

Annual Impact Report 2023

Impact and
Activities Summary



Supporting women
through generations



Women's Aid

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Supporting women
through generations



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Read the Full Annual
Impact Report, including
Audited Financial
Statements 2023

Section 1

Welcome

Sharon's Story*

I loved him so much. I idolised him. Handsome. Funny. His family were lovely. I was so proud to be his girlfriend. I remember being thrilled when he asked me to move in with him. But not long after, his put-downs started. They were subtle at first. Then they got really cruel. He began to pressure me into sex and humiliate me. He would bombard me with questions about where I'd been and who I'd talked to. He took my phone. He took my bank cards. He dominated every aspect of my life.

Even though I was terrified and confused, I started to think about leaving him. But then I found out I was pregnant. I think he sensed I might do something, so he began to manipulate me again. He said, "I'll change. I'll get counselling for my issues. I'll be a good dad."

I wanted to believe his lies. But after a few weeks of calm, the verbal abuse, the controlling behaviour, the threats, and violence – it all started again. I felt lost. Powerless. Trapped in hell. I had no one to turn to.

I had no one in my corner – until I turned to Women's Aid

The worst abuse I suffered – and the turning point for me – came when I was 26 weeks pregnant. He went into a rage over what I cooked him for dinner. It was the most frightening night of my life. I can't fully describe everything that happened. He punched me in the face. Then, while I was on the ground, he started kicking me.



I curled up into a ball to protect my stomach. I was certain I was going to die. I was certain I was going to lose my baby. It was a miracle we survived. As I was recovering in hospital, I knew I had to report what was happening to the Gardaí. This was no longer just about me. It was about protecting my baby.

I also spoke to one of my maternity nurses and a hospital social worker, who were incredibly supportive. They told me about Women's Aid and its Maternity Outreach Project and said they'd refer me to it. That conversation changed everything for me. The nurses and midwife were amazing. They listened to me. They told me I was safe. They said Women's Aid was my path to safety.

After I was assessed by my Maternity Outreach Support Worker, I was given financial support so I could buy food, pay my bills, and change the locks on my home. I was also given ongoing emotional support that's helped me work through my trauma and take back power from my ex-partner. This meant that when I faced him in court, with Women's Aid standing by my side, I no longer felt afraid. With Women's Aid's support I had built my resilience back up, bit by bit, and I now saw him for what he really is – a violent, controlling abuser. I'm in a much better and more secure place in my life.

Women's Aid was always there for me

Women's Aid gave me a map of hope. They held my hand and helped me walk to freedom and safety. They provided real, practical support. I began to see the reality of the life I was in and that it wasn't my fault. I got legal help. I escaped because of a mixture of bravery and desperation. And most importantly, with the support of the amazing services of Women's Aid.

Every 5 minutes, someone like Sharon reaches out to Women's Aid for information and support.



**Read more
women's stories
of courage
and hope.**

**Please note: name has been changed for safety and confidentiality reasons.*

What we do

Our Purpose

Women's Aid is a national, feminist organisation working to prevent and address the impact of domestic violence and abuse including coercive control, in Ireland since 1974.

We do this by:

- advocating, influencing, training, and campaigning for effective responses to reduce the scale and impacts of domestic abuse on women and children in Ireland

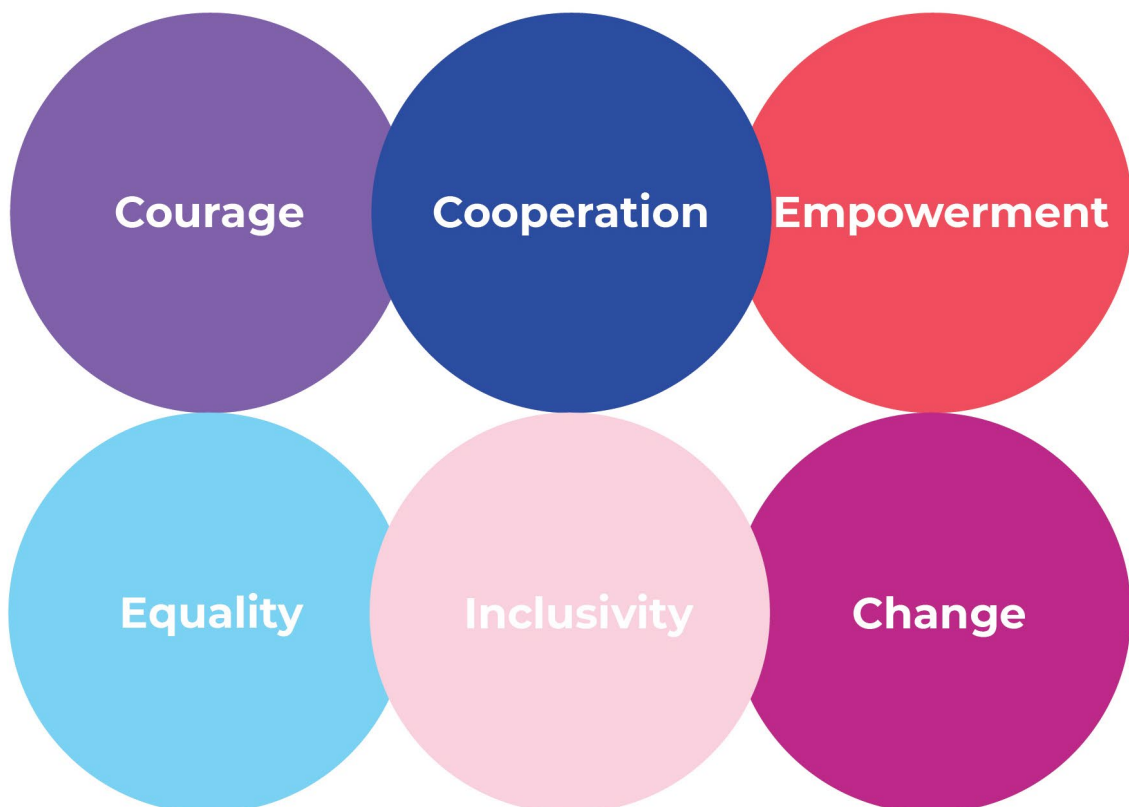
and

- providing high quality, specialised, integrated, support services.

Our Vision

Women's Aid's vision is an equal Ireland, with zero tolerance of domestic abuse and all other forms of violence against women.

Our Values



Enablers

Creating awareness
Educating audiences
Influencing audiences
Contributing to national service provision
Service outcomes
Sustainability
Valuing and developing Staff and Volunteers
The Survivor voice

Inputs

Staff
Volunteers
Expertise
Resources
Collaboration
Donor Funding
Peer Organisation
Survivors/Survivor Voice

Assumptions

Society is capable of change
Building and drawing attention to the impacts of DVA builds a platform for change
Survivors must be heard
Empowering survivors is the centre of society change
Working with our stakeholders enable a social change
Change is rooted in a feminist analysis of DVA
Resources will be available to support our theory of change

Purpose

Working for the prevention of domestic violence and abuse by:
Influencing, educating and advocating for effective responses, to reduce the scale and Impacts of domestic abuse
and
Providing high quality, specialised, integrated, support services

Social Change

Shared Agenda
Understanding
Awareness
Training
Education
Advocacy
Campaign

Stakeholder Community Change

Working with stakeholders to enable change
Collaboration
Alignment for Change
Engagement

Individual Change

Empowering Survivors
Enhancing Services
Acknowledging & Supporting Women

Vision

An Ireland where there is equality, with zero tolerance of domestic abuse and all other forms of violence against women

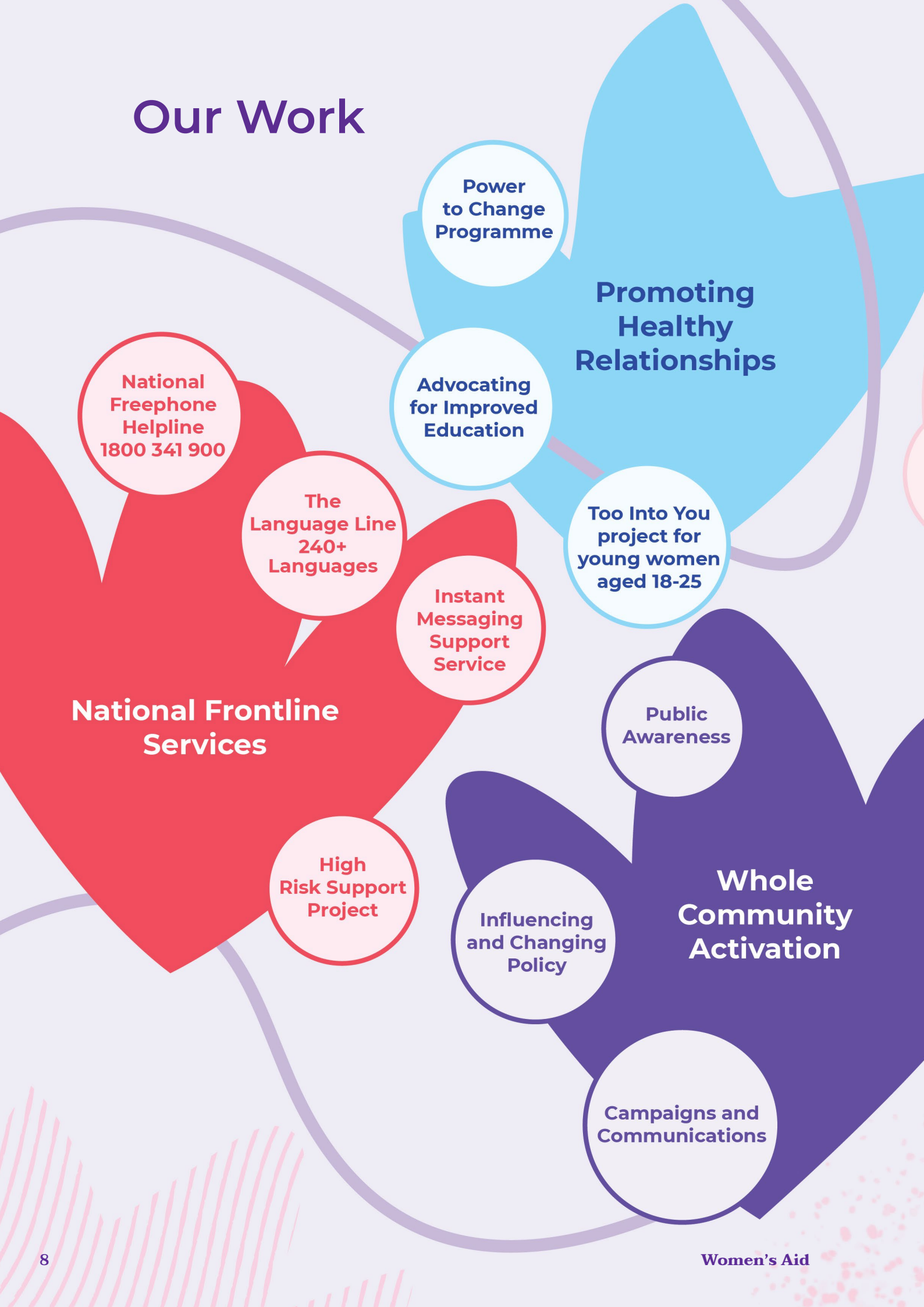
- **Change Tolerance Levels**
- **Change Legislation**
- **Change Policy**
- **Change Service Provision**

Our Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities are based on a strong dedication to the women we serve and an unwavering focus on bringing about the social change in Ireland that will deliver our vision. During the period 2022-2024, we have framed our work around three strategic priorities.



Our Work



Promoting Healthy Relationships

Power to Change Programme

Advocating for Improved Education

Too Into You project for young women aged 18-25

National Frontline Services

National Freephone Helpline
1800 341 900

The Language Line
240+ Languages

Instant Messaging Support Service

High Risk Support Project

Whole Community Activation

Public Awareness

Influencing and Changing Policy

Campaigns and Communications

National
Polling

Strategic Research

Commissioned
Research

Femicide
Watch

Domestic Abuse
Information and
Support Service
at Dolphin
House

Court
Accompaniment

Maternity
Outreach
Service

Regional Frontline Services: Greater Dublin Area

One-to-One
Support
Services

Practical
Assistance for
Women

Counselling
Support

Employer
Engagement
Project

Training &
Development

Specialist Training and Policy Support

Maternity
Project



Read the full
Women's Aid
Statement of
Strategy
2022-2024.

Chairperson's Welcome



I am delighted to welcome all readers to the 2023 Annual Impact Report from Women's Aid.

In addition to sharing our huge body of work during 2023, we launch this report in 2024 which marks an incredibly significant anniversary of Women's Aid. Having started in 1974 as the very first specialist domestic abuse service in Ireland, Women's Aid have now been working for an incredible 50 years supporting generations of women and children across the country.

We know domestic abuse affects every community in Ireland. This Annual Impact Report 2023 gives us important insights into the lived experiences of the women we support, as well as the critical work that

Women's Aid conducts to help make Ireland a safer and fairer place to live. Our model of work ensures that we combine a range of innovative frontline responses to those in need with strategic advocacy, campaigning, research, and delivery of specialist training. We ensure that we help to improve systemic social responses to combat this persistent scourge.

As we reflect on what has changed over 50 years, we can pinpoint positive developments in legislation, service provision and public recognition of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. We can also recognise that some issues such as victim blaming and stigma persist, and we face new challenges that were barely conceived of 50 years ago: the internet as a new tool of abuse and victim shaming, ubiquitous pornography. Irish society has changed for the better in so many ways over the last five decades. Yet, it is an undeniable fact that Women's Aid persists because we still live in an unequal society. At this very moment, there are many thousands of women and children living in fear of the person who should love, respect and care for them.

I am proud to be a part of Women's Aid, which exists to create an equal Ireland with zero tolerance of domestic abuse, and all forms of violence against women. Despite the challenges presented, Women's Aid continued to innovate and adapt to meet women's needs in these desperately acute circumstances.



**One in four women
in Ireland have
experienced
domestic abuse
from a current or
former partner.**

Women's Aid

Thank You to our Team and our Supporters and Partners

I want to thank our incredible staff, volunteers, and my fellow highly dedicated Board members for their tireless work. I also want to thank all our partners in the community and voluntary, private, and statutory sectors, who collaborated with us in 2023, to progress a concerted whole of community response to tackle domestic violence and abuse.

As an organisation that relies on a combination of statutory funding and significant fundraising. I want to thank our funders in the Department of Justice, Tusla and Pobal, and newly in 2024 the Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence Agency, Cuan. As well as our many incredible donors for your support which is vital to enable us to uniquely combine our frontline services and direct support to women with social change advocacy, specialist training, strategic research, and campaigning to such significant effect. You have ensured that all Women's Aid vital services could continue as a lifeline to thousands. We have also been able to continue and develop a range of new and innovative projects including commissioning strategic research, to help increase our positive impact for women and children at risk of or subjected to abuse.

Governance Standards

As a charity with 50 years' experience, we also take very seriously the trust we hold and the public confidence that enables us to do our work. We operate transparently, and to the highest standards of good governance and compliance.

As Chairperson, myself, and my colleagues on the Women's Aid Board work in lockstep with the executive team to ensure we meet and maintain these standards. We are proud to be fully compliant with the Governance requirements of the Charities Act and meet the Triple Lock Standard of the Charities Institute Ireland.

In Women's Aid, we know that we cannot achieve zero tolerance alone. Therefore, we must be a part of a cooperative community alongside our colleagues in civil society and community organisations, with statutory partners and survivors, and the public.

We are currently delivering our Strategic Plan 2022-2024. Women's Aid will continue to advocate, to seek opportunities, work in partnership, create reliable data and research and innovate our direct service provision.

We need to promote positive and healthy masculinities and equality and ultimately reduce that shocking number of one in four women suffering domestic abuse for future generations. We will work steadily and with determination alongside our partners, survivors, funders, and peers across the sector, collaborating where our interests are aligned and working to bring about the required fundamental social change that will achieve gender equality and end male violence against women.

We have come a long way in 50 years but there is still a journey ahead. We warmly invite you to join with us in achieving this vision for Ireland.



Ailbhe Smyth

Chairperson, June 2024

CEO's Introduction



Every year the Women's Aid Annual Impact Report serves as a harrowing and poignant reminder of the level of domestic violence and abuse against women and children that prevails in homes and relationships across Ireland. Unfortunately, 2023 was no different. This report provides an insight into the coercive and controlling emotional, physical, economic, and sexual abuses inflicted upon women and their children at the hands of current and former intimate partners, whom we supported during just one year.

Providing Support and Making an Impact in 2023

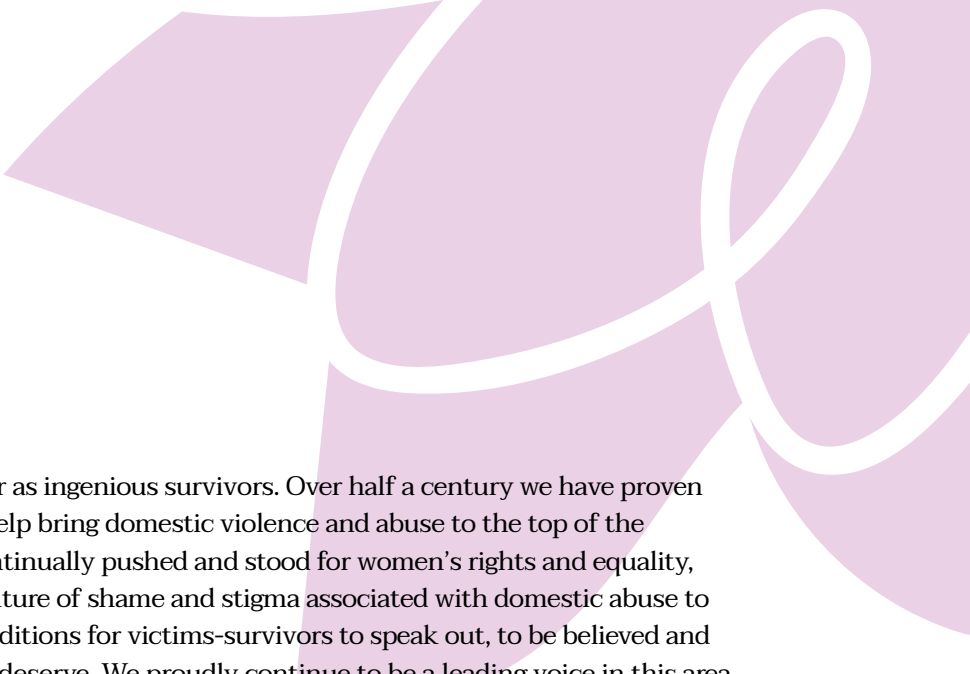
In just twelve months, our team had **28,638** contacts through our frontline services during which we heard a staggering **40,048** disclosures of abuse – including **35,570** reports of domestic abuse against women and **4,478** reports of abuse of children. Victims-survivors and their supporters accessed our websites (womensaid.ie & toointoyou.ie) **319,986** times for vital information and support. Our Specialist Training Team delivered training to **1,162** participants and awareness sessions to **1,461**, people including many employers in a year where we welcomed some landmark new legislation including a statutory paid domestic violence leave for all workers who need it. We also saw legislation covering the darkest sides of abuse including new offences for stalking and non-fatal strangulation, which highlight the urgent need to keep delivering support in a country where so many are still targeted with terrifying abuse and violence.

We know that our frontline figures represent just the tip of an enormous iceberg whereby our National Helpline is a referral point to all the other local services across the country - and because we know that so many victims and survivors still suffer alone, in silence and without any specialist support. This is something Women's Aid remains fully committed to changing.

I am so immensely proud of the work of the Women's Aid team, including our incredible staff, volunteers, and Board members, for the organisation's achievements in 2023. Our amazing team goes above and beyond every day to listen, believe, support, and empower women and to help shape a safer society for everyone.

50 Years - Supporting Women Through Generations

2024 marks a landmark milestone for Women's Aid. We have reached 50 years of listening, believing, supporting, and empowering women subjected to domestic abuse. We have been generations of women, many survivors themselves - supporting generations of women and their children. We are privileged to have empowered women to share their experiences, to witness



their incredible resilience and power as ingenious survivors. Over half a century we have proven our resilience and worked hard to help bring domestic violence and abuse to the top of the agenda of Irish society. We have continually pushed and stood for women's rights and equality, and to continually challenge the culture of shame and stigma associated with domestic abuse to reduce stigma and create better conditions for victims-survivors to speak out, to be believed and empowered to get the support they deserve. We proudly continue to be a leading voice in this area and vow to continue to see our vision of zero tolerance of domestic abuse become a reality.

Systems Under Pressure

Aside from the horrific and often long-lasting impacts of abuse itself, there are so many challenges today for those subjected to domestic abuse. Family and criminal law systems that are creaking at the seams, creating lengthy, protracted, and traumatising delays for women navigating both criminal and civil law systems. The housing crisis and dearth of appropriate specialist accommodation provision for survivors of abuse, limits options for a safe home for many. The negative impact of inflation on family incomes, taken especially with deliberate economic abuse, exacerbate acute and frightening situations for many thousands of women and children across the country.

There is still so much work to do, and we are deeply grateful to our statutory, non-statutory and public funders and supporters for their continuing commitment to us, and to our work. We are fully committed to honouring this support and to maintaining and innovating our vital services to deliver positive impact.

We are so grateful to our colleagues in the specialist domestic and sexual violence services and our peers among so many other civil society organisations and our current research partners for their collaboration towards a shared goal of a more fair, safer, and better society for all.

Implementing a Whole of Government and Society Approach

The government is now nearing the midpoint of its five-year Third National Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) Strategy. The implementation of this work must remain the highest priority for Government as we approach a period of political change. With stewardship and monitoring by Cuan, the newly established dedicated DSGBV Agency, we have cause for optimism. Yet, we cannot take success for granted. The work to end DSGBV is not the work of just five years but many more. This strategy and Cuan can help us ensure that Ireland continues to lay and build on those foundational strategic, structural, and collective steps already taken to do what is required for effective implementation of change across the four pillars of Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Co-Ordinated Policy.

This can only happen with a clear-eyed focus on naming and tackling those structural and systemic barriers that maintain gender inequalities and the additional intersecting factors that can further disadvantage some victims-survivors due to their disability, sexuality, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or age. These barriers can impede access to support, safety, justice, and the means to achieve their full potential for those who most require it.

It will require focus, co-ordination and - crucially - investment from Government to see the ambitions of this excellent Strategy realised. A continued commitment to collaboration and co-creation of solutions with the specialist DSGBV services must be a cornerstone of this vital work.

High Stakes of Violence Against Women

We must succeed because the stakes remain high. In addition to the tens of thousands of women seeking our support during 2023, we also must remember those who did not make it. As curators of the Femicide Watch for Ireland, Women's Aid recorded the names of a further **nine women** who died in violent circumstances during 2023. Statistically, it remains the case that the most dangerous place for women is their own home. The nightmare of violence and abuse most commonly will be at the hands of a current or former intimate male partner.

With a heightened public understanding and increased discourse, now is a rare but vital moment to build on the social and political awareness of the heinous issue of domestic violence. As individuals, and communities, we must all come together and create an equal Ireland, free from violence.

Now is the time to be brave and ambitious. In 50 years, I want Women's Aid to be a memory of what used to be required in Ireland, not the vital service it unfortunately remains today.



Sarah Benson
CEO, June 2024



Read more
about Sarah
and the Senior
Leadership Team
at Women's Aid.





Section 2

Activities and Impact Summary 2023



Three Year Comparative Frontline Services Statistics

	2023	2022	2021
Contacts with Women's Aid	28,638	31,229	26,906
24hr National Freephone Helpline (including calls, instant messages and emails)	20,891	23,566	21,126
Face-to-Face Support Services (including one to one support, court accompaniments, drop-in visits, HRSP, maternity outreach support sessions)	7,747	7,663	5,780
Talk Time Hours (24hr National Freephone Helpline calls and instant messages)	4,112	3,940	3,863
Disclosures of domestic abuse against women and children	40,048	33,990	33,831
Against Women	35,570	28,578	28,096
— Emotional	21,974	20,851	19,902
— Physical	7,851	4,509	4,707
— Economic	4,297	2,290	2,383
— Sexual	1,448	928	1,104
Against Children	4,478	5,412	5,735
— Emotional	4,253	5,006	5,361
— Physical	167	315	282
— Sexual	58	91	92
Referrals, Provision of Information and/ or Advocacy by Helpline and Regional Services	23,329	18,667	21,446

2023 Summary

28,638

Contacts with
Women's Aid

7,747

Contacts with
Face-to-Face Support
Services (including
one-to-one support, court
accompaniments, drop-in
visits, HRSP support
sessions)

20,891

Contacts with the 24hr
National Freephone
Helpline (including
calls, messages and
emails)

4,112

Hours of
Helpline talk
time

23,329

Referrals, provision
of information
and/or advocacy by
support workers

40,048

Disclosures of Domestic Abuse

35,570

Disclosures of abuse against women

4,478

Disclosures of abuse against children

1,448

Sexual abuse

21,974

Emotional abuse

7,851

Physical abuse

4,297

Economic abuse

256,848

Visits to Womensaid.ie*

25,654

followers

25,071

followers

63,138

Visits to toointoyou.ie*

35,789

followers

47,397

followers

4,560

followers

743

followers

907

followers

**These figures for womensaid.ie and toointoyou.ie in 2023 are extrapolated following significant changes to cookies. There have been two big changes that have impacted the sites' reported stats on Google Analytics - the move from GA3 to GA4 (which changed the way things were reported) and the launch of our new site which had a GDPR compliant cookie management system. The previous site had a Cookie pop up that offered two options "Manage Cookies" and "Accept All Cookies". This pushed people to "Accept all" as that is the easy option. However, the DPC requires that the user has to be offered an equally prominent option to "Reject All" which we provide on the new site. This means that a lot of people take that option and therefore their stats are not recorded in Analytics. We do have a report on Cookie acceptance levels and conducted an analysis on this in conjunction with our website provider. Extrapolated figure based on adding 30% to the indicated number of visits to cover those who refused cookies as advised by our provider.*

Domestic Abuse Against Women in 2023

We heard
21,974
disclosures of
emotional abuse
including:

- Name calling and verbal abuse.
- Isolation from family and friends.
- Possessiveness, jealousy, and accusations of cheating.
- Stalking and being monitored both physically and online.
- Living with the threat of physical and/or sexual violence.
- Being forbidden to leave the home without the abuser.
- Having the abuser threaten to hurt or kill her, themselves, their children or her family or her friends.
- Abuser denying or minimising the abuse shortly after it happened (Gaslighting).
- Abusers targeting the mother-child bond by manipulating and encouraging the children to join in on the abuse of their mother.

We heard
7,851
disclosures of
physical abuse
including:

- Assault, including with an object (i.e., hammer, golf club, hurl, gun).
- Strangulation.
- Pushing and shoving.
- Harm with knives including cutting and stabbing.
- Punching and slapping.
- Inflicting physical injuries including: broken bones, having hair pulled out, teeth broken.

We heard
4,297
disclosures of
economic abuse
including:

- Abuser denying access to household income to pay for food, medication and other necessities for themselves and the children.
- Abuser pressurising them into giving them large sums of money or getting them into debt.
- Abuser jeopardising women's access to employment.
- Abuser controlling women's income.
- Abuser refusing to pay maintenance for any children in common or only paying sporadically. Often, abusers use child maintenance payments as a means to control and coerce their ex-partners.

We heard
1,448
disclosures of
sexual abuse
including:

- Rape (307 disclosures) and sexual assault.
- Coerced sexual activity.
- Unwanted sexual advances.
- Being spoken to, or about, in a sexually derogative way.
- Abuser forcing them to watch and re-enact pornography.

Within the above disclosures of abuse, there were

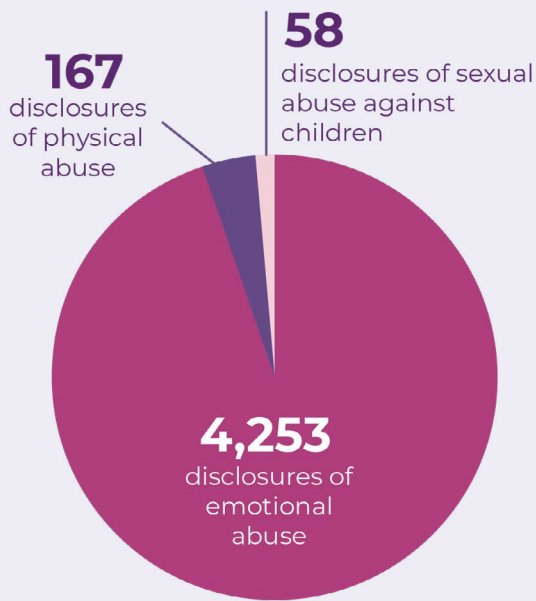
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disclosures of digital abuse and cyber-stalking including:

- Abuse by text, email, phone call and social media.
- Abuser sending explicit and violent images and videos.
- Abuser monitoring their internet use.
- Abuser subjecting them to image-based sexual abuse by:
 - Secretly recording them.
 - Sharing or threatening to share intimate images of them without their consent.
 - Blackmailing them into sending intimate images.



Domestic Abuse Against Children in 2023



- Emotional abuse including verbal abuse, name-calling and being threatened with violence.
- Physical abuse including slapping, hair pulling, assault with weapons.
- Children, including infants, hurt by the abuser as they attacked the mother.
- Sexual assault and molestation.
- Witnessing domestic violence against their mother.
- Children forced to go on access visits with an abusive father.
- Mother-Child bond deliberately damaged by abuser.
- Older children abused by fathers through the use of technology

Abuse During Access

Women reported that they were subjected to abuse during access visits

845

times and that children were being abused while on access visits numbering

203

disclosures

Where women indicated that they felt their children were at risk of emotional, physical and/ or sexual abuse during access visits, the 24hr National Freephone Helpline recorded

298

calls where there was a social worker involved in the case.



Impact of the Abuse on Women and Children in 2023

The mental and physical impacts of domestic abuse including coercive control on a woman's health and well-being are significant and can be long lasting and wide-ranging. The ultimate cost, in some extreme cases, can be fatal due to homicide and suicide.

Physical impacts include:

- Broken bones and broken teeth.
- Bruising.
- Nausea.
- Nerve damage.
- Damage to throat and neck due to strangulation.
- Loss of consciousness.
- Miscarriage.

Mental and emotional impacts include:

- Depression, anxiety, panic attacks, fear.
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- Feeling alone with nobody to turn to.
- Suicidal ideation and attempted suicide.
- Hyper-vigilance.

Other impacts include:

- Living in, or being at risk of, poverty.
- Fear of homelessness and homelessness.
- Living in fear of deportation or the threat by abuser of spousal visa not being renewed.

Children experience both short-term and long-term effects of domestic abuse. These include:

- Guilt.
- Anger.
- Insecurity and anxiety.
- Difficulty with sleep, including nightmares.
- Flashbacks.
- Lower self-worth.
- Difficulties at school.

However, it is important to remember that some children may not exhibit any negative effects.

The Abuser

In 2023, 86% of those in contact with Women's Aid were abused by a current or former male intimate partner. An additional 9% of women were abused by a man who was not an intimate partner or ex-partner. 5% of women disclosed abuse by a female abuser.

86%

of those in contact with Women's Aid were abused by a current or former male intimate partner

9%

were abused by a man who was not an intimate partner or ex-partner

55%

were abused by a current male partner

31%

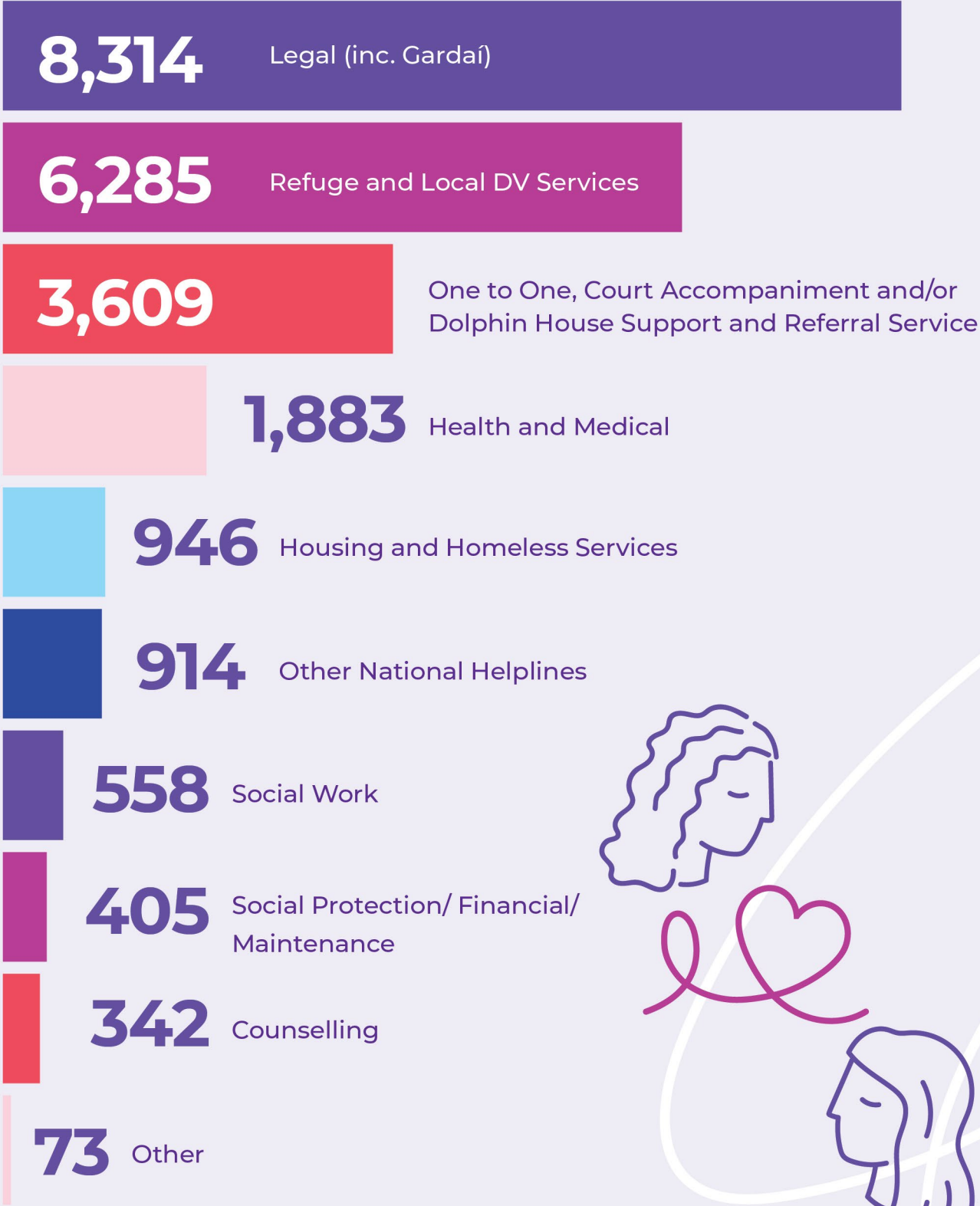
were abused by a former male partner

5%

disclosed abuse by a female abuser

Referrals, Provision of Information and Advocacy

On **23,329** occasions the Women’s Aid National Freephone Helpline and Regional Services made referrals to other agencies, provided information, and advocated on behalf of women.

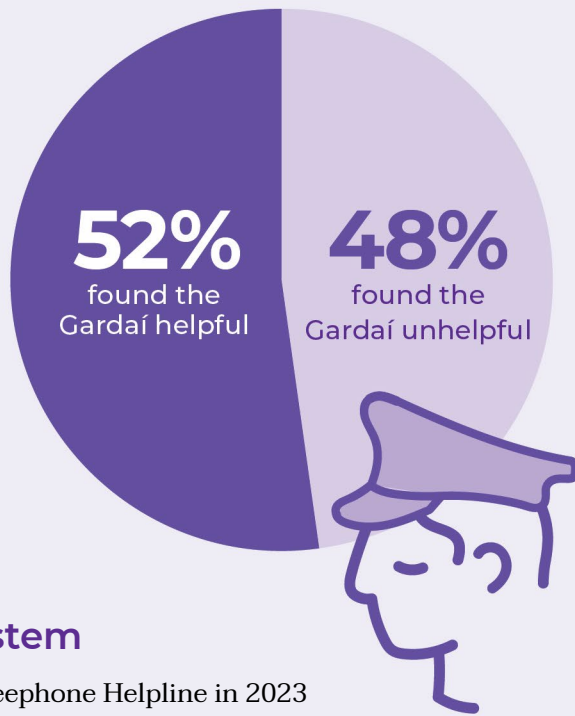


Support through Legal System in 2023

In 2023, Women's Aid provided support to women going through the legal system for protection from domestic abuse. This includes women contacting An Garda Síochána, accessing the Family Law system and also women whose perpetrator is charged with criminal offences.

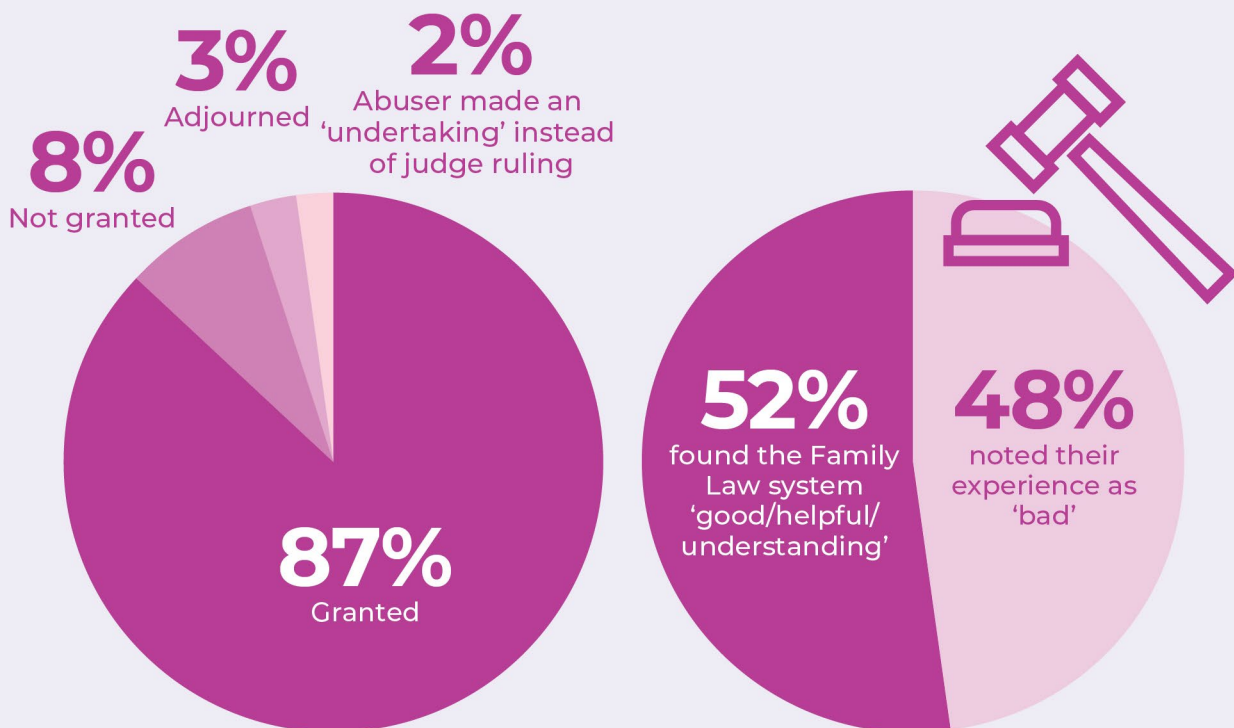
An Garda Síochána

Last year, **2,603** women in contact with the National Freephone Helpline disclosed that they had contacted An Garda Síochána because of domestic abuse.

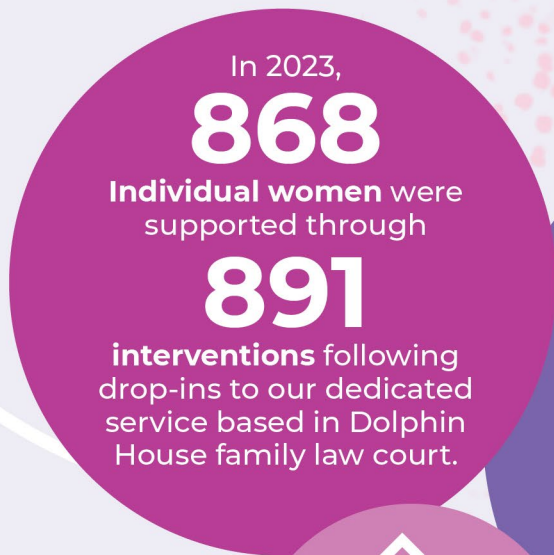


Accessing the Family Law System

1,068 women in contact with the National Freephone Helpline in 2023 said that they had applied for a Domestic Violence Order through the Family Law System. Most orders were granted (87%).



Outcome of applications for Domestic Violence Orders disclosed to the National Freephone Helpline.



Criminal Proceedings

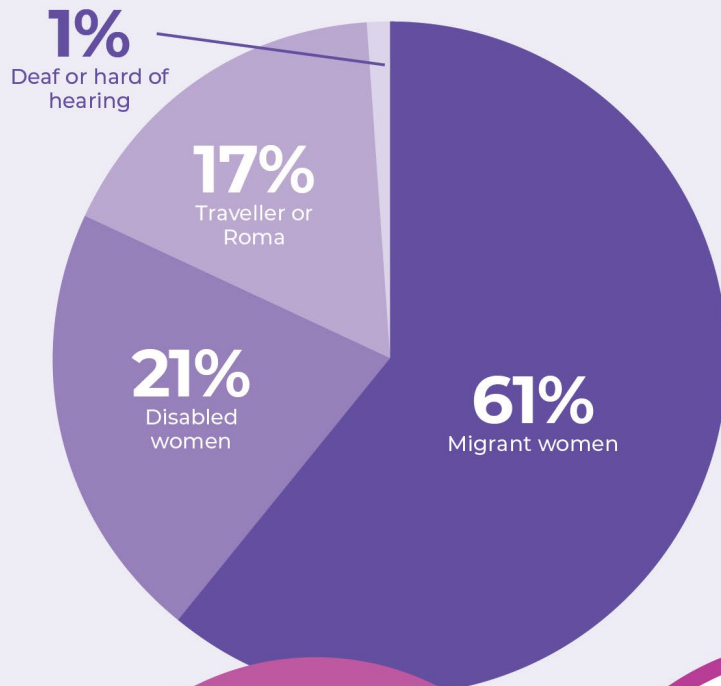
Last year, **399** people in contact with the National Freephone Helpline for support disclosed that the perpetrator of abuse was facing criminal proceedings.

Charges	Disclosures
Breaches of Court Orders	145
Assault Causing Harm	130
Sexual Offences (rape, aggravated sexual assault, Image Based Sexual Abuse)	26
Coercive Control	25
Criminal Damage (inc. arson)	14
Child neglect & cruelty, abandonment	13
Threats to Kill	12
Attempted murder	11
Other*	23

*Charges in the other category include stalking, harassment, non-fatal strangulation, kidnapping and offensive weapons offences.

Supporting Women Facing Additional Barriers

712 callers to the 24hr National Freephone Helpline identified as being deaf/hard of hearing, Disabled, coming from a Migrant, Traveller or Roma background.



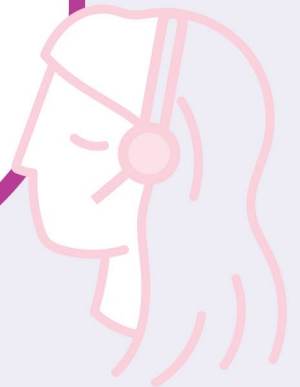
We facilitated
609
calls through
36
different languages
in 2023

51%
of languages used
were EU

The two most
frequent languages
were **Polish** and
Portuguese

49%
were Non-EU

42%
of women who accessed
our Face-to-Faces in
2023 were migrant
women



Specialist Training and Development Activity 2023

The Training and Development team had its busiest year ever in 2023.

	2023	2022	2021
Training events	138	81	60
Participants	1162	835	600
No. of organisations	130	116	169
Inputs & awareness sessions	32	41	15
No. of people	1461	2047	500

In addition, the dedicated **Employer Engagement Project** provided:

- Training Sessions to **211** participants from **21** organisations.
- **6** information sessions to **861** participants from **575** companies.

Strategic Communications Activity 2023

In 2023, Women's Aid continued to advocate for social change and create awareness on the prevalence and harms of domestic abuse against women and children, as well as intimate relationship abuse against young people.

19 Awareness Raising Sessions and Talks for Too Into You

10 Policy Submissions made

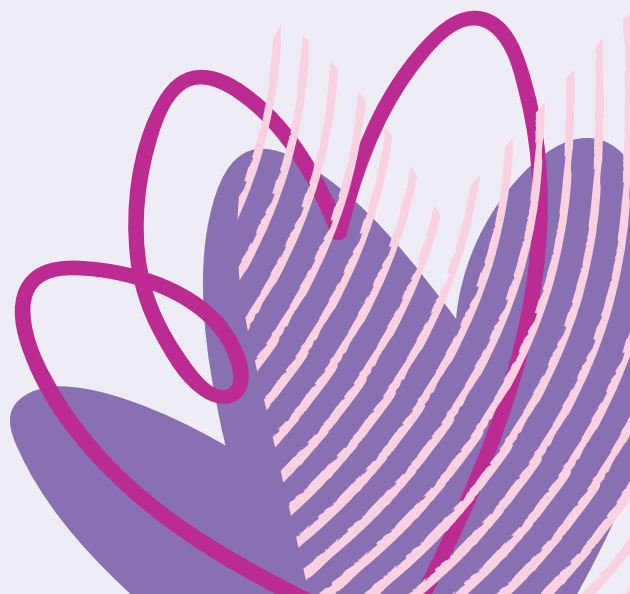
8 National awareness campaigns

- World's Strongest Women
- Too Into You campaigns X 2
- Domestic abuse during pregnancy awareness campaigns in maternity settings.
- National Freephone Helpline Awareness X 2
- 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence
- International Women's day
- Support for migrant women

5 Too Into You Workshops

3 Research Projects commissioned

2 Public Events



Femicide Watch

STOP KILLI

In 2023, 9 women died violently in the Republic of Ireland

Bruna Fonseca

Maud Coffey

Geila Ibram

Angela Canavan

Catherine Henry

Anna Mooney

Deepa Dinamani

Lorna Woodnutt Kearney

Claire Collins

Each woman violently killed is an outrage. An absolute tragic loss of life resulting in utter heartache and trauma for her loved ones left behind.

The Women's Aid Femicide Watch is dedicated to all women whose voices have been silenced through violence, and whose boundless potential was robbed of them and their loved ones.

Women's Aid stands in solidarity with families, friends and communities of women murdered and with women currently living with abuse.

We also dedicate this report to the families and the loved ones bereaved. Families who are enduring the unimaginable pain of loss and absence while left picking up the pieces.

IMAGE: Stop Killing Women Mural, Dublin 2023, by Emmalene Blake (photo kindly supplied by @emmaleneblake).

NG WOMEN

Women's Aid Femicide Watch (Republic of Ireland)

1996- June 2024

266

women have died violently between 1996-present*

172

women have been killed in their own homes (63%)

1 in every 2

femicide victims is killed by a current or former male intimate partner (55% of resolved cases)

20

children have died in incidents where women have died violently

87%

of women (where the case has been resolved) were killed by a man known to them. 13% of women were killed by a stranger

208

cases have been resolved (80%)

All-Ireland Femicide Watch 2020 – 2024

In 2023, Women's Aid and the Women's Aid Federation of Northern Ireland created the All-Ireland Femicide Watch. Based on information collected, we know that since the beginning of 2020:

53

women have died violently in Ireland (33 women in the Republic while 20 women have been killed in Northern Ireland).

79%

of women have been killed in their own homes.

24

cases have been resolved (46%). In these resolved cases, 79% of women were killed by a man known to them. In 50% of perpetrators were current or former partners of the victims.

4

children have died in incidents where women have been killed.

We will continue to record these killings to illustrate the danger posed to women and to better understand how to increase protection for women and children. Our aim is to continue to try and break the pattern of male violence against women in the hope of preventing any further loss of life.

Section 3

Plans for 2024 and Beyond



Women's Aid is extremely proud of our teams' performance during 2023 where the company continued to grow and develop its range of charitable activities in an innovative and strategic way. We have a clear and focused Strategic Plan 2022-2024 to frame and drive our work over the coming period. Some examples of achievements, which we will continue to build on in 2024, with the support of our new strategic framework include:

- During 2024 we will engage in a process of **review of our current Strategy** (2022-2024) and planning beyond its conclusion to ensure that the organisation has a clear framework for targeted operations, growth, and sustainability for coming years.
- The National Freephone Helpline (NFH) continues to be a crucial support to women across Ireland 24hrs a day, 7 days a week. Our Instant Messaging Support Service has been maintained for those who may wish to communicate silently (e.g. if in proximity to their abuser), for deaf and hard of hearing women and also others for whom this just a more comfortable mode of expressing themselves. Review of evolving peak call times and longer, more complex, calls to the service will inform targeted continuing investment to meet continuing demand. During 2024 **the National Helpline will expand the hours of Instant Messaging Support**, available via both www.womensaid.ie and www.toointoyou.ie.
- During 2023 we completed implementation of an integrated operating platform to increase administrative efficiency and data collection for the National Freephone Helpline. Women's Aid is very grateful to Tusla for supporting this important upgrade to the national service. The new platform went live in Q1 of 2023 and will be **further enhanced in 2024 to enable foreign language translation on the Helpline's Instant Messaging Service** which increases accessibility to this vital lifeline for migrant women who do not speak English.
- The work to enhance the National Helpline during 2023 also included a completely **new database system to enhance data collection for the NFH** and this is supported by SupportIT who contributed significant pro bono assistance in design and development of the database. 2024 will give us our full year of enhanced data via this new system.
- In 2024, Women's Aid **will undergo the application process to again achieve The Helplines Partnership Quality Standard**, which defines and accredits best practice in helpline work. The National Freephone Helpline is in its fourth accreditation, which runs to 22nd November 2024.
- Through very welcome grant support from the Department of Justice, the unique High Risk Support Project which Women's Aid delivers in partnership with An Garda Síochána and Vodafone Foundation Ireland, began its **national expansion** in Q4 2023 and **will be on a national basis by the end of 2024**.
- Through support from Tusla **the Services Team will expand the number of dedicated Maternity Outreach Support Workers** to two core staff.
- Women's Aid has commissioned three separate strategic research projects (see above) to give an evidence base for potential policy and structural improvements to combat DSGBV. These **three pieces of research will all be completed**

during 2024 and we will use the findings and recommendations to contribute meaningfully to national work to improve responses to all victims/survivors of domestic abuse, including disabled women, and children and those who may be particularly vulnerable or marginalised. All these activities will involve continuing cooperation with a wide range of stakeholder who share an interest in the outcomes and implication of each different research project.

- Through the wonderful generosity of many donors, Women's Aid offers an Internal Emergency and Security fund to women engaged directly with our services which we have in place to continue for 2024. With Board approval we will now also **extend for an additional fourth year our External National Emergency Fund to eligible Domestic Abuse services nationwide** which targets delivery of direct benefits to women and children in need.
- The organisation will **enhance its long-standing engagement with survivors** who wish to be agents for social change with **creation of a comprehensive survivor engagement policy and planning for delivery of an innovative 12-month Survivor Empowerment Project** to commence in late 2024/early 2025.
- Our court based drop-in service (DAIS), located in Ireland's largest Family Law Court was sustained on a full-time basis in 2023 and saw **significant increased demand will continue full time 2024**.
- We will invest in **enhancing our facilitator team during 2024 to increase capacity to deliver our Power to Change Programme** for survivors of domestic violence.
- We have **significantly increased our online training activities and further developed our training offering** to ensure we meet the needs of those seeking our specialist support. With further investment, design and development work continued in 2023 to **integrate an 'E-Learning' platform into our training offer, and new training materials to support online and blended learning**, we will respond to anticipated strong demand for training by a wide range of key stakeholders in 2024 and beyond.
- Following passage of legislation to put paid domestic violence leave on a statutory footing during 2023, we will **complete of our contract with DCEDIY to generate open-source policies and guidelines to support employers of all sizes to implement the law** in Q2 2024. In parallel we are investing further in the Training and Development's existing project to support Employer Engagement, with bespoke consultation and training to develop and roll out domestic abuse workplace policies across the country.
- Women's Aid will **continue to collaborate** with other partners to be a leading voice in campaigning and influencing key legislative reforms in 2024 with priority focus on new legislation, including the Family Courts Bill and the Human Trafficking Bill. We will also be monitoring the implementation of recent legislation that has been enacted, such as Coercive Control; Non-Fatal Strangulation; Stalking and other key measures which will better support and give access to justice for victims/survivors.

- Women’s Aid will **enter the fourth and final year of its TooIntoYou project pilot** in 2024. Building on two national research reports and with the launch of the new upgraded www.TooIntoYou.ie website in 2022, we have further expanded our awareness and engagement work with this important cohort of 18-25 year olds. In 2024 the project has a full year of planned activities we will also **receive an independent evaluator report**, commissioned in 2023 for this project. We will use this evaluation, along with our broader strategic planning process to identify the most strategic and sustainable way to grow the impact of this unique project for young people into the future.
- Our unique 3-year pilot **Maternity Project in partnership with 4 Maternity Hospitals, to increase support and referrals of pregnant women experiencing abuse, commenced mid-2021 and continues until the end of 2024, was extended with Board approval**. This will have a comprehensive independent evaluation to identify potential mainstreaming to improve and enhance supports available to women subjected to abuse during pregnancy. <https://www.womensaid.ie/get-training/maternity-project/> The evaluation and a range of external factors will be reviewed to decide the strategic and sustainable potential for continuity of the three different components of this important project which combined: specialist training design and delivery; a unique Maternity Outreach model and targeted awareness raising for the maternity healthcare setting.

In addition to the above, during 2024, Women’s Aid must practically invest further in some essential maintenance works to ensure our offices provide a safe and healthy work environment.

In 2024 and beyond, we are fully committed to continuing our ongoing vital support work and expanding this to continue to work incrementally and sustainably towards an Ireland where there is zero tolerance of domestic abuse.





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Supporting women
through generations

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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Community
Foundation
Ireland