



2021-2022 Annual Report



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

Where you can find us



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

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Management Committee

Chairperson

Ms Eileen Webster

Vice-Chair

Ms Cathie McMinn

Treasurer

Ms Jacinta McCool

Secretary

Ms Marie Brown

Member

Ms Karen O'Leary

Member

Mrs Suzie McAneney

Member

Ms Amanda Biega

Member

Ms Karen Breslin



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

2021-2022

The fiscal year 2021-22 finally saw an end to lockdown measures as we had previously experienced them. Although the COVID pandemic was not by any means gone, the success of the vaccination programme and the reduction in restrictions allowed us the opportunity to gradually resume normal services, in adherence with health guidelines. There were ongoing challenges as COVID had not by any means gone away, and managing social distancing and COVID illness did cause disruptions to the service. The staff were very quick to adapt and find solutions on a day-to-day basis to ensure that the services were not too adversely disrupted. The staff's experience of crisis intervention was, and remain, utilised to the full. The adverse impact of the pandemic on women, children and young people suffering domestic and sexual abuse, both during and post-lockdown, resulted in increased demands across our services. Foyle Women's Aid remained consistent in the delivery of exceeded targets despite the challenges and that was down to the experience and commitment of the staff team here in Foyle.

We experienced a continuing upward trend in referrals. Women reported that the abuse got worse and more hidden as lockdown restrictions increased isolation. Demand for the Floating Support service reached record levels.

It is well documented that COVID had a very negative impact on children and young people in general. The added

trauma of witnessing escalating abuse at home took its toll on children and young people. As restrictions eased, POD15 started to move back to full onsite services whilst still adhering to the safety guidelines and ensuring that all centre users had a positive experience. There will be a greater need for support and recovery services post-COVID.

Our partnership with the Education Authority was restored again, alongside a recovery plan to begin this crucial work to support children and young people. This was very much welcomed by the young people who attended the post-COVID programme – they especially benefited from and enjoyed the face-to-face interactions, fun activities and simply being back in the POD. Social interaction and support derived from others with shared experience is crucial for the recovery and wellbeing of young people surviving abuse. This was more pertinent this year as the normal respite away from the situation, such as time spent in school and the wider family support or hobbies, were all suddenly taken away. The Childcare Team continued with all the activities they could deliver under extenuating circumstances. We were all acutely aware of the need to get children and young people back to their routine, many of whom suffered a range of anxieties about isolation, schoolwork and not having the equipment or support needed to function. It was hard for all children and young people, but we will only know the true extent in future studies. The Childcare Team continued to up-skill

with various online training opportunities and, of course, worked extremely hard to ensure that we passed our Early Years inspection. New experiences and memories were created with the children over this period, and it was a proud moment for mothers to celebrate their child's first graduation from creche to pre-school.

Foyle Women's Aid, Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid and MAP continue to work together to oversee and support Michelle Martin, Project Manager of the ASSIST NI project. Michelle expertly manages this project and has put a great deal of expertise and energy into getting this project off the ground, creating a valuable service and first point of contact after the incident. The first-year anniversary seminar and report not only demonstrate the need for this project, but also highlight the excellent support that was provided by the specifically trained advocates. The feedback and evaluations from the first year have been overwhelming and encouraging and, if we are left to manage and direct this service in line with the cumulative experience of the agencies and Project Manager, this project will flourish. There have been challenges – as there will be – but we are truly clear that we will remain delivering in accordance with the contract and within our ethos to be victim-focused and trauma-informed for all the clients and staff.

Foyle Women's Aid has partnered with the Southall Black Sisters, the lead agency with responsibility for reporting to the Home Office since April 2021/2022 to provide support for victims of domestic abuse who have no recourse to public funds. The aim of the project was to provide support for victims of domestic abuse who have no recourse to public funds. The project sought to provide protection and a positive impact for victims and survivors to access safe

accommodation when they most needed it by giving them support to escape an abusive relationship. A period of 12 weeks' respite was provided to them, allowing them to make decisions that would secure the best outcomes for their ongoing safety. During the 12 weeks, their rent was paid, and they received weekly sustenance. The project partners will seek to assist BAME migrant victims and survivors to obtain local authority housing and any other eligible assistance/support. An appropriate immigration lawyer and immigration advice centre hubs were also sought to help service users to access the correct legal advice. We have successfully secured further funding to deliver for the services for the years 2022/2023 to support up to a minimum of 40 service users that meet the criteria across Northern Ireland.

Dress for Success has been remarkably busy and has truly recovered since the pandemic close-down. The Foyle boutique has reopened since October 2021 and the referral numbers are gradually picking up. In March 2022, we hosted a range of partner agencies at the Grand Central Hotel to celebrate the launch of our second boutique in Belfast. We have successfully secured support from Community Finance Ireland to support prime accommodation close to the city centre. From October 2021 to March 2022, a total of 11 women have been styled for interview employment, volunteering, and work placements. 12 women have attended our career centre for support with CVs, job searching and interview preparation. 5 new volunteers have registered their interest in supporting Dress for Success and Volunteer Training has already been scheduled.

In this reporting year, despite the setbacks and challenges of COVID, the Foyle Family Justice Centre is finally at the final stages. What was a derelict site

now houses the Family Justice Centre building and, although the building is not complete, what we had envisaged – and the layout plan – is exactly right to house all the activities and agencies that will be in the Centre. The building is only one aspect of this work, and the Management Team remains busy behind the scenes planning and finalising all the systems required for the smooth running of the new centre. The Accommodation Support Team has been busy preparing for the release of the much-needed housing units. We look forward to reporting next year on the progress of our Family Justice Centre once it is operational.

The Finance Team has been busy working on securing all the equipment we will require for both projects to ensure we create an outstanding office and housing complex. This has involved a great deal of negotiation and fundraising, so that we will have everything in place. The opening will be in September, and we look forward to a great celebration on that day.

The Senior Management Team will focus on other key developments on our strategic plan.

We are very grateful for the financial support from all our funders and generous donations from businesses and individuals who helped us throughout the year. Your help was crucial in supporting us to make the transitions that were required to keep working over the COVID period. Your kindness and contributions to supporting families are so much appreciated by us and the families you support.

I would like to thank the wonderful team of staff, Management, volunteers and Voices Forum, whose combined efforts contribute to the success of Foyle Women's Aid and our mission. We will continue to highlight the inequalities and hardships that victims and survivors endure in NI and how the political failure that exists in NI diminishes their protection and rights.

Marie Brown
CEO

Support Services Report 2021-2022



945

Referrals were received



825

Women were supported during the year



7,567

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



112

Women took part in the Journey to Freedom group work programme



221

Women were supported at meetings with other agencies



42

High-risk cases were referred to MARAC



19

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

The impact of COVID-19 was still one of the main challenges for Foyle Women's Aid this year as we moved slowly out of lockdown. The changes we made last year to ensure that our services stayed open and accessible for women looking for help mostly remained in place in 2021/22.

“

The impact of the pandemic on women living with domestic and sexual abuse extended well beyond the easing of lockdown and we experienced all-time-high referral rates for our services.

”

Demand for the Floating Support service reached record levels, averaging 79 per month – peaking in January 2022, when 96 women sought help. Despite the restrictions and challenges, the Floating Support Team responded to all the women who needed their help.

“

The Accommodation Service remained busy, with staff remaining on site at all times to support the 23 families living in our short-term emergency housing units. Vigilance and compliance by both staff and residents prevented any outbreak of COVID on site and kept everyone feeling secure and healthy.

”

Group work continued through the year, with 112 women completing the Journey to Freedom programme in person or by Zoom. We extended this programme this year, delivering it in Strabane and, for the first time, Castlederg. Both groups were well attended and we hope to build on this next year.

Preparation for the move to the Foyle Family Justice Centre saw staff take part in specialised training by Dr Chan Hellman on the Science of Hope, which looks at how to bring trauma-informed, hope-centred services to survivors of interpersonal violence. This was followed by Strangulation Awareness Training by the Alliance for Hope organisation, which highlighted the seriousness of non-fatal strangulation in cases of domestic abuse.

Survivors had a busy year also. The Voices Forum continued to use their experiences and voices to raise awareness about the needs of victims, and Foyle was well represented on the WAFNI Regional Voices project 'Hear Her Voice', which captured the lived experiences of survivors through creative writing, song and art.

Jo Corcoran

Senior Support Services Manager

Foyle Women's Aid has partnered with **Southall Black Sisters (Lead Agency – responsibility for reporting to the Home Office)** since April 2021 to provide support for victims of domestic abuse who have no recourse to public funds.

The aim of the project was to provide support for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) migrant victims/survivors of domestic abuse who have no recourse to public funding, thus not able to access safe accommodation. The project sought to provide protection and a positive impact for victims/survivors to access safe accommodation when they most needed it by giving them support to escape an abusive relationship.

A period of up to 12 weeks' respite was provided to them, allowing them to make decisions that will secure the best outcomes for their ongoing safety. During the 12 weeks, their rent was paid and they received 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 were also sought to help service users access the correct legal advice.

We have secured further funding of £100,000 to support up to 40 service users in this financial year. The services that were provide to clients across Northern Ireland who meet the criteria included:

- WA refuge or other safe temporary accommodation for up to 12 weeks (rent paid up to a maximum of £350 for refuge / £250 for other temporary)
- Subsistence payments - £60 per week + £15 per child



- Signposting to immigration solicitor in your geographical area
- Advocacy/holistic support advice/therapy and/or counselling
- Funding towards translation costs

In this new project year, we have already seen a larger number of referrals in the first 2 quarters. To date, we have applied for funding for 19 clients. Therefore, we are on target to reach 40 clients by the end of the year. SBS have advised that if we go over the £100,000 funding allocation, they can give us an increase in funds due to an underspend in other regions across the UK. This increase in referrals is due to raising the awareness/profile of the project with refuge managers in NI, as well as external agencies such as NIHE, North West Migrant Forum and other organisations who represent BAME communities.

The Home Office has also just agreed that an extension to the funding will be granted for the next financial year, which is great news for those BAME victims in our region who will be able to benefit from this funding. It is also hoped that, with 3 full years of data collection from this project, it can be presented to the Home Office and policy decision-makers in government to help to inform the vital changes needed for victims of domestic abuse with no recourse to public funds, i.e. that they can avail of the same support as other victims of domestic abuse.

Michelle McDaid,
Support Worker

Children & Young People's Services Report 2021-2022



As restrictions eased, we started moving safely back to full services at POD15, while continuing to adhere to safety guidance to ensure that all centre users had a positive experience. This brought about changes in our programme delivery. We had crèche being delivered 5 days per week for 0-4 years; Helpings Hands and Active Learning for our school-aged children; and Teenlink in partnership with the Education Authority.

Our seasonal activities returned at Easter and we created a Spring-filled programme of fun and laughter, with Easter bunnies, baking, messy play and much more. We continued to share information on our social media platforms, reaching a wider audience and celebrating good practice and memorable events.

Staff had the opportunity to attend online training on Keeping Children Safe; Internet Safety; Paediatric First Aid; EpiPen Usage; and Becoming a Trauma-informed Centre with training delivered by Dr Karen Treisman.

We had various meetings with the National Lottery Community Fund regarding the upcoming Camp Hope project, with the young people's Voices Group meeting with the funders to share what this project would mean to them. This was a successful application, and we all look forward to the growth of Camp Hope.



We had our annual inspection from Early Years as our governing body over a two-day period, which looked at our physical setting, policy and staff standards. We received notification of success and will now be working towards the next inspection in 2023. We have continued to update and revise practices to ensure compliance – this included the recruitment of new staff to maintain a standard of qualifications and experience.

We have continued to deliver 3 of our early intervention programmes, reaching 44 children aged between 5-10 years. These took place at POD15's Afterschool Club and involved structured group work and creative sessions that addressed issues, such as identity, worries, self-esteem, friendships, cooking, messy play and much more. We have received the following valued feedback:

“Helping Hands is a great programme that had supported my son during difficult contact sessions.”

“I love a Thursday and going to my group. It is fun and the book is colourful.”

“Helping Hands gave us something nice to talk about when I was worried.”

We have continued our partnership with the Education Authority Youth Service in delivering a year-round service to the young people referred to Teenlink. This allowed for groups to meet, build relationships and build knowledge in areas of interest. Some of the topics addressed were mental health, future career pathways, drugs and alcohol, and sexual health. The young people took part in an art project to share their thoughts on the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.

Teenlink Voices

We had a session about the future and goals, and this was some feedback:

“Teenlink gives everyone hope.”

“Wish we had more sessions.”

“I have made friends for life.”

We have had a busy, successful year with lots of happy memories created – from the success of Camp Hope being approved to the graduation of a group of children from crèche to preschool, to the new members of staff who have joined our team. We look forward to what this year has to bring, with the launch of the Foyle Family Justice Centre, development of Camp Hope and much more!



teen link



48

Referrals were received and actioned for children and young people



79

Children and young people supported



312

Direct creche sessions took place at POD15



150

Children in the community supported at Christmas with toy packs



60

Toy packs from KidsOut received and shared



44

Helping Hands groups delivered to 44 children



30

Children attended our 6-week summer programme



Children in the community supported at Christmas with toy packs



Financial Review for 2021-2022



Foyle Women's Aid (parent charity) have posted a net movement in funds of £881,556 for the year to 31 March 2022 (31 March 2021: £159,514). Total funds carried forward as at 31 March 2022 now stand at £2,574,758 (31 March 2021: £1,693,202).

Restricted funds (including restricted capital funds) for the group comprise £1,566,565 as at 31 March 2022 (31 March 2021: £700,542), with unrestricted funds comprising £973,543 as at 31 March 2022 (31 March 2021: £963,342).

Our principal funders are Supporting People and we have received continued funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, Comic Relief, Western Health & Social Care Trust, BBC Children in Need, NIHE Provider Innovation Fund, The Pathway Fund 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 2021-2022



It has been a busy and successful 6 months for Dress for Success Northern Ireland and the programme is going from strength to strength. Our Foyle Boutique has been open to clients since October 2021 and the referral numbers are gradually starting to pick up following the pandemic.

In March 2022, hosted at the Grand Central hotel, we launched our second branch in Belfast City Centre. The new approachable boutique in Belfast, based in the Glengall Exchange, was *kindly supported by Allstate NI*. Both boutiques act as a place for women of all ages and backgrounds to avail of a myriad of services, including styling for interview and programmes designed for every step of their professional journey. The Belfast Boutique fit-out was supported by *Castlecourt Shopping Centre*, who donated rails, mannequins and shelving units to help style the boutique and make the client experience as positive as possible.

From October 2021 – March 2022, a total of *11 women have been styled* for interview, employment, volunteering roles and work placements and *12 women have attended* our career centre for support with CVs, job searching and interview preparation. *5 new volunteers have registered their interest* in supporting Dress for Success NI and we are planning to deliver Volunteer Training later in the year.



DRESS FOR SUCCESS®
FOYLE - NORTHERN IRELAND

Going Places. Going Strong.



Additional Highlights:

In November 2021, Dress for Success NI secured funding from the Department of Communities to deliver the *Transit Forward* programme, under their Developing Women in the Community fund, which aims to provide training and support to women, empowering them with the skills, knowledge and confidence to become involved in transformational community development. Transit Forward was delivered to 16 women over a 10-week period and concluded with a celebration event. Funding for this programme has been extended to further support those who participated on the pilot.



Transit Forward Participants' Feedback:

“Great sense of community, very supportive environment. Transit Forward took me out of my comfort zone, encouraging and improved my confidence. The programme helped with my confidence and to be more outspoken. I feel I am in a more positive place and hopeful for moving forward.”

Suiting Client Feedback:

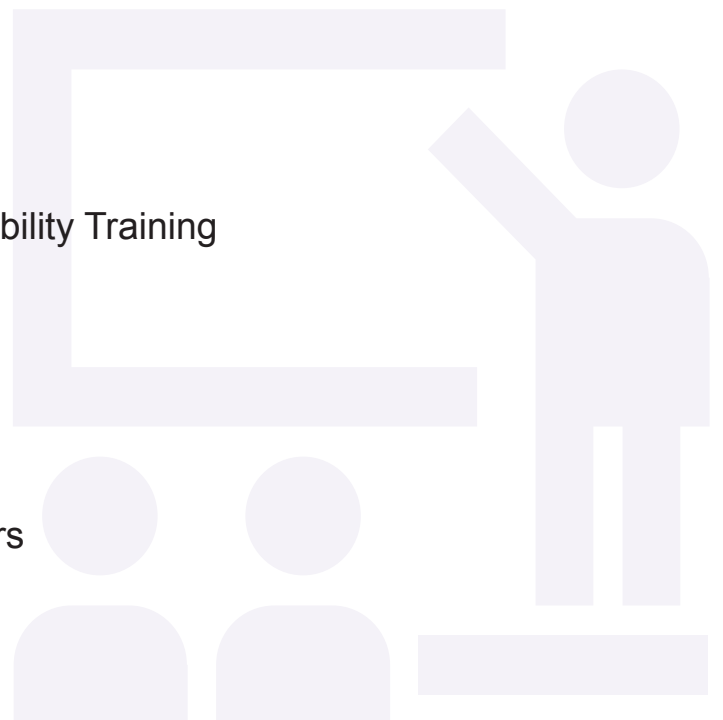
“I’ve been offered a full time permanent post which I am absolutely delighted about. The interview went amazing, thank you so much for your help and for making me feel so beautiful and confident. Everyone absolutely loved my outfit & I felt so good wearing it!”



Staff Training Completed April 2021 – March 2022



- ✓ How to Empower Teenagers to Develop Healthy Online Behaviours
- ✓ Making Good Funding Applications
- ✓ Keeping Adults Safe
- ✓ Strangulation Prevention
- ✓ Motivational Interviewing
- ✓ PDR Training
- ✓ Intranet Training
- ✓ Western Trust Adult Safeguarding Conference
- ✓ New Worker Training
- ✓ Self-Care
- ✓ Designated Officer Training – Child Protection
- ✓ Young People & Substance Use
- ✓ Drug & Alcohol Awareness
- ✓ Observation, Assessment & Planning
- ✓ Dementia Awareness & Learning Disability Training
- ✓ COVID Training
- ✓ GDPR Training
- ✓ Food Hygiene
- ✓ Mental Health Awareness for Managers
- ✓ Mental Health First Aid
- ✓ Keeping Children Safe
- ✓ Paediatric First Aid
- ✓ How to be an Agile Leader with Psychological Flexibility



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, NIHE, Supporting People, WHSCT, PBNI, The Pathway Fund, BBC Children in Need, Comic Relief

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

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