Equality Strategy with a robust action plan

and effective monitoring processes. The strategy should address violence against women as a form of gender inequality, and ensure that work on gender equality is linked to work on domestic and sexual violence through the Stopping Domestic & Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy.

Domestic Violence in the Workplace

In November, our CEO Annie Campbell addressed a seminar on violence against women convened by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. Women's Aid continues to work closely with Trade Unions on issues such as domestic violence, and we support ICTU's call for mandatory workplace policies on domestic violence across all of the public sector.

Connecting

We continue to develop and sustain our relationships with key partners across all sectors and participate actively on a number of policy fora. These include:

Stopping Domestic & Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy - DHSS&PS and DOJ

Regional Strategic Group
Protection & Justice sub-group
Prevention and Support sub-group
Children & Young People's subgroup
MARAC Operational Group

Children and Young People Strategic Partnership Board

- Early Intervention sub-group

Other

- Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) Policy Forum
- Child Maintenance & Enforcement Division Stakeholder Forum (CMED)
- End Violence Against Women UK Expert Advisory group
- NI Human Rights Consortium
- NI Women's European Platform (NIWEP)
- CSW Alliance
- OFMDFM Gender Advisory Panel
- PBNI - Un-adjudicated Domestic Abuse Programmes Regional Steering Group

- Queens University DV Research Special Interest Group
- Rural Women's Policy Forum
- Skills For Justice Steering Group
- UK/ROL (Refuge Online) London
- Women's Policy Group
- Women's Aid Federations across the UK and the Republic of Ireland
- Reclaim the Agenda
- International Women's Day Committee
- Welfare Reform Group
- PPANI Victims Advisory Group
- Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NIASP)
- Human Trafficking NGO Engagement Group
- CRISPP
- NIPB Strategic Consultation Group
- Women's Sector Consortium
- Government Voluntary Sector Joint Forum
- NIRWN
- WRDA
- No Recourse to Public Funds Network
- Turn Off the Red Light

Policy Responses

- Committee for Justice: Justice Bill – Call for written evidence
- Department of the Environment: Statutory Guidance for the Operation of Community Planning – Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
- Department for Finance & Personnel: Draft Multi-Agency Guidelines on Female Genital Mutilation
- Department of Foreign Affairs (Ireland): Ireland's Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR1325)
- Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety / Department of Justice - Consultation on Stopping Domestic & Sexual Violence & Abuse in Northern Ireland Strategy 2013 – 2020
- Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety / Department of Justice: Consultation on a draft Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety: Draft Budget
- Department of Justice - Human Trafficking and Slavery – Strengthening Northern Ireland's Response
- Department of Justice: Women Involved in Prostitution – Guidance for Practitioners
- Department of Justice: Consultation on Proposals to Vary Firearms Licensing Fees and Other Miscellaneous Amendments to the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004
- Department of Justice: Consultation on a new Victim Charter
- Department of Justice: Draft Budget
- Department of Justice: Consultation on the Scope of Legal Aid
- Department of Justice: Consultation on Abortion 2014 – Lethal Foetal Abnormality & Sexual Violence
- Department of Justice: Use of expert witnesses in courts in NI
- Department of Justice: Review of Criminal Damage and Criminal Injuries Scheme
- Department for Social Development: Draft Budget
- Education & Library Boards: Draft Elective Home Education policy
- Home Office: National Referral Mechanism Review
- Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunal Services: Review of the use of accommodation across the Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service Estate.
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Safer Together – Community Safety Strategy
- NISRA: Survey of PSNI Statistics Users

- Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister: Active Ageing Strategy 2014 – 2020
 - Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister: Sexual Orientation Strategy
 - Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister: Gender Equality Strategy – comments on draft document
 - Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister: Racial Equality Strategy
 - Public Health Agency: Consultation on the Lifeline Crisis Response Service
 - Policing Board Northern Ireland: Consultation on the 2015-2016 Update to the 2014-2017 Policing Plan
 - Policing Board Northern Ireland: Policing Plan Refresh 2015-16
 - Probation Board for Northern Ireland: Victims Policy in relation to the Victim Information Unit
- During the period 1st April 2014 - 31st March 2015, we responded to 30 policy consultations drawing on the expertise of Women's Aid across Northern Ireland.

Women's Aid Federation NI responded to 30 policy consultations in 2014/15

REGIONAL TRAINING

It has been another busy year for regional training as we continue to equip Women's Aid staff across Northern Ireland with essential skills to ensure quality service provision and raise awareness externally of domestic and sexual violence and its impact. This year has seen the development and roll out of exciting new external training initiatives with a range of partner agencies.

Prison service training

We were delighted this year to be invited to engage in a progressive and innovative training programme with staff from the Northern Ireland Prison Service. Baroness Corsten's review of vulnerable women in the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales (2007) identified a range of issues underlying women's offending behaviour including: domestic circumstances and problems such as domestic violence and childcare issues; personal circumstances, such as mental illness and substance abuse; and socio-economic factors, including poverty, isolation, unemployment and homelessness. This report (2007) identified that approximately **half of all women in prison have suffered domestic violence and one third have experienced sexual abuse at some stage in their lives.** The need to support these women in prison settings is clear and best practice should encourage women to disclose experiences of domestic violence, rape, abuse or prostitution, and

signpost to specialist services to support them.

Women's Aid Federation NI developed and delivered a two-tier tailored training programme; firstly to prison service staff, to build their capacity to understand and address the needs of women in custody who may be victims or survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence and direct Pathway to Support sessions for female prisoners.

The aims of the Prison Staff training were as follows:

- Increase understanding of context/impact of domestic violence
- Assist individuals to identify concerns/ initiate earlier interventions
- Explore role of social guardian and examine positive response
- Provide overview of Women's Aid in Northern Ireland
- Outline Women's Aid service provision across Northern Ireland

The programme was extremely well received. Evaluation comments from Prison Service Staff included:

“I will hand out Helpline cards”

“I feel more equipped and knowledgeable”

“Everything I learned will help me in the future if any females are affected by domestic violence”

Pathways to support

The training with the Prison Service also highlighted other areas of need, including the need for Women's Aid to work directly with female prisoners in Ash House, to ensure they are aware of support available for those who have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence.



As part of this training initiative, Women's Aid Federation NI facilitated group support work with female prisoners through the delivery of a new programme developed specifically for this group,

Pathways to Support. This innovative programme sought to increase female prisoners' understanding of domestic and sexual violence and abuse and to help them to identify support available to them. Throughout the programme emphasis was placed upon the importance of accessing support and linking in with pathways to support that are available through the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline service, which is now accessible from Ash House for the first time.

The longer-term impact of the programme has also been evident with the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline receiving calls from women in Ash House.

The impact of this programme was evident immediately. It was extremely well received by female prisoners who participated. Comments included:

“You learn, its not just you.... you learn its not your fault”

“Knowledge that help is available”

“Thank you! We NEED you to come back”

Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA)

This year, once again, we delivered a series of training sessions to doctors and dentists as part of their professional development programme through NIMDTA. Women's Aid was the only non statutory agency participating.

Doctors and dentists are perfectly placed to

identify signs and symptoms of domestic violence and it is essential they engage in training to fully understand the context and impact of domestic and sexual violence and abuse and to know how to respond and signpost to specialist services. A total of seven sessions were delivered to approximately 350 doctors and one session was delivered to approximately 50 dentists. Once again the training was extremely well received.

Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) training

Women's Aid across Northern Ireland has always welcomed opportunities to work together with the Police Service of Northern Ireland to ensure up to date awareness of the extent and impact of domestic and sexual violence and to promote best practice and effective response.

This year, we delivered, in partnership with some of our member groups (Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid, Fermanagh Women's Aid, North Down and Ards Women's Aid and Mid Ulster Women's Aid) a total of 15 training sessions attended by approximately 50 PSNI Recruits (750 total) at PSNI Garnerville Training College.

Women's Aid and Northern Ireland Housing Executive – joint working protocol

Women's Aid Federation NI was delighted this year, to work in close partnership with NIHE to develop a progressive joint protocol with the following aim:

Promote and enhance the safety of those who have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse through increased awareness, collaborative working and effective and efficient referral.

Both organisations were delighted to agree and present this joint protocol for working together. The protocol reflects both organisations' commitment to inter agency working and applies to all Housing Executive Outlets and local Women's Aid groups and Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland, including the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline.

To underpin the joint protocol and ensure its effective implementation across all Housing Executive outlets and Women's Aid groups, Women's Aid Federation NI delivered training to approximately 50 NIHE staff.

Other external training developments

It has been a busy year in relation to external training development and delivery and other work has included:

- Provision of Social Guardian training to Victim Support NI (25 staff and volunteers)
- Reach out – Speak out – impact of domestic violence on children and young people with CiNI (20 participants across NI)
- Provision of training to Stranmillis University College (35 educators across NI)

External training delivered April 2014 – March 2015

Training Provided	Agency	Duration	Numbers Attended
Pathways to support Understanding the impact of domestic violence on female prisoners	Northern Ireland Prison Service	2 x 1 days	24
Pathways to support	Female prisoners Ash House	4 x 1 days	30
Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness Raising	Northern Ireland Medical & Dentists Training Association (NIMDTA)	8 Workshops	400 (8 x 50 approx.)
Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness Raising	Northern Ireland Housing Executive	1 half day	50
Developing Social Guardians to respond to domestic violence	Victim Support NI	1 day	25
Reach out – Speak out Impact of domestic violence on children and young people	Stranmillis University College	1 day	35
Reach out – Speak out Impact of domestic violence on children and young people	Children in Northern Ireland	1 day	20
Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness Raising	Police Service Northern Ireland	15 sessions	750 (15 x 50 approx.)
TOTAL			1334

1334 representatives from external agencies attended training provided by Women's Aid Federation NI

Internal training - Accredited training

Women's Aid Federation NI is completely committed to the provision of quality training programmes to staff and volunteers across our nine member groups. We strongly believe that by providing highly effective training interventions we can:

- Assure provision of a quality service
- Consistently demonstrate best practice
- Promote continuing professional development
- Build skills and capacity
- Meet our quality assurance requirements from funders



Women's Aid Federation NI is an accredited centre with Open College Network

(OCN) and continues to effectively deliver accredited courses at level 3.



Women's Aid Federation NI is also an Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) Recognised Provider. This enables the organisation to quality assure various programmes by awarding ILM Development Awards on successful completion of the following:

- Train the Trainers to Develop Social Guardians Facilitators to deliver Helping Hands.
- Effective Communication Skills for Social Guardians Delivering Helping Hands.

Accredited training provided

- OCN Level 3 The Role of the Domestic and Sexual Abuse/Violence Practitioner (Part of QCF qualification)
- OCN level 3 Understanding Domestic Violence
- OCN level 3 Court Support Training
- OCN level 3 Training Skills for Trainers
- Keeping Safe Child Protection- endorsed by Volunteer Now
- Foundation Level in Certificate of Protective Behaviours

UK wide accredited training

Women's Aid Federation NI has continued to develop a national core curriculum for domestic violence training. We are now in a position to roll out the certificate level of the **Tackling and Preventing Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse** qualification, which is available at 3 stages of learning and accreditation (QCF):

Award

- New starters/volunteers

Certificate

- Practitioners with 2 years experience

Diploma

- Practitioners who have completed certificate

This progressional award enables staff to access training and increase their level of qualification on an ongoing basis and provides nationally recognised transferable skills within the UK. This qualification has been mapped to the Domestic & Sexual Violence National Occupational Standards (NOS).

The certificate consists of 4 units

1. Understanding domestic and sexual abuse/violence within a social and historical context.
2. Professional responses to children and young people with experiences of domestic and sexual abuse/violence.
3. The role of the domestic and sexual abuse practitioner.
4. Domestic and sexual violence/abuse services and a coordinated community response.

The Certificate in tackling and preventing domestic and sexual violence and abuse has been approved by the Home Office as:

“suitable training for all IDVAs and other specialist domestic violence services”.

The roll out of Unit 3 – The Role of the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Practitioner was implemented in the last quarter of the previous year with 3 X 2 day training programmes accessed by 51 staff from across all nine Local Women’s Aid Groups. During this year the assessment process was completed and we are very pleased to announce that 47 staff successfully received NOCN (National) Level III Certificate.

A further 3 X 2 day training programmes are in place for Autumn 2015.

PREVENTATIVE EDUCATION PROJECT

Women's Aid Federation NI 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 unacceptable and no child or young person is left without information or support.

This is year five of a project funded by the Department of Education. Women's Aid Federation NI has developed an innovative programme to build capacity for primary school teachers to deliver Helping Hands. The capacity building programme, Developing Social Guardians to Deliver Helping Hands, has been delivered to Primary School Teachers across the five Education and Library Board Areas since 2010 and this year 2014/2015 was the fifth successful roll out of this training.

Programme outcomes:

- Assist teachers to understand the context and impact of domestic violence in the lives of children and their families.
- Assist teachers to develop preventative and early intervention strategies in relation to children who do not feel safe, specifically children affected by domestic violence.
- Enable teachers to deliver the Helping Hands programme linked to the curriculum.

Teachers who successfully complete the two day programme are eligible for an ILM Development Award entitled: *Effective Communication Skills for Social Guardians delivering Helping Hands*.

Teachers and schools involved 2014 - 2015

Numbers of Primary Schools Involved	Number of teachers who accessed the two day training programme
111	161

Trained to date 2010 - 2015:

Teachers
824

Schools
553

Exciting developments

Women's Aid Federation NI is delighted to have been approached this year by Dr John Devaney from the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work at Queens University Belfast, in relation to the possibility of conducting robust research into the effectiveness of the Helping Hands education programme as a preventative education approach in primary school settings. This work is in its very initial stages and we are looking at submitting a bid for funding to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). We are extremely hopeful and optimistic that this research will go ahead and look forward to evidencing the effectiveness of our preventative education approaches.



Post primary preventative education - Heading for Healthy Relationships (H4HR)

We are still in the process of shaping our final module for this post primary education pack. We are now at the stage where most of the hard work is done and we look forward to working in partnership over the next year with our member groups to finalise the programme and roll it out to post primary schools with the necessary teacher support and training across Northern Ireland.

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM



Journey to Freedom is a personal development group process, for women who have experienced (or who continue to experience) domestic violence.

This is the third year using the newly updated pack and Women's Aid facilitators have been really positive about the benefits. The new pack, whilst retaining the main structure, key activities and materials from the original process, has been updated and further developed.

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 wellbeing 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.

This year 576 women participated in the Journey to Freedom programme across Northern Ireland

Journey to Freedom: The Stepping Stones





YOU AND ME, MUM

The aim of this 10 week programme is to empower, support and develop further understanding of the role of mothers in addressing the needs of their children and young people who have lived with domestic violence.

Aim

To provide a ten week self-help programme, which will empower, support and develop further understanding of your role as mothers, in addressing the needs of children and young people who have lived with domestic violence.

Objectives

- Understand how domestic violence affects you as a parent.
- Understand the effects of domestic violence

on children and young people.

- Develop effective communication skills with children and young people.
- Promote healthy and non-violent relationships.
- Explore the key Protective Behaviour messages and strategies for keeping mothers, children and young people safe.

The programme is delivered to groups of mothers by two facilitators, one with expertise in working with mothers and the other brings an expertise in working with children. All mothers who participate in the programme receive their own You and Me, Mum handbook which contains information relating to all the topics discussed on a weekly basis as well as space for them to record their own learning and thoughts.

Week	Topic covered
1	An ideal family
2	How domestic violence influences me as a mother (part 1)
3	How domestic violence influences me as a mother (part 2)
4	How domestic violence can influence my child or young person
5	Survival strategies of children and young people
6	How to deal with my child or young person's challenging behaviour
7	When a child or young person acts abusively in the home
8	How to support my child with protective behaviours
9	Effective communication with your child/young person
10	My hopes, my dreams, my plans

This year a total of 40 mothers participated in the You and Me, Mum programme.

WOMEN'S AID GROUPS: REGIONAL STATISTICS

Statistical data can never fully reflect the devastating impact of domestic and sexual violence. Statistics do however show the extent of need for support for victims, and offer a snapshot of the work carried out by local Women's Aid groups across Northern Ireland.

Number of Women and Children Staying in Refuge: 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015

932 women stayed in refuges

689 children stayed in refuges

439 women unable to access refuge in their area

71 women were supported during their pregnancies

Refuge

A total of **932 women** stayed in Women's Aid refuges during 2014/15. This is a slight decrease from 2013/14, when 999 women were accommodated. **689 children** also stayed in refuge, a slight decrease from 2013/14 when 747 children were accommodated. **439 women** were unable to access refuge services in their area because there were no beds available for them. This presents a **9% increase** from last year's figure of 402 women. A small number of these women were able to be accommodated in Women's Aid refuges in other parts of Northern Ireland, but for many women the extremely high demand for our lifesaving services meant that there were no bed spaces for them or their children.

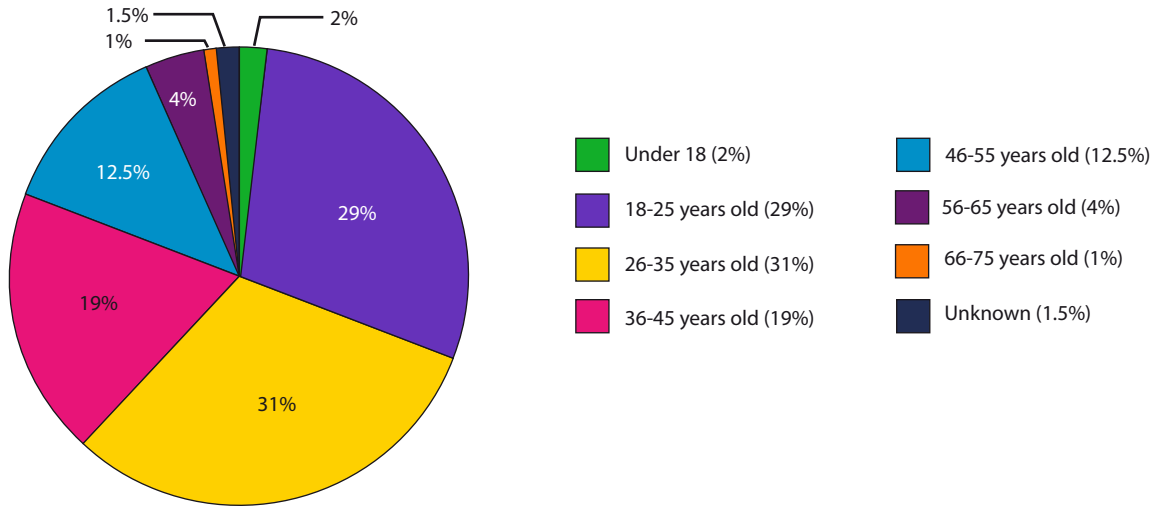
As these figures show, refuge services are as vital as ever for women and children who are victims

of domestic and sexual violence – on average, **4 women and children** come to stay in refuge every day because they are not safe in their own homes. During the year, **71 women** in refuge were supported during their pregnancies. This is a rise from last year, when 59 women were supported through pregnancy.

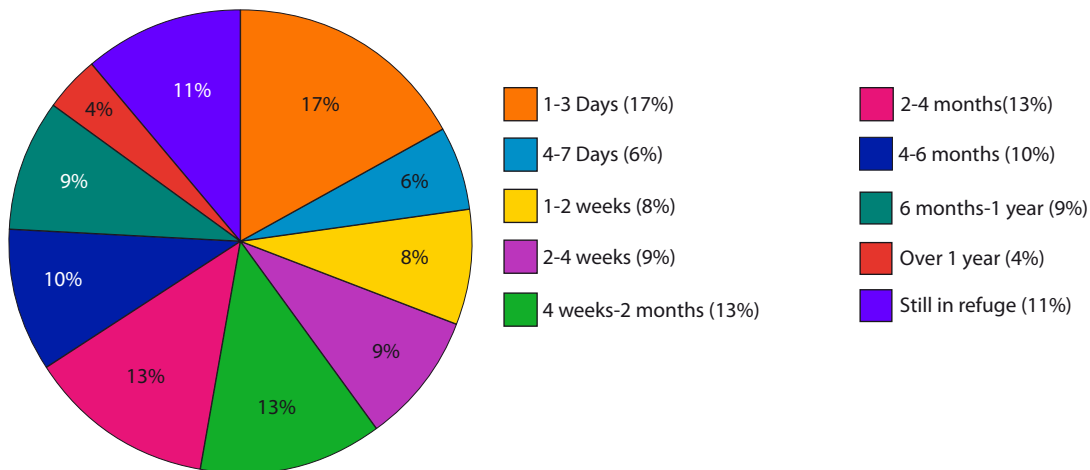
Age range

Domestic and sexual violence affects women of all ages. Many women suffer for years before reaching out for support. The most predominant age group this year is the 26 – 35 year olds, who represent **31%** of all women staying in refuge in this year. The second highest group are 18 – 25 year olds, who make up **29%** of all women staying in refuge this year. **1%** of women who stayed in our refuges were over 66 years old.

Age range of women staying in Women's Aid refuges: 1st April 2014 - 31 March 2015



Length of stay of women & children in Women's Aid refuges: 1st April 2014- 31st March 2015



Floating Support & Outreach Services

The number of women accessing Floating Support and other Women's Aid Outreach Services rose in 2014/15. A total of **3,567 women** accessed Floating Support services this year, a slight increase **of 9** from 2013/14 when the number was 3,558. There was a significant increase in the number of women accessing our other outreach services this year. **2,395 women** accessed these services, an increase of **44%** on 2013/14, when the figure was 1,662. This brings the total of women accessing all community

- PSNI
- Social Services
- Nurses / Doctors / Midwives / Health Visitors / healthcare professionals
- NI Housing Executive
- Probation Board NI / IDAP
- The Rowan SARC
- Simon Community
- Housing Associations
- Solicitors
- Other Women's Aid groups
- Citizen Advice Bureaux
- Victim Support NI
- Lifeline
- SureStart
- Youth Justice Agency
- Debt Action
- Extern
- Education & Library Boards
- Youth Workers
- Relate
- NSPCC
- Judiciary
- Christians Against Poverty
- South West Alcohol Project

based services to **5,962**.

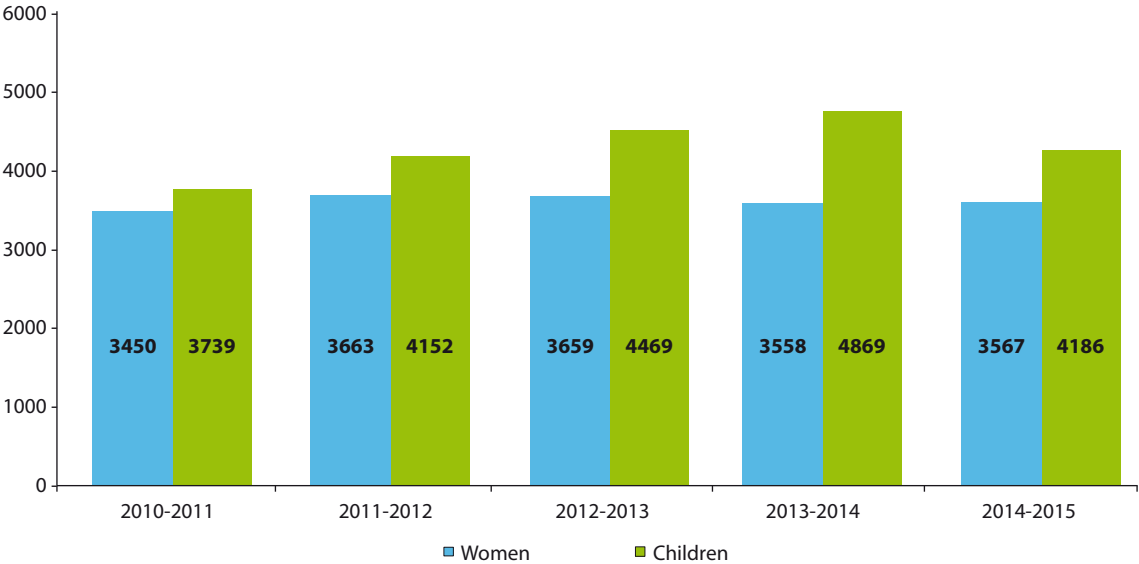
4,186 children were indirectly supported through the Floating Support service. This represents **a decrease of 14%** on the 2013/14 figures, when 4,869 children were supported.

Referrals to our outreach services come from a variety of sources, including the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline. Other organisations that refer to Women's Aid include:

- Family Support Hubs
- Community Mental Health
- Homestart
- Addiction services
- MARAC
- Action for Children
- St Vincent DePaul
- Belfast Migrant Centre
- Women's Centres
- Counselling services
- Political parties / representatives
- Friends/relatives
- Schools
- Church groups
- Food banks
- Ballymena inter-ethnic forum
- Prince's Trust
- SOLACE
- BME groups
- Homeless Advice Centre
- Colleges / universities
- British Deaf Society
- FASA
- Jobs & Benefits office
- Parent support groups
- Victims'Voice

**3,567 women accessed Floating Support.
4,186 children were indirectly supported through the Floating Support service.**

**Numbers of women and children supported through Floating Support
over past five years 2010/11 – 2014/15**



5,962 women were supported via all community based outreach services

Unfortunately, in spite of our efforts, waiting lists continue to operate across our local groups for community-based outreach support. This shows the real need for the expansion of such vital support initiatives for victims of domestic violence

in Northern Ireland. Nonetheless, our outreach services continue to enable many women and their children to access support whilst remaining in their own homes and communities.

Black & Minority Ethnic Women

Women's Aid is committed to ensuring our services are inclusive of all women and children in Northern Ireland. As part of our efforts to reach out to women from black and ethnic minority communities, information leaflets on domestic and sexual violence are published in 12 different languages. Both our 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline and local Women's Aid groups have access to interpretation and translation services.

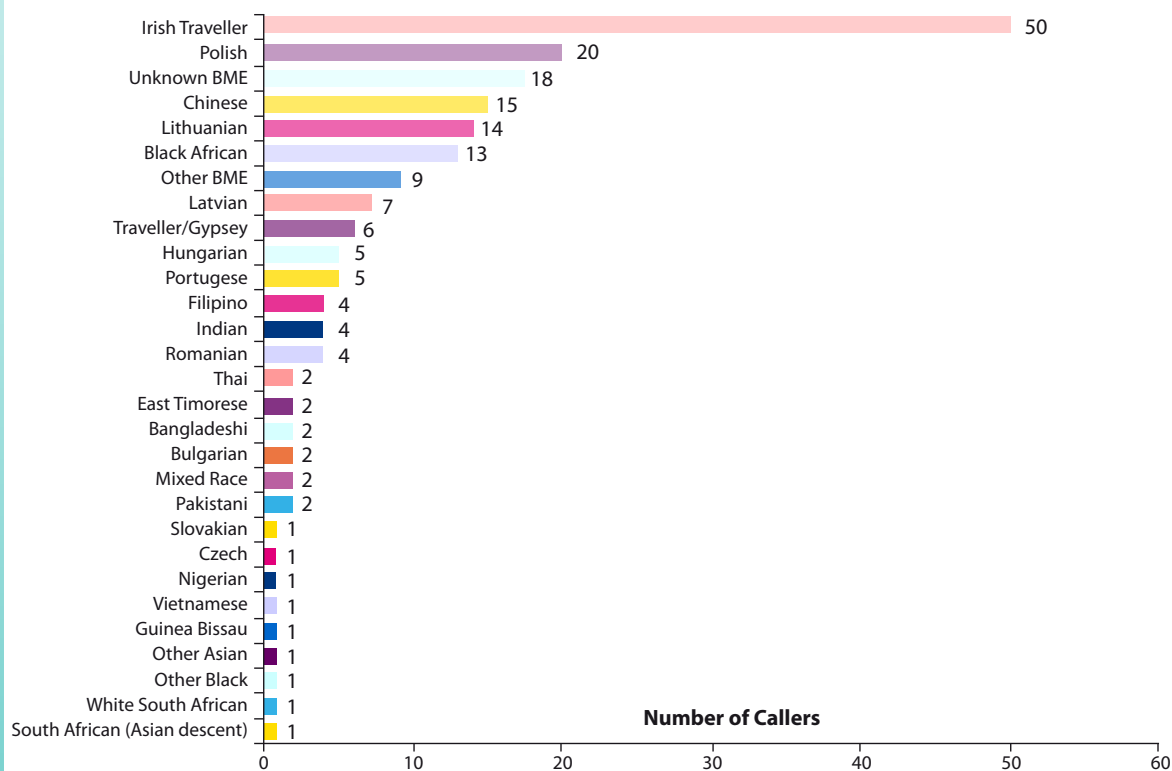
In 2014/15, **195 women** from black and minority ethnic communities, including the Travelling community, were accommodated in our local refuges – this is **an increase of 20 women (11%)** from 2013/14, when the figure was 175.

207 women from BME communities accessed Floating Support services, a decrease of **56 women (21%)** on last year's figure, which was 263. A further **124 BME women** accessed other Women's Aid outreach services. This is a total of **331 BME women** who accessed all our outreach services.

Women's Aid is actively seeking ways to reach out to women and children from all communities who need our services. However we are aware that in order to significantly improve access for BME women, resources are required to enable outreach work with BME communities.

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland strives to welcome and support women from all ethnic backgrounds, nationalities and communities.

Women from black, minority and ethnic communities accommodated in Women's Aid Refuges 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015



195 women from black and minority ethnic communities, including the Travelling community, stayed in refuge.

331 BME women accessed all Women's Aid outreach services.

Disability

Domestic and sexual violence and abuse can have a huge negative impact on the physical and mental health of the women who experience it. Consequently, women in our services have a number of complex additional support needs, including:

- Mental health issues
- Mobility problems
- Arthritis
- Cardiovascular disease
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Eating disorders
- Sight / hearing impairment

- Crohn's disease/ colitis / IBD
- Scoliosis / spinal disease or injury
- Fibromyalgia / chronic fatigue / ME
- PTSD
- Addictions
- Suicidal thoughts / ideation
- COPD / lung disease
- Communication difficulties

Number of women presenting with mental health issues in Women's Aid services

Refuge: 241

Floating Support: 775

Community-Based Outreach: 394

No Recourse to Public Funds

The issue of women who are victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse and have no recourse to public funds continues to be a source of concern for Women's Aid. This year, **41 women** with no recourse to public funds stayed in our refuges, **27 of whom** had children. Women's Aid is willing and committed to provide support, emergency accommodation and assistance for all women and children who are victims of domestic violence; however this requires sustained funding and resources.

Emergency fund: This fund, which was provided by OFMDFM and managed and distributed by British Red Cross, was secured for a short two month period during this year. The purpose of the fund was to assist destitute migrants who come to Northern

Ireland and may have become vulnerable due to a range of circumstances. This fund has been in place several times over the last few years for short periods of time and Women's Aid has always been involved in supporting vulnerable women and children with limited or no recourse to public funds.

Women's Aid Federation NI distributed £3,625 through 8 of our local groups during this two month period. These funds supported **23 women and their children** and the financial support was mainly used to provide food, heat and essential clothing.

Women's Aid Federation NI was the second largest distributor of the funds across Northern Ireland and

domestic violence was highlighted as one of the major issues causing destitution.

This fund is a lifeline to women who are affected by domestic violence and have no recourse to public funds. Even small amounts of money have

made a huge difference to their lives. Women's Aid Federation NI calls on OFMDFM to establish the Emergency Fund on a permanent basis so that women suffering domestic violence are able to leave their abuser without facing certain destitution.

Perpetrators of abuse

Women's Aid in Northern Ireland supports women who have been victims of domestic and sexual violence and their children, regardless of who has committed that abuse. Our statistics show that the vast majority of domestic and sexual violence and abuse against women is perpetrated by male intimate partners or ex-partners. Women's Aid also supported women whose perpetrators were family members, same-sex partners, or others such as neighbours, co-tenants, landlords, friends, acquaintances, strangers or traffickers.

We believe more focus should be placed on perpetrators and the abuse they commit. For too long victims have been disbelieved, scrutinised or blamed for abuse perpetrated against them, instead of placing the blame where it firmly belongs - with the perpetrator. We hope that by placing the spotlight on perpetrators of abuse, we can help counter pervasive victim-blaming myths and stereotypes relating to violence against women.

Of the women who stayed in our refuges, **45%** of perpetrators were current husbands, partners or boyfriends, **35%** of perpetrators were ex-husbands, partners or boyfriends, **0.4%** were same sex partners or girlfriends, **8.9%** were family members or relatives, and **4.4%** were other perpetrators. In **6.3%** of cases the relationship of perpetrator to victim was unknown.

Of the women who accessed all our outreach services (including Floating Support), **31.7%** of perpetrators were current husbands, partners or boyfriends, **53.8%** of perpetrators were ex-husbands, partners or boyfriends, **0.1%** were same sex partners or girlfriends, **6.1%** were family members or relatives, and **0.4%** were other perpetrators. In **7.9%** of cases the relationship between perpetrator and victim was unknown.

With the right support behind them, many women can and do leave abusive relationships. This is especially evident in our outreach services, where many women will have been supported through the crisis stage of leaving an abuser and are now receiving ongoing support to rebuild their lives while staying in their own homes.

The statistics also help dispel the myth that a victim is partly at fault for their abuse because they do not leave their abuser. As the numbers clearly show, abuse often does not end when a woman flees an abusive situation. However, with support from expert organisations like Women's Aid and the committed efforts of government and statutory support agencies, it is possible for victims to break free from their perpetrator and build a new life.

Women engaged in group work programmes

This year, women participated in a range of personal development courses run by our local groups. **576 women** took part in the *Journey to Freedom* programme, **40 mothers** participated in *You and Me, Mum*, and a **further 1,430 women** partook in a number of other programmes offered by individual

local Women's Aid groups. In all, a total of **2,046 women** participated across **34 programmes** dealing with issues such as recovering from abuse, parenting, self-esteem building, stress management & wellbeing, coping with trauma, numeracy, literacy, art and financial management.

Women supported as part of the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP)

During 2014/15, **352 women** were engaged with a Women's Aid Women's Safety Worker, the support offered to women and their children when their partners or ex-partners are undertaking the IDAP perpetrators programme run by Probation Board NI.

Of these **352 women**, **89** were new referrals during 2014/15. The remaining **263 women** had been referred in the previous year and continued to receive support.

129 children were referred to the Women's Safety Worker service in 2014/15.

Children and young people in Women's Aid services

Women's Aid across Northern Ireland is committed to meeting the needs of all children and young people affected by domestic violence. Listening to their voices and views on our services is essential to how we take forward this work. We are committed to rolling out our strategy for children and young people, ***Our Place - Safe Space***, and are seeking resources to ensure that the outcomes in our strategy can be fully delivered.

In 2014/15, **689 children** and young people were accommodated in refuges, and **4,186 were indirectly supported through Floating Support**.

13 babies were born to women in refuge, ensuring that both mother and baby had a place of safety and were able to access vital support during this special time.

6,267 one to one sessions were held with children in refuge, in one of our centres or in the community. These sessions are crucial for listening to the needs and experiences of children, exploring their feelings and putting in place tailored support mechanisms and safety plans to encourage and enable them to recover and move on from the abuse they may have experienced.

322 Outings and social trips were organised for children and young people in refuge. These activities are of vital importance and ensure children and young people have opportunities to learn and have fun together during their time in Women's Aid refuges.

Women's Aid staff attended **348 Case Conferences** where they advocated for and on behalf of the children involved, ensuring their specific needs and circumstances were fully understood and considered in all decisions affecting them.

11,461 children and young people engaged in preventative programmes, including Helping Hands, either in one of our refuges or centres or in a community setting.

1,318 crèche sessions were held with **679 children**, as well as **973 additional childcare sessions**.

161 teachers were trained across **111 schools** to deliver the Helping Hands programme to children in primary schools, to increase their understanding of safety and support.



689 children and young people accommodated in refuge.



4,186 children and young people indirectly supported through the Floating Support service.



13 babies born to women in refuge.



518 children and young people in refuge registered with a GP.



6,267 one-to-one sessions held with children and young people.



129 children and young people supported through Women's Safety Worker (IDAP).



322 Outings and social trips organised for children and young people in refuge.

Women's Aid staff attended 348 Case Conferences



161 teachers trained to deliver Helping Hands programme.



Women's Aid Local Groups

Women's Aid Federation
Northern Ireland

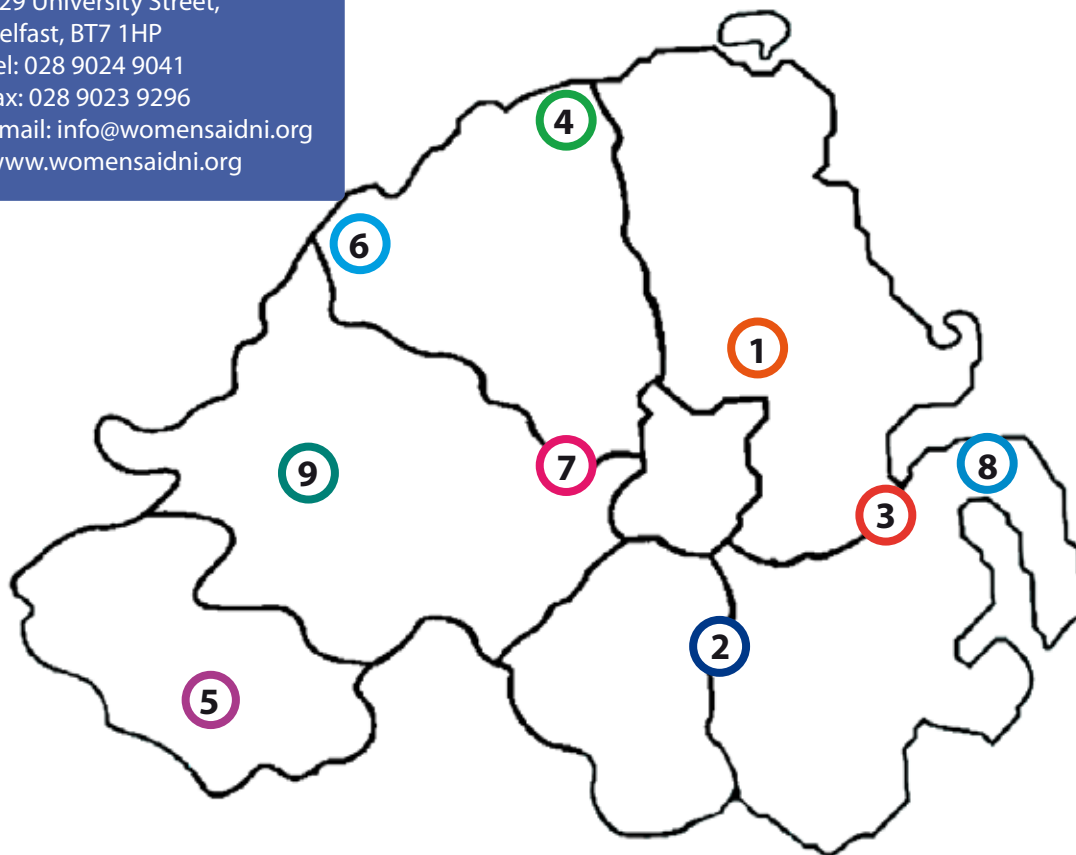
129 University Street,
Belfast, BT7 1HP

tel: 028 9024 9041

fax: 028 9023 9296

email: info@womensaidni.org

www.womensaidni.org



24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline: 0808 802 1414

Text **support** to 07797 805 839 Email: 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org

Open to **all women and men** affected by domestic & sexual violence

Contact details for Women's Aid groups

1. Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne & Newtownabbey Women's Aid

2 Cullybackey Road, Ballymena, BT43 5DF
t: 028 2563 2136
f: 028 2565 3304
e: womensaidareaoffice@btconnect.com
w: www.womens-aid.org.uk

2. Armaghdown Women's Aid

7 Downshire Place, Belfast Road, Newry BT34 1DZ
t: 028 3025 0765
f: 028 3026 9606
e: newrywomensaid@btconnect.com
w: www.womensaidnewry.co.uk

3. Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid

30 Adelaide Park, Belfast, BT9 6FY
t: 028 9066 6049
f: 028 9068 2874
e: admin@belfastwomensaid.org.uk
w: www.belfastwomensaid.org.uk

4. Causeway Women's Aid

23 Abbey Street, Coleraine, BT52 1DU
t: 028 7035 6573
f: 028 7032 6949
e: womensaidcoleraine@btinternet.com

5. Fermanagh Women's Aid

19 Darling Street, Enniskillen, BT74 7DP
t: 028 6632 8898
f: 028 6632 8859
e: womensaidfermanagh@btopenworld.com

6. Foyle Women's Aid

Pathways, 24 Pump Street, Derry, BT48 6JG
t: 028 7141 6800
f: 028 7136 5134
e: info@foylewomensaid.org
w: www.foylewomensaid.org

7. Mid - Ulster Women's Aid

27 Old Coagh Road, Cookstown, BT80 8QG
t: 028 8676 9300
f: 028 8676 9300
e: admin@midulsterwomensaid.org.uk
w: www.cookstownwomensaid.org.uk

8. North Down & Ards Women's Aid

18 Bingham Street, Bangor, BT20 5DW
t: 028 9127 3196
f: 028 9145 5245
e: info@ndawomensaid.org

9. Omagh Women's Aid

27 Market Street, Omagh, BT78 1EL
t: 028 8224 1414
f: 028 8224 1414
e: info@omaghwomensaid.org
w: www.omaghwomensaid.org

Women's Aid Local Groups: Highlights of the year

Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne and Newtownabbey Women's Aid

Investors in People Award

This year, like previous years, saw a great deal of work and commitment by our experienced staff. The organisation received a Silver Award from Investors in People in March 2015.

Opening of Ruth House

In November 2014, we opened Ruth House, specialist self-contained accommodation for women who have extraneous needs, rendering them unsuitable for communal living. This has proved to meet the needs of this group and we are delighted to say it has been fully occupied since it opened.

My story (short film)

In March 2015, we launched "My Story" a groundbreaking short film, which allowed local victims of domestic violence to tell their story while offering hope to other women. Last year the same group of women made their first film in collaboration with the Ulster Orchestra and Causeway Media. "Don't Silence the Violence" illustrates the harrowing cycle of violence a woman experiences at the hands of her violent partner.

Voices group

Additionally in February 2015, the young people in our Voices group made a short film with Fixers, a national movement for young people "fixing" the future. Statistics show that children and young

people's education is impacted upon by 80% as a result of living with domestic violence and the young people wanted to challenge their schools to respond to this issue.

Big Lottery Fund

We were fortunate to have our funding from the Big Lottery for our work with children and young people extended for one year. The Make It Better project works with children whose education has been impacted upon by domestic violence and following assessment provides a range of support ranging from crisis intervention to after schools group work.

Armaghdown Women's Aid

Safe Place

We are delighted to continue our success in the development and implementation of our new initiative SAFE PLACE throughout the Newry, Mourne, Down, Armagh, Craigavon and Portadown area with a wide range of agencies achieving their Bronze awards. We are very hopeful that Newry and Armagh City will achieve Safe City Award in the near future.

Provision of quality services

We were absolutely delighted this year to have been awarded a level B overall in our QAF (Quality Assessment Framework) assessment. This is a huge achievement and credit must be given to all our staff and volunteers who work endlessly to ensure the delivery of services that are consistently of a high quality and meet these standards.

Partnership working

We continue to work with a wide range of partnerships to ensure awareness of the impact of domestic and sexual violence and abuse is kept at the forefront of all relevant agencies. This year we have been fully engaged in all local multi partnership meetings.

Working in Schools

We are delighted this year to have again participated in the Developing Social Guardians to Deliver Helping Hands programme. This involved delivering two 2-day training courses to over 30 teachers across primary schools in the Southern Education Library Board area.

Also of vital importance to us is our ongoing work in post primary settings to raise awareness of the differences between healthy and abusive relationships and this year we are delighted to have delivered our post primary education programme **Heading for Healthy Relationships (H4HR)** to 409 young people in 10 post primary schools.

Delivering on our strategy

This year staff and volunteers at Armaghdown Women's Aid have continued to carry out the work of our strategic plan and objectives. We look forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead and remain strong in our belief that we need to address societal attitudes which blame the victim and become part of the abuse that victims must endure.

Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid

We continued to meet the increasing demand for services and provided support to women and children across a number of projects to a high standard, meeting all internal and external good practice, governance, and quality requirements.

40th Birthday celebrations

This year we celebrated our 40th anniversary of providing domestic violence services and support to women and children. We were also chosen as one of the Deputy Lord Mayor's Charities of the Year and celebrated this and our anniversary at an event in the City Hall. A number of speakers spoke of the issues and developments through the decades.

The Reach Project

We played a key role in the **Reach Project**, a European funded programme aimed at raising awareness of trafficking as a form of violence against women and girls, and improving responses across the whole island of Ireland. The project, the first "all Ireland" initiative of its kind brought together the expertise of a unique multi-agency partnership consisting of Women's Aid, Ruhama, the Departments of Justice North and South, PSNI, Garda Siochana and Health and Social Services. Work included, awareness raising and training events, and poster campaigns.

Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Bill 2015

We played a key role in Lord Morrow's Bill and provided expertise on the issue of trafficking and prostitution, outlining the support that is required to help women exit prostitution safely and permanently.

Changes in governance

A number of long established Trustees left the organisation following a long period of commitment; new members were also recruited to ensure the continuation of good governance.

Working in partnership

Partnership working underpins all our work and staff continued to play a key role in a number of partnerships, including the Domestic Violence Partnerships of both the Belfast and South Eastern Health Trusts. Staff shared their expertise through attendance at meetings, developing strategic and operational action plans, providing training and awareness, attending and speaking at events, seminars and conferences.

Causeway Women's Aid

Our dedicated and highly skilled staff continue to deliver excellent services to meet the accommodation, support and training needs of women and children.

Integration of Triage service

Following on from the success of our Triage service,

we have been able to integrate this way of working into our organisation through extended funding from Supporting People. This service arose due to the sheer volume of referrals and the recognition that immediate access to crisis response services in the community was vital for those we support.

Community training and resources

We have made great strides in supporting local community groups and associations this year by providing training and supporting the development of community specific resources. Community Associations, our local Polish school and others have taken up this service and it has proved mutually beneficial by raising awareness of domestic violence and increasing an understanding of our work.

Every Voice Counts

In partnership with the University of Ulster and PSNI, we have led the Every Voice Counts research that, for the first time in Northern Ireland (and we believe, the UK) has involvement from women who have experienced police response to Domestic Violence. The ability to draw out the actual experiences of each group will help to better understand the attitudes and behaviours exhibited and will allow the development of recommendations, which will ensure all victims have the right response first time.

Contributing at multiple levels

Through our daily work within Causeway Women's Aid, our community group support, our input into regional issues such as giving evidence at the

Justice Committee and with important research underway, we are contributing at multiple levels to ensure that domestic and sexual violence remain high on the public agenda.

Fermanagh Women's Aid

2014/15 saw Fermanagh Women's Aid directly support 307 women, 309 Children and 32 older women.

Strengthening partnerships

The ever increasing levels of domestic and sexual violence have required a joined up response, strengthening the working relationships within the Safe Hands Centre, Men's Action Network, NSPCC, VOYPIC and NEXUS, all providing services from this location.

Constitutional review

We were proud to participate in the Constitutional Review process with Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland and local Women's Aid groups. The Board of Directors and Management would like to express their thanks to WAFNI for facilitating this process. This will undoubtedly place the Women's Aid Movement in a stronger regional position.

Fundraising

Fundraising in 2014/15 was imaginative and successful, with events ranging from a formal Ball to GOLF Classic, Family Fun Days and a Christmas Appeal resulting in an overwhelming response of gifts and donations from the local community.

Training and awareness raising

Fermanagh Women's Aid were proud to assist WAFNI in PSNI Training in Garneville and have delivered a range of training and awareness programmes to 329 people across Fermanagh. We were proud to participate in World Host Training given Fermanagh's popularity as a tourist destination and are confident that we will be better placed to support and refer women and children whether they are visiting, seeking accommodation or residents.

Engaging service users

Service user engagement and involvement has been a priority, resulting in a complete review of support plans for children, targeted training and talks for professionals. We also established three Advisory Groups for Children and Young People, Women and Older People.

New properties

Fermanagh Women's Aid was generously offered two properties in the Fermanagh area by an anonymous businessman. These safe houses and move on properties are utilised in the event that Refuge provision is full or where a family is too large to house.

Foyle Women's Aid

Development at Ashleywood

Last year was very busy for all staff and volunteers at Foyle Women's Aid as we continued to develop our on-site services in Ashleywood. All services have been extremely busy, evidencing the need for this service provision.

Teenlink

Foyle Women's Aid now has a very active Teenlink project that has a high number of referrals and has been extended to two evenings a week with a lot of extracurricular activities, including participation in the planning of our new family service that is anticipated to begin in December.

Brussels seminar

Last year Foyle Women's Aid participated in a seminar in Brussels where we presented the work of all the countries in the European Alliance of Family Justice Centres and we signed up to the new foundation.

Funding developments

Foyle Women's Aid was absolutely delighted this year, to celebrate our successful application of 1.4 million pounds from the Heritage Lottery Fund. We are very excited about this new project and are currently working with our partners and the Heritage Lottery at the development phase of the project. We look forward to the development next year will bring for this new and innovative project.

Working in partnership

We have progressed our partnerships with a wide range of agencies and remain committed to working with all relevant agencies to achieve our vision of eliminating domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

Looking to the future

Foyle Women's Aid has many strategic developments planned for the next five years

and we look forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead for further developing our vital services for women and children in our area.

Mid Ulster Women's Aid

Outreach offices

We opened new offices in Dungannon and Maghera, making our services more accessible to women, children and young people in rural areas. The Chair of Magherafelt District Council, Catherine Elatter, officially opened our office in the Lurach Centre in Maghera and welcomed the initiative for supporting local people who find themselves the victims of domestic or sexual violence. The Mayor of Dungannon, Sean McGuigan, officially opened the Dungannon office, which is in the First Steps Women's Centre building, an ideal location for those in the Dungannon area who require support due to their domestic and/or sexual violence situation.

Supporting People Campaign

Mid Ulster Women's Aid joined the Mid Ulster and South Tyrone homeless hostel to bring the campaign to their local MLAs. During visits to the MLA's local offices, we asked them to support the campaign to strengthen the Supporting People programme that provides vital support to help our service users live independently.

White Ribbon Campaign

As part of the 16 days of Action Campaign, Mid Ulster Women's Aid invited local stakeholders to join the White Ribbon Campaign and sign the pledge. Among others who joined the campaign this year, were the Chair and Chief Executive of Clanmil, the

Housing Association we work in partnership with to provide refuge accommodation and also our local Accountant and Auditors David Lyttle + Co Ltd.

Signposting /Training Service

This year we offered a signposting and training service to raise awareness of signs and symptoms of domestic and sexual violence to help organisations signpost victims to appropriate services. Eight sessions were delivered to frontline staff from various organisations in the Dungannon and Cookstown areas.

Domestic violence awareness raising sessions

This year we delivered a total of 19 domestic violence awareness raising sessions to 222 individuals from statutory, voluntary and community organisations. These sessions were held in our resource centre in Cookstown and in venues throughout the Mid-Ulster area.

North Down and Ards Women's Aid

Floating Support

Our Floating Support extension application was successful with NIHE Supporting People, providing this project with an additional full time post, a half time post and a full time Manager's post. With the increase in staffing, we have been able to eliminate our waiting list for Floating Support services. Our Assessment Post continues to provide a single point of entry referral system, providing essential support and crisis services prior to allocation to a Floating Support worker. Referrals into Floating

Support have continued to significantly increase during 2014/2015.

Children's Services

Once again this year, the Children's Services programmes continue to grow and develop, with the art workshops continuing to be very popular and well attended. Helping Hands programme requests have increased this year and we are now offering Helping Hands as a group programme and also this year as a family programme. Feedback for the Children's Services programmes has proven to be very positive.

Refuge

Staff continue to provide safety, protection and support to refuge families, many of whom experience complex needs. This year refuge accommodated 45 women. Unfortunately, we were unable to accommodate 20 women and 11 children due to the refuge being full. Negotiations continue with the Housing Association to explore a new location for a new refuge.

IT developments

NDAWA opened a Facebook page, with a steady increase in 'page likes'. The new IT system went live towards the end of this year and is working very well.

Omagh Women's Aid

Visit from Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women

Omagh Women's Aid were delighted to facilitate

a visit in April 2014 by Professor Rashida Manjoo from South Africa. Professor Manjoo was appointed in June 2009 as Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences, by UN Human Rights Council. Professor Manjoo's visit was part of her 16 day mission to the UK, to gather evidence on how well or otherwise the UK government was meeting its international obligations in relation to violence against women and girls. She met with service users, staff, volunteers and other women's sector representatives at our sister refuge in Cookstown.

Fundraising

A number of fundraising events took place throughout the year to raise money to refurbish the children's playground at the refuge. Events included a "Showstoppers Concert" performed by Londonderry Musical Society, in partnership with Omagh Lions Club and a gig by talented local singer/songwriter, Michelle Owens.

Summer fun for children

Local children who had used the services of Omagh Women's Aid enjoyed a summer programme at the Resource Centre. The children participated in the Helping Hands programme and enjoyed getting creative by cutting out, painting and decorating their hands!

Children in Need funding

Much welcomed funding from Children in Need enabled Omagh Women's Aid to launch a project to support children and young people affected by domestic violence. The project was launched at Omagh Women's Aid's International Women's Day celebrations in March 2015, where staff, volunteers, other agencies and women who use Omagh Women's Aid's services enjoyed coffee, cake, chat, music and poetry readings.

FINANCE

Please note that the accounts that follow are an extract from the original document. A copy of the full accounts is available upon request by calling 028 9024 9041 or emailing info@womensaidni.org

NORTHERN IRELAND WOMEN'S AID FEDERATION LTD (COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE) FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

Company Information

Management Board	Christine Whiteman (Chair) Lorna McAlpine (Vice-Chair) Anne McMahon (Secretary) Margaret McMahon (Treasurer) Jean Brennan Claire Curran Allison Forbes Elsie Jordan Angela Lloyd-Stevens Tara Maguire Ursula Marshall Agnieszka Martynowicz Bronagh McKee	Bankers	First Trust Bank Donegall Square North Belfast
		Solicitors	Flynn & McGettrick 9 Clarence Street Belfast BT2 8DY
		Registered Office	129 University Street Belfast BT7 1HP
		Charity Number	XN 45049
		Registration Number	NI 021741
		Governing Document	Memorandum and Articles of Association
		Legal Status	Company Limited by Guarantee
Secretary	Anne McMahon		
Auditors	Lynn, Drake & Co Ltd Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors 1 st Floor 34 B-D Main Street Moirá BT67 0LE		

The Management Board (Board of Directors) presents their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2015.

Objects of the Charity

The aims of the Charity (which has nine member groups throughout Northern Ireland) have been encapsulated in the following mission statement:

Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation exists to challenge attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate domestic and sexual violence. We seek, through our work, to promote healthy and non-abusive relationships.

The following are key aims of the Organisation:

Women's Aid is the lead voluntary organisation in Northern Ireland addressing domestic and sexual 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 and sexual violence and, through our work, promote healthy and non-abusive relationships.

The core work of Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland is structured under the four key aims:-

1. Challenge attitudes and beliefs / policy

Challenge the attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate domestic & sexual violence by lobbying, campaigning and influencing the policy agenda

- To educate and inform the public, media, police, courts, social services and other agencies of the impact of domestic and sexual violence.
- To advise and support all relevant agencies in the development of domestic and sexual violence policies, protocols and service delivery.
- To work in partnership with all relevant agencies to ensure a joined up response to domestic and sexual violence.

2. Prevent Domestic & Sexual Violence

Promote healthy and non-abusive relationships through research, education and training

- 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 and sexual violence.
- To run preventative education programmes in schools and other settings.

3. Support grassroots work

Support the work of local Women's Aid groups

- As the umbrella body tackling domestic and sexual violence in Northern Ireland we co-ordinate and lead local Women's Aid groups on all regional initiatives and developments.
- Develop and support local Women's Aid groups to provide refuge accommodation to women and their children suffering mental, physical or sexual abuse within the home.
- To manage the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline which provides the key co-ordination role for women accessing refuge and other services.
- Develop and deliver a range of child protection training through Regional Children's Planning meetings with Women's Aid local groups. This supports the provision of services to children and young people who have experienced domestic violence.
- Work with local Women's Aid groups to develop and sustain a regional fundraising strategy.

4. Manage and Develop Resources

Manage and develop resources – personnel, financial resources, estate – to meet the challenges of a changing political, economic and social policy environment

- To ensure effective leadership and management through good governance and support to our Board of Trustees.
- To manage, supervise and train all staff and volunteers on a continuing basis.
- To maintain rigorous financial auditing and accounting systems.
- To lead on the constitutional review of Federation and local Women's Aid groups.
- To identify and secure funding for new premises for Women's Aid Federation NI offering disabled access, safety of night workers access, secure parking and adequate space for training and development.
- To oversee the delivery of the current strategic and operational plan and development of a new strategic plan post 2018.

Decision Making Structures

The governing body of Women's Aid Federation, the Management Board, is drawn from membership of our affiliated groups and expertise from external co-options. The Management Board is responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation and oversees the management of the organisation. The day-to-day management and operation of the activities are carried out by a staff team, lead by the Director and Management Team, who also report regularly to the Board.

Identified Risks

During this period in order to ensure sustainability of Women's Aid Federation NI we made four posts redundant. Taking this action has secured the sustainability of our core work for the immediate future.

Uncertain and short term funding continues to make future planning difficult and indications from the government departments that fund us suggest a difficult financial time ahead. We will continue to negotiate with government departments to extend their commitment

to ensure that our core work can effectively continue and secure the sustainability of all our projects. Fund-Raising and Income Generation from diverse sources will continue in order to support the core work.

Volunteers

Volunteers play a key role in all the services of Women's Aid. We are able to sustain our 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline with the vital support of our volunteers. The Management Board members (Directors) also volunteer their time freely to attend regular monthly Board meetings, sub groups and offer ongoing support to the organisation.

Review of the transactions and financial position of Women's Aid Federation

Women's Aid Federation's funds have mainly been applied to the objects specified by each project's funders. It is policy to meet all restricted fund deficits by transfers from the accumulated unrestricted funds.

The Statement of Financial Activities, on page 9, indicates that the Organisation had incoming resources of £845,681 in the year which was exceeded by resources expended of £939,396 by £93,715 and this amount has been transferred to the Organisation's accumulated funds.

The Balance Sheet at 31 March 2015 on page 10 shows a net Accumulated Funds balance at that date of £199,525.

No significant events have occurred since that date of the Balance Sheet which affect the Organisation or which materially affect these financial statements.

Fixed Assets

There were no additions to fixed assets during the year.

The following persons were members of the Management Board at some time during the year to 31 March 2015: -

Christine Whiteman
Anne McMahon

Lorna McAlpine
Margaret McMahon

Jean Brennan
Allison Forbes
Angela Lloyd-Stevens
Ursula Marshall
Bronagh McKee

Claire Curran
Elsie Jordan
Tara Maguire
Agnieszka Martynowicz

The Management Board in each year shall consist of one member nominated by each affiliated group. If a Group has no-one able to serve, its committee may ask a second member of another group to act on their behalf. In the event that there are insufficient nominations and/or an identified skills deficit, the Management Board will seek co-options.

Reserves Policy

The charity's policy is to retain a level of free reserves, which matches the needs of the organisation, both at the current time and in the foreseeable future. The reserves required should be sufficient to meet committed grant expenditure and the running costs for a period equivalent to six months annual expenditure. The charity will continue to monitor compliance with this policy on a regular basis and the Board will review the appropriateness of the policy annually.

Charitable Status

Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Ltd enjoys charitable status by the authority of the Inland Revenue under reference XN 45049.

Members

The members of the company at 31 March 2015 were as follows: -

Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne &
Newtownabbey Women's Aid
Armaghdown Women's Aid
Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid
Causeway Women's Aid
Fermanagh Women's Aid
Foyle Women's Aid
Mid Ulster Women's Aid
North Down & Ards Women's Aid
Omagh Women's Aid

Statement of directors' responsibilities

The directors are responsible for preparing the Report of the Directors and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the directors are required to

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement as to disclosure of information to Auditors

So far as the Board of Directors are aware, there is no relevant information (as defined by Section 418 of the Companies Act 2006) of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware, and each director has taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a director in order to make them aware of any audit information and

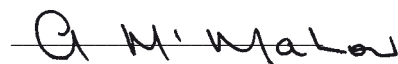
to establish that the charitable company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

The auditors, Lynn, Drake & Co Ltd, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

By Order of the Management Board



Anne McMahon
Secretary
8 August 2015

Report of the Independent Auditors to the members of Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Ltd.

We have audited the financial statements of Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Ltd for the Year Ended 31 March 2015 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies are set out on page 11.

This report is made solely to the charity's Members, as a body in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's Members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the management board and auditors

The management boards' responsibilities for preparing the annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable Northern Ireland law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards are set out in the statement of directors' responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with the relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view, are properly

prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice and are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006. We also report to you whether, in our opinion the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements.

In addition, we report to you if, in our opinion, the charitable company has not kept adequate accounting records, if the charitable company's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns, if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit, or if certain disclosures of directors remuneration specified by law are not made.

We read the report of the management board and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements within it.

Basis of Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgments made by the management board in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularities or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of

the presentation of the information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2015 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice applicable to smaller entities;
- the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006; and
- the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements.



Alistair Wells (Senior Statutory Auditor)
8 August 2015

For and on behalf of Lynn, Drake & Co Ltd
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
1st Floor
34 B-D Main Street
Moir
BT67 0LE

NORTHERN IRELAND WOMEN'S AID FEDERATION LTD (COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2015 £	Total Funds 2014 £
Incoming Resources					
Activities in furtherance of the Charity's objectives:					
Grants Receivable	29,245	-	766,982	796,227	788,980
Income from charitable activities	49,362	-	-	49,362	52,719
Activities for generating funds:					
Interest receivable	92	-	-	92	186
Total Incoming Resources	78,699	-	766,982	845,681	841,885
Resources Expended					
Costs of generating funds:	-	-	17,384	17,384	23,255
Charitable Expenditure:					
Costs in furtherance of charitable objectives	-	-	857,377	857,377	896,259
Management and Administration of the Charity	37,343	-	27,292	64,635	70,932
Total Resources Expended	37,343	-	902,053	939,396	990,446
Net (Outgoing)/Incoming Resources					
Before Transfers	41,356	-	(135,071)	(93,715)	(148,561)
Transfer between Funds	(71,145)	(125,000)	196,145	-	-
Net Incoming Resources for the Year	(29,789)	(125,000)	61,074	(93,715)	(148,561)
Funds Balance brought forward at 1 April 2014	86,225	205,000	2,015	293,240	441,801
Net Movement in Funds in Year to 31 March 2015	(29,789)	(125,000)	61,074	(93,715)	(148,561)
Fund Balance carried forward at 31 March 2015	56,436	80,000	63,089	199,525	293,240

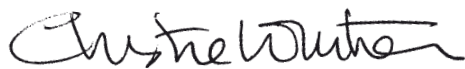
There were no recognised gains or losses other than those included in the statement of financial activities above.

NORTHERN IRELAND WOMEN'S AID FEDERATION LTD (COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Fixed Assets	53,000	53,000
Current Assets		
Debtors & Prepayments	70,934	182,110
Bank Accounts	134,226	121,176
Cash in Hand	76	252
	205,236	303,538
Liabilities		
Amounts falling due within one year	(58,711)	(63,298)
Net Current Assets	146,525	240,240
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	199,525	293,240
Liabilities – Amounts falling due after more than one year	-	-
Net Assets	199,525	293,240
Represented By: Accumulated Funds		
Unrestricted – General	56,436	86,225
Unrestricted – Designated	80,000	205,000
Restricted	63,089	2,015
Balance at 31 March 2015	199,525	293,240

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small charitable companies and with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

The financial statements were approved by the Management Board on 8 August 2015 and signed on its behalf by;



Christine Whiteman



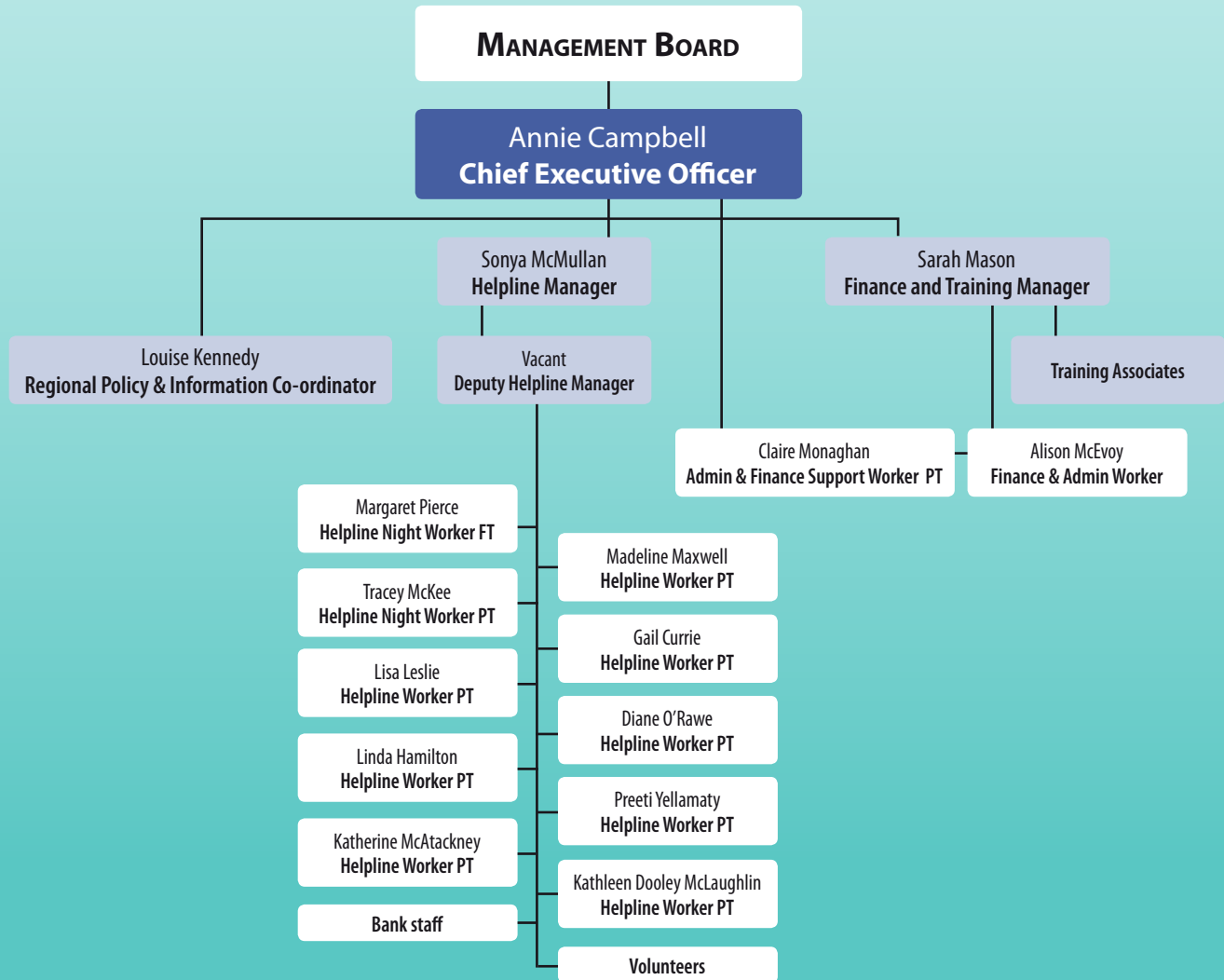
Margaret McMahon

THANK YOU

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland would like to thank all our donors for their on-going support and acknowledgement of our work and for enabling the continuation of so many vital projects.

- British Red Cross (OFMDFM)
- Community Safety Unit, Department of Justice
- Department of Education
- Domestic & Sexual Violence Unit, Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety
- Health & Social Care Board
- Individual Donors & Legacies
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Probation Board Northern Ireland
- Volunteers

WOMEN'S AID FEDERATION NI ORGANISATIONAL CHART



24 HOUR

Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline

FREEPHONE

0808 802 1414

Open to *all women and men* affected by domestic & sexual violence

📱 text **support** to **07797 805 839** ✉ 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org

women's aid

Federation Northern Ireland