



women's aid

Federation Northern Ireland

Annual Report  
05/06

Published by Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland

129 University St  
Belfast  
BT7 1HP

Tel: 028 9024 9041  
Fax: 028 9023 9296

Email: [info@womensaidni.org](mailto:info@womensaidni.org)  
Website: [www.womensaidni.org](http://www.womensaidni.org)

**24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline: 0800 917 1414**

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**Annual report, 2005–2006**

**Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland  
2006**

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women's aid

Federation Northern Ireland



Working to end domestic violence.

Challenging attitudes and beliefs which perpetuate domestic violence.



Promoting healthy and non-abusive relationships.



## Our Vision

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland's vision for the 21st century is the elimination of domestic violence.

## Our Mission

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

## Our goal

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland strives to welcome and support all women and children, including those with disabilities and those without, women from minority communities, different cultures, races, languages and sexual orientations and from a wide age range.

## **Principles, Values & Beliefs**

Women's Aid in Northern Ireland believes that:

Violence against women is a manifestation of unequal power relationships between women and men at all levels of society;

Violence against women remains a historical and cultural feature of our society;

The underlying cause of violence against women is the abuse of power and control by perpetrators;

Domestic violence is one form of violence against women;

Domestic violence is a violation of Article 5 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights – that “no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”;

Women are not passive victims of domestic violence. With support women have the capacity to cope with and survive the violence and abuse they experience;

Children who are experiencing domestic violence benefit from a range of services and support, and some may need safeguarding from harm. Often, supporting a non-violent parent is the most effective way of promoting a child's welfare.

Women's Aid in Northern Ireland is part of a worldwide feminist movement which is working for a better future in which equality of opportunity and real choice is available to all.

Our work is rooted in the principles of enablement, self-help, mutual aid, inclusion, equality and collective action. We recognise self-help as a gradual process which enables and promotes personal development.

All Women's Aid services have been developed in response to the needs of women affected by domestic violence. By listening and responding to the needs of women, Women's Aid has built up an expertise about violence and abuse.

Women's Aid recognises that domestic violence is a complex problem which requires effective and timely interventions by a range of agencies to protect and support women and children. Women's Aid is committed to working collaboratively with all relevant agencies to develop improved, coordinated responses and services for women and children experiencing domestic violence.

## **Tackling Violence at Home**

Domestic violence has been firmly on the government agenda this year with the release of the Tackling Violence at Home strategy. Women's Aid Federation, in partnership with its sister Women's Aid groups across Northern Ireland, were deeply involved in the consultation process, ensuring that the needs of women and children were recognised and supported.

## **24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline**

Women's Aid Federation's ten years of experience operating a Helpline was underpinned by a service level agreement. Funded by the Northern Ireland Office, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the agreement forms part of Tackling Violence at Home. The successful agreement has resulted in the addition of a freephone number to the service and a more secure financial footing. Crucially, it means that a vital lifeline is there for victims of domestic violence.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks must also go to all our funders who have supported our work throughout the year. A full list is available on the final page of this annual report.

The work of the management team must be commended for rising to all the challenges presented and steering the organisation forward in the absence of a Director.

A very successful year has drawn to close with the appointment of a new Director. Annie Campbell joined us in March and the Management Board welcomes her. Her experience and abilities means that she is well placed to lead a very talented and skilled staff team in our work to end domestic violence.

**Elsie Jordan**  
**Chairperson, Management Board**

## In the beginning

This was the year of the Helpline. From cramped beginnings 10 years ago, run by dedicated volunteers amidst constant worries about paying the telephone bill and keeping the lifeline afloat, this year the Helpline came of age with the freephone 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline in operation for one year. 20,261 calls managed by the Helpline in this first year are testament to the need for it.

Welcome capital funding from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive allowed us to introduce a new state-of-the-art telephone management system and soundproofed call centre, formally launched by Minister David Hanson. It is the realisation of a dream come true for all Women's Aid workers, volunteers and supporters across Northern Ireland.

## Partnership

The successful partnership that is sustaining the Helpline reinforces our belief that no single agency can eliminate domestic violence alone. Although we are proud to be the lead voluntary agency working on domestic violence in Northern Ireland we are fully committed to the development of partnership work rolling out from the government's Tackling Violence at Home strategy, launched in October 2005.

We value our place on the Regional Steering Group, and its various sub-groups, which are tasked with implementing the strategy. Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland has a long track record of lobbying for government to name domestic violence as a crime; to take decisive action to prevent it; and to resource us as we offer sanctuary and support to women and children who are victims of it. We will continue to challenge government and other agencies to live up to their commitments in Tackling Violence at Home.

**Senior Management Team (l-r)**  
 Anne Graham, Operations Manager  
 Annie Campbell, Director  
 Lorna Dougherty, Regional Support  
 Services Manager &  
 Sarah Mason, Finance Manager





## **Core Support**

Meanwhile throughout this year our core work continued with the provision of training; information; policy development; and management support to our membership of 10 autonomous Women's Aid groups.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers created the Women's Aid movement and continue to play a key role in all the services of Women's Aid. Our Helpline could not be maintained without the vital support of our volunteers. During the year 127 new volunteers were recruited and trained to provide support to the Helpline and our local groups. Unfortunately in this financial year the funding for our North West Volunteer Co-ordinator Project ended and the project closed in March 2006.

## **Commitment**

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland's Management Board members also volunteer their time freely to attend regular monthly Board meetings and sub groups and to provide strategic leadership for the organisation. Their support, commitment and good humour is critical to the success of our work.

The previous Director, Hilary Sidwell left the post in February 2005; I would like to acknowledge gratefully the firm foundations she helped build. I am very proud to have taken on the Director's post in March 2006. Tribute is due to the Senior Management Team, Lorna Dougherty, Anne Graham and Sarah Mason, for their excellent work in skillfully steering the organisation, aided by their committed staff teams, throughout this interim period of organisational change.

## **The challenge ahead**

As we face into the next year much work remains to be done and change, or impending change, seems to have become a constant feature of the political environment.

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland is prepared for the challenge and clear about our goal: to eliminate domestic violence and to help create a world where healthy and non-abusive relationships prevail.

**Annie Campbell**  
**Director**

### **What is domestic violence?**

Domestic violence is the intentional and persistent physical, emotional, sexual, financial or psychological abuse of one person by another, with whom they have or have had an intimate relationship. It is rarely a one-off event. Instead, it tends to escalate in frequency and severity over time.

Physical violence includes slapping, punching, beating, kicking and knife wounds — often leading to permanent injuries, and sometimes death.

Emotional and psychological abuse includes constant criticism and public humiliation such as being described as useless, ugly, or worthless. It can be threats to kill or harm the woman or children; intimidation; bullying; being locked in or kept in isolation away from family and friends; withholding food or sleep and being made a prisoner in her own home.

Sexual abuse includes being raped, sexual degradation and forcing sex in ways that hurt and injure.

Money can also be used as leverage for control and abuse. Money may be unreasonably taken or withheld; demands made for explanations on expenses; or providing receipts for all expenditure.

### **Who experiences domestic violence?**

Let's start by turning this question around and asking who *perpetrates* domestic violence. Research indicates that the risk of abuse correlates more closely to the actions of the perpetrator rather than the behaviour or profile of the victim. (Piispa 2002)

Much research has been done on a range of factors including age, socio-economic status, geographical location, being a parent and ethnicity. While there is some indication of increased risk in some groupings, what emerges strongly is not the picture of a likely victim but the indication that the more factors present that differentiate victims from the mainstream, the more barriers there are to seeking help.

The differentiating factor most frequently cited is that of gender. A range of UK agencies, auditing the number of contacts being made in a single day indicated a disproportionate level of violence experienced by women. 86% of calls to the police were from female victims attacked by male current partners or ex-partners. (Stanko, 2001) In a study of cases sent for prosecution under the Protection from Harrassment Act, 94% of perpetrators were male. (Harris, 2000) Further, 87% of partner homicides in London during 2001-2002 involved male perpetrators and female victims. (Richards, 2003)

Kimmel (2002) estimates that if data on assaults (physical and sexual) and homicides by partners or ex-partners is added to data purporting to show equal rates of violence, men would be shown to have perpetrated 80% of partner violence and 90% of all systemic, persistent and injurious violence. (Burnish, 2006).

The key message that comes through all studies on differentiating factors for victims is that the single biggest risk factor to experiencing domestic violence is being a woman.

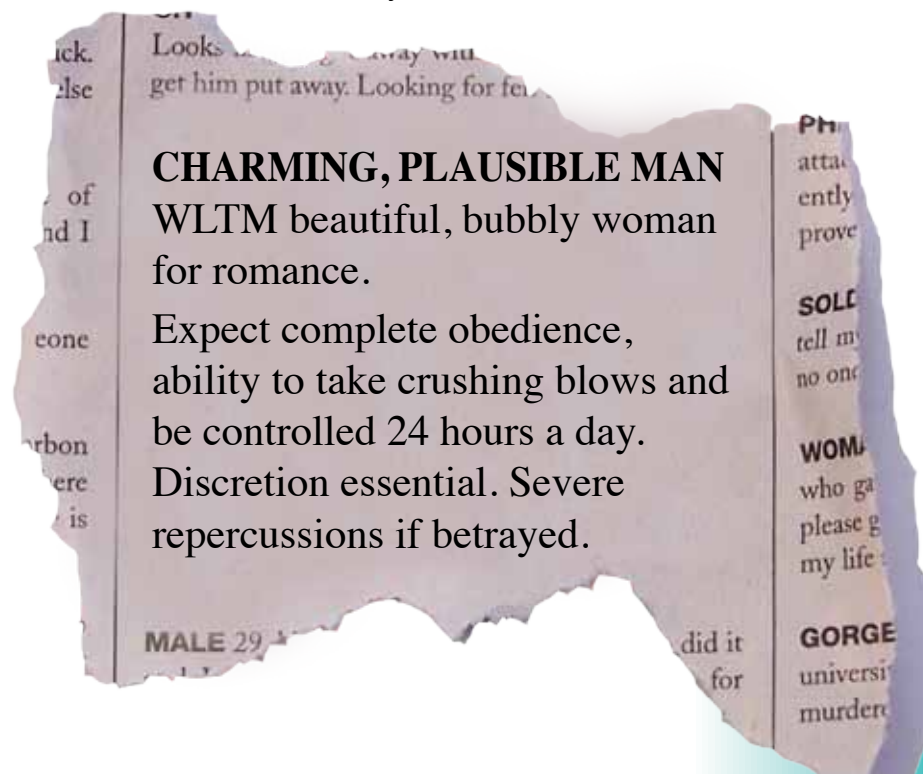
### How prevalent is domestic violence?

A World Health Organisation review of 48 international population-based surveys found prevalence rates for women, experiencing domestic violence at some point during their lifetime, ranged from 10% to 69% (WHO 2002).

The British Crime Survey (BCS) in 2001 indicated that 1 in 5 women had experienced domestic violence. This is a lower level of victimisation than previously reported in the BCS in 1996. However, the 2001 survey excludes sexual assaults (although 40% of all those reporting domestic violence had also been sexually assaulted). Subsequent inclusion of financial and emotional abuse returns the figure to 1996 level of prevalence of 1 in 4.

It is worth noting that crime surveys have proved unable, in the main, to reach black and ethnic minority communities, migrants and older women. Higher disclosure rates are reported for these groups of women when more sensitive survey methods are used. (Burnish, 2006).

In Northern Ireland, the PSNI have experienced a 36% rise in the number of domestic incidents reported in the last 2 years. The most recent figures show that the police attend a domestic incident every 22 minutes.



Between April 2005 and March 2006

**1069** women

**1026** children

stayed in Women's Aid refuges

Statistics can never give the full picture of what is happening to women and children living with the pain and misery of domestic violence.

We know from the increases in first time callers to the 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline that coincide with each advertising campaign that there are still women who have not accessed the help and support that Women's Aid can offer.

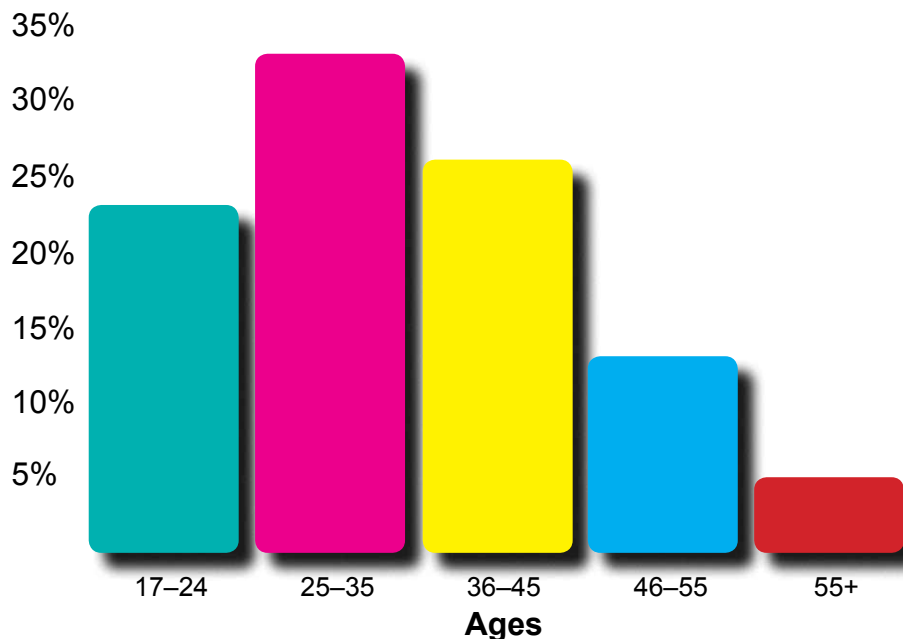
However, statistics can give a snapshot of the work of Women's Aid Federation and the ten autonomous groups that span Northern Ireland.

### Number of women and children staying in refuge

A total of 2,095 women and children stayed in Women's Aid's refuges during this year. The 1069 women is a slight decrease of 2.5% on the previous year while there is an increase of 10% in the number of children who stayed. That means that every day in Northern Ireland another 6 women and children come to stay in refuge because their home is not a safe place.

Information available for 561 women indicate that 44% had stayed in a refuge before at some point in their lives, either as a child or an adult.

### Age range of women staying in Women's Aid refuges 05–06



The 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline  
managed 20,261 calls  
between April 2005 and March 2006

### Age range

The spread of women's ages is illustrated on the previous page. The most predominant age group is the 25–35 year olds, accounting for a third of all women staying this year, and the 36–45 year olds at 26%. This is closely followed by the youngest age group (26%), then the 46–55 grouping (13%) and women aged over 56 at 5%.

Where information is available on the previous year, this shows a slight difference in prominence of age groupings. In the same period spanning 2004-2005, the most numerous grouping was the 36–45 year olds (31%), then the 25–35 year olds (27%) and very closely followed by the 17–24 year old group (26%). There were also 1% fewer women in 04–05 for both groupings of 46–55 and older women aged 56 and over.

Some research indicates that youth is a risk factor in experiencing domestic violence. (Walby and Allen, 2004). However, it should also be noted that younger women are more willing to disclose. (Bunge and Locke, 2000).

### Diversity

The increasing diversity of Northern Ireland's population was reflected in the fact that 37 women staying in refuges or calling the Helpline did not speak English as a first language. This is a significant increase from the 12 women recorded in the previous year (where information was available) and it is reasonable to expect that this trend will continue to increase.

53 women from the travelling community also stayed in Women's Aid refuges during this year.

45 women who disclosed having a disability came to refuge this year.

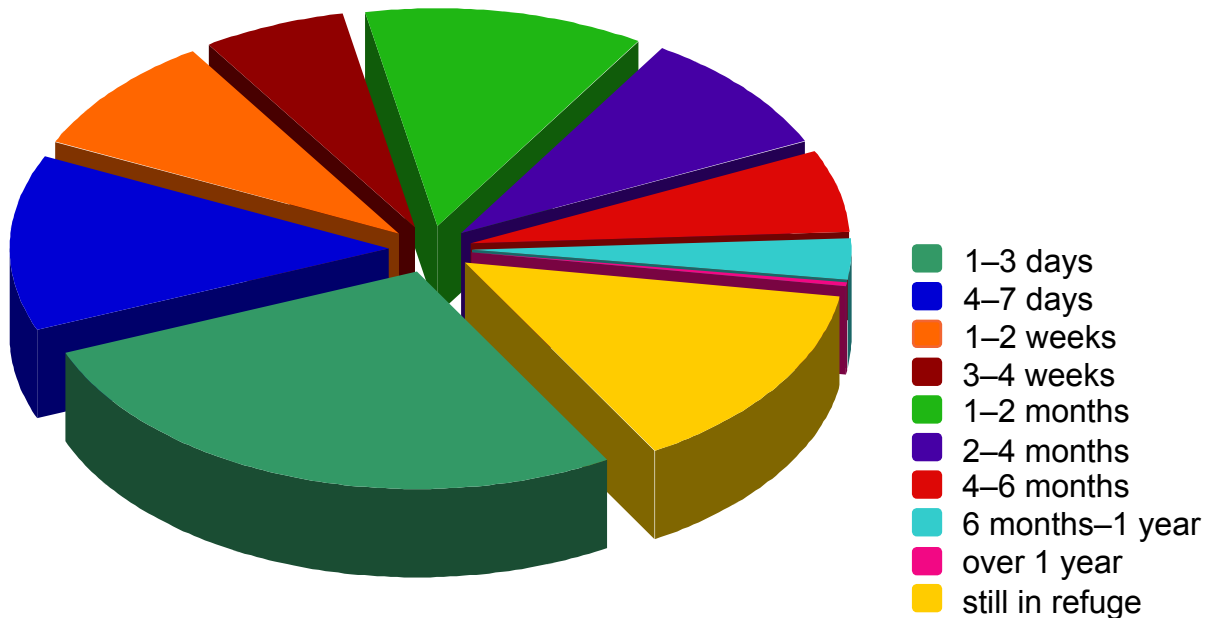
### Length of stay

40% of women and children stayed less than a week in a refuge in any single visit this year. In comparison, 1 in 6 women and their children stayed more than 6 months.

*"You know what you'll  
get if you tell anyone"*



### Length of stay of women in Women's Aid refuges



### Employment status of women

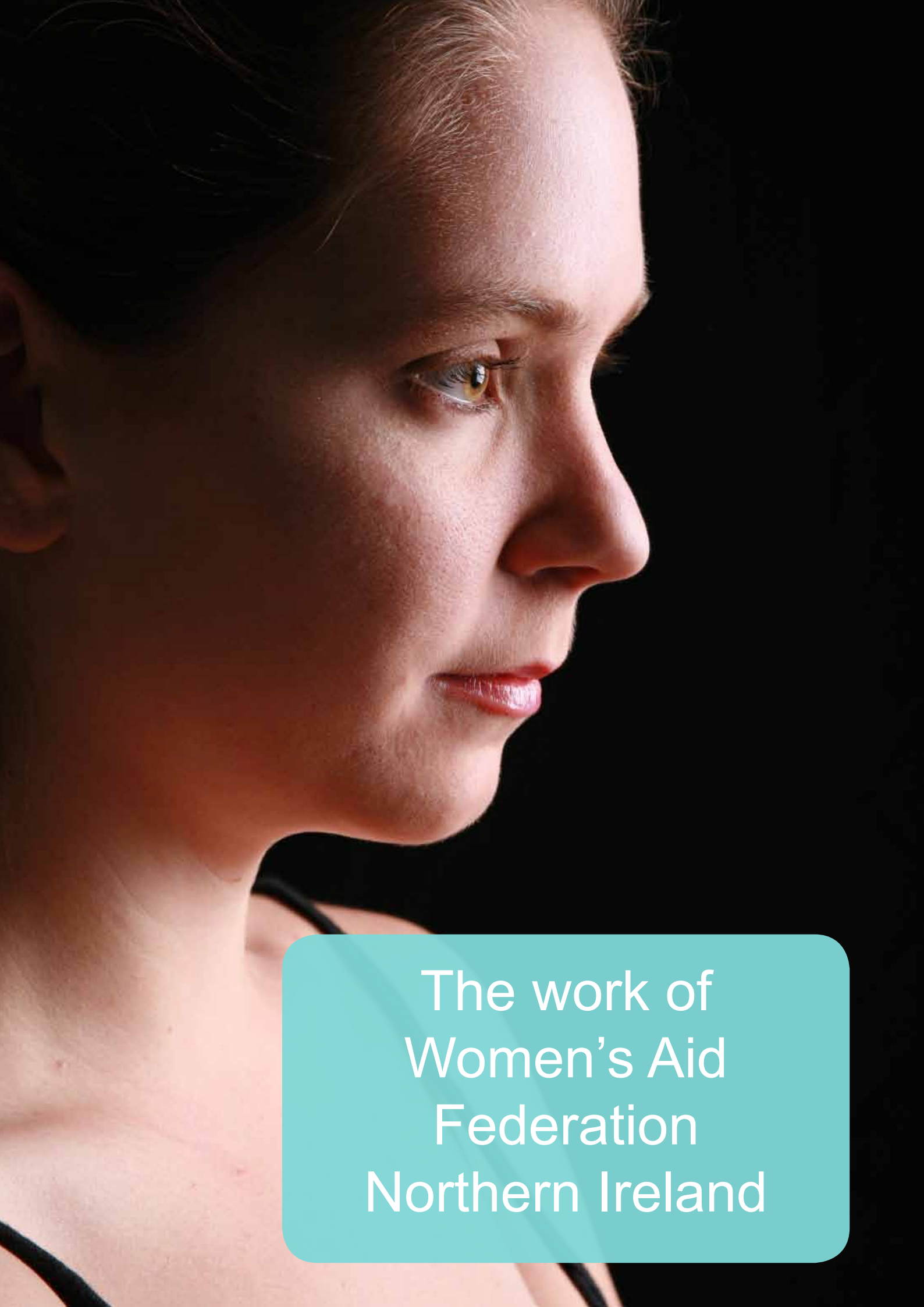
Information was available on the economic status of 672 of the women who stayed refuges this year. Of that number, 90% were unemployed (85% with benefits and 5% without).

There are many explanations why such a large percentage of women accessing refuge support were unemployed. Some working women may have financial reserves and can access alternative accommodation. It may be that women who stay a very short period (for whom less information is collected and may not be included in this figure) return to the abuser or move on because of work commitments.

Indications are that women experiencing domestic violence may be unemployed as a result of being prevented from working by their partner's controlling behaviour. (Walby and Myhill, 2001)

It would be useful to further explore the link with unemployment and domestic violence. Examining the prevalence of, and reasons for, unemployment may be very illuminating in determining the impact of domestic violence. Tackling Violence at Home\* estimates a loss of £180 million in economic output in Northern Ireland due to domestic violence. But more interestingly, it also estimates £500 million in "intangible costs"— factors described as pain and suffering in the strategy which may manifest themselves as long term illness or actions such as fleeing a local area which may result in unemployment.

*\*Tackling Violence at Home is the government strategy which addresses domestic violence.*



The work of  
Women's Aid  
Federation  
Northern Ireland

The 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline is open to anyone affected by domestic violence.

Tackling Violence at Home, the government's strategy on domestic violence, has led to major developments within the Helpline. The service is managed by Women's Aid Federation and funded by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the Northern Ireland Office and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

This year saw the first full year of providing our services using a freephone telephone number—0800 917 1414.

While the introduction of a freephone number has the obvious benefit of being free from a BT landline, it also has had other significant benefits.

For those living with domestic violence, the reality is that many cannot make phone calls because bills are checked, or no money is made available that can be used in a phone box. The new freephone number doesn't show up on landline bills and calls from phone boxes are free too. In short, it has increased access to the 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline for those in need.

Another great benefit of the new Helpline number is that the service is being accessed by more women across Northern Ireland. Having moved from a number that had a Belfast code to one with an 0800

prefix gives the implicit message that the Helpline service is for anyone affected by domestic violence and not just those in urban areas. Information gathered indicates that an average of 56% of callers during the year were from outside the major urban areas of Belfast and Foyle.

As a result of calls to the Helpline, 576 women with 1,114 children were given information about accommodation and referred to Women's Aid refuges around Northern Ireland.

Bearing in mind that victims do not have to leave home to get help, many callers preferred to get information about support in their community. The Helpline was able to give 4,977 callers information about Floating Support services, operated by Women's Aid and funded by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Considering that

### Who calls the Helpline?

The 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline managed 20,261 calls between April 2005 and March 2006. This is the first time the Helpline calls have exceeded 20,000.

A total of 74% of all calls come from women, family and friends who are affected by domestic violence.

A further 13% are enquiries from support staff drawn from social services, health professionals, police, voluntary and community services.

Some calls, including those from men, are signposted to other, more appropriate agencies. This year, the Helpline has signposted callers to mental health support teams, social services, health professionals, Rape Crisis Service, Nexus, Parents Advice Centre, Contact Youth, Men's Advisory Project, Men to Men and many other services.

The remainder of the calls are silent, ask for general information or are for administrative purposes.



### The effects of advertising on the Helpline

The Helpline's work has been ably supported by a government funded media campaign which ran three times this year. The first coincided with Community Safety Week in June 2005 when a TV advertisement entitled the *Doll's House* was aired simultaneously with a radio ad called *Different Voices* and a series of posters. This resulted in a 40% increase in calls during and immediately after the campaign was aired.

A second burst of advertising was organised to coincide with the launch of Tackling Violence at Home in October, 2005. The accompanying media campaign resulted in a 14% increase in calls from the previous month. In general the Helpline experiences a marked increase in calls during and immediately following media campaigns.

Women's Aid Federation has also distributed 75,500 Helpline cards and 20,000 posters throughout the year.

this resource has only been available since 2003, having support in the community has meant that Women's Aid is able to support many more victims of domestic violence.

This year's developments, alongside an evaluation undertaken by the Telephone Helpline Association, indicated the need for an increased number of staff and volunteers and a fit for purpose environment to handle the volume of calls.

As a result, we focused on improving the Helpline environment, reassessing our training and support for staff and volunteers and incorporating technological advancements into our phone system.

These developments have meant that our staff and volunteer teams are comprehensively supported in a specialist job that can be very challenging.

The improved systems are intended to reduce the number of engaged calls as it is essential to respond to as many calls as possible. This is particularly crucial when considering that making the call is not a simple task for a victim of domestic violence.

*"I will give you a face to put lipstick on"*



Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland provided training to 515 individuals through 11 different programmes. Many programmes were delivered several times this year to meet demand.

*Training is provided on an academic calendar so figures relate to the period September 05–June 06.*

Women's Aid Federation's programme of training is central to all our work because without training and support women who are experiencing domestic violence do not get the positive and effective response crucial to seeking help.

All training and materials are informed directly by the women and children who have used our services in the last three decades.

Our trainers are all qualified, quality assured and experienced in the field of domestic violence.

This year, we established a training relationship with the Northern Ireland Court Service (NICS) as a direct result of feedback from women and NICS's desire to provide a better service to women affected by domestic violence. The training has resulted in better informed staff who can provide support at a particularly sensitive time.

Tackling Violence at Home's emphasis on work based policies to support employees has meant that we are now providing training to a broader range of employers than ever before. This work has ranged from delivering basic awareness packages through to tailored

workplace policies. For the first time, we have been providing training in agencies whose core work is not providing support to women and children. This reflects the fact that domestic violence is so prevalent in our society that disclosure from colleagues in any work setting is very likely. It also acknowledges the importance that a first response to disclosure should be positive and knowledgeable to ensure that women access the help they need.

One of our core strengths is the value we place on training and opportunities for staff across Women's Aid. We seek to identify specialisms to ensure courses are not generic - they are always customised to suit each staff member's role in the organisation. Further, the organisation has made significant inroads in gaining recognised, benchmark standards for our training materials and processes. The result is that training for staff delivered by Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland means a recognised qualification for participants that reflects their commitment.

#### **Feedback from course participants**

"Surpassed my expectations. Some very down to earth introductions on how to apply my skills"

*Groupwork and Facilitation Skills*

#### **Feedback from course participants**

"Very, very worthwhile and interesting training. The trainer was excellent"

*Basic Awareness of Domestic Violence*

### Feedback from course participants

“The trainers were very informative and have excellent presentation and group facilitation skills. It felt like a very safe environment to learn and develop knowledge in.”

*New Worker Training*

### Overview of domestic violence

The first step in basic awareness is to inform participants of the prevalence and nature of domestic violence. It covers the experiences of women in an abusive relationship and the services of Women’s Aid to meet specific needs. This training is a foundation course and is used as an initial component for many of the tailored courses.

The programme was delivered 9 times throughout the year to 93 participants.

### Advanced understanding of domestic violence

Incorporating the prevalence and nature of domestic violence, this course focuses on promoting an effective response to disclosure. It also supports the creation of an environment that is conducive to disclosure. It explains some of the age old questions and myths surrounding domestic violence; the help seeking process as experienced by victims; and additional barriers encountered for women from minority communities of interest.

The programme was delivered 8 times throughout the year to 86 participants.

### Domestic Violence Investigators Course (PSNI)

Designed as a continuous professional development skills based programme stemming from the changing role of Domestic Violence Officers to become more investigative. Lead partners, Police Service Northern Ireland, organised the training and Women’s Aid provided expertise on the specifics of domestic violence to an advanced level.

Training was provided over a course of 6 months to 77 Domestic Violence Officers.



Women's Aid in Northern Ireland has delivered prevention work directly in 105 schools, by 15 Women's Aid staff, who accessed training from Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland.

Women's Aid believes that one of the most effective ways to reduce and eliminate domestic violence for children and young people is through prevention and protection programmes.

### **Support to Women's Aid Children and Young People's Workers**

In addition to training opportunities, children and young people's workers are supported through the regional PECS group (Preventive Education within Communities and Schools). Facilitated by the Young Person's Development worker, this group meets quarterly to ensure clear and consistent quality standards in service delivery.

This year the PECS group produced a publication to ensure children and young people receive training of a high standard. Entitled *Delivering domestic violence preventive education programmes in schools and external settings: Good Practice Guidelines*, it is available through Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland.

In addition to the PECS group, Women's Aid's child workers have also been meeting quarterly. The focus of their work has been working with challenging behaviours; alternatives to physical punishment; and working with children who have experienced domestic violence and who are affected by court orders.

### **Representation on behalf of children and young people**

Women's Aid believes that children and young people are often the forgotten victims of domestic violence. To end this, Women's Aid has worked to ensure that the needs of children and young people affected by domestic violence are taken into account by the health board's Children Services Planning Committees (CSPC). All four CSPCs have established sub groups on the issue and Women's Aid is

represented throughout the region. Women's Aid Federation is also represented on the Regional Steering Group's Children's sub group. In this way, Women's Aid Federation, in partnership with Women's Aid throughout Northern Ireland, ensures that children and young people affected by domestic violence are more visible and that their needs are highlighted and included in future government policies and statutory plans.

### **Future developments**

A great deal of this year's work will be to consolidate the progress achieved in 2006/2007.

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland is working on a new training programme entitled *You and Me, Mum* for mothers whose children and young people have experienced domestic violence and the development of *From Process into Practice*, a four day advanced training programme.

## Training

### **The impact of domestic violence on children and young people**

Giving an understanding of children's experiences of domestic violence, and its effects, this training highlights children and young people's coping strategies and support needs.

This course was delivered to 187 participants including social workers, social work students, teachers, students, Police Service Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities as well as domestic violence projects throughout Ireland

### **Prevention Strategies**

Essential for those working with children and young people, this training illustrates the impact of domestic violence, Protective Behaviours™ and a practical approach to personal safety.

The programme introduces materials developed by Women's Aid for direct work with young people, namely Helping Hands for under 12s and Heading for Healthy Relationships for 12-18 year olds.

This year there were 6 programmes, and 79 participants took part. Participants on Women's Aid prevention programmes included PSNI school liaison officers, youth workers, teachers and other domestic violence project staff throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

### **Keeping safe child protection training**

This programme, endorsed by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, is delivered by the Young Persons Development worker.

Women's Aid child protection policy raises awareness of child protection issues, and the potential vulnerability of children living with disability as well as domestic violence situations.

The programme consists of four modules which include: awareness of abuse ; policy and procedures; code of behaviour and disability awareness.

This year there were 7 programmes with 68 participants.

*" Please don't  
hit my mummy "*



The pace of change, encouraged by the introduction of Tackling Violence at Home, has meant that there are ever increasing demands for information. This year has seen an increased number of requests for Helpline cards, posters and domestic violence information from a diverse range of sources, including sections of the community such as private businesses who are contacting us for the first time.

Local Women's Aid groups, students, statutory providers, voluntary agencies, church groups, businesses and individuals have contacted the Information Unit for resources to support their work in the community. All have been driven by the need to find out more about domestic violence and its effects. Many have contacted the unit with a specific woman or child in mind (and been referred to the Helpline as the more appropriate support mechanism) but often it is to improve services as a result of the increased awareness of the issue. All have become aware of the need for a positive first response when women and children disclose abuse in their home.

Women's Aid Federation's library, which houses the most comprehensive range of publications on domestic violence in Northern Ireland, has been used by over 100 students and 20 other individuals and has proved to be invaluable for their research and education.

### Publications produced this year

#### **Domestic Violence Awareness Pack**

Detailing three courses for use by Women's Aid groups, this pack has been used across Northern Ireland.

#### **Directory of Women's Aid services in Northern Ireland**

The Directory gives clear details of all services which Women's Aid in Northern Ireland delivers. It is a quick and easy reference for service providers.

#### **Language leaflets**

Leaflets in Portuguese, Arabic, Irish and Urdu have been updated and reprinted to meet demand. They complement the existing Mandarin and Hindi leaflets.

#### **Training booklet**

Publicising the breadth of training available from Women's Aid Federation, the booklet has been central to raising our training profile.

All these publications and others are available by contacting [info@womensaidni.org](mailto:info@womensaidni.org)

A series of new posters, promoting the new 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline number, were produced and demand has far outstripped our stocks requiring reprints. These posters have been sent to numerous public points of access and Women's Aid groups have used them extensively in local areas.

The most heavily used resource is still the Helpline card. More than 75,000 cards were distributed throughout the year and there are increasing numbers of agencies who make regular contact to re-order supplies. Hospitals and health centres regularly order supplies of Helpline cards.

The numbers requesting leaflets in languages other than English has also soared.

Numerous agencies have also contacted the Information Unit to enquire about how Women's Aid Federation meets its Section 75 obligations in communicating with groups such as women with hearing or

sight impairments, women who speak English as a second language, rural women and older women. This is a work in progress but much has been achieved this year in making documents available in larger print and following guidelines on clarity in design, using textphone systems, producing information in alternative languages, ensuring that outlets for materials cover the region and does not solely focus on urban areas and examining language and images for inclusivity. There is still much to be done in this to ensure that meaningful communication is effected with women across Northern Ireland.

The Monthly Mailing is available by email to any interested organisation or individual. Featuring events, details of related courses, new publications and a round up of news stories, the number requesting copies has steadily grown throughout the year.

Focus on the media this year resulted in numerous stories in the press and on television. Many of the stories followed the heightened awareness of domestic violence that Tackling Violence at Home created. The accompanying advertising campaign which features the 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline also brought increased media attention. It is hoped that the work with the media will increase in the future as it not only furthers Women's Aid Federation's goal of raising awareness but also, on a very practical level, attracts calls to the Helpline.

### What's next?

The nature of providing and disseminating clear and pertinent information is constantly changing in today's high-tech society.

Mindful of this, the Information Unit will be making materials available in more diverse formats—it will make more use of the internet, particularly when designing information for young people as well as making more use of email and traditional print based methods of communicating the Women's Aid message.

Recognising the increasing diversity of society in Northern Ireland, additional leaflets will be produced in Russian, Spanish, Polish and Bulgarian. This will be supported with a new multi-lingual poster and display stand and will be made possible through funding from the Northern Ireland Office's Domestic Violence Unit.

Work achieved this year in reaching women, children and young people via public points of contact such as libraries and GP surgeries will be capitalised upon and developed further.

*"This place is a pigsty,  
why are you so useless?"*



### Some examples of work we achieved this year

Publicity campaigns involving everything from posters and leaflets, to dramas, computer mousemats and wristbands have raised awareness and debate on domestic violence and abuse.

As understanding has increased, aspects of domestic violence such as user consultation and elder abuse have been explored. Service provision has developed and increased in courts and advice centres.

Training was delivered to a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations; resources including a DVD on civil law responses were published and distributed.

Relationships have been forged with local community safety partnerships, area child protection committees and schools all aimed at preventing abuse, earlier interventions and greater efficiency.

Since 2005, Tackling Violence at Home has set an overall direction and context for inter agency co-operation on domestic violence and abuse in Northern Ireland. The strategic approach of the Regional Steering Group is followed and interpreted locally by domestic violence partnerships based on their local needs and resources.

Women's Aid Federation provided support and practical help to a number of local partnerships as they reviewed and prioritised plans and made progress on key tasks. Local partnerships show real determination and initiative in how they approach their work.

There is no doubt that there is strong commitment to the process of inter agency work, but sufficient time and resources remain perennial challenges to delivering effective and efficient outcomes.

The themes and objectives of Tackling Violence at Home are also reflected in the development of several pieces of work supported by Women's Aid Federation.

The policy and practice of routine enquiry of pregnant women and new mothers has now been developed in a number of maternity services. Women's Aid Federation and local Women's Aid groups worked alongside midwives, health visitors and other key health and social care professionals to develop comprehensive, practical policies to increase the safety and support of women and their children.

Improved service and support for women was also one of the key objectives of the joint working protocol developed between Women's Aid and Victim Support in Northern Ireland. As well as clearly outlining the role and response each organisation has in supporting victims of domestic violence crimes, the protocol was published with useful directories of local and regional services provided by both organisations.

The Women's Aid Inter Agency Support Group meets several times a year and helps to share ideas and best practice throughout the region. Support group members represent all local Women's Aid groups with a mixture of team leaders and local inter agency workers attending.

There is great value and learning in people sharing their direct



experience of working with other organisations and agencies in local domestic violence partnerships. Both the success that is achieved and the challenges that are faced in partnership working are discussed at meetings. With so much work in progress across the region of Northern Ireland the support group helps to avoid duplication of effort while still encouraging local effort and initiative. Ideas are passed around generously with a regular chorus of “can I have a copy of that please” going round the table. Meetings are used to promote new projects and programmes of interest to partnerships and recently appointed inter agency workers have found information and support from colleagues.

Casting ahead to the next year, thoughts turn to the Review of Public Administration; testing innovative approaches from elsewhere here in Northern Ireland; and securing ongoing support and resources for local and regional plans.

*“The next trip you’ll be taking  
will be in an  
ambulance”*



The Regional Support Services team provided information, support and guidance to Women's Aid groups that deliver services to women, children and young people affected by domestic violence. The team responds to group requests on management and development issues, policy and procedures, resources and information.

Supporting People continues to be a major challenge for those providing accommodation and housing related services to homeless and vulnerable adults. Three years into the reform a degree of uncertainty and change persists and has ensured that meeting requirements both at organisational and service delivery level continues to be a priority across Women's Aid.

Regional support services has continued to facilitate the three regional forums progressing developments in accommodation, floating support and finance. Over the year significant progress has been made in all required core objective areas.

Financial administration focused on issues relating to Supporting People accreditation; disparity of practice and use of documentation within housing offices; management of overpayments; bad debt procedures; and project apportionment of costs.

The restructuring of external housing forums has increased the opportunity to network with regional housing bodies and other local service providers. This has improved communications and provided a structure for clarification and consultation on information.

### North and West Volunteering Project

Into its final year of funding with the Volunteer Development Agency, the project continued to provide training and volunteer opportunities for women wishing to support Women's Aid.

#### Examples of work undertaken

Contributing to the work of the policy subgroup reviewing and updating core policies and an implementation framework.

Development of an evaluation *pro forma* for women within floating support projects on Health & Wellbeing and services

Leaflets for refuge usage promoting key information for women on health and safety; refuge services; floating support services; comments and complaints; and confidentiality

Documentation for use within Supporting People services – admission criteria, consent agreements; support recording documentation

Refuge development – provided guidance and support to Fermanagh Women's Aid including assistance with outline budget for proposal of new refuge services.

Four recruitment drives successfully attracted 94 women, all of whom completed an 8 week volunteer training programme before being placed within Women's Aid groups located in the North and West.

Despite the loss of project co-ordinators during the year and lack of success in attracting replacements due to the short term employment offered, annual recruitment figures achieved 61% of the target.

The strong base of 139 volunteers and their continued commitment in many areas including refuge work; children's services; community justice and call centre telephone management and support, resulted in a total of 8020 volunteering hours recorded.

## Client Link

Following the initial pilot by North Down and Ards Women's Aid and the 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline, Clientlink is responding to suggested improvements to ensure it is an effective resource for our work.

The Regional Support Services team supported the introduction of Clientlink across Women's Aid groups with a comprehensive training programme. A total of 12 programmes were delivered with 78 participants from Women's Aid groups. By the close of the year, all groups participating were registered for access to the secure site and moving towards implementation.

## UK Refuges Online (UKROL)

This year has seen an increase of 24% in usage with approximately 8000 monthly log-ons to the site and updating UKROL is now part of daily practice. An evaluation of UKROL this year highlighted its success in delivering a more effective system for accessing and updating information.

The UK Gold Book, a national directory of refuge and domestic violence and abuse services, was reprinted in Autumn 2005 with information on Women's Aid services in Northern Ireland included for the first time. A valuable resource, servicing this process is integral to our work.

## Legal Practitioners Subgroup

This group shares information, raises legal issues about domestic abuse and develops work which promotes effective and efficient practice.

Women have highlighted problems they have faced within the legal process, eg, accessing legal representation, the trauma of the court process and lack of understanding of outcomes. From this, Women's Aid identified the need for comprehensive information to improve support and advocacy services and to lobby effectively for change.

Women's Aid will conduct a mapping exercise called *Court Watch* next year to survey women's experience of family courts, to identify good practice, the gaps in support provision and future areas of research.

In preparation, to get approval and agreement to undertake this work at designated courts, we consulted Northern Ireland Court Services who have been very supportive of this initiative. Crucially, we consulted women in the initial drafting of the questionnaire. Their willingness to share their time and experiences with us is greatly appreciated.

## Client Link

Clientlink is a secure web-based client monitoring system, which enables Women's Aid to record work undertaken with women accessing Women's Aid services; monitor key outcomes and provide organisational statistical requirements.

UKROL is the internet based system which provides domestic violence/abuse with up to date information on vacancies in refuges and availability of other domestic violence/abuse services throughout the UK.

The system is managed in partnership by Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland, Scottish Women's Aid, Welsh Women's Aid, Women's Aid Federation England and Refuge.

**Women's Aid Federation  
Northern Ireland**

129 University St, Belfast, BT7 1HP  
tel: 028 9024 9041, fax: 028 9023 9246  
email: [info@womensaidni.org](mailto:info@womensaidni.org)



**1. Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid**

49 Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 6RY  
tel: 028 9066 6049, fax: 028 90682874  
email: [admin@belfastwomensaid.org.uk](mailto:admin@belfastwomensaid.org.uk)

**3. Cookstown & Dungannon Women's Aid**

61 Molesworth Street, Cookstown, BT80 8PA  
tel: 028 8676 9300, fax: 028 8676 9300  
email: [womensaidcookstown@hotmail.com](mailto:womensaidcookstown@hotmail.com)

**5. Fermanagh Women's Aid**

27a High Street, Enniskillen, BT74 7EH  
tel: 028 6632 8898, fax: 028 6632 8859  
email: [womensaidfermanagh@btopenworld.com](mailto:womensaidfermanagh@btopenworld.com)

**7. North Down & Ards Women's Aid**

18 Bingham Street, Bangor, BT20 5DW  
tel: 028 9127 3196, fax: 028 9145 5245  
email: [ndawomensaid@hotmail.com](mailto:ndawomensaid@hotmail.com)

**9. Women's Aid in Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne & Newtownabbey.**

2 Cullybackey Rd, Ballymena, BT43 5DF  
tel: 028 2563 9301, fax: 028 2565 3304  
email: [womensaidareaoffice@btconnect.com](mailto:womensaidareaoffice@btconnect.com)

**2. Causeway Women's Aid**

23 Abbey Street, Coleraine, BT80 8PA  
tel: 028 7035 6573, fax: 028 7032 6949  
email: [womensaidcoleraine@btinternet.com](mailto:womensaidcoleraine@btinternet.com)

**4. Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid**

Horizon House, 198 Union Street, Lurgan, BT66 8EQ  
tel: 028 3834 3256, fax: 028 3832 2277  
email: [info@craigavonbanbridgewomensaid.org.uk](mailto:info@craigavonbanbridgewomensaid.org.uk)

**6. Foyle Women's Aid**

Pathways, 24 Pump Street, L'Derry, BT48 6JG  
tel: 028 7128 0060, fax: 028 7128 0061  
email: [info@foylewomensaid.org](mailto:info@foylewomensaid.org)

**8. Omagh Women's Aid**

27 Market Street, Omagh, BT78 1EL  
tel: 028 8224 1414, fax: 028 8224 1414  
email: [omagh.wa@easynet.co.uk](mailto:omagh.wa@easynet.co.uk)

**10. Women's Aid Newry, Mourne, South Down & South Armagh**

7 Downshire Place, Belfast Road, BT34 1DZ  
tel: 028 3025 0765, fax: 028 3026 9606  
email: [eileen.havern@btconnect.com](mailto:eileen.havern@btconnect.com)



Women's Aid in  
Northern Ireland:  
the work of  
Women's Aid  
autonomous groups

*Each autonomous group has its own full report of this year's activities. This section gives a brief snapshot of some work that has been achieved by local groups across Northern Ireland this year.*

## **Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid**

### **New resource centre**

The resource and support centre was relocated to a more suitable building to meet the increased demand for Floating Support and outreach work.

### **Inter-Agency Work**

Staff continue to play a key role in the North & West and South & East Trust partnerships. Achievements this year include *The Law on Your Side* – a DVD guide through the process of obtaining protective orders, and a directory of domestic violence services in Belfast.

### **Funding**

This group was involved in securing funding for a Domestic Violence Co-ordinator post working jointly for both Belfast Trust Partnerships.

### **Training**

Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid is instrumental in organising and delivering domestic violence training to PSNI recruits. The development of routine enquiry work with maternity hospitals across the area has also been central to training successes this year.

*"I told him I was pregnant and he hit me. Words can't describe how vulnerable and shocked I was because it came out of nowhere. Now I am terrified that he will hurt my baby"*

Ayesha, 29

### **Children and Young People**

Staff provide extensive support in schools through the *Helping Hands* and *Protective Behaviours* programmes. In addition, there are support and activities for children and young people whose mums are using our services.

## **Causeway Women's Aid**

### **Children & Young Persons Project**

Responding to a gap in services, the Children & Young Person's Project developed an initiative for 13–16 year olds. Working with Coleraine Youth Forum, young people can use support services and a forum to discuss domestic violence and any other issues affecting their lives.

### **Education & Training**

The Education & Training unit has introduced a new CLAIT course. Plus, a new summer programme meant the centre was a focal point for women to meet up and enjoy recreational and therapeutic courses in the company of others over the summer months.

### **Safe Families**

Ballymoney Safe Families hosted *Don't Say A Word*, a play about domestic violence from the perspective of both victim and perpetrator. September 2005 saw the launch of Ballycastle Safe Families, offering a much needed service to women in the Moyle District Council area.

*“At first, I was nervous about moving to a refuge and I missed my friends. But the Child Care worker made me feel at home and I feel so much safer now.”*

Sami, 7

### **Community Justice Project**

Additional funding from the PSNI secured a second post in the Community Justice Project. The funding allows the further development of the project, providing a complete support package for those women involved in both criminal and civil proceedings.

### **Protocol**

Over the last year Causeway Women’s Aid has played an active role in the working group established to develop a joint protocol with Victim Support. This protocol will ensure that the agencies work to provide a seamless service for victims of domestic abuse.

## **Cookstown & Dungannon Women’s Aid**

### **Diversity**

Cookstown & Dungannon Women’s Aid has responded to the ever changing cultural diversity within the Mid Ulster area and has welcomed and supported 44 women including 5 from black and minority ethnic groups.

### **New resource centre**

The Women’s Resource Centre currently operates out of rented premises. However, the organisation has recently purchased a building which will be converted into offices, including a private advice room, training and conference facilities as well as space for a crèche.

### **Floating Support**

Cookstown & Dungannon Women’s Aid has recruited a Floating Support Worker with experience of supporting women with difficult and complex needs.

### **Preventative Education Pilot Programme for young women**

This programme is for young woman aged 13–16. The programme ran for 10 weeks and topics included a wide range of issues. Feedback from attendees and mothers was very positive and it is hoped this programme will form part of our future work.

### **Don’t Say a Word**

*Don’t Say a Word* was staged in February this year and a total of 400 year 11 pupils from two local secondary schools were supported to view the play. This proved to be a very effective medium for raising awareness of domestic violence among young people.



## Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid

### Multi-Culturism

We continue to challenge those statutory agencies that have yet to adapt to the needs of a multi cultural region. We work those living with the consequences of conflicting advice from some government departments. Practically, all of us need to promote that it is everyone's human right to have basic needs met.

### Levels of Work

Spiralling levels of work speak loudly for our provision and the effectiveness of multi agency referrals, especially the evident confidence of social services in our therapeutic work. Local media campaigns have reached women and families who were previously not aware of our work.

*"It took 10 years for me to leave him. I spent 2 years talking to the Helpline and my local group before I was ready. It was the best thing I ever did."*

Sonya, 57

### Lack of Resources

Under-funding continues to be a problem. This year has been particularly difficult as funding streams have ended, with unsuccessful attempts to secure new contracts, and the resulting loss of key staff. Increasing demand coupled with understaffing has led to stretched services.

### Court Service

Our very successful partnership pilot, now established five mornings a month, in collaboration with Craigavon Court demonstrates to us the ever increasing need for support on child contact and the barrage of issues and problems that accompany it.

## Fermanagh Women's Aid

### New resource centre

Fermanagh Women's Aid is preparing to move to a new resource centre. Services have grown, the current centre no longer meets our needs and a new building has been secured for our future work. Notably, the new centre will improve disability access.

### Volunteers

We were successful in our application to the Volunteer Development Agency to enable us to secure our Volunteer Co-ordinator post.

### Call Centre

At the beginning of 2005 we created a Call Centre managed by the Volunteer Co-ordinator and volunteers. This has been a tremendous success. All calls are filtered through to workers.



### **Administration and funding development**

We have been able to maintain the present staffing structure by securing funding and have implemented a new Senior Management Team structure. This development streamlines our working systems, making best use of staff skills.

### **Support**

Fermanagh Women's Aid supported 220 women and worked with 85 children. Our small refuge housed 19 women and 9 children. We dealt with 9,448 calls for information and support. Floating Support engaged in 2,115 home visits and the childcare team made 368 home visits.

## **Foyle Women's Aid**

### **Inter-agency groups**

Outreach groups in Limavady and Strabane as part of the Foyle Interagency Partnership on Domestic Violence were established this year. These groups will focus on the needs of rural women and children and help us address the inequality of services for these families.

### **Conference**

*Hurt Indoors*, a conference focusing on domestic violence & elder and vulnerable adult abuse, was held by a consortium of agencies including Action on Elder Abuse, Ballymena Women's Aid Antrim, Carrickfergus, Larne and Newtonabbey and Foyle Women's Aid

### **Foyle Day of Action against Domestic Violence**

Funded by Derry City Council, this seminar focused on Amnesty International's Global Campaign *Stop Violence Against Women*.

### **Broken Toys – Shattered lives**

Young people from the local Foyle Trust Area performed this play at the NIO *Raising the Standards* conference. Produced by the Playhouse in conjunction with Foyle Women's Aid, the play depicted childhood experiences of domestic violence based on children's stories.

### **Charity Debate Night**

The debate *Boys are Best* was a great night's craic and helped raise funds for the development of our children's unit. Special mention to

*" Stop whining  
and lie down "*



Radio Foyle for their participation alongside Angela Hegarty (University of Ulster at Magee) and Joe Mahon (Lesser Spotted Ulster).

## North Down & Ards Women's Aid

### Support in schools

The demand for our programmes in both primary and senior schools in the area continues to increase. We have noticed a significant rise in children and young people seeking one to one support after these sessions and the need has been identified for school workers to allocate additional time to provide this service.

### Transformers

Referrals to our Transformer groups have increased. The benefit to the children who attend these groups is reflected in their regular attendance as well as the feedback we receive at the end of each course.

### Training

The additional post of a Training Worker has enabled us to provide more training and information to statutory, voluntary and community groups and underpins the work that we do in our local area.

### Data collection

Volunteering to pilot Clientlink gave us robust data and was instrumental in providing comprehensive support to women and their children using our services. It also fed into future strategic planning. This programme is now being rolled out across Women's Aid groups.

*"I can't leave.  
I know what he will do to  
me and my family."*

Liz, 41

### Feedback from women

Women who have used our services attended a local forum where they heard from representatives of PSNI, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and a solicitor. The women asked questions and made recommendations on how to improve services.

## Omagh Women's Aid

### Funding

Big Lottery funding led to the recruitment of two workers to carry out valuable work with children and young people affected by domestic violence. The project will also undertake preventative work with children and young people in schools, youth clubs and after schools settings.

### Inter-agency

Another funding success this year has allowed Omagh Women's Aid to employ a part-time inter-agency worker to take forward the work of the Sperrin Lakeland Domestic Violence Forum.

## Seminar on Elder Abuse

Omagh Women's Aid, with Sperrin Lakeland Domestic Violence Forum, Omagh Community Safety Partnership and Senior Citizens Consortium Sperrin Lakeland organised a seminar on elder abuse.

*"Meeting with other kids who saw their mums being beaten and who understand was such a relief.*

*It was so good to find out that it wasn't just happening to me."*

Paul, 14

## Vagina Monologues

Talented staff and volunteers took part in a local production of the Vagina Monologues, raising over £2,000 for Omagh Women's Aid, Nexus and the Japanese Comfort Women's Fund.

## Education Project

Omagh Women's Aid, with the local college, delivered essential skills training to over 30 women. This was so popular that additional mornings were made available. Some women achieved the GCSE equivalent and some have gone on to use their new skills in paid employment.

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

### Anniversary

This year has seen the celebration of 10 years of achievement, success and growth for the group.

### Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

We have been active participants in developing the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference pilot project. The role of the MARAC is to assess and manage the risks to victims of domestic violence and Women's Aid will play a key role when launched in April 05.

### Bullybusters

A Childcare Strategy was developed, launched and implemented. The childcare team developed and delivered *Bullybusters* — an interactive programme for 8–12 year olds. The programme builds self esteem and confidence to understand, cope with and overcome bullying.

*"If you don't shut that brat up, I will"*



### **New resource centre**

Funding was secured to purchase and refurbish premises for a dedicated Women's Resource Centre — centrally located in Ballymena. This provides sustainability for the group as a social economy initiative allowing for the development of a social business enterprise.

### **Funding**

We reflect proudly on the past decade with pride in our achievements. However, we look forward with hope and expectancy mingled with fear that we have created standards of practice and response largely at the behest of identifying and securing relevant, accessible funding streams.

## **Women's Aid Newry, Mourne, South Down and South Armagh**

*"Things aren't too bad right now. I have been talking to Women's Aid who give me support in the community and I realise that I have choices for the future."*

Charlotte, 56

### **Violence Against Women**

This cross border conference, attended by a wide range of agencies, was held in partnership with Dundalk Women's Aid. The conference examined prostitution, trafficking, domestic violence and rape as part of the continuum of violence against women.

### **Seminars**

Several seminars were held this year including one on the use of tranquilisers and antidepressants. Currently, we are planning another entitled *MARAC - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference on Information Sharing Protocols*.

### **Volunteer Training**

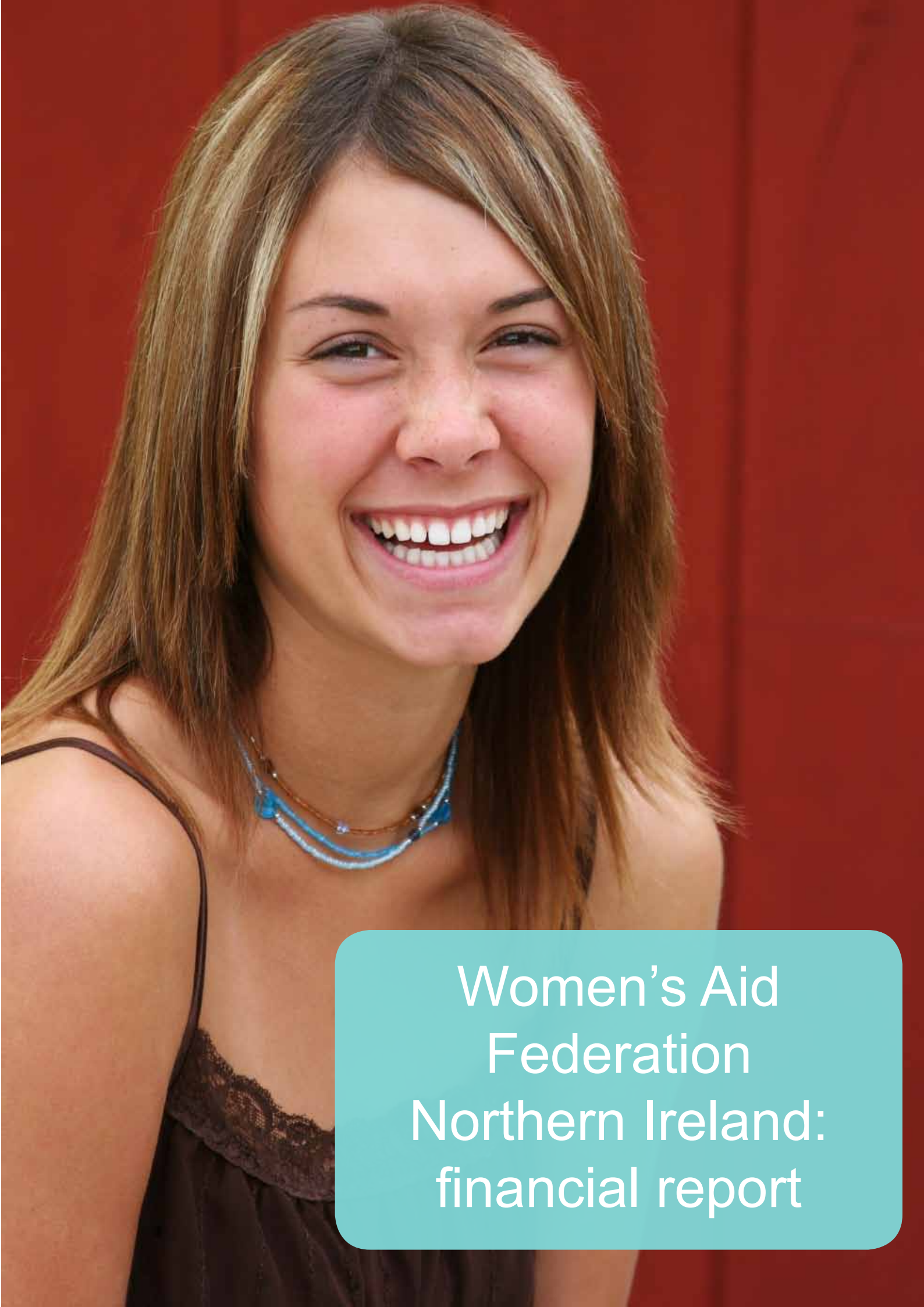
Capacitar Training in Wellbeing and Health was offered to volunteers. This training is in non intrusive methods to help individuals suffering from trauma to begin the recovery process and enable self healing.

### **Balloon Launch**

To highlight the beginning of the 16 Days of Action in countering violence against women, Women's Aid Newry, Mourne, South Down and South Armagh organised a balloon launch in the centre of the city.

### **Community Safety Public TV**

TV screens, located in public areas, have been addressing the issue of domestic violence in the local area. Supported by the Community Safety Unit and Newry and Mourne City Council, we have been instrumental in developing this useful service for the area.



Women's Aid  
Federation  
Northern Ireland:  
financial report

*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](mailto:info@womensaidni.org)*

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Ltd  
(Company Limited By Guarantee)**

**Extract from the Financial Statements For The Year Ended 31  
March 2006**

**Company Information**

<b>Management Board</b>	Elsie Jordan (Chair) Anne McMahon (Secretary) Christine Whiteman (Treasurer) Donna Coyle Margaret McMurrin Julie Waters
<b>Secretary</b>	Anne McMahon
<b>Auditors</b>	Lynn, Drake & Co Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors 40 Main Street Moira BT67 0LQ
<b>Bankers</b>	First Trust Bank Donegall Square North Belfast
<b>Solicitors</b>	Flynn & McGettrick 26 Arthur Street Belfast
<b>Registered Office</b>	129 University Street Belfast BT7 1HP
<b>Charity Number</b>	XN 45049
<b>Registration Number</b>	NI 21741
<b>Governing Document</b>	Memorandum and Articles of Association
<b>Legal Status</b>	Company Limited by Guarantee

## **Report Of Management Board**

The Management Board (Board of Directors) presents their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2006.

## **Objects of the Charity**

The aims of NIWAF (which has ten 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 violence. We seek, through our work, to promote healthy and non-abusive relationships.

## **The following are key aims of NIWAF:**

- 1 To educate and inform others of the social context of domestic violence, in particular the attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate abuse.
- 2 To support and promote the core aims of Women's Aid, which are:
  - To provide temporary refuge to women and their children affected by mental, physical or sexual abuse within the home.
  - To encourage the woman to take control of her own future, whether this involves returning home or beginning an independent life.
  - To recognize and care for the emotional needs of the children involved.
  - To offer support and advice to any woman who asks for it.
- 3 To encourage the promotion of a self-help ethos to achieve effective and equitable working relationships.
- 4 To monitor and evaluate the work to be inclusive and accountable to all communities of interest.

NIWAF, together with its member groups, are the lead voluntary agency challenging domestic violence. The charity strives to create a safe and supportive society for women, children and young people affected by domestic violence.

## **Decision Making Structures**

The governing body of NIWAF, NIWAF's Management Board, is largely drawn from membership of affiliated groups. The Management Board are responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation and oversee 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.

### **Related Parties**

NIWAF provides a range of services; training; information; policy development; and management support to its membership of 10 autonomous local Women's Aid groups. It also directly manages a 24-hour domestic violence helpline.

NIWAF recognise that no one agency can tackle domestic violence therefore we are committed to inter agency working and work collaboratively with a range of voluntary and statutory organisations including; Regional Steering Group on Domestic Violence; DHSS&PS; Domestic Violence Unit; Northern Ireland Office; Community Safety Unit; Northern Ireland Housing Executive; Police Service Northern Ireland; Probation Board Northern Ireland; Court Services NI; Amnesty International; Victim Support NI; Children in Northern Ireland; and women's organisations.

### **Review of Activities**

The freephone 24-hour Domestic Violence Helpline open to all victims of domestic violence was launched in February 2005. NIWAF concluded major negotiations during the year with key statutory agencies and achieved a Service Level Agreement for the 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline. This Service Level Agreement was funded by DHSS&PS, NIO and Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Capital funding was successfully raised from Northern Ireland Housing Executive to address technical and environmental improvements for the Helpline in January 2006. This has introduced a new state of the art telephone management system and the introduction of a sound-proofed call centre. The introduction of the freephone has significantly increased the number of calls and in particular those from rural areas. At the end of the first year of the operation of the freephone in excess of 21,000 calls had been managed. This has included an increase in the number of calls from concerned family, friends and professionals.

NIWAF are represented on the Regional Steering Group on Domestic Violence and its three subgroups which are tasked with progressing the Government's Tackling Violence at Home Strategy.

The development of Refuge on Line and Client Link, both funded by Comic Relief, have been facilitated by the Federation's Regional Support Services Team. Refuge on Line is a UK-wide partnership with other Women's Aid Federations which manages access to refuge accommodation and information on refuge and other domestic



violence services throughout the UK. Client Link is a secure internet based client recording system designed and utilized by Women's Aid in Northern Ireland. Client Link was piloted with a local group and the 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline and rollout throughout Northern Ireland is ongoing.

Significant time was spent this year by NIWAF (Regional Support Services Team) in supporting local groups with the Quality Assurance Framework in order to comply with Northern Ireland Housing Executive Supporting People funding requirements.

NIWAF's training team published a training booklet on all their training programmes for 05/06 and it was disseminated to relevant external agencies. The training team delivered a range of training programmes to local groups throughout NI during the year. All local groups accessed at least one training programme.

The Young Person's Development Worker delivered Keeping Safe Child Protection training (a DHSS&PS endorsed child protection programme) to local groups throughout the year. This work is ongoing.

The previous Director, Hilary Sidwell, left in February 2005. The current Director, Annie Campbell, took up the post on the 6 March 2006.

## **Identified Risks**

Uncertain and short term funding continues to make future planning extremely difficult. 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. Some projects continue to be at risk with short-term funding.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers play a key role in all the services of Women's Aid. Our Helpline could not be maintained without the vital support of our volunteers. During the year 127 new volunteers were recruited and trained to provide support to the Helpline and our local groups. Unfortunately in this financial year the funding for our North West Volunteer Co-ordinator Project ended and the project closed in March 2006.

NIWAF's 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 NIWAF**

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

The Statement of Financial Activities, on page 9, indicates that NIWAF had incoming resources of £721,632 in the year which was exceeded by resources expended of £744,772 by £23,140 and this amount has been transferred from NIWAF's accumulated funds.

The Balance Sheet at 31 March 2006 on page 10 shows a net Accumulated Funds balance at that date of £430,370.

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

### **Fixed Assets**

Additions to fixed assets are per note 11 of the Accounts.

### **Management Board (Board of Directors)**

The following persons were members of the Management Board at some time during the year to 31 March 2006: -

Maggie Bryson	Donna Coyle	Clodagh Foster
Elsie Jordan	Angela McGuckin	Margaret McMurrin
Anne McMahon	Julie Waters	Linda Watson
Christine Whiteman		

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.

### **Management Board Responsibilities**

Company Law requires the Management Board to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the surplus or deficit of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Directors are required to: -

- select suitable policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Management Board are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure

that the financial statements comply with the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### **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 2006 were as follows: -

Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid  
Foyle Women's Aid  
Causeway Women's Aid  
Newry & Mourne Women's Aid  
Cookstown & Dungannon Women's Aid  
North Down & Ards Women's Aid  
Craigavon & Banbridge Women's Aid  
Omagh Women's Aid  
Fermanagh Women's Aid  
Women's Aid in Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne & Newtownabbey

### **Auditors**

In accordance with Article 392(1) of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, a resolution proposing the re-appointment of Lynn, Drake & Co as auditors to the Company will be put to the Annual General Meeting.

By Order of the Management Board



**Anne McMahon**  
Secretary

**30 September 2006**

**Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation Ltd**  
**(Company Limited By Guarantee)**  
**Statement Of Financial Activities For The Year Ended 31 March 2006**

*all amounts are in pounds sterling*

	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Designated Funds</b>	<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds 2006</b>	<b>Total Funds 2005</b>
<b>Incoming Resources</b>					
<b>Activities in furtherance of the Charity's objectives:</b>					
Grants Receivable	45,556	—	611,288	656,844	755,270
Income from charitable activities	56,776	—	—	56,776	34,993
<b>Activities for generating funds:</b>					
Interest receivable	8,012	—	—	8,012	9,310
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	<b>110,344</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>611,288</b>	<b>721,632</b>	<b>799,573</b>
<b>Resources Expended</b>					
<b>Costs of generating funds:</b>	15,271	—	—	15,271	19,100
<b>Charitable Expenditure:</b>					
Costs in furtherance of charitable objectives	5,133	—	696,164	701,297	766,821
Management and Administration of the Charity	5,046	—	23,158	28,204	28,480
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>	<b>25,450</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>719,322</b>	<b>744,772</b>	<b>814,401</b>
<b>Net (Outgoing)/ Incoming Resources</b>					
Before Transfers	84,894	—	(108,034)	(23,140)	(14,828)
Transfer between Funds	(147,571)	—	147,571	—	—
<b>Net Incoming Resources for the Year</b>	<b>(62,677)</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>39,537</b>	<b>(23,140)</b>	<b>(14,828)</b>
<b>Funds Balance brought forward at 1 April 2005</b>	268,050	148,498	36,962	453,510	468,338
<b>Net Movement in Funds in Year to 31 March 2006</b>	(62,677)	—	39,537	(23,140)	(14,828)
<b>Fund Balance carried forward at 31 March 2006</b>	<b>205,373</b>	<b>148,498</b>	<b>76,499</b>	<b>430,370</b>	<b>453,510</b>

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)**  
**Baance Sheet as at 31 March 2006**

*all amounts are in pounds sterling*

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible Fixed Assets	83,841	69,378
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors and Prepayments	73,113	54,690
Bank Accounts	300,385	340,259
Cash in Hand	393	217
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	373,891	395,166
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Amounts falling due within one year	(24,989)	(5,877)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>348,902</b>	<b>389,289</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>	432,743	458,667
<b>Liabilities – Amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	—	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	432,743	458,667
<b>Provisions and charges</b>		
Deferred Capital Grant Reserve	(2,373)	(5,157)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>430,370</b>	<b>453,510</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Represented by: Accumulated Funds</b>		
Unrestricted – General	205,373	268,050
Unrestricted – Designated	148,498	148,498
Restricted	76,499	36,962
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2006</b>	<b>430,370</b>	<b>453,510</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Approved by the Management Board on 30 September and signed on its behalf by:


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**Elsie Jordan**


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**Christine Whiteman**

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

- Charities Aid Foundation
- Comic Relief
- Community Safety Unit
- Craigavon & Banbridge H & SS Trust
- Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety
- Domestic Violence Unit
- Eastern Health & Social Services Board
- Northern Ireland Office
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency
- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- The Body Shop
- Volunteers
- Individual Donors

And all those who contributed anonymously throughout the year.



*Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland respects the right to privacy and anonymity.  
While the images are representative of the women, children and young people who use our  
services, all photos used in this publication are posed by models.  
Mindful of the very real danger to women and children even after they have escaped abuse,  
names and ages have been changed in personal stories to protect identities.*

# women's aid

*Federation Northern Ireland*

A large black silhouette of a hand with fingers spread is on the left, and a black silhouette of a woman's head with long hair is on the right. The text 'Stop violence against women' is centered on the hand silhouette.

**Stop  
violence  
against  
women**