

Meath Women's Refuge & Support Services

Annual Report 2016



Introduction by the Chairperson

In 2016, MWRSS continued to strive to ensure that women and children received an effective, timely and responsive level of services and supports to meet their needs in terms of domestic violence. The board recognises that while the organisation received no funding cuts in 2016, we continue to rely heavily on the support of donors and the wider community who have tirelessly supported our work over the past 29 years. We wish to acknowledge and thank them for this vital support to women and children and the spirit of generosity and solidarity in which it is given.

We continue to be conscious of the challenges we face and the new and competing demands on the work of the organisation, not least of which is the growth of our outreach work with women experiencing domestic violence in the community, work that this report reflects has grown hugely over recent years. The housing crisis nationally and in Meath has resulted in a slower transition for women in leaving refuge when court orders are in place and this has a knock-on effect in terms of refuge provision and space available for emergency refuge and the fact that in 2016 we had to turn away which totalled 85 women and 148 children, which means for every woman we took into refuge (45 women in total) we had to turn almost two women away and for every child we took in (56 in total) we had to turn away almost three children.

We will continue to work with our local authority on the needs of vulnerable women and children experiencing domestic violence in terms of accommodation. Finally, we are also concerned about the economic and social costs of domestic violence to the lives of women and children we work with, which acts as a barrier to women seeking to move on with their lives.

In terms of our direct work with women, we see a number of gaps that currently exist in provision of supports and services and our capacity to undertake preventative work, namely:

- The increasing demands on the outreach service which has quadrupled to four times its size since 2008 and requires additional staffing;
- A dedicated part time childcare worker with a therapeutic focus to support the needs of women who access the organisation as residents and non-residents;
- The complex and intersectional needs of women who present to refuge and the demands this puts in terms of key working, care planning and interagency working and resourced counselling services to support women who are affected by domestic violence
- Resources to undertake consciousness raising work about gender based violence on domestic violence issues within the wider community and a focus on informing and responding to policy issues and models of best practice much of which is outside of our current funding streams.

continued overleaf

We also note and welcome new opportunities for women and children we work with in terms of access to better services and supports, namely, the potential of the action plan towards ratification of the Istanbul convention and its focus on judicial recourse. We also welcome the domestic violence bill 2017 but would call on the minister to enact it and include a definition of domestic violence in the act. While the state through COSC is promoting a preventive strategy, which builds awareness of domestic violence which is vitally important, resourcing local domestic violence services to engage with this work locally we believe should be prioritised.

Our audited accounts are presented at the end of this report and reflect a number of relevant points:

- We continue to be supported by fundraising activities generated by ourselves and others on our behalf, including the courts service donations, without which we could not meet the needs of women and children
- The impact of austerity cuts means that since 2008 we have experienced culminated in a reduction of funding of 34% and we need to work towards a stage where this gap is narrowed significantly
- Our core funding grant does cover all the costs of the organisation and fundraising events and activities assisted us in meeting this shortfall in 2016
- While we recorded an operating deficit of €24,954 in 2016, we continue to be prudent and efficient in ensuring that our cash reserves are maintained

to address building and maintenance expenditure needs as they arise, contingency funds in line with best financial management practice.

We are also conscious of the increasing focusontransparencyandaccountability in terms of organisational agvernance and the role of board directors in ensuring appropriate policies and procedures are in place and are operationalised and we are committed to and will continue to have a strong focus on this in 2017 in line with our responsibilities under company law and charity regulation. Finally, the board would like to thank all our funders including Tusla, Department of Justice and Equality, COSC, Meath County Council, staff, CE workers, volunteers and supporters, donors in the community without whom we could not support women and children to the level that we do. We hope this report which presents highlights and overview of our work is useful to a wide range of parties who are interested in and who support and fund our work and look forward to marking our 30 years of work in Meath in 2017.

Chairperson Dara Fitzsimons



Directors of the Board of MWRSS: L to R-Frank Long, Sinéad Gogan, Bob Lee, Aiden Weldon, Front Row L to R: Orla O'Reilly, Siobhán McKeever and Dara Fitzsimons, Missing - Teresa Macken and Liz Lorton

the numbers in brief for 2016 in MWRSS



We worked with 45 women and 56 children in providing refuge accommodation and supports

We engaged 313 women in our outreach service





We provided childcare supports to 75 children

We provided education and peer to peer support programmes to 66 women over 44 weeks of the year including the Pattern Changing Programme, Arts and Crafts and the Peer to Peer support group





We took 1,117 phone calls from women seeking information or in crisis and we made 823 calls on behalf of women experiencing domestic violence to advocate on their behalf.

History of Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services

In 1985, a group of young women in Navan formed the Navan women's forum and undertook research on issues facing women living in Meath, one of which was the issue of violence against women. From the work of the group, which included campaigning, awareness raising and fund raising the group established the Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services in 1987 and acquired a building through the generosity of the St. Vincent de Paul. Initially, the work was supported by the commitment of volunteers and their families and the wider community who gave time, energy and support to the work and the refuge began by providing refuge accommodation to three families staffed by volunteers.

Further fundraising and campaigning resulted in the current building officially opened to families by President Mary Robinson on the 23rd September 1992 and a new kitchen and childcare facilities were added in 1995. While the women's forum dissolved, the establishment of MWRSS is a lasting legacy to their work.

The organisation is celebrating 30 years in existence in 2017. Our work includes the provision of refuge services, outreach services including court accompaniment, a helpline, referral supports, a support group, the MOVE programme and education programmes with women who have experienced violence.



Fundraising volunteers with manager Deirdre Murphy at the bag pack in SuperValu in October 2016.



The volunteer bag packers included TY students from St. Joseph's Convent of Mercy, Navan and Orla Houlihan volunteer with MWRSS

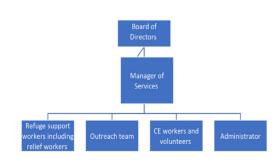
Organisational Structure

Board

The organisation is governed by a board of directors who oversee its governance and strategic direction. The current board is made up of eight directors and includes a chairperson, company secretary, treasurer and ordinary directors. The board meets monthly and is responsible for the governance and strategic and the manager reports into the board. In 2017, the board will oversee a review of governance policies and procedures to ensure the organisation in line with our obligations as a company and registered charity.



Directors of the Board of MWRSS (Right to Left), Dara Fitzsimons Chair and Teresa Macken with Mary McGuigan former board member



Operational Flow Chart

Staffing

On a day to day basis, operational management is undertaken by a manager of services on full time basis. Financial administration is managed on a day to day basis by the organisation's part time administrator.

has 24-hour The organisation management of the refuge by refuge support workers on a rota basis. We also have an outreach team who work with women in the community and manage the Pattern Changing Programme, Support Group, court accompaniment and paper work with women in refuge and in the community. In total, we currently employ seven whole time equivalent positions (a total of 14 staff members) including relief workers. We have two CE workers, one undertakes maintenance work and a second person manages our charity shop Savvy Chic, which acts as tool for raising funds for the organisation.

We also rely on volunteers to support our fundraising activities.



Some of MWRSS Staff members at a team meeting

Strategic Plan

In 2017, MWRSS will begin the process of reviewing our current strategic plan which has not been updated since 2011. This will be linked to the development of a new strategic plan for the organisation which will take on board the current and future context in which we work in to support a cohesive approach to our work and to ensure we have the necessary resources both human, financial and structural in place to meet future opportunities and challenges that lie ahead and it will be launched in the Autumn of 2017 as part of our 30th anniversary events. One key focus of the new plan will be a new

building development for refuge accommodation. The current mission statement and aims are outlined below.

Misson Statement

The mission of Meath Women's Refuge & Support Services is to provide information, crisis accommodation, counselling, outreach support, and transitional housing to women and their children who are impacted by domestic abuse. Furthermore, to provide a safe, caring and nonjudgemental environment to clients regardless of their economic, social, cultural or religious background.

Aims

- 1. To provide a place of safety and development to women and children suffering mental, emotional, physical, sexual or any other forms of abuse.
- 2. To ensure confidentiality is observed by all persons frequenting the refuge, this includes all workers and regular visitors.
- 3. To recognise and care for the physical, emotional and educational development needs of the children who attend the refuge & support services.
- 4. To respect and where necessary foster the Parent/Child relationship.
- To offer support and information to any person in relation to violence against women whether or not they are in refuge.

Policy Context

The recent publication of an action plan to work towards the ratification of the Istanbul Convention and the domestic violence bill when enacted will offer increased protections and focus on the supports required for women experiencing domestic violence. As would be expected, the challenge facing the success of both will be implementation of the action plan for the convention and the enactment of all aspects of the new act when it becomes law. Both will require additional resources to be allocated to a wide range of services and supports.

The development of a new national women's strategy again offers another opportunity to ensure that gender based violence issues become mainstreamed through broad range of actions to address women's inequality in Ireland. A key benchmark will be ensuring that gender based violence responses in the wider community, particularly amona women are supported and funded e.g. through community development initiatives outside of service provision funding. As a women's refuge, we are clear that raising consciousness in the wider community is vital in ending gender based violence but that new funding streams are required to enable women's refuges which are well placed to do this work.

In a local context, the organisation continues to work in collaboration with local agencies and policy makers to ensure the best outcomes for women experiencing gender based violence within our county and we have established strong working relationships with a wide range of bodies in the community, voluntary and statutory sector. An acute issue that currently faces us in our work is the lack of available accommodation for women and children in the county and the challenge women face transitioning from refuge to a home for them and their children. Meath has the second lowest stock of social housing the country and while new stock is being acquired there is a large gulf to bridge. (Socio Economic Profile of Meath: Local Economic and Community Plan, LCDC,

2016). Again, we welcome the recent publication of a policy and procedure document on housing and domestic violence issued by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government to local authorities to clarify and direct responses locally.

Gaps in funding and resourcing for daily needs of women experiencing domestic violence continues to cause economic hardship for women and children e.g. travel costs for women with no transport, social welfare entitlements for women who do not meet the habitual residence condition (HRC), immediate emergency payments for women who arrive at refuge with no resources and no access to financial aid and women who have no financial means to afford even basic food and clothing. In our work, we seek to advocate with and on behalf of women to access supports from the relevant agencies to ensure women do not experience hardship. Other issues still arising including time lags in relation to accessing legal aid waivers, this is in spite of having completed a form and a written request for a waiver, follow up to access the waiver by outreach workers happens on a regular basis in spite of women's legal rights to it.

The complexity of issues facing women who experience domestic violence impacts on the speed of the response to emergency needs and we continue to face this in our work.

Resourcing our work

MWRSS receives its core funding from Tusla, the child and family agency through a service level agreement and we would like to acknowledge their ongoing support for our work and commitment to the issue of domestic violence. We would also acknowledge our gratitude for the ongoing support of the court poor box, the wider community in Meath which has supported our fundraisers and who have donated generously to our work over the years. Whilst recognising that we are coming out of a deep recession, the level of cuts applied during austerity have had an impact on the work of domestic violence services. Our funding which includes core funding, capitation funding previously funded through the local authority and funds from grants has experienced reductions due to austerity by 32% since 2008 and the organisation has worked hard to ensure this has not had a negative impact on our supports and services and we have sought to mitigate this through fundraising, cuts to some services e.g. funding for counselling services, the provision of a full-time child care worker and huge demands on our outreach service are acute issues and continue to be an ongoing focus of our work to address these issues.

Work Activities in 2016

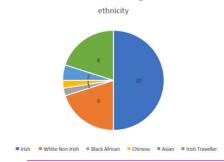
The remainder of this report provides a summary overview of our activities in 2016

Profile of Women who access MWRSS refuge services

organisation has seen demographic shift in the numbers of migrant women coming into refuge on an annual basis, in line with the changing demographics of Meath and Ireland. Women who experience domestic violence come from a wide range of socio economic backgrounds and are diverse in ethnicity, age, status etc. The changing demographic requires us to be in a position to respond to the needs of women, in particular where these needs may not be catered for e.g. language issues, cultural competence in work practices, wider social inclusion issues for women such as migrant or Traveller women in accessing supports and services e.g. discrimination. In terms of the breakdown of women who accessed the organisation in 2016 is broken down as follows

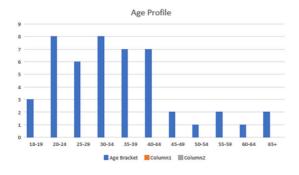
- Irish 20 women
- Irish Traveller 8 women
- White Other (Non-Irish) 15
- Black African 1
- Chinese 1
- Asian 2

Statistically, in terms of intake: 42% of women were Irish nationals; 17% were Irish Travellers, Nonnationals who were white represented 31% of women and Black, Asian and Chinese jointly represented 8.5% of admissions to refuge.



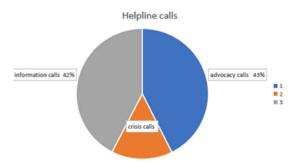
Ethnicity of women engaged in outreach services

The outreach service worked with a broad range of women from Ireland and countries all over the world including EU member states but also women outside the EU. This took in more than 20 countries. The outreach service engaged 230 Irish women (74%) and 80 migrant women (26%) (a total of 310 women that we knew the identity of out of 313 we worked with) who represented with ethnic minority women represented as one in four women who we worked with. This is contrast to the higher numbers of migrant women who access refuge services and may reflect the fact that for many migrant women, access to family and wider social support networks to go to where domestic violence occurs is limited given the fact that many are in Ireland without their family and close friends. Age profile of women we worked with in refuge The age profile of women we worked with is represented below with the main median age group between 20 to 44 years, which is reflective of the fact that the majority of women who access refuge services are parents of young children. The breakdown below illustrates the trends:



Confidential 24-hour telephone line

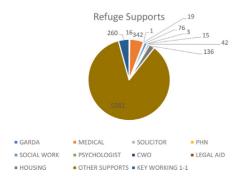
The helpline is managed by refuge supportworkers and in 2016 we received 290 crisis calls and 827 information calls to the organisation. In addition, we made 823 advocacy calls on behalf of women in refuge and those who contacted the organisation. This is a total of 1,940 calls dealt with by MWRSS and a breakdown below illustrates that advocacy calls accounted for 43% of issues dealt with, 42% were information and crisis calls made up 15% of all calls.



*these figures of 47 women include women who returned to refuge and women brought forward from 2015

Emergency Accommodation

In 2016, we accommodated 45 women (total number of women admitted) and 56 children throughout the year. In total, 651 sessions of support were provided for children in refuge and 6192 supports were provided for women in refuge plus 178 accompaniments and 20 court supports to women and three accompaniments to the gardai. In breaking down the statistics for supports provided for women in refuge we can illustrate a better picture of the broad range of services and supports provided. The supports and services provided included a high level of interagency working and advocacy given the needs of women in refuge settings to access following; medical supports, solicitor, public health nurse services, social work, psychology services, gardai, community welfare officer, legal aid, housing, other supports and key working. The breakdown of these services is highlighted below:



It is important to note the high level of medical support needs at 342, housing supports 136 and social work at 72 contacts. In 2016, 260 one to one sessions of key working took place with 45 women which is an average of 5 sessions per woman. An important component of our work is key working with women in refuge in keeping with the development of care plans which are done in partnership with the woman who is supported to determine what supports she needs while in refuge. Risk assessment and Safety planning forms part of the care plan development. Key working sessions takes place on a weekly basis which each woman in refuge and follow up work on care plans happens on a daily basis. In addition, other supports accounted for 5282 contacts with women in refuge settings, illustrating the wide range of needs women and children have. As noted in the policy context, 136 contacts with women related to housing issues, again illustrating the challenges women in refuge face when seeking to move away from abusive relationships. This is a complex area that is resulting in longer stays in refuge for women who do not have the means to afford private rented accommodation or if they do qualify cannot access accommodation in the current market.

Women turned away from Refuge in 2016

In line with refuges across Ireland, MWRSS has had to turn away women at different periods throughout the year due to a lack of capacity.

Coupled with this is lack of social and affordable housing for women who do not have the financial means to competeinthehousingmarketandwho as a result are remaining in refuge for longer average periods. Given the fact that Ireland's current refuge space is only 1/3 of the EU recommended levels. this is not surprising and it mirrors the experience of other refuges. With one in five women experiencing domestic violence (Fundamental Rights Agency report 2012) it is vital that Ireland has robust service provision for women who require refuge accommodation. In addition, due to the increasing levels of homelessness in the county, we also had to refer women and children to relevant homeless services.

Transitional Housing

The organisation currently manages four transitional housing units in Windtown, Navan and tenants are supported by the refuge worker with responsibility for this area. Weekly contact is made with tenants and the organisation supports the maintenance of the accommodation and a safety review and assists tenants in setting up systems for the payment of utilities. At the current time, the main challenge facing residents in transitional housing is the fact that the move to more permanent accommodation is difficult in the face of a shortage of housing available in the county in particular, social or affordable housing at the present time and is compounded due to funding cuts for a support worker during the recession. This means

tenants who should be in transitional accommodation for up to 18 months have been there for up to four years. The organisation works closely with Meath County Council in relation to the housing issue on an ongoing basis. While the HAPS scheme was introduced in early 2017, women and children are finding it increasingly difficult to access accommodation in a market where demand outstrips supply and where there may be cherry picking of tenants in the private rental sector.

The organisation has decided that in 2017, we will work with Sonas Housing to move the transitional housing units to a recognised housing association to ensure tenants have security of tenancy. This will mean the organisation will no longer retain a stock of transitional housing.



Outreach Work

Outreach work forms a large part of the work of MWRSS and this work has grown year on year and reflects the changing needs of women and children. At present the equivalent of two full time workers operate as an outreach team providing a wide range of supports to women which is broken down in the arid below for 2016. In terms of court work which is supported by funding through our core funding from Tusla and the Victims of Crime office the outreach team had 1.208 contacts with 313 women in 2016 in total of which 31% was made up of court accompaniment, 20% was supporting women to complete court paperwork and 21% were court applications and 28% was one to ones with women in the community. Our outreach workers work with women attending court in Navan and Trim. In terms of court orders granted to women, the breakdown is illustrated below.

order granted

32

14

27

136

interim barring order protection order safety order
barring order maintenance order

As can be seen, the majority of orders issued were protection orders (63%) which are emergency orders

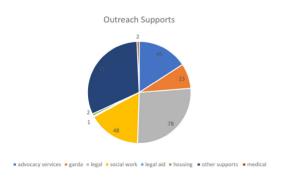
for women who require immediate protection; 15% were safety orders and 13% were interim barring orders. Barring orders and maintenance orders made up the remaining balance. The growing demands on the outreach service are evidenced through the statistics below with 313 referrals in 2016 which included 52 ongoing clients. Since 2003 when our initial outreach work began we have grown exponentially from working with 80 women to 313 women an almost four-fold increase in the number of women with reduced levels of resources.

As this area of work grows, there is a requirement to source additional resources to meet these needs. In terms of non-face to face work with women through our phone contact with the outreach team (which is separate to the helpline) we dealt with 24 crisis calls, 637 information calls and made 206 advocacy calls, a total of 867 calls. The majority of the calls, almost three quarters were for information (73%), with 24% advocacy calls and 3% crisis calls.



Outreach work in the Community & Follow Up

We undertook face to face work in the community on 343 occasions and at our office base on 70 occasions. The outreach team also had 879 contacts as part of their follow up work with women who have linked in with the outreach programme on issues such as court paper work, dates for court appearances, preparation for court, linking into relevant programmes in the organisation etc. In addition, the outreach team provided a wide range of supports to women experiencing domestic violence which is described below in terms of advocacy and accompaniment to agencies outside of court accompaniment.



No of support contacts provided to women during outreach

In total 200 advocacy contacts were made on behalf of and with women through the outreach programme to a wide range of agencies e.g. gardai, legal aid, legal services, social work, housing etc. In addition, accompaniment supports included accompaniment to the gardai (10), solicitor/legal aid (2), medical (1) and to Meath County Council (1).

Pattern Changing Programme

In addition, the outreach team also delivered the Pattern Changing Programme which is an educational programme developed by Goodman and Fallon (1995) for women who have experienced an abusive intimate relationship. The programme has been running since September 2008 and has been delivered twice each year with one course to run in 2017. A total of 134 women have participated in the programme to date. In 2016, twentyone women participated in the Pattern Changing Programme which ran twice in 2016. The programme ran for 33 weeks in total with both groups and accounted for 21 women attending 290 times in total over the 33 weeks.

This year we undertook an external evaluation of the programme which included interviews with the programme facilitators, interview with a past programme participant and a sample review of 55 evaluation questionnaires which is a sample of 41% with high feedback rates on the programme across all the topic areas that the programme covered.

The main recommendations to be pursued in 2017 and 2018 are outlined below:

- 1. To explore the potential expansion of the Pattern Changing Programme to women's groups in the county where resources are available, including groups working with ethnic minority women, ensuring the programme can meet their needs.
- 2. To secure a funding stream for counselling support to programme participants, travel and childcare costs where required, materials and finally to resource the training up of two additional staff members to deliver the programme on an outreach basis with these hours funded
- 3. To develop and run one annual shorter refresher course for women who have been through the programme in the past as a progression route.
- 4. To update the PCP in terms of three key topic areas, namely sexual abuse, emotional abuse and why it is hard to leave and to explore the potential to develop an updated version of the programme which could support a training of trainers' dimension.
- 5. To adopt the Safe Ireland outcome evaluation tool across the whole PCP programme in line with the overall organisation and to evaluate the programme on annual basis using this tool.

In 2017, we will explore the potential of delivering a refresher programme to women who have previously participated in the programme in the third quarter of the year based on the findings of the evaluation. This will require the development of a new shorter

programme and additional resource in terms of facilitation costs for a new programme.

Peer to Peer Support Group

Thirty-five women participated in the weekly peer to peer support group facilitated by the outreach workers over forty-four (44) weeks in 2016. In terms of the weekly session numbers this accounts for 263 contact times women attended the programme. Women who participated in the programme included women engaged through outreach, women who have been in refuge and also women who have participated in the pattern changing programme. It is also inclusive of women who are currently in or have been in abusive relationships. The Pattern Changing Programme and the Peer support group space is a very important element of our work and is in line with best practice standards and principles in domestic violence services framework developed by Safe Ireland in terms of empowerment of women who experience domestic work:

Principle 6: Empowerment

Outcome: The skills and knowledge of women and children are acknowledged and they are actively involved in determining their needs and support responses towards greater emotional and social wellbeing. (p8, A Framework, Principles and Standards for Specialist Domestic Violence Services in Ireland.)

Supports for Children

As already stated 651 sessions of childcare and child play were provided to 56 children of women in refuge and 147 sessions to 19 children of women who accessed other services e.g. the support group, court accompaniment and the arts and crafts group.

and non resident children

children in refuge
non resident children

supports to chidren in refuge

Child Protection

The organisation continues to work to best practice following our child protection policy and procedures. We work closely with Tusla and women and children who engage with our services and ensure that women are aware and informed of when we are making a child protection referral. The organisation works to report child protection concerns in a timely and professional manner at all times and undertakes follow up work when we re engage with women and children post referral where appropriate. In 2017, we will review our child protection policies and undertake updated refresher training on child protection for all staff. In early 2016, a new garda e-vetting process was established and replaced the previous system. We work with

social work and family support workers from Tusla and with Navan Springboard Family Support Services.

MOVE Programme

In late February 2016, the new programme began and we worked with 27 women during the year providing partner support to women whose partners were participating in the MOVE programme. The MOVE programme is a programme that the organisation has been involved in since 2009. A member of the outreach team works on the MOVE programme and the organisation is a member of the steering committee for the MOVE programme in Meath and is represented on the committee by the manager of MWRSS. Funding from MOVE Ireland resources the partner support work that the organisation undertakes. This work includes meeting each partner completes an assessment of the history of the relationship with the woman with the support worker at an initial meeting and a weekly meeting/phone call is made to the woman partner of the MOVE programme. The support takes place over a 42-week period, during and post programme completion. If court accompaniment is required the other outreach team worker provides these.

In 2016, 513 contacts were made with 12 women from MOVE in early 2016 and a second group began in late 2016. November with 15 women. In addition, the outreach worker responsible for the partner support meets on a two-weekly basis with the MOVE programme facilitators and the co-ordinator to review the programme and its progress and address any issues that may arise. The manager of MWRSS sits on the steering committee of MOVE to assist in oversight and management of MOVE in Meath. Other committee members include organisations such as Navan Springboard, Meath County Council Homeless services, Tusla, the Garda Siochána and the Probation services.

Arts & Crafts

The arts and crafts programme takes place once a week for residents and non-residents and is a non-threatenina way to engage women in discussion on the issues affecting them as result of abusive relationships. It is facilitated by a tutor who has experience in counselling and facilitating groups using the arts for therapeutic supports. In 2016, 10 women attended 64 times to 45 weeks of the programme. Childcare supports were provided for women who attended. The aim of the programme is to build self- esteem through the medium of arts and works to promote the participation of women with low levels of literacy and limited English language skills.

Counselling services

The organisation provided supports with no resources in 2016 for counselling 15 women who attended 42 sessions with a professional counsellor. Women were linked to the counsellor through refuge staff and the outreach team through the Pattern Changing Programme and the Support Group. This provision was limited due to a lack of resources and the organisation will need to explore potential funding avenues for this support in 2017. In previous years funding was received from a range of sources including the HSE national lottery fund. Low cost counselling services are an important component of the supports package that women may require.

Savvy Chic Shop

The Savvy Chic shop was established in 2013 and opens 3 days a week on Thursday, Fridays and Saturdays and is staffed by CE workers. The room for the shop is provided free of charge by a local business owner. We receive donations of women's clothing items and accessories and re sell them with all funds going to the work of the organisation. The shop initiated the event and it was led out Laura McCorley, supported by the Central played a central role in organising a fashion show fundraiser supported by Ms. United Nation 2016.

Fundraising in 2016

Some highlights of fundraising in 2016 included, in May, members of the friends of MWRSS organised a fashion show and a table quiz was also organised in May by a supporter of our work who volunteered to organise this event and a bag pack took place in December with Marks and Spencer's assisted and another bag pack took place with Supervalu Johnstown in October 2016. A champagne breakfast was organised by one of the entrants of the 'Miss Navan' competition in September and a women's lunch was organised in December as a fundraiser event. A special acknowledgement is due to the Central in Navan which provides a room for the shop to operate in free of charge, this support means the shop has a space and can open from Thursday to Saturday and a CE worker manages the shop on a day to day basis for MWRSS. A special acknowledgement is also due to Generali Insurance who funded our work with children in the refuge setting.



Volunteers and supporters for the Raffle in Aid of Meath Womens Refuge and Support Services at the Meath Style Awards

Training and Staff Development

The organisation under took Meitheal training with a number of staff members attending the training. Given limited resources in recent years the level of training available to staff has been low. In 2017, we are committed to updating training in key areas including: child protection, Meitheal training, new policy developments etc.

Working with funders and regulators

In early 2016, regional co-ordinators were appointed by Tusla Child & Family Agency and regular meetings took place between MWRSS and our funders to discuss, review and report on our work. We undertook a service level agreement review in May. The organisation attended a briefing on the new charities regulatory authority and its role. All documentation has been submitted and registered with the Charities regulator with activity reports and audited accounts submitted in April 2016. In late 2016, the organisation changed its legal name from LTD. to CLG in line with the Companies Act of 2014.

Networking and Policy Work

The organisation works with a wide range of agencies in our work and without this interagency collaboration we would not be as effective as we are. The agencies we work with include the gardai, the courts services, Tusla social work services, the PHN services, Meath County Council housina section, Navan Springboard, the Meath Equality, Rights and Anti-Poverty Network (MERAN) and many others. The importance of working with these agencies to ensure the women and children we work with are supported is paramount but it also fulfils another objective of the organisation which is raising awareness of Gender Based Violence in the wider community. In March 2016, the organisation attended the launch in Aras an Uachtarán of the COSC awareness campaign Man Up.

Maintenance and Upkeep of the Building

The importance of health and safety and maintaining a building that is appropriate to the needs of women and children and fit for purpose is paramount to our work. In 2016, we painted a number of parts of the building but no significant building works or repair took place.

Conclusion

This report reflects the broad range of supports MWRSS provides and indicates the growing levels of demand on our organisation evidenced by the numbers of women and children we could not accommodate; the increasing length of time women and children are staying in refuge and the growth of our outreach service. In order to be in a position to respond to these needs the organisation continues to work to ensure we have effective structures and governance professional staff and adequate resources to meet these needs. In 2017, we will mark 30 years in existence and will review our work and develop a new strategic plan to meet the challenges women and children experiencing domestic violence face.

Acknowledgements & Thanks

Finally, the board would like to thank all our funders including Tusla, Department of Justice and Equality, COSC, Meath County Council, small grant providers, donors and fundraisers in the local community, staff, CE workers, volunteers and supporters, without whom we could not have supported women and children to the level that we did in 2017.

Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG (A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital)

Income & Expenditure Account Financial year ended 31/12/2016

	2016	201!
	€	•
Total Income	461,303	445,367
Overheads	(488,078)	(466,788
Operating Deficit	(26,775)	(21,421)
Operating Deficit percentage	5.8%	4.8%
Other interest receivable and similar income	1821	257
Other interest receivable and similar income	1021	237
Deficit on ordinary activities before taxation		
	(24,954.00)	(21,164.00

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Meath Women's Aid Housing Association CLG (A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital) Statement of financial position As at 31/12/2016

	2016 € €	2015 €	€
Fixed assets Tangible assets	<u>326,662</u> 326,662	<u>335,526</u>	335,526
Current assets			
Debtors Cash at bank and in hand	1,860 <u>229,327</u>		3,275 245,545
	231,187		248,820
Creditors: amounts falling due Within one year	<u>(17,739)</u>		(19,282)
Net current assets	213,448		229,538
Total assets less current liabilities	540,110		565,064
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(158,717)		(158,717)
Net assets	381,393		406,347
Capital and reserves			
Members' funds Revaluation reserve Income and expenditure account Members Funds	14 15,981 365,398		14 15,981 390,352
	<u>381,393</u>		406,347





MWRSS, working to end violence against women