

WHEN HOME IS NOT SAFE

Domestic Abuse During the Covid-19 Emergency



WOMEN'S AID

Listening. Believing. Supporting.

CEO INTRODUCTION

Highlighting the safety of home has been paramount during the Covid-19 emergency. When most of us think of home, we think of a place of solace to retreat from the pressures of the outside world. In Ireland and around the world, this crisis has opened eyes to the fact that for thousands of women and children, home can be the most dangerous place. Since late March, Women's Aid has been on the frontline answering calls from women who are trapped at home with very dangerous abusers. Our 24hr National Freephone Helpline responded to a **43%¹ increase in calls** between the end of March and the end of June, compared to 2019 figures. There was also a **71%² increase in visits to the Women's Aid website** for this period. These women are not just statistics, they are real women reaching out, sometimes in the dead of night, to be heard, believed and supported.



This report provides a snapshot into the effects of the Covid-19 crisis on women and children experiencing domestic violence³ and the ways in which Women's Aid has adapted and responded. I would like to thank all of the Women's Aid staff and volunteers as well as the Board of Directors for their commitment and compassion during this time in adapting quickly and seamlessly to the ever-changing terrain of the emergency.

It is also important to recognise the work of our colleagues in Safe Ireland, local domestic violence and rape crisis support services, refuges, An Garda Síochána, the courts, Tusla and various Government departments including the Department of Justice and Department of Social Protection, whose collective efforts tried to ensure that women who needed support and legal protection received it as far as possible, in such exceptional circumstances.

I would also like to thank our donors for their generous contributions over this period. As we look ahead and begin to adapt to *'the new normal'*, we cannot close our eyes to the women and children for whom abuse is the daily reality.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Benson".

Sarah Benson
CEO, Women's Aid
August, 2020

1 23rd March to 30th June 2020: calls responded to 6,561
23rd March to 30th June 2019: call responded to 4,563
Variation: 1,968 (43%).

2 23rd March to 30th June 2020 - 114,567 sessions
23rd March to 30th June 2019 - 67,187 sessions
Variation: 47,380 (71%).

3 While recognising that the legal term in Ireland is 'domestic violence' we acknowledge that many victims/survivors identify more with the term 'domestic abuse' or 'intimate partner violence'. Women's Aid uses these terms interchangeably in this report to refer to the same set of abusive behaviors perpetrated by current or former intimate partners (including emotional, physical, sexual and financial abuse and coercive control).

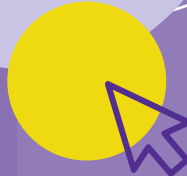
43%

Increase in calls responded to by the Women's Aid 24hr National Freephone Helpline



71%

Increase in visits to the Women's Aid website



78%

Expansion of hours for the Instant Messaging Support Service



Domestic violence is reaching new extremes as women suffer the physical and emotional consequences of being in lockdown with abusive partners.

"I've thought about ending my life just to escape the situation."

"I feel like I've no choice but to put up with his unacceptable behaviour all day, every day, because I'm literally locked inside the house with him."

"I feel completely trapped, suffocated and I'm frightened of telling anyone in case matters escalate and the situation gets even worse."

25%

Increase in calls to the Gardaí for help in relation to domestic violence

23%

Drop in court applications related to domestic violence



107

Men prosecuted



25%

Decrease in capacity in emergency refuge and accommodation



WHEN HOME IS NOT SAFE

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Since the Covid-19 pandemic took hold late last year, the devastating impacts have been felt across the globe, overwhelming healthcare systems and killing hundreds of thousands of people. When much of the world was asked to stay at home in order to stay safe, the issue of domestic violence quickly emerged amongst the most prevalent and dangerous impacts of the outbreak. On the 6th of April 2020, António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, called for a 'ceasefire' amidst the 'horrifying global surge in domestic violence' noting that 'for many women and girls, the threat looms largest where they should be safest: in their own homes'.

The sense of sanctuary and security we usually associate with home became inflated as we were asked to 'cocoon' and 'shield' ourselves, to spend time with family and take time out from normal life. For many women going to work or going to meet friends or family is the only respite from abuse. Without this outlet, women began suffering abuse without the supports and various outlets they had in place before the pandemic.

As the virus made its way into cities and communities, the reality of the lives of women and children trapped at home with abusers began to set in. As international figures emerged, domestic violence was dubbed the 'Shadow Pandemic'.⁴ In France, reports of domestic violence have increased by 30%. In Cyprus and Singapore helplines have registered an increase in calls of 30% and 33% respectively. Increased cases of domestic violence have also been reported in Canada, Germany, Spain, the UK and the US.⁵

In Australia, the Family Court have established a court list dedicated to dealing exclusively with urgent parenting-related disputes that have arisen due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Chief Justice of the Family Law Court in Australia has noted that issues involving the risk of family violence are especially eligible for this list and that urgent applications are now being heard electronically.⁶ Canada designated \$50 million to support shelters for sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence.⁷

4 UN Women (2020) Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/issue-brief-covid-19-and-ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-infographic-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5348> (Accessed: 27 July 2020).

5 *Ibid.*

6 Family Court of Australia (2020) Media Release – The Courts Launch Covid-19 List to Deal with Urgent Parenting Disputes. Available at: <http://www.familycourt.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/fcoaweb/about/news/mr260420> (Accessed: 27 July 2020).

7 Abramiam, J. (2020) The Covid-19 Pandemic has Escalated Domestic Violence Worldwide. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackie-abramian/2020/07/22/the-covid-19-pandemic-has-escalated-global-domestic-violence/#256f70f6173e> (Accessed: 27 July 2020).

IRELAND - A 'PERFECT STORM'

A similar situation unfolded in Ireland with a 'perfect storm' of circumstances which saw an increase in the number and the severity of incidents of domestic abuse. Gardaí saw a 25% increase in calls for help in relation to domestic violence for April and May 2020 in comparison with April and May 2019. There were 107 men charged with domestic violence offences in the last two weeks of May.⁸ The increase in reporting highlights the important role Gardaí play in the protection of those being abused in their own homes.

Women's Aid welcomed Operation Faoiseamh initiated during the pandemic by the Gardaí. It has been encouraging to see priority given to domestic violence. It serves as a reminder to perpetrators that they can and will be prosecuted for breaching domestic violence orders and we hope that this will continue after the crisis is over. Unfortunately, we also know that this is just the tip of the iceberg as only a small percentage of victims ever contact the Gardaí.⁹

Community awareness of the additional risks faced by victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse has been absolutely critical during these extraordinary times. Vigilance to ensure they are protected and offered support is just as important as our attention and care to shelter those who are most vulnerable from the serious impacts of the new virus.

INCREASE IN CONTACTS WITH WOMEN'S AID

Women's Aid supported callers on over **6,500 occasions** from late March to the end of June 2020 which is a **43% increase** on the same period last year.

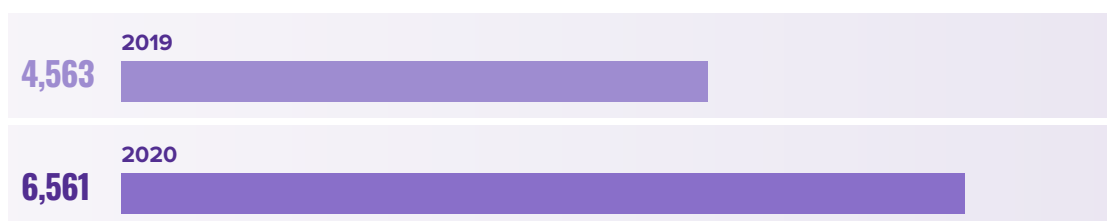


Chart 1: Calls responded to by the 24hr National Freephone Helpline from 23rd March to 30th June indicating a 43% increase during the Covid-19 pandemic.

There was also a **71% increase** in traffic to the Women's Aid website during this period which provides a trusted source of information on safety planning, supports available and guidance for family and friends.

⁸ Reynolds, P. (2020) RTE. Available at: <https://www.rte.ie/news/2020/0609/1146245-domestic-violence-gardai/> (Accessed: 27 July 2020).

⁹ Watson, D. & Parsons, S. (2005) 'Domestic Abuse of Women and Men in Ireland: Report on the National Study of Domestic Abuse'. Available at: <http://www.cosc.ie/en/COSC/Abuse%20Report%20NCC.pdf/Files/Abuse%20Report%20NCC.pdf> (Accessed: 14 August 2020).

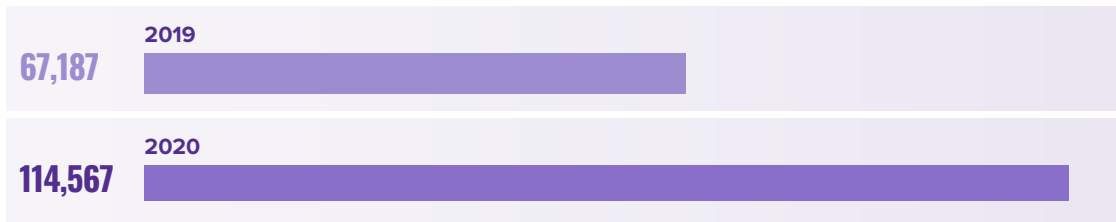


Chart 2: Sessions on www.womensaid.ie from 23rd March to 30th June indicating a 71% increase during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We saw a steady increase in contacts to the new National Helpline Instant Messaging Support Service over the lockdown for April and May as shown in chart 3 below where the number of contacts rose from 28 in January to 207 in May. The opening hours of this new service, which is accessible through the Women’s Aid website, were increased in response to the crisis.

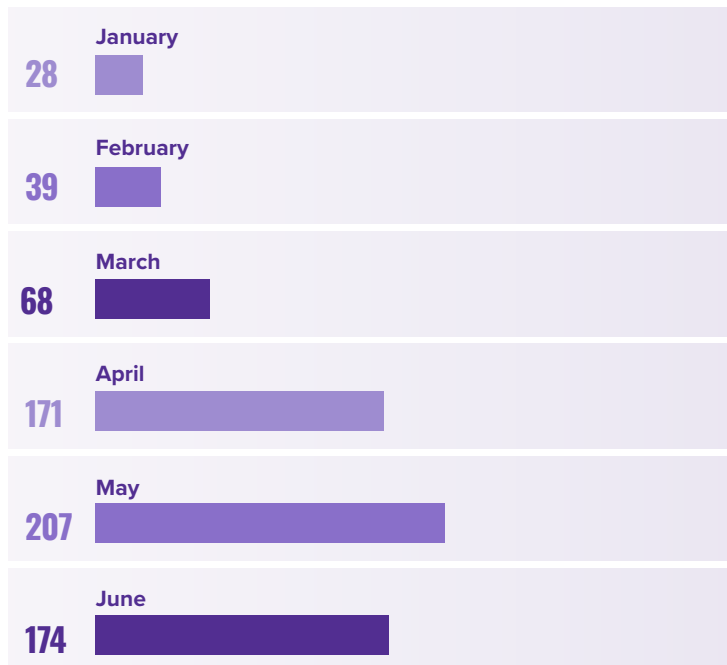


Chart 3: Number of contacts to the Women’s Aid Instant Messaging Support Service per month from January to June 2020.

ABUSE AGAINST WOMEN DURING COVID-19

During 6,561 contacts with our 24hr National Freephone Helpline, women disclosed **high levels of emotional, physical, sexual and financial abuse** from their partners, in some cases as a direct result of the lockdown introduced to stop the spread of the virus.

Women told us that they had been **strangled, raped and beaten by abusive partners** as well as feeling **constantly monitored** in their homes. Women told us that their partners were using the lockdown restrictions as an excuse not to leave after they had been violent. When abusers couldn't get access to their families, they shifted to digitally abusing women through messages, phone calls and video calls.

The **mental health impacts** of domestic abuse for women have also been heightened due to restrictions, with some women reporting suicidal thoughts.

For women who had experienced abuse, the restrictions that the Government placed on movement prompted painful memories of being abused and controlled. Women with underlying health issues reported that their partners were not adhering to Covid-19 restrictions deliberately, and some were effectively weaponising the virus by coughing or spitting on women.

The decreased capacity in refuge space because of social distancing rules meant that women in extremely dangerous situations were unable to access a space in a refuge when Women's Aid called on their behalf. This was already an issue before the emergency but was dramatically heightened as a result. Safe Ireland have noted that because of social distancing and isolation requirements, emergency refuge accommodation is operating at approximately 25% less capacity.¹⁰

WOMEN'S VOICES: 'I FEEL LIKE THE ONLY WAY OUT IS TO DIE'

Sharon

42-year-old Sharon* is mum to 12-year-old Sam and 6-year-old Ava. She is continuing to work from home during the Covid-19 pandemic but is finding the situation increasingly more difficult and desperate as she is locked into the house with her abusive husband all day and night and has been unable to hide or escape, even for short amounts of time. Prior to the lockdown, her husband was aggressive and controlling but since the lockdown, he has become more volatile. She says:

"I feel like I'm being monitored by my husband 24/7. He takes every opportunity he can to undermine and control me. He constantly intrudes on my work calls and conversations and I feel like I've no choice but to put up with his unacceptable behaviour all day, every day, because I'm literally locked inside the house with him. It's unbearable and I constantly feel frightened and vulnerable. One evening, I was preparing dinner, cooking the children's favourite meal, when he suddenly attacked me and started to choke me. I was so afraid; I didn't know what to do. I was too scared to ring the Guards because I didn't want the children to get upset and I was worried about what my husband might do when released by the Guards. But, I decided to ring Women's Aid for support and they helped me in securing emergency refuge for both myself and the children. I'm so thankful for their support."

¹⁰ The Irish Times (2020) Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/letters/domestic-violence-and-covid-19-1.4252680> (Accessed: 28 July 2020).

Agnes

Agnes* is 78 and has sadly suffered emotional, physical and financial abuse throughout her entire married life. Though her husband is now 80, she continues to endure his abuse and remains terrified of him. To make matters worse, her 58-year-old son recently returned to the family home and he has become increasingly more abusive in his behaviour towards her. Agnes told us:

*“He refuses to contribute financially and demands that I wait on him hand and foot. Whenever I’ve asked him to help, he has got angry and aggressive with me, shouting things like “you owe me, you old bitch” and “you’ve never done anything for me, so why should I do anything for you?” With the Covid-19 lockdown, the situation has become even more unbearable as I feel completely trapped, suffocated and I’m frightened of telling anyone in case matters escalate and the situation gets even worse. My two other children both live abroad and I don’t want to worry or upset them so I don’t tell them any of what is going on. But, having not seen my friends in weeks, I’m feeling very alone and isolated. My son is at home all the time now and there is literally nowhere to escape from the abuse of both my husband and my son. **I feel like the only way out is to die.** The stress and intensity of the situation is making me feel hopeless and desperate. I’ve started having flashbacks of some of the worst attacks from my husband and it is giving me panic attacks. **I’ve thought about ending my own life just to escape the situation.**”*

Desperate for emotional support, she rang the Women’s Aid National Freephone Helpline and is grateful to know that there is someone on the line who listens and understands. She is too afraid to seek a safety order against her husband or her son. But she is worried about what all this added stress and abuse is doing to her mental health so she might talk to her GP and will stay in contact with Women’s Aid for continued support and reassurance.

Elke

Elke* has been in an abusive relationship since marrying her husband four years ago. Since the Covid-19 imposed lockdown, she has been minding their one-year-old daughter and working full-time from home, which has begun to take its toll on her mental health. She is finding being confined to the house with her husband all day a living nightmare. She told us:

*“He makes me feel like a servant, demanding I cook, clean, and have sex with him when and as he pleases. I’ve tried refusing, but he doesn’t listen and threatens to beat me so badly that no one would recognise me. **He’s twice my size and I know the damage his fists have caused me in the past,** so I feel like I’ve no other choice but to do whatever he asks. I’m terrified of him but I don’t know what to do or where to turn. None of my friends or family live in Ireland so I feel completely alone and isolated. I’m desperate to leave the relationship with my daughter but I’m scared of what my husband might do to us. **I’d like to secure a safety or barring order against him but I’m scared I won’t be believed without solid proof.**”*

Elke is continuing to seek support from the Women’s Aid National Freephone Helpline, who are supporting her and helping her to apply for a safety order against her husband.

***All names changed and details amended to protect identities and privacy.**



ON THE FRONTLINE

Women's Aid had to adapt quickly to the changing situation in order to keep staff safe and meet the demand of increased contacts from women experiencing domestic abuse. The 24hr National Freephone Helpline continued to be available as before. The Dolphin House Family Law Court Support and Referral Service¹¹ is a free and confidential drop-in service for women who are experiencing abuse in a relationship and wish to apply for legal protection. As face-to-face meetings at this service were temporarily suspended, we extended the phone line from 9.30am - 1.30pm to 9.30am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday. This gave women the chance to reach out by phone in order to access information on safety planning and the legal system and to link in with services that provide on-going support.

Our one to one outreach support workers provided regular support to women via phone.

The team at Women's Aid have been working hard to ensure not only that our services can meet the growing demand brought on by the pandemic but that domestic violence is recognised as a key issue that affects thousands of women and children across Ireland every day. The Covid-19 pandemic may have brought the issue to the fore but the levels of violence exposed are an everyday reality for so many women and children.

Some of our **frontline support workers** described their experience of supporting women and children affected by domestic violence during the Covid-19 emergency:

Linda Smith, Manager of the 24hr National Freephone Helpline, says that like everyone else, the 24hr National Freephone Helpline team went into 'lockdown' and began to deliver supports remotely, our Helpline phone technology and IT systems enabled us to provide a vital continuity of service. She is exceptionally proud of the National Freephone Helpline team, staff and volunteers, and how they worked hard together to meet all of the challenges that presented during Covid-19:

*"We continued answering as many support calls to our 24hr National Freephone Helpline service as possible, with the knowledge that the Helpline is a lifeline for so many women who experience domestic violence. It is a safe place to talk about the experience of domestic violence, it's a space to be heard and not judged. Supporting the callers through an exceptionally traumatic time, such as Covid-19, could only be achieved by the unfailing commitment, drive, energy and dedication for the work that we all do. **The calls were often hopeless, sad and difficult, the options were more limited than usual, safety spaces were thin on the ground but we did our utmost to ensure that every caller was met with empathy, dignity and understanding. I am very grateful to be part of a truly wonderful service.**"*

Hilary Daly is the acting Women's Aid High Risk Support Project Coordinator. She describes the feeling of dread she experienced when the news of lockdown was announced as she felt that women experiencing domestic violence would be at greater risk:

*"Confined to their homes with abusive partners, and with literally nowhere to go, **I was worried that existing abuse and violence would be exacerbated.** Without the opportunity to get out of an abusive home to go to work, meet family/friends and engage in activities the situation at home can quickly become like a tinderbox. Delays in court proceedings as a result of Covid-19 also contributed to women feeling more vulnerable, and from a support worker's point of view, the lack of clarity about court hearings, was somewhat frustrating."*

11 This service is run in partnership with Inchicore Outreach Service.

However, she commends the states response:

“Garda response to incidents of domestic violence during Covid-19, and public statements by the Department of Justice did help to reassure women experiencing domestic violence, and those of us working in the area, that women were not forgotten. During the pandemic, Women’s Aid was very lucky to have been given generous donations that helped us to support women with home security measures and transport costs so they could meet with support workers in safe environments. As a support worker, this was really essential as we could offer practical assistance to women, to better protect themselves and their children.”

Colette O’Donovan is part of the Outreach Team at Women’s Aid:

*“Initially I felt helpless in supporting women who had upcoming court dates for issues relating to domestic violence and I was concerned for the women that would be in lockdown with their abusers. **Thankfully, many women found a way to make calls, often from the car or the garden shed or from the bathroom with the shower running.** The Gardaí were amazing in their response which really made women feel safer. My initial feeling of worry turned to pride as we adapted and continued to provide services to women. **It was so important for women to know you were at the end of the phone so they didn’t feel alone.**”*



THE NATIONAL HELPLINE INSTANT MESSAGING SUPPORT SERVICE

At the end of 2019, we began piloting our Instant Messaging Support Service which launched in January 2020. Available on www.womensaid.ie and www.toointoyou.ie, the service is volunteer led. With their dedication and enthusiasm, we expanded the service when the pandemic hit from 9 hours a week to 41 hours a week, an increase of 78%.

The Instant Messaging Support Service may be an easier way for women to receive support if the abuse and control is at a point where it is not possible for them to make a phone call without being heard. It is also a valuable resource for deaf or hard of hearing women suffering abuse. This service is particularly vital given the stay-at-home measures. We now have a dedicated specially trained volunteer-led team working remotely on the Instant Messaging Support Service.

Anne O’Keeffe is a volunteer working on the Instant Messaging Support Service. She felt proud to be a part of the Women’s Aid Volunteer Team during the emergency:

*“During the pandemic, the service was a lifeline for many women. Lockdown resulted in many women and children being trapped at home for months with their abusers. Their world shrank but dangers increased. Messaging – via any device– offered a silent and safer mode of communication. In the strange world of Covid-19, the Instant Messaging Support Service continued to function precisely as it had done before: as a mode of communication which simply suited many women better. Working on the Instant Messaging Support Service, both before and during the pandemic, has been powerful. The work of listening, believing, supporting is always challenging and awe-inspiring. **It is challenging to listen to chilling stories of abuse but awe-inspiring to work with women of such resilience, courage and strength.**”*

Volunteer Coordinator Laura Brennan commends the Women’s Aid Volunteer Team:

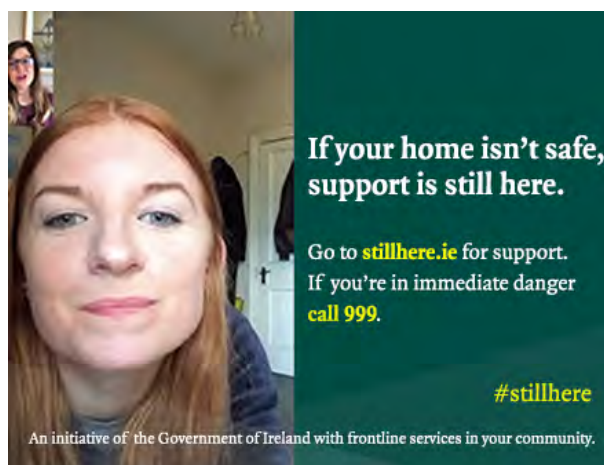
*“Working during the Covid-19 pandemic, while extremely challenging, has been made so much easier by our wonderful team of volunteers. We have always been indebted to them. However, we were not prepared for their commitment to the continuation of the support they offer women via the 24hr National Freephone Helpline. They opted into remote online working and to the expansion of the Instant Messaging Support Service by 78%. This has allowed us to be there for women who were unable to pick up the phone for a number of reasons during Covid-19 and offer more hours of support for women who prefer to contact us in this way. They bring a certain magic to the helpline and have created a space of support not only for those who contact the service but for each other. **I hope they are as proud of themselves as we are. Thank you so much.**”*



GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT – HOME IS NOT ALWAYS SAFE AND WE ARE #STILLHERE

One week into the emergency restrictions, Women's Aid sought to focus minds on the situation of women trapped in homes with their abusers during the Covid-19 emergency.¹² Immediately we sourced radio and print advertising free of charge across a wide range of stations and titles to promote the availability of the 24hr National Freephone Helpline and other specialist services for anyone experiencing abuse.¹³

A key part of the Women's Aid communications strategy at this time was to use social media to reach out to women who were facing additional barriers in seeking help. We produced informational videos for social media including one for deaf and hard of hearing women in Irish Sign Language, another highlighting the interpretation service on the 24hr National Freephone Helpline and a specific message for Traveller and Roma women experiencing domestic abuse.



The impact of this work was immediate and effective with significant media coverage and sharing on our social media platforms. It helped to put the issue of domestic abuse and the support needs for those affected firmly on the political agenda.

In April Women's Aid was a lead partner, alongside Safe Ireland, the National Women's Council, the Rape Crisis Network Ireland, Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and the Men's Development Network, in the development of the Government's **Still Here** national public awareness campaign.¹⁴ This collaborative campaign between Government and frontline organisations ensured victims were aware of, and would access, services.

12 Women's Aid (2020) Available at: <https://www.womensaid.ie/about/newsevents/news/2020/03/18/media-release-home-not-always-the-safest-place-dur/> (Accessed: 28 July 2020).

13 Titles included The Irish Times, The Irish Examiner, The Irish Independent, The Star, The Sunday Times, The Irish Sun and the Evening Echo. Radio ads were secured across Communicorp stations including Newstalk, Spin 1038, 98FM, Spin South West, Today FM and Urban Media Stations FM104, Q102, 96FM in Cork, 95FM in Limerick, Galway Bay, WLR (Waterford) and LFMF (Louth/Meath). Ads were also aired on Radio Nova and Sunshine Radio.

14 Department of Justice (2020) Available at: <https://www.stillhere.ie/awareness-campaign/> (Accessed: 28 July 2020).

TRAINING – ADAPTING, GROWING AND IMPROVING RESPONSES

Due to the necessary restrictions that were put in place in March 2020 all of Women's Aid's scheduled classroom based training had to be cancelled. It was impossible to predict when we could get back into a training room again with a group of training participants. However, the need for training remained and became even more pronounced. Services were grappling with situations where some of the women they work with were at an increased risk of being a victim of domestic violence. For women in a relationship with a current or former abusive partner, this is a time of elevated risk and even greater isolation.

The Training Unit embarked on a journey of exploring how to convert Women's Aid training to the online world. This involved desk-based research of different online platforms available, of how to impart information online and how to assess training participants' comprehension of the issue, in all its complexity, when you are not in a room with people.

In June we ran our first online training session with staff from local groups linked into the Ballyfermot Local Area Drug and Alcohol Taskforce. The half-day session, 'Domestic Violence Awareness Online Training', was very well received and feedback was positive. Participants welcomed the opportunity to analyse the dynamics of domestic violence and to improve their responses to women experiencing domestic violence and were grateful to be given this opportunity.

Women's Aid will continue to respond to training needs of statutory agencies, organisations working in the community and voluntary sector and to corporate organisations who are looking for the expert knowledge that a specialist domestic violence service can give. This training will take place in an online setting until circumstances allow us to get back to the training room.

POSITIVITY AND GENEROSITY DURING A TIME OF CRISIS

From Creatives against Covid, Meitheal na mBan, a song by Mick Flannery and performance by Lisa Hannigan at the National Art Gallery of Ireland, cake baking, online yoga classes, 5K a day in May, walking from Malin to Mizen Head, taking on an 80Km walking challenge and much, much more, Women's Aid has been overwhelmed by the generosity and kindness of our supporters since the start of the Covid-19 emergency.

An unprecedented 8,500+ people have made individual donations to Women's Aid since mid-March to help while various businesses and corporate companies stepped up to the mark and made significant contributions to our emergency needs fund and frontline services and in support of our social change work.

Women's Aid has to fundraise approximately 43% of its costs every year. To every person who donated €5 and to the companies that gave donations big and small we thank you so much for being there in this time of crisis.



Sending Love to Women's Aid and ISPCC Childline: Garrett Bridgeman, An Post's MD Mails and Parcels, Sarah Benson, CEO Women's Aid and John Church, Chief Executive of ISPCC Childline launch a special discount on the Love stamp booklet (now €8 with a value of €10) to raise funds.

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Women's Aid and other domestic violence support services around the country have been supporting victims and survivors every day during this pandemic. The dire impacts on women's physical and mental wellbeing are already acutely evident. We are really concerned that we are only seeing a fraction of what is happening in homes where domestic violence is occurring. An essential part of post-Covid-19 planning must include increasing supports and protections to maximise the safety and wellbeing of victims of domestic abuse, including sexual abuse and coercive control.

There needs to be a sustained investment in the specialist domestic violence sector to cope with the surge in demand because of the pandemic. Innovation is needed from Government so that court services can facilitate applications for ex-parte domestic violence orders remotely at this time. The reconfiguration of communal refuges to independent family unit models is more urgently needed than ever, so that women and children can seek refuge without the risk of contracting Covid-19 and so that they will feel safe seeking refuge while social distancing measures are in place.¹⁵

It is vital to keep the importance of a safe home, and healthy relationships to the foreground. The recovery post-Covid-19 needs to ensure that domestic violence remains a whole Government priority that ensures systemic responses to maximise prevention of abuse, protection for victims/survivors and prosecution of perpetrators as a vital tri-partite strategy to keep women and children safe now and for the future.

The world may be beginning to return to normality, but for many returning to normality means remaining in a life rooted in violence and fear and they must not be forgotten.

¹⁵ Phelan, S. (2020) The Independent. Available at: <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/courts/victims-of-domestic-violence-could-soon-apply-for-barring-orders-online-39349570.html> (Accessed: 28 July 2020).

SUPPORT OUR WORK

Visit www.womensaid.ie/donate to make an immediate and secure donation.

Text the word **ACTION** to **50300** to donate €4 to Women's Aid.

100% of your donation goes to Women's Aid across most network operators. Some operators apply VAT which means that a minimum of €3.25 will go to Women's Aid. Service Provider: LIKECHARITY. Helpline: 0766805278.



WOMEN'S AID

Listening. Believing. Supporting.

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www.womensaid.ie

24hr National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900

Registered charity number 6491

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