




STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2026



"Life transformed so much for myself and my kids. No more living in fear."

"I cannot thank MWRSS enough for all the support, advice and guidance they provided me with at such a difficult time, through their support groups, help with childcare when attending support group, advice re court and offering support with court documents, I am forever grateful for your support, advice help. It's been long time ago but thank you so much."

ABOUT

MEATH WOMEN'S REFUGE SUPPORT SERVICES

Meath Women's Refuge and Support Services (MWRSS) provide a wide range of support and crisis services, including refuge accommodation to women and children who have experienced domestic violence in Co. Meath. Our organisation was founded in 1987 and we have expanded our work over the intervening years to include outreach services, court accompaniment, therapeutic supports, and a children and young person's programme.

MWRSS STRATEGY 2022 - 2026

This five-year strategy is built upon on a wide-ranging consultation with women we work with, staff, management, and the Board directors in MWRSS. It sets out our ambitions for the future based on what is achievable and how MWRSS can continue to strengthen and build on strong foundations.

Our strategic priorities reflect the collective experience and knowledge of these stakeholders to provide guidance for our activity over the next five years. This strategic plan is based on:

- The challenges facing MWRSS and the changes most likely to occur over the coming years
- MWRSS's role and specifically what it can contribute as a service provider and an advocate for those experiencing Domestic Violence and finally as a contributor to shaping social change on gender-based violence
- Priorities for the next 5 years and the approaches to take

OUR VISION

To live in a society where all forms of abuse against women and children are not tolerated.

Feedback from women and children we work with every day has informed the development of our strategic plan. In addition, we undertook an online stakeholder survey with women who have used our services and a consultant conducted a number of one of one interviews to gauge how we could support women into the future. We know that the social value generated by women's services is five to eleven times greater than the amount of money invested in them (put a reference in for this). Society benefits from women and children being able to reach their full potential and lead empowered lives. Through our work we

- Support and advocate for and with women, children and young people experiencing domestic abuse.
- Challenge the pillars of women's inequality – poverty of rights, autonomy, money, and power
- Engage with Government and other national stakeholders to inform them to understand and respond boldly to the problem of domestic abuse in Ireland

OUR MISSION

*To empower women and children who experience domestic violence and abuse
on their journey towards safety, wellbeing, and recovery.*

We do this by providing woman and child centered specialist support services.

OUR VALUES AND PURPOSE

Our values and purpose underpin how we deliver against our mission and vision, how they are central to everything we do. They influence our every action and interaction at MWRSS, when working with women and children and when advocating on their behalf.

All our people are expected to live and work through these values on a day-to-day basis, and they are reflected across our philosophy and approach, our planning, and daily practices. They are part of the standards against which our people's performance is appraised, and what we look for when recruiting. Our values and purpose drive our decision making and our communications.

OUR VALUES

Women and Child Centred

All our work is led by the needs of women and children, and we bring their voice to everything we do. We are committed and passionate about women and children's human rights.

Inclusive

We embrace diversity and strive to be a fully inclusive organisation in who we work with, who works for us and how we do our work.

Accountable

We strive to always achieve the highest standards across the organisation.

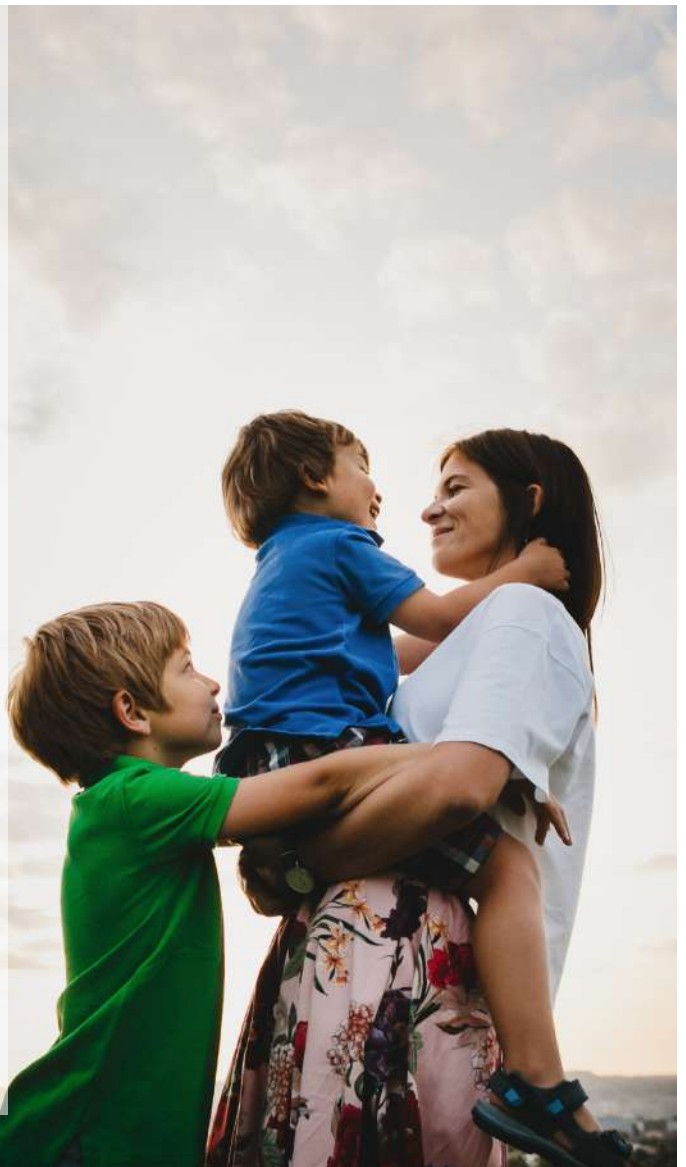
Trustworthy

We act with empathy, compassion, and integrity.

OUR PURPOSE

MWRSS reason for being is twofold. We exist to fulfil a greater purpose to;

- Provide a space where women and children can take time to explore the options available to them to ensure their future safety.
- Support, advocate for and alongside women dealing with abuse of themselves and their children.



STRATEGY HOUSE

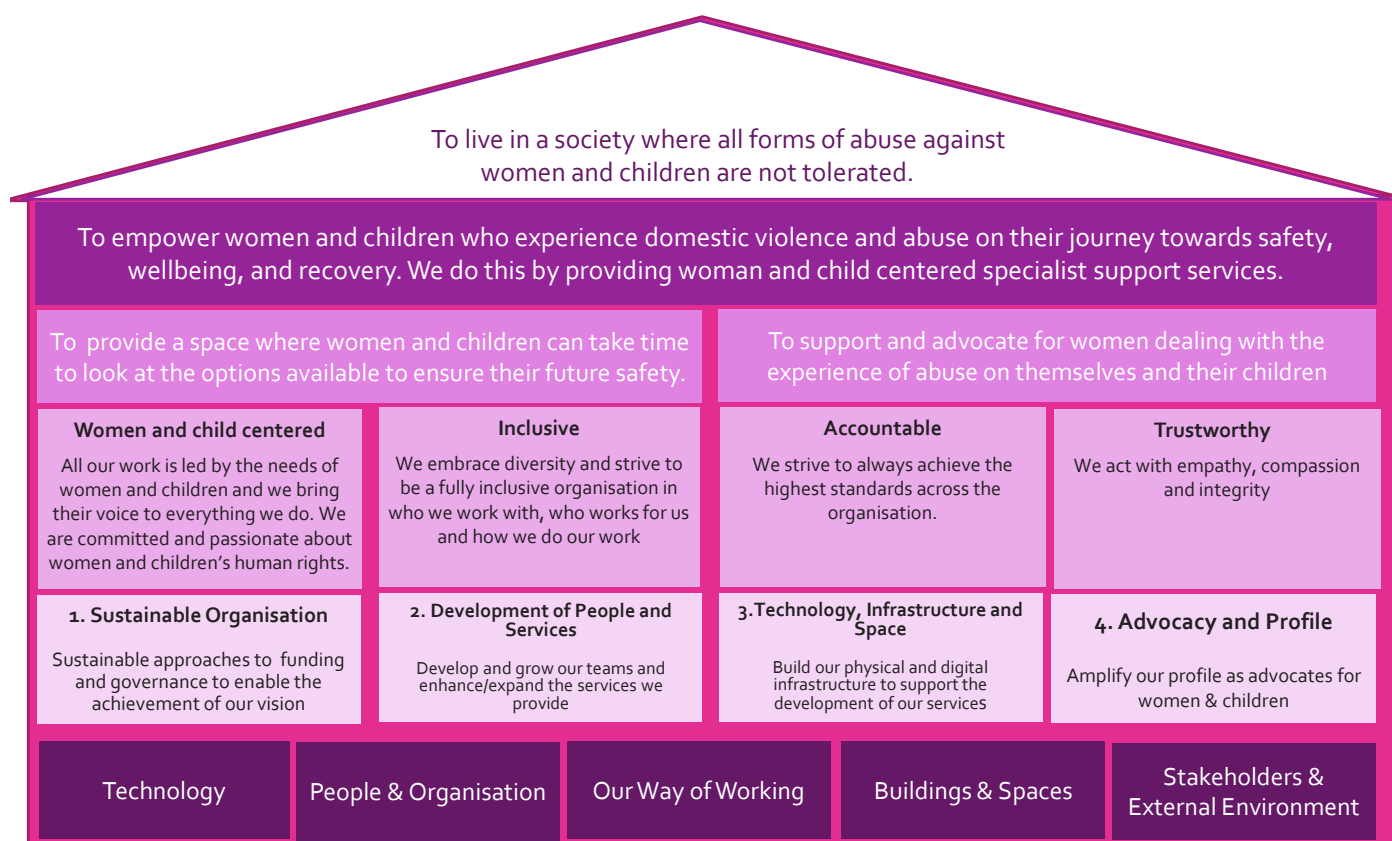
In developing our strategy, we built a “house” with strong foundations (our enablers) and priority “pillars” to articulate our strategic focus for the coming five years. Our vision and mission guide us, and our purpose is our reason for existing as an organisation.

Our plan is centred on a collective commitment and overarching goal that we will bring the voice of women and children to everything we do.

We are striving towards a sustainable securely funded organisation with the right people, delivering the right services to meet the needs of an ever-growing population of women and children experiencing Domestic Violence. We have an ambition to contribute to changing the conversation and informing innovative approaches to tackle gender-based violence and promoting gender equality more broadly.

We have big plans to develop our infrastructure and spaces (both physical and virtual) to enable us to deliver modern supports to the women and children who use our services. More women need to know we exist, to do that we must raise our profile so that women know where to find us and how we can help.

We have summarised our ambition for this strategy in the MWRSS Strategy House (below). This will be our guide – for our development, our decisions, and our plans.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority 1 - Sustainable Organisation

We strive to be a sustainable, secure organisation, with the right people, delivering the right services, funded appropriately to meet the needs of an ever-growing population of women and children experiencing Domestic Violence.

We will work to secure the future sustainability of the organisation by developing sustainable funding structures. This includes taking actions to become more self-reliant by having more control over our income sources.

Why it is important

To be a sustainable and effective organisation we must be funded and governed to the highest standards to meet the needs of women and children, not just today but into the future. This is important to achieve the following strategic outcomes:

- Become more self-reliant by having more control over our income sources.
- Be resilient in times of change and flux so we can respond and adjust quickly to shocks and changes
- MWRSS is positioned to meet the needs for services that present in our work not just today but over the next five years
- We are visible in the community as a credible specialist support agency who can contribute and inform community-based approaches to addressing gender-based violence
- Fully transparent and accountable in meeting our legislative and statutory obligations in how we are governed
- Setting high quality standards in how we do our work as a trauma informed and gender-based analysis informed women and child centred organisation

What we are trying to achieve

- A balanced mix of income streams and an increase of the percentage of funding that comes from fundraising
- A team of people skilled and competent to meet the needs of the women and children experiencing Domestic Violence
- An organisation that is agile, robust, and able to respond to change creatively and collaboratively
- A high quality, needs informed, well governed ways of working
- The ability to measure our impact and demonstrate best practice in the services we provide

Priority 2 - Development of People and Services

To deliver on this strategic plan we must invest in developing our own capacity and capability. This will ensure we can deliver a high-quality set of services and supports to the women and children we work with while also maintaining a strong and healthy organisation.

We know that to meet the needs of the many more women and children contacting us for support and increase the positive impact we have will involve focusing on both crisis and prevention work. We are committed to developing a responsive rather than reactive approach to Domestic Violence and integrating our services as part of a continuum of wrap around services as a recovery pillar to fully support the needs of women and children.

Why it is important

We have recognised the need to broaden, deepen and enhance the scope of services we provide in line with the national Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence strategy. This is important so that we can achieve the following strategic outcomes:

- Ensure our impact can be measured and improvements to services can be made
- Be an organisation with the right people with the right skills in place to deliver new and enhanced support services
- Therapeutic services are part of our core work as part of a continuum of wrap around services as a recovery pillar
- Be responsive and agile in meeting service demands

What we are trying to achieve

- Increase resourcing across all programme areas in line with increased demand for Domestic Violence services, future growth, and strategic focus
- Improve and align the programmes we already deliver to meet the needs of women and children experiencing Domestic Violence
- Embed the children's programme across the organisation's work ensuring we uphold the voice of children and reflect their needs in our work
- Integrate therapeutic recovery as a core element of our work as a Trauma Informed Organisation for women and children
- Position MWRSS to respond in innovative ways to new and emerging needs in our work e.g., sex work, LGBTQI communities
- Strive to be an inclusive and diverse organisation in how we are structured that can meet the needs of ethnic minority women, Travellers, and Roma

Priority 3 - Technology, Infrastructure and Space

This strategic plan takes in the local, national, and global context in which we work. This means we will need to place a priority on the physical space we offer as well as how we use technology to support and enhance the services we provide.

Our current plans are to expand refuge accommodation and we will explore safe house models in a number of locations across the county to ensure families have access to other options alongside refuge. During the COVID 19 pandemic we used technology to allow access to our services that may not have otherwise been possible.

Why it is important

We know that the need is great, women and children are being turned away from DV services daily, due to the lack of refuge spaces available in Ireland. We must increase and improve our capacity (space), technology and infrastructure to be able to do more, to meet a greater need for services in line with the national Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence strategy. This is important so that we can achieve the following strategic outcomes:

- Be responsive to women and children in crisis situations in Co. Meath
- Work effectively and efficiently in the way we deliver services, so that we can have a stronger impact
- Provide innovative facilities for women and children in terms of refuge and frontline services to the community

What we are trying to achieve

- Expanded refuge provision for Co. Meath will support us in meeting the needs presented by population growth
- Women and Children are provided with a safe secure space that recognises family dignity and can provide all the wrap around supports needed in one place
- New models of safe housing along with safe at home could prevent families coming to refuge depending on safety needs and can function as step down models
- Bring outreach services closer to women and children to continue to reduce accessibility barriers and ensure we are part of community supports
- Be an effective organisation using technology to be able to respond in a timely manner to the needs of women and children in our helpline, case management and reach into the community
- Improve internal communications and productivity as a staff team
- Reduce communication barriers and provide new ways to engage with MWRSS in an accessible way to groups who may not be able to access services e.g., rural women, women with disabilities, women with language barriers

Priority 4 - Advocacy and Profile

We are part of a bigger movement of societal partners working to eliminate gender-based violence. Challenging the narrative on Domestic Violence through bringing the voice of women and children to everything we do will have a community wide impact. We know that by advocating for women and children we can affect real policy and social change.

Why it is important

Raising our profile will ensure that the women and children who need our services are aware that we exist and know how to reach us.

We want to ensure that potential donors recognise that we have a strong profile and see us as a worthwhile organisation to fund. This is important so that we can achieve the following strategic outcomes:

- **Increased awareness of MWRSS**, to women, funders, volunteers, local community groups / agencies and state services
- **Improve our local and national networks** and access opportunities to collaborate with other agencies
- Increase and diversify our **funding streams**
- **Amplify our voice as advocates** for the women and children we support

What we are trying to achieve

- **Maximise our presence, profile and participation across a range of platforms to** enable us to reach women and children impacted by domestic violence
- **Be positioned as the go to organization in Co. Meath** with expertise on domestic violence for a wide range of stakeholders
- **Ensure policy responses to domestic violence by the state** is led by the needs of women and children

"Meeting others in similar situations from all backgrounds helps you realise you are not stupid, and it can affect anyone, with anyone, at any time. You choose to stop it, but only when you have the strength and courage. The refuge helps you achieve that."



"I am now a stronger more confident woman as I'm more educated to realise I am not worthless"