

# TIME IS TICKING



Every 16 minutes the PSNI are called to a domestic abuse incident.  
Every other month a woman in an abusive relationship is murdered.

And still we are waiting for Government  
funding to meet the demand.

**#UNLOCKTHEFUNDING**

**THE 2022 - 2023  
ANNUAL REPORT**

**Women's Aid**  
 **FEDERATION  
NORTHERN IRELAND**

# TAKING HER LEAD: SURVIVOR ENGAGEMENT



Our regional Survivor Engagement Group is made up of women from our local Women's Aid groups across Northern Ireland with lived experience of domestic abuse. The group was created to empower members and to ensure that Women's Aid service development and delivery continues to be informed by the very women we exist to support.

We asked members what they think is the best part of being in the group was and they told us:

**"The chance to meet others from across the region."**

**"The feeling that you are making a difference."**

**"Being part of this group makes me feel good and it's helped my confidence grow."**

In the financial year 2022/23, the group of experts-by-experience were involved with a number of engagement projects. As well as informing Women's Aid training and public consultation responses; they gave their views on a regional stalking awareness campaign, spoke to journalists covering the implementation of the new non-fatal strangulation legislation, and developed and implemented 'Hear Her Voice' art installations in libraries across Northern Ireland. The installations included embroidery, paintings, and writing that were created by women from across NI with lived experience of domestic abuse. They challenged common victim-blaming narratives and called for the responsibility to be put on the perpetrator as well as the institutions that allow their abusive behaviours to continue.

## THE SEE HEAR ACT PROJECT

The work we do with children and young people is informed by our aim to create:

**"A society where all children and young people are safe, supported and surrounded by social guardians who will listen to them, build their confidence and encourage them to be the best they can be".**

The 'See Hear Act' Project, funded by Comic Relief, is a three-year initiative designed to develop Women's Aid internal children and young people services and working in partnership with external agencies through training so children and young people throughout NI can thrive. In the past ten years alone, 126 babies have been born to a woman staying in refuge.

In 2022/2023, the project made a number of key developments including:

- The piloting of specialised sensory play programmes for mums and their children aged 0 - 5.
- The development of regional peer support and good practice sharing.
- Supported colleagues throughout Northern Ireland in their training and delivery of our 'Helping Hands' Social Guarding training.



# The Key Numbers in 2022 / 23



**518 Women**  
stayed in our refuges  
throughout NI



**7,543 Women**  
received support whilst  
staying in their homes



**342 Children**  
stayed in refuge  
with their mum



**5,948 Children**  
had mums supported in  
Women's Aid services



**43 Women  
& 33 Children**  
With no recourse to public  
funds stayed in refuge



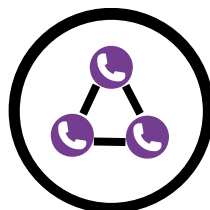
**274 Women**  
who were pregnant received  
support from Women's Aid



**7 Babies**  
born to women  
in refuge



**2,887 Women**  
with complex needs were  
supported by Women's Aid



**10,377 Calls**  
Referrals made to Women's  
Aid Service



**32,875 Incidents**  
The number of domestic  
abuse incidents recorded  
by the PSNI

## Forward by Sarah Mason - CEO - WAFNI

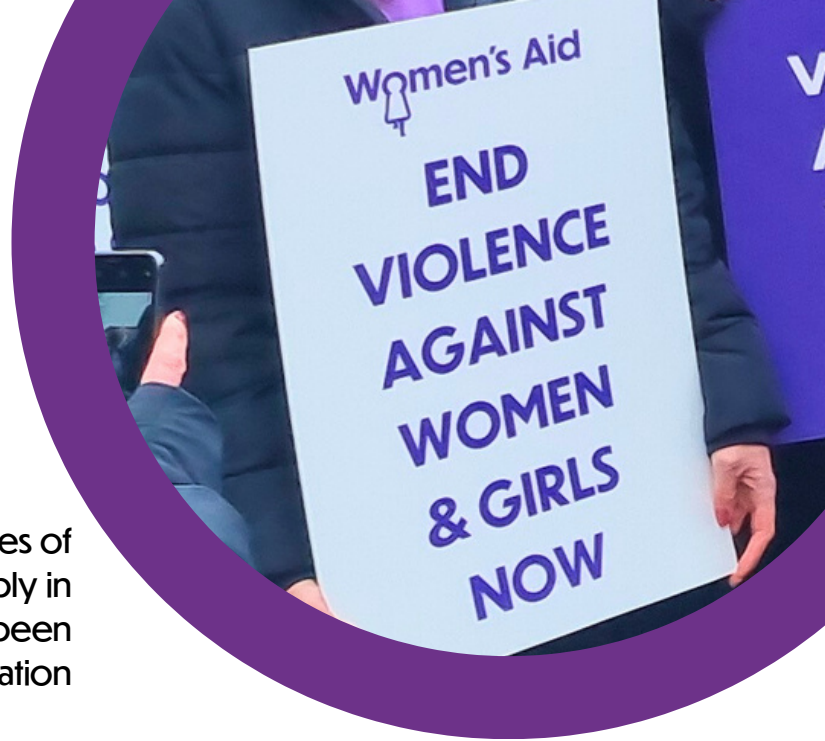
This year saw the huge progress against all six high level outcomes ( big ideas) presented in the strategic plan, Unlocking Potential, Building on Success, Road Map of Change 2022-2025 which was launched last year. The strategic plan seeks to build on strengths, harness opportunities and provide clear direction to the organisation in the aftermath of covid-19 and in line with changes in the external environment including government policy, legislation and funding constraints. This was a busy and productive year that witnessed the roll out of new legislation, the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act NI 2021 (which was implemented in February 2022). WAFNI developed and rolled out training to increase understanding of coercive control and build capacity among key organisations to risk assess and respond, in line with new legislation. We worked to build capacity internally across the 8 Women's Aid groups through the Centre for Training Excellence including the introduction of new online training modules.

# CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER, SAFER FUTURE FOR WOMEN & GIRLS

Following the passage of a number of key pieces of legislation through the Northern Ireland Assembly in the previous financial year, Women's Aid have been working with our key partners in the implementation of life saving and life changing legislation.

Despite no functioning Northern Ireland Executive in the financial year 2022/23, Women's Aid continued to campaign for greater protections for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and ending gender-based violence in Northern Ireland. This year Women's Aid Federation engaged extensively in The Executive Office's Co Design process for an Ending VAWG Strategy and also responded to a number of public consultations on matters directly affecting victims and survivors of domestic abuse including the PPS Policy for prosecuting cases of domestic abuse. These consultations included; the use of Live Links in court proceedings in Northern Ireland, the effects of paramilitaries on society in Northern Ireland and the review into Hate Crime Legislation.

Our powerful and hard-hitting campaign 'Time is Ticking' which ran in November 2022, calling on the Government to 'Unlock the Funding' as shocking new statistics revealed the PSNI received a call relating to a domestic abuse every 16 minutes. As we move into the next financial year, Women's Aid will continue to campaign to ensure women are safe in every area of our society.



## Our Helping Hands Programme



Helping Hands is a preventative education programme, developed by Women's Aid NI for primary school aged children at Key Stages One and Two. The overall aim of the programme is to increase children's understanding of feeling safe and to explore and promote behaviours which will contribute to a safe environment.

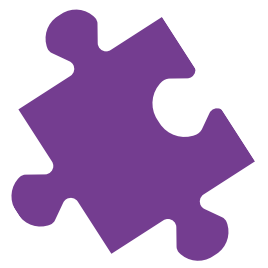
After covid-19, we reviewed and updated content of our teacher programme, developing Social Guardians to deliver helping hands, with up to date research, changes that reflected the updates in domestic abuse legislation and focusing on children's experiences of coercive control. As of 2022/23, 70% of Primary Schools in Northern Ireland have been trained in delivering Helping Hands, with a total 1,680 teachers becoming Social Guardians.

Following the roll out of this updated programme and an extensive consultation of teachers who participated in the training found that:

- 100% rated trainer's style and manner as either excellent (98%) or good (2%).
- 100% rated course content and materials as either excellent (98%) or good (2%).
- 100% rated range of methods used as either excellent (96%) or good (4%).



# THE VITAL PIECE IN THE PUZZLE: YOUR LOCAL WOMEN'S AID GROUP



The 8 local Women's Aid groups throughout Northern Ireland are the vital specialist support service for women, children & young people affected by domestic abuse in the heart of your community.

They make a massive difference every day to those whom they work with, and here is just a highlight of some of their amazing work in 2022/2023.

You can find out the contact details of your local group by visiting our website: [womensaidni.org](https://womensaidni.org)

## ABCLN

The Reconnect Project, funded by the Gallaher Trust, offers women personal development, group work, and courses to boost confidence, reduce isolation, and improve well-being in safe, supportive environments.

## Foyle

Opened the first Family Justice Centre in L/Derry; a trauma-informed centre where Agencies work together in one safe, neutral location to support victims of abuse and break the cycle of violence in families.

## Belfast & Lisburn

Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid supported women who have been victims of human trafficking. 273 women and 148 children were supported through this service.

## Armagh Down

Launched a 6 month pilot extension for their DASS Specialist Hospital Support Worker, and trialed out-of-hours services for female victims of domestic abuse in the Craigavon and Daisy Hill Hospital sites.



## North Down & Ards

Reached 40 years of service in the area, with new CEO Emalyn Turkington joining the group in September 2022.

They also introduced two new important support roles, Young Women's Worker and Older Women's Worker.

## Causeway & Mid Ulster

Partnered with Queen's Social Work Department to train women in services as Citizen Educators to support the training of future social workers and planning for development of self-contained accommodation to meet growing service demand.

## Fermanagh

Hosted their 'Where the Blame Lies' conference, with renowned international speakers. The focus was on domestic abuse, risk escalation conditions and domestic homicide. The speakers shared 'Where the Blame Lies' and how we can save lives.

## Omagh

Omagh continued to provide a variety of empowerment programmes which has been greatly received by all participants. Refurbishment work commenced at the Refuge to update kitchens and bedrooms.



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

T: 028 2563 2136

2

Armagh Down Women's Aid

T: 028 3025 0765

3

Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid

T: 028 9066 6049

4

Causeway & Mid Ulster Women's Aid

T: 0300 373 1055

5

Fermanagh Women's Aid

T: 028 6632 8898

6

Foyle Women's Aid

T: 028 7141 6800

7

North Down & Ards Women's Aid

T: 028 9127 3196

8

Omagh Women's Aid

T: 028 8224 1414

9

Women's Aid Federation

T: 028 9024 9041

## With special thanks to our valued partners:

