

*Love doesn't hurt.*

Cover photo - WAFNI

## 2020-2021 Annual Report



**929**

Referrals were received



**1047**

Women were supported during the year



**548**

Food and fuel vouchers were distributed to clients in need



**11**

Women who moved into new homes were supported with a deposit and a Home Starter Pack



**8,005**

Support sessions took place – either in person, by Zoom or on the phone



**301**

Journey to Freedom group work sessions were held – either in person or on Zoom



**221**

Women were supported at meetings with other agencies



**51**

High-risk cases were referred to MARAC

# Where you can find us



One number for all services: **028 71 416 800**

## **Marie Brown**

### **CEO**

24 Pump Street

Derry/Londonderry

BT48 6JG

Email: [marie.brown@foylewomensaid.org](mailto:marie.brown@foylewomensaid.org)

## **Finance**

### **Ciara McDonough**

Financial Controller

24 Pump Street

Derry/Londonderry

Email: [ciara.mcdonough@foylewomensaid.org](mailto:ciara.mcdonough@foylewomensaid.org)

## **Support Services**

### **Jo Corcoran**

Senior Support Services Manager

24 Pump Street

Derry/Londonderry

BT48 6JG

Email: [jo.corcoran@foylewomensaid.org](mailto:jo.corcoran@foylewomensaid.org)

## **POD15 Centre Coordinator**

### **Rosin Hamill**

POD15

15 Ardmore Road

Derry/Londonderry

BT47 3QP

Email: [rosin.hamill@foylewomensaid.org](mailto:rosin.hamill@foylewomensaid.org)

## **Dress for Success Programme Manager**

### **Sarah Quinn**

Ashleywood House

15 Ardmore Road

Derry/Londonderry

BT47 3QP

Email: [foyle@dressforsuccess.org](mailto:foyle@dressforsuccess.org)

## Management Committee

### **Chairperson**

Ms Eileen Webster

### **Vice-Chair**

Ms Cathie McMinn

### **Treasurer**

Ms Jacinta McCool

### **Secretary**

Ms Annemarie Harkin

### **Member**

Ms Karen O'Leary



# Foyle Women's Aid Vision and Purpose



## Vision

We will create a centre of excellence that leads in partnership working to develop and sustain non-violent, healthy communities in the North-West.



## Purpose

We exist to eliminate violent behaviour by supporting all victims of abuse through support, prevention, protection, and justice.

- » **Respect:** We treat others with equality and fairness.
- » **Understanding:** We strive to understand the needs, fears, and wishes of others.
- » **Shared Learning:** We are committed to exchanging knowledge, experiences, and ideas.
- » **Trust:** We will build open and honest relationships, and act with integrity and confidentiality.
- » **Non-Judgemental:** We respect the right to hold opinions and the choices of others, even though they might be different from our own.
- » **Challenge:** We advocate and question to empower all to make changes and reach their goals.

# Our Strategic Objectives



**Based on our analysis of the internal and external environment, our priorities fall under 8 key objectives:**

- 1** Extend client-led services.
- 2** Plan, develop and maintain fundraising to meet demand and provide value-added services.
- 3** Maintain professional standards and practice.
- 4** Develop effective formal operational links with statutory bodies.
- 5** Awareness-raising of services and public profile.
- 6** Strengthening local and regional relationships to influence DV Policy.
- 7** Increase capacity and create opportunities for career and personal development.
- 8** Build on current partnerships and develop further partnerships to meet the core objectives.

# Director's Report

## 2020-2021

The financial year 2020-21 was one that will never be forgotten and, whilst Foyle Women's Aid is used to challenges by the nature of our work, this year was exceptional. The Government's COVID-19 lockdown brought challenges to us all. It was particularly challenging to keep those most vulnerable and at risk safe. Our key objectives were to continue to keep protection services for women and children ongoing, and to ensure we kept staff and service users supported and safe during the COVID pandemic. We are immensely proud to report that Foyle Women's Aid services remained fully opened during lockdown, with very innovative practices of delivering outreach services online and via telephone, and very quickly adapting support programmes to online to continue delivering support services.

Accommodation services remained open to referrals throughout the pandemic and, at one point, this support was extended to provide 24-hour crash pads, in partnership with NIHE, to ensure that those most vulnerable were not left at risk or on the street. Support staff, Admissions & Safety and Maintenance staff rotated on- and off-site to keep emergency services running and providing support to the twenty-three families accommodated. Foyle played an active role in increased collaboration with local and regional organisations during this chaotic time, when other services had been so adversely impacted that they either closed or had radically reduced services due to COVID.

The staff team once again must be commended for achieving the exacting standards of delivery whilst managing the increasing work demands and supporting and implementing the changes in service to keep women, children and young people's services running during COVID. The Finance and Management Teams worked hard at both local and regional levels to highlight the changes required to adapt buildings and raised funds to cover the continuity costs of COVID and its impact on our budgets. This was achieved under exceedingly difficult circumstances and despite all the personal challenges, such as managing and adhering to restrictions; balancing childcare and homeworking during school closures; and keeping each other supported during the lockdown.

During this time, Foyle Women's Aid took part in an immensely powerful BBC Spotlight fly-on-the-wall documentary, where cameras followed various staff on a typical working day delivering services and women from our Voices Forum shared their experiences of domestic abuse on camera. The positive PR and feedback from the programme were overwhelming –importantly, this brought home to all viewers just how domestic abuse impacts on women and children's lives and the work and commitment demonstrated by all staff to provide a holistic service to meet their needs. Well done to everyone involved, particularly to our Voices Forum, who spoke out to empower other women.

Other work going on behind the scenes was the collaboration with WAFNI on the completion of our new regional strategic plan for Northern Ireland, which has already been launched, and the consultation and completion of the FWA and the Family Justice Centre strategic and operational plans, which are now almost at completion and will be implemented at the beginning of the incoming financial year. We look forward to

Foyle were key in initiating and collaborating with Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid and MAP in successfully tendering for and developing the ASSIST NI service to support all qualifying victims of domestic and sexual abuse within the criminal justice service. We continue to collaborate with our partners in PSNI, DOJ and the SARC unit to oversee, monitor and develop this project, which has been crucial in addressing some of gaps for victims progressing through the criminal justice system under the expert supervision of the services manager, Michelle Martin.

Another addition to services has been the successful funding bid and implementation of the much-needed support services to BAME women with no recourse to public funds, in partnership with the Home Office and the Southall Black Sisters. This is being coordinated by one of our Support Workers, who is collaborating across the region with Women's Aid and other key stakeholders to assist with some much-needed support and accommodation for these very vulnerable and marginalised women. We look forward to receiving updated national progress reporting for this project.

Unfortunately, our Dress for Success boutique did have to close over the COVID pandemic and activity for volunteers had to reduce dramatically, however links continued with women and support via Zoom. The Programme Manager maintained links and negotiations with our stakeholders and applications and plans were commenced for expansion into Belfast. With special thanks to support from Community Finance Ireland, we secured space for our second boutique. We look forward to updating on further progress on this opportunity, which will allow us to reach more women and support their journey to employment and financial independence.

Other developments in the pipeline are the further implementation of the Hope Evaluation, currently being piloted within the Support Services and being expanded across the other projects. Now that we have completed all the necessary work for planning and the applications for funding, we look forward to driving that plan forward to support young people suffering or witnessing abuse. We have progressed our plans and submitted to planning for the Family Justice Centre Annex and Café Central, the onsite social economy business based at the Justice Centre. All this work has been carried out by senior managers and the expertise of our new Financial Controller, Ciara McDonough, who has hit the ground running to support the ambitious plans for Foyle Women's Aid.

The ongoing achievements in Foyle have been achieved by contribution across the teams to achieve the best service possible for women, children and young people in the Foyle area. We have built much closer relationships across the region because of the pandemic and will continue to strengthen this commitment with WAFNI to lobby, campaign and strengthen regional services for women and children across NI.

**Marie Brown**  
CEO

# Support Services Report 2020-2021



This was a unique year in the history of Foyle Women's Aid services. The global COVID-19 pandemic reached crisis point on 23rd March 2020, when a government-ordered lockdown forced us to drastically adapt the way we work to keep our service open to victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Foyle Women's Aid remained fully open by exploring and developing new ways of reaching women who needed our help. Community Support staff worked from home, mainly using the telephone and Zoom to speak to clients.

The Accommodation Service was open to referrals at a time when many other service providers closed their doors to new referrals. We operated a 24-hour emergency 'crash pad' for women who were rescued by police during lockdown. Admissions & Safety staff and some Support staff remained onsite to meet the needs and reassure the 23 families using our accommodation.

Strict COVID prevention measures were put in place and we prevented any major outbreaks of COVID within our premises. Referrals to Foyle Women's Aid continued to rise, reaching record levels in January to March 2021. Women reported that the abuse that got worse and more hidden as lockdown restrictions increased their isolation.



**929**

Referrals were received



**8,005**

Support sessions took place – either in person, by Zoom or on the phone



**1047**

Women were supported during the year



**301**

Journey to Freedom group work sessions were held – either in person or on Zoom



**548**

Food and fuel vouchers were distributed to clients in need



**221**

Women were supported at meetings with other agencies



**11**

Women who moved into new homes were supported with a deposit and a Home Starter Pack



**51**

High-risk cases were referred to MARAC



Services, such as GPs, Social Services and particularly Mental Health, were all adversely impacted by lockdown, leaving women feeling very isolated and afraid.

“

*It felt as if everything stopped at once, the ground was taken from under me. You couldn't get anyone on the phone, nowhere was open. My ex-partner suggested moving back in to help. I was at such a low point that if it hadn't been for my Support Worker being there for me, I might have agreed. Thank you for helping me not to make what would have been the worst decision of my life.*

”

The continued contact and support from Support Workers was a major factor in easing the loneliness and isolation, according to clients.

“

*I really looked forward to C's call. I was going mad in the house, watching the news about COVID. My head was all over the place. To know that someone was still there for me was a lifesaver.*

”

Women reported that the lockdown restrictions were used by some perpetrators to monitor and restrict their movements.

“

*I wasn't allowed to go anywhere or do anything. I looked forward to taking the children out for the daily walk, just to get away from him, but then he started to come along as well, playing happy families to everyone we met. To be able to text my Support Worker when I could was the only bit of hope that I had.*

”

Some of the changes made due to lockdown will continue post-pandemic as they have proved to be beneficial to clients. For example, the courts closed, so women could not attend in person. Their solicitors attended or the women linked in remotely to the court from facilities in their solicitor's office.

Women reported that this worked well for them and took a lot of the fear and pressure out of facing their abusers in person. Foyle Women's Aid are working to bring this facility into the Family Justice Centre, due to open in 2022.

The provision of support by Zoom or telephone has enabled us to bring a service safely to women with mobility issues or women living in isolated and rural areas. This will never replace face-to-face support, but has become an invaluable way of reaching more women in need of support, which remains our goal as figures for domestic and sexual violence continue to rise in the North-West.

**Jo Corcoran**

*Senior Support Services Manager*



# Foyle Women's Aid Community Service Project 2020-2021



Some 22 women have been completing their community service at the Foyle Women's Aid site between October 2020 and the present. Tasks undertaken have included painting, weeding, mulching, raking leaves, clearing/treating mossy paths, sorting clothes, moving clothes bags, assembling gazebo, moving benches, power-hosing, pruning, leaf-blowing and planting flowers.

Service users and supervisors alike view Foyle Women's Aid as a great site; the Log Cabin is a great resource with excellent facilities, particularly during last winter. The site provides a great variety of jobs the women buy into and they can see how the site develops through the progression of their Orders. The memorial garden particularly resonated with the women and was one aspect they really took pride in.

Overall, this is viewed as being very mutually beneficial, with some great anecdotal stories of women implementing the skills learned when out on the community service within their own lives. These include one woman painting in her own home for the first time, another creating a garden, or even simple things like the importance of establishing routines, such as eating at appropriate times and being able to problem-solve in a practical way.

A very significant effect of the women completing their community service at the Ashleywood site was the fact that the onsite contact, Ivan, assisted Probation staff in identifying the right people to speak to with regard to signposting the women for help. At least 2 service users went on to complete the Journey to Freedom programme through attending Foyle Women's Aid for community service. We estimate some 8 women have availed of other Women's Aid support through completing their community service there.

**David Young**  
*Area Manager, Probation NI*

# BACKGROUND

The number of women contacting Women's Aid groups across the region with no recourse to public funding has been increasing every year. (Some are dependent on their partners or spouses for their immigration status, whilst others arrive in the UK through other immigration routes).



No Recourse to Public Funds (**NRPF**) is a legal restriction imposed by the UK Border Agency on people subject to immigration control. The NRPF rule means that women subject to immigration controls on a variety of visa statuses cannot access benefits and, therefore, they cannot access safe refuge accommodation or other support, even if they are the victims of serious and sustained crimes. Breaching this rule puts a person's current or future right to be in the UK at risk.

We struggle on a daily basis to support abused migrant women with NRPF because the normal routes to safety are simply not available to these women. Insecure immigration status shapes the abuse, increases its severity and prolongs it, across a range of different forms of violence against women and girls. This includes so-called honour-based violence, forced marriage, domestic violence including sexual violence, systematic sexual exploitation in the commercial sex trades, trafficking, harassment, stalking and homicide. These women find it difficult to go to the local authority (unless children are involved and, even then, it is difficult) or to a refuge, because refuges rely on rental income. As a consequence, many women are forced to rely on charity and hand-outs from strangers and, in the process, subject themselves to other forms of degradation, exploitation and harm.

What makes their position even more worrying is that they are held hostage by their abusers, who routinely tell them that they will be arrested, detained and deported if they report the abuse. Their passports, other documents and any money they have are taken away from them, and they are deliberately kept away from the outside world in order to limit their opportunity to tell someone about the abuse. What is particularly palpable is migrant women's overwhelming sense of fear; fear of what will happen to them if they stay in abuse and fear of what will happen if they leave. If informal networks of extended family or friends are not available, there is in fact no safe place to go, so they frequently choose to stay with abusers. We do not have reliable estimates of women who are **'trapped'**.

The state actively reinforces a political and social climate that is hostile to migrants, resulting in:

- **barriers to healthcare**
- **landlord checks on immigration status of tenants**

This climate, on balance of probabilities, exacerbates the fear and unwillingness of women subject to immigration control to disclose abuse.

## THE WAY FORWARD

Foyle Women's Aid has partnered with Southall Black Sisters (Lead Agency – responsibility for reporting to the Home Office) in the last year to provide support for victims of domestic abuse, who have no recourse to public funds.

The aim of the project is to provide support for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (**BAME**) migrant victims/survivors of domestic abuse, who have no recourse to public funding, thus unable to access safe accommodation. The project seeks to provide protection and a positive impact for victims/survivors to access safe accommodation when they most need it by giving them support to escape an abusive relationship.

A period of up to 12 weeks of respite is provided to them, allowing them to make decisions that will secure the best outcomes for their ongoing safety. During the 12 weeks, their rent is paid and they receive weekly sustenance. The project partners will seek to assist BAME migrant victims/survivors to obtain local authority housing and any other eligible assistance/support. An appropriate immigration lawyer/immigration advice centres/hubs are also sought to help service users access the correct legal advice.

**We secured funding to support 50 service users in the 2021/2022 financial year. The services that were provided to clients across Northern Ireland who met the criteria included:**



Women's Aid refuge accommodation for up to 12 weeks



Signposting to immigration solicitor in your geographical area



Subsistence payments - £40 per week



Advocacy/holistic support/advice/therapy and/or counselling



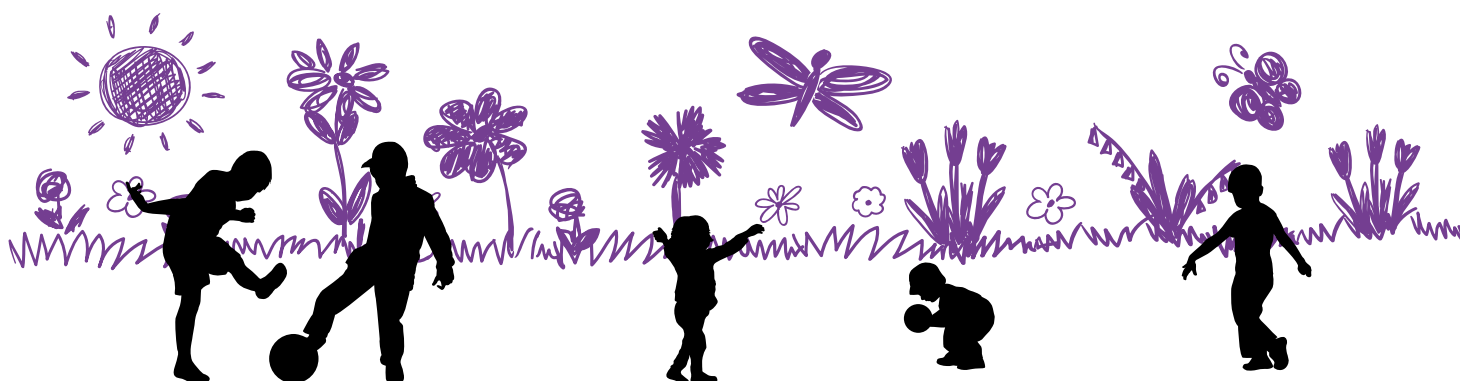
Funding towards translation costs

It was vitally important that we used up this funding and provided support across our region to those women who have no recourse to public funds.

The data from all partners availing of this fund is now being collated to present to the Home Office, in the hope that the funding will continue in 2022/2023. It is also hoped that the data collected will help to inform change and that the decision-makers at government level can implement the vital changes needed for victims of DV with NRPF, so that they can avail of the same support as other victims of DV.

**Michelle McDaid**  
*Support Worker*

# Children & Young People's Services Report 2020-2021



COVID-19 brought about some difficult challenges for people worldwide. At POD15, we acted upon the needs of the families in our residential settings and the wider community. Following strict guidelines – and keeping safety at the forefront for both service users and staff – we continued services by delivering remote sessions via Zoom with music and movement, online fitness classes and Rhyme Time. These were enjoyed by all the family in the safety of their own home.

From April to August, we delivered activity packs from planting, arts and crafts, poster kits and healthy eating. We had daily regular check-in calls to ensure that the needs of the families were listened to and acted upon.

We have also been fortunate to receive support from charity, KidsOut, who provided children in residential through their Toy Box Appeal.

We received packs from BookTrust, which have been distributed to families – another added resource for families to utilise at home. Staff at the POD offered a Zoom session to help support mothers, with tips on storytelling and their child's engagement.

We ensured that our seasonal activities continued in a safe manner, with our annual Easter Hunt, Halloween event and Santa visits all delivered with social distancing, and even a virtual approach.

We utilised our social media platforms to share links and signpost families to best suit their needs.

Staff had opportunities to attend online training on Infection Control, Autism, Safeguarding and Play. This will only enhance our already growing portfolio and skill base amongst the POD team.

Opportunities for funding were sought out and we had several successful applications that enhanced the support we had already wrapped around the families during these unsure times.

Work is continuing on Early Years Action Plan, as our registering body, to ensure that the services we provide meet the relevant standards, especially during these unpredictable times.

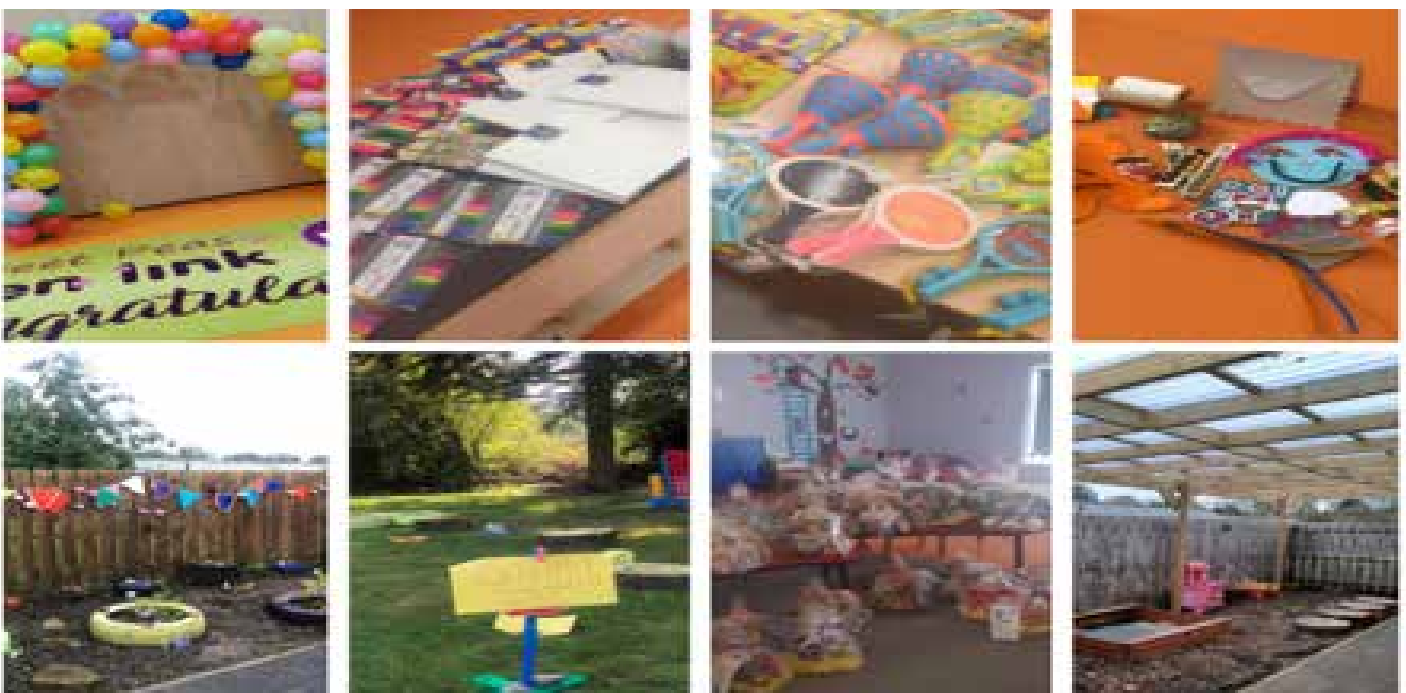
In September 2020, services at Sweet Peas Creche reopened 4 days per week under strict government guidance. As our group was deemed to be within the vulnerable sector, we applied for an amendment to our certificate to ensure that we could offer a safe service for the families at this time.

We carried out robust risk assessments to ensure that all areas of need had been addressed, putting in place several safety measures – from PPE to one-way systems – and regular contact with care-givers in relation to symptoms.

Creche services 5 days a week started back in November 2020, staying within class bubbles and adhering to any changes in regulation allowed us to continue with a much-needed service. This service has continued to date.

Our Active Learning and Early Intervention programmes started back in February 2021. We worked with small groups to ensure safety during the Helping Hands programmes, utilising our vast outdoor and indoor space.

Our partnership with the Education Authority restarted with a bespoke group of young people living within our residential settings. This was very much welcomed and the young people attending the programme enjoyed the face-to-face interactions, fun activities and simply being back in the POD.





**41**

Referrals were received and actioned for children and young people



**101**

Children and young people supported



**25**

Online classes between April and July



**200**

Home activity packs delivered/collected during COVID lockdown April-September



**6**

Children completed Helping Hands face to face between February and March



**16**

Active Learning sessions took place between February and March



**38**

Toy boxes delivered



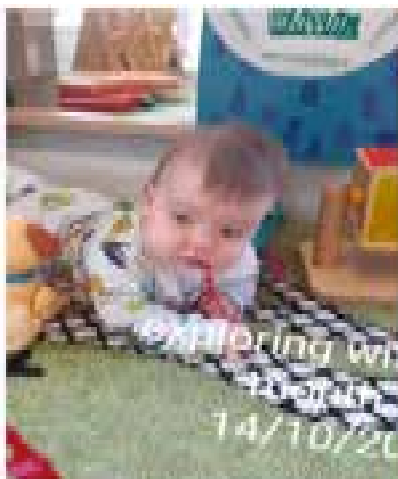
**500**

Hours of direct service took place from September to March (limited due to restrictions)





Charlotte making her bat  
16/10/20



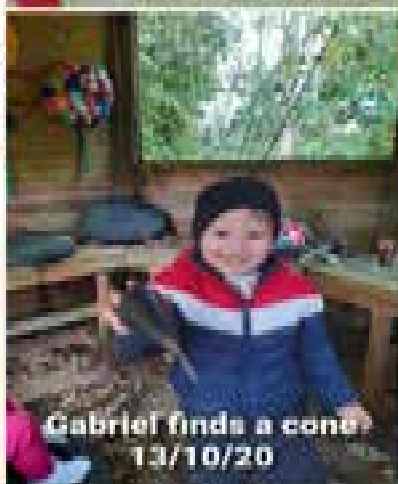
Exploring with  
toothbrush  
14/10/20



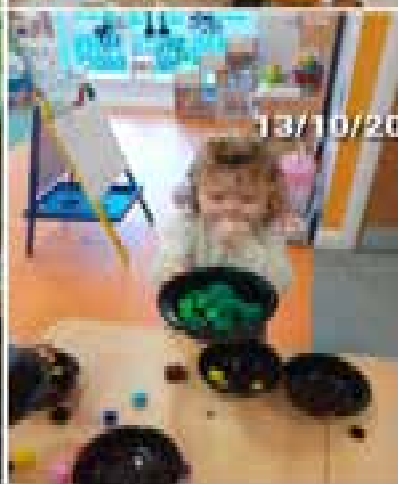
painting Halloween  
pumpkins  
14/10/20



Dolls hospitals  
14/10/20



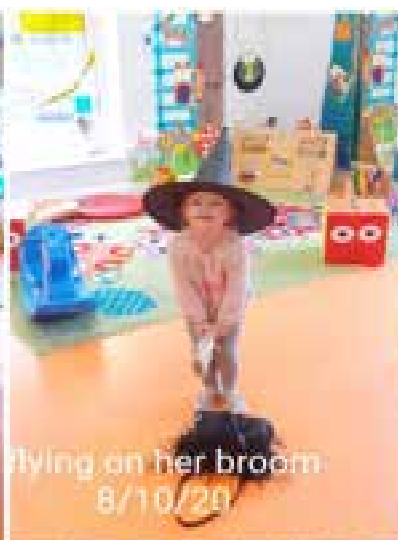
Gabriel finds a cone  
13/10/20



13/10/20



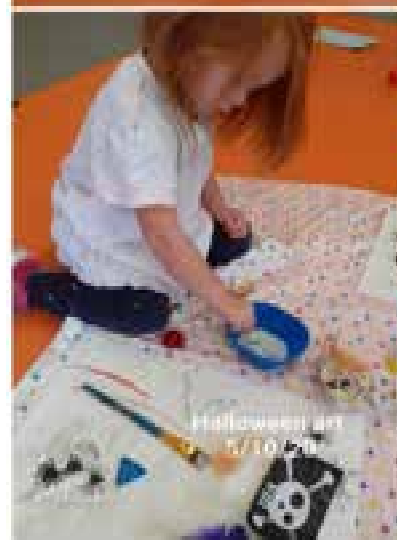
building and counting blocks  
8/10/20



flying on her broom  
8/10/20



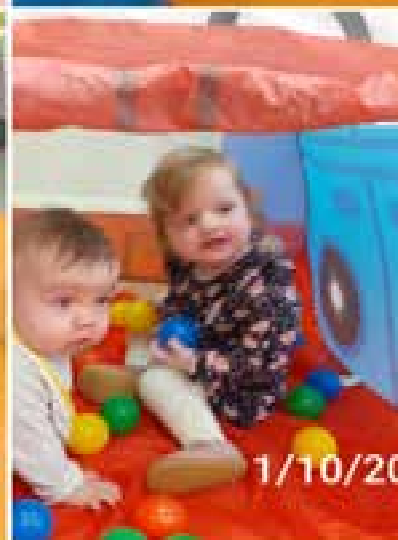
Halloween hats  
7/10/20



Halloween art  
5/10/20

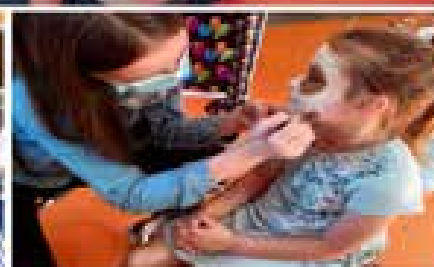


Getting ready to decorate for  
Halloween  
7/10/20



1/10/20





# Financial Review for 2020-2021



Foyle Women's Aid have posted a net movement in funds of £159,514 for the year to 31 March 2021 (31 March 2020: deficit £45,141). Total funds carried forward as at 31 March 2021 now stand at £1,693,202 (31 March 2020: £1,533,688).

Restricted funds (including restricted capital funds) for the group comprise £700,302 as at 31 March 2021 (31 March 2020: £560,132), with unrestricted funds comprising £963,582 as at 31 March 2021 (31 March 2020: £958,212).

Our principal funders are Supporting People and we have received continued funding from the Big Lottery, Western Health & Social Care Trust and Probation Board NI.

The funding we received has enabled Foyle Women's Aid to provide the services, staff and resources required to meet the aims and objectives of the organisation.

**Ciara McDonough**  
*Financial Controller*



# Dress for Success Report 2020-2021



Due to Joanne's departure from the role in June, there has been a lull in delivery of Dress for Success services. In September, we recruited a new Dress for Success Programme Manager, Sarah Quinn. Sarah has a strong community background in managing and delivering programmes, and has vast experience of programmes with an employability focus.

Following the success of establishing a new branch of Dress for Success in Belfast, our focus now will be on developing and raising continued awareness of the brand locally, as well as in a wider Northern Ireland context.

In October, we reopened face to face appointments for clients at our boutique in Ashleywood House. Interview skills and additional support, provided via our Careers Hub, continue virtually, as well as in person, and three new volunteers have signed up to support our services.

We have successfully secured funding from the Department for Communities to introduce the **'Transit Forward'** programme to clients. A tried and tested model developed by our affiliate colleagues at Dress for Success Greater London, Transit Forward will support women to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

M&S continue to be our core donor of clothes. Due to an overstock of donations, we will be hosting a Winter Pop-up Shop in November, with all proceeds benefiting Dress for Success Foyle.

**Sarah Quinn**  
*Programme Manager*



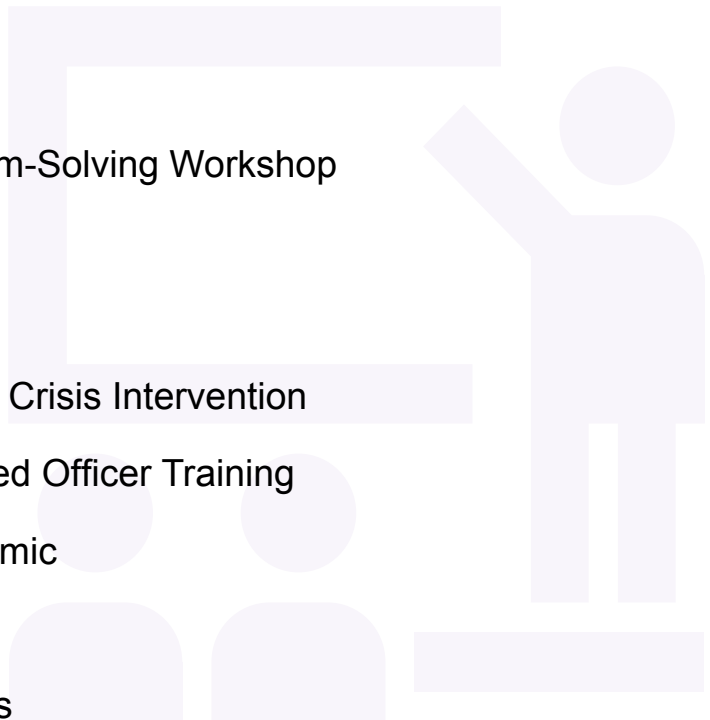
**DRESS FOR SUCCESS®**  
FOYLE - NORTHERN IRELAND

*Going Places. Going Strong.*

# Staff Training Completed April 2020 – March 2021



- ✓ Zoom Training
- ✓ Office365 Trainin
- ✓ Domestic Homicide Review Training
- ✓ Domestic Homicide Review: Being an Effective Panel Member
- ✓ Opposing Violence Against Women
- ✓ Promoting Mental Health in the Workplace
- ✓ Introduction to Mindfulness
- ✓ Surviving to Thriving: Trauma Awareness
- ✓ Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
- ✓ Keeping Adults Safe: Adult Safeguarding Champion & Appointed Person Training
- ✓ Self-Care Workshop
- ✓ Looking After Your Mental Health
- ✓ Keeping Adults Safe
- ✓ Design Thinking & Critical Problem-Solving Workshop
- ✓ Recruiting Fairly
- ✓ Hope Matters
- ✓ Impact of Alcohol on Self-Harm & Crisis Intervention
- ✓ Keeping Children Safe: Designated Officer Training
- ✓ Leading Teams Through a Pandemic
- ✓ Influencing in a Virtual World
- ✓ Supporting Clients in Rent Arrears



# THANK YOU TO ALL OUR FUNDERS



**Our thanks to all the agencies listed and to all the wonderful individuals, organisations and companies who supported our work so generously during the year.**

National Lottery Community Fund, Housing Executive, Supporting People, LandAid, WHSCT, Derry and Strabane District Council, PBNI, The Pathway Fund, BBC Children in Need, Comic Relief, Cash for Kids.

Company Registration Number:  
**NI 23041**

Charity Number  
**NIC103223**

Bank  
**Danske Bank**

Date of Incorporation  
**6 September 1989**

Auditors  
**Fergus McAteer & Co.**

Solicitors  
**Caldwell & Robinson Solicitors**

*Front cover photo - WAFNI*

Contact Foyle Women's Aid: 24 Pump St, L/Derry, BT48 6JG

T: 028 7141 6800 | E: [info@foylewomensaid.org](mailto:info@foylewomensaid.org)

[foylewomensaid.org](http://foylewomensaid.org)

