



RCC **40** | 1979-2019
YEARS

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

PREVENTING AND HEALING THE TRAUMA OF RAPE AND SEXUAL ABUSE

ANNUAL
REPORT
2018

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The mission of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC) is twofold – to provide counselling and other supports to the victims and survivors of sexual violence, and to advocate for the elimination of tolerance of sexual violence in Irish society. Demand for our services reached record levels in 2018, with more than 13,000 contacts received by our helpline, while 582 clients were seen by our therapists. There was also increased demand for our education, training and information services. >>

The continuing increase in demand for our services must be a cause for concern as it is an indicator of the high prevalence of sexual violence in our society. It is also a cause for mixed emotions. Coming forward to seek help requires tremendous courage and any increase in the number of people doing so must be seen as welcome. However, we have no real idea, beyond purely anecdotal evidence, if the increase in numbers is due to an increase in rape, sexual abuse and sexual harassment or to greater empowerment of victims and survivors following campaigns like #MeToo.

The last study seeking to establish the prevalence of sexual violence in Ireland was the 2002 Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) report. The DRCC has long called for a follow-up study, as the absence of data on the true extent of the problem hampers our efforts to tackle it. The announcement by Government in 2018 that the Central Statistics Office (CSO) is to undertake a new study was therefore welcome news indeed. However, it was quite disappointing to learn that the study may take five years to complete and even then, may not capture the experience of minorities in our society. The very long gap between these reports, and the unduly long time period set for the CSO report, sends out a poor message in relation to the priority being placed by society on addressing sexual violence.

While 2017 had brought a welcome clarification of the meaning of consent, based on free and voluntary agreement, 2018 showed how this clarity could be undermined through the use of the so-called 'honest belief in consent' defence, which allows for a totally subjective view of consent. Our submission to the Law Reform Commission in response to their issues paper on Knowledge or Belief Concerning Consent in Rape Law called for this defence to be reviewed to ensure that the belief of consent by someone engaged in sexual activity must have some element of reason and rationality.

The question of how consent is to be viewed and assessed by children and young people also came into focus in 2018. At the request of the Minister for Education, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is to review on the teaching of consent in schools; in addition, the Oireachtas Education Committee and the Minister of State for Higher Level Education have also examined consent and relationships in the context of third-level education. Our submission to the NCCA highlighted the need for children to learn about trust, respect and communication in the context of consent, and the fact that consent is never irrevocable. We are looking forward to the completion of the Department of Justice and Equality review of the treatment of victims of sexual offences in the courts system, to which we also contributed. There is broad acknowledgement that our system, as it currently stands, is not fit for purpose and we hope to see progress towards much needed reform following the publication of the review.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the DRCC and in November we will hold a conference which will look back over the past four decades as well as looking forward to how we will continue to fulfil our mission in the coming years. There is no doubt that the future will be challenging. While we acknowledge and depend on the support we receive from our funders, the fact remains that we continue to operate under severe financial constraints and are unable to cope with demand for our services. Our response will be to redouble our fundraising efforts in the year ahead.

Finally, I must pay tribute to the marvellous work and dedication of all of the volunteers and staff of the DRCC as well as my fellow board members for their work in supporting the victims and survivors of sexual violence and their efforts to eliminate rape and other sexual violence in Ireland.



Ann Marie Gill
Chairperson of the Board

CEO'S OVERVIEW

2018 saw Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC) continue to operate across its various strands of work including initiatives to prevent the harm of sexual violence through preventive work, advocacy and awareness raising activities. We also provided expanded therapeutic services to address the ever-increasing demand that we have recorded. >>

We are constantly asked to speculate on whether that increased demand is due to an increase in the occurrence of sexual violence or due to increased awareness. We cannot answer this question with any certainty because of the paucity of reliable data. In this regard, we have welcomed the Government's announcement in November 2018 that the Central Statistics Office (CSO) is to carry out a new national survey on sexual abuse and violence in Ireland. We have, however, expressed reservations about the length of time that such a survey will require, and the lack of resources for this research to address hard-to-reach groups.

Our work in supporting victims and survivors of sexual violence and abuse is guided by the three key goals set out in our Strategic Plan 2016–2019:

Ensure that victims/survivors of current and historic sexual violence receive the supports that they need to heal

Eliminate tolerance of sexual violence in Irish society and support the rights of victims/survivors

Be a strong, sustainable organisation

NEW FORMAT

Our annual report and accounts are presented in a changed format this year. This new format is in line with that recommended by good governance standards and sees the report laid out by reference to the DRCC's goals and our performance in relation to them.

SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Our main support services include the National 24-Hour Helpline; face-to-face counselling and psychotherapy and group therapy; and accompaniment of victims to Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATUs) and in their contacts with the justice system.

Helpline contacts reached 13,367 in 2018, an increase of almost 4% on 2017, and 7.9% higher than in 2016. We provided counselling and psychotherapy services to 582 clients during the year, an increase of 6.2% on 2017 and a 17.58% increase on 2016, when 495 clients were seen.

During the year, a total of 4,228 appointments were delivered, an increase of 9% on 2017. However, the 65% increase in demand for crisis services over the 2 year period 2016- 2018 meant that some people had to wait longer for appointments in 2018. This is a matter of deep regret for the DRCC and we will redouble our efforts to increase the resources devoted to this critically important area.

The raw statistics relating to our accompaniment services do not tell the full story. While services provided to clients in their contacts with the justice system, including visits to Garda stations and appearances in court, increased quite significantly, the number of visits to the Rotunda Hospital's SATU actually declined. This was mainly due to the fact that the Rotunda Hospital's SATU was closed on a number of occasions during 2018 as a result of staff shortages. In this light, the announcement by the Government in March 2019 of a significant increase in staffing and resources for SATUs around the country was very welcome indeed.

Our services extend beyond the therapeutic. During 2018, our Education and Training team provided 148 training days to 2,816 people working in other frontline services which support people who have experienced sexual violence. We also provided our Dignity at Work Course, which seeks to build a respectful culture in workplaces, to a range of different organisations.

In addition, we provided training to 65 people in services working with homeless people, and to 72 people working with refugees, including those in direct provision. This was in recognition of the fact that people without homes, and who are refugees, are particularly vulnerable as victims of sexual violence.

ELIMINATING TOLERANCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Towards the end of 2018, the DRCC carried out a survey asking those who have experienced sexual harassment whether they reported their harassment, what mechanisms facilitated or impeded reporting, and whether they were satisfied with the outcome. Analysis of the survey responses is continuing, and the outcomes, combined with legal analysis, will assist us in developing recommendations for improving reporting mechanisms and investigative procedures for sexual harassment cases.

We continued to provide analysis to journalists, students and the general public on a number of issues, including adequacy of services and the experience of victims in the health and justice systems.

The heightened awareness and understanding of the importance and nature of consent is welcome. During the year, the DRCC made submissions to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Skills, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), and the Law Reform Commission on this and other issues.

We also made submissions, both jointly with colleague Rape Crisis Centres, and on our own in relation to the justice systems on the two parts of the island and how victims are treated. These submissions highlighted the need for specialist training and personnel in the Garda Síochána to improve the detection and prosecution of sexual offences, the need for all legal practitioners to be trained to deal professionally with victims of sexual violence, and the urgent change required in the legal and courts processes and their treatment of victims.

Our December 2018 submission to the Department of Justice and Equality on reform of sexual offence trials raised a number of issues which had been directly advised to us by survivors of sexual violence, as well as by a number of frontline workers in the justice system.

A STRONG, SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

Our income in 2018 was up on that in 2017. Much of this funding came from public donations made anonymously through the DRCC website – and also via text – in the 90 days following the outcome of the Belfast rape trial of four young men, including two Ireland and Ulster rugby players. People told us of their upset about the cruelty of the court system and inappropriate social media messages. In deference to the intention of members of the public who made these donations, the funds have been ring-fenced in order to increase our capacity to support those who need it when they are attending court and Garda stations.

While DRCC income overall was up on that in 2017, our expenditure also increased in 2018, reaching €1,940,500, an increase of 10%. This was principally the result of an increase in the number of employees providing therapy services and a consequent rise in the wages and salary bill of €77,000.

It should be noted that there was no wage increase for staff in the DRCC during 2018, nor indeed for many years previously.

In essence, the DRCC has three streams of income – funding from government, philanthropic donations, and money raised through our own fundraising activities.

Our National 24-Hour Helpline and Therapy Services are mainly funded through a grant from Túsla, which is in turn funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. We commit to meeting certain service delivery targets in return for this funding, and I am pleased to report that we have made good on all these commitments during 2018.

The cost of running the Helpline and Therapy Services still exceeds the funding received, however. That means we continue to be dependent on the generosity of the public and other donors not only to maintain services and activity at current levels but to expand them to keep pace with increasing demand.

The story of the DRCC is an amalgam of all of the stories of the victims of rape and sexual violence to whom we offer support and assistance. But there are also the unheard stories of all of those other victims who have not yet had the opportunity to come forward and seek help. We have worked in 2018 on innovative ways to identify new methods to extend our support and will continue to do that in 2019. We continue to seek the financial and other resources that are required both to offer the support required by victims and survivors and to continue in our mission to eradicate tolerance of sexual violence in our society as well as to create the conditions which will allow victims to come forward with their stories. We are very grateful to all those who understand our aims and, through their contributions, invest in our ambitions.

We are hugely dependent on our volunteers for their selfless work and dedication. It would not be possible to operate our Helpline or many of our other services without them. I wish to offer my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has ever worked as a volunteer for the DRCC; they are an inspiration to all of us.

I also wish to pay tribute to all of my colleagues on the staff of the DRCC who carry out their duties with extraordinary levels of diligence, professionalism and commitment. Every one of them makes a valuable contribution to achieving the mission of the DRCC.

Finally, my personal thanks go to our hugely supportive Board of Directors and our Chairperson Ann Marie Gill. They all give of their time, passion and expertise freely, and well beyond the call of duty, to help us deliver on our mission.



Noeline Blackwell
Chief Executive

DUBLIN RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

The DRCC is guided by its strategic plan 2016–2019, which has set the three strategic goals for the organisation:

Ensure that victims/survivors of current and historic sexual violence receive the supports that they need to heal;

Eliminate tolerance of sexual violence in Irish society and support the rights of victims/survivors;

To be a strong, sustainable organisation.

Each goal is to be achieved through delivery of a number of strategic objectives.



GOAL 1

Ensure that victims/survivors of current and historic sexual violence receive the supports that they need to heal.

THIS GOAL WILL BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE DELIVERY OF THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES:

Objective 1: Providing high-quality services to victims/survivors of current and historic sexual violence.

Objective 2: Building the capacity of Irish society to better understand and guard against the harm of sexual violence, as well as meet the needs of victims/survivors.

Objective 3: Recognising the diversity of those who are victims/survivors of sexual violence, ensuring our services are available to whoever needs them.

OBJECTIVE 1

Providing high-quality services to victims/survivors of current and historic sexual violence.

OUR SERVICES ARE DELIVERED THROUGH:

The National 24-hour Helpline;

Face-to-face counselling and psychotherapy and group therapy;

Accompaniment services.

NATIONAL 24-HOUR HELPLINE

The total number of Helpline contacts reached 13,367 in 2018, an increase of almost 4% (398) on 2017, and 7.9% (979) higher than in 2016. The number of first-time calls in 2018 was 7,423, an increase of almost 13% (850) on the previous year, and 21% (1,290) higher than in 2016. In 2018, the number of calls in respect of rape specifically was 4,713. This was a slight decrease of 40, or less than 1%, on the 2017 figure. On the other hand, the 2018 figure is still more than 31% higher than in 2016, when 3,579 calls were received. In other words, the number of calls specifically in respect of rape increased by one-third between 2016 and 2017, with 2018 remaining broadly at the same level. Even more striking has been the increase of almost two-thirds in such calls since 2015, when the number stood at 2,876. This quite dramatic increase has had a major impact on demand for crisis appointments.

FACE-TO-FACE COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Clients who come to the centre may have experienced rape or sexual assault in the recent past, some time ago, or as children. With demand for our services again exceeding supply in 2018, we had to make some difficult decisions. One of these is to ensure that crisis clients, anyone who has experienced rape within the previous six months, is seen as quickly as possible: normally within two weeks. Any increase in the number of crisis clients places pressure on our ability to provide services to those who have suffered rape or sexual assault outside of that six-month period. Face-to-face counselling and psychotherapy activity is measured by the number of clients seen as well as by the number of appointments offered and taken up. In addition, we record the number of new clients seen each year. In 2018, 582 clients were seen, an increase of 6.2% on 2017 (548) and a 17.58% increase on 2016 (495). Of the 582 clients seen, 356 were seen for the first time, an increase of 4.7% on the number of new clients seen in 2017. More significantly, the number of new clients seen in 2018 was up 21% on 2016, when 293 were seen.

APPOINTMENTS OFFERED AND DELIVERED

Appointments offered

Overall, some 5,564 appointments were offered during 2018, a 12% increase on 2017 and almost a quarter higher than in 2016. The largest increase was in the number of crisis appointments offered, which rose to 2,908, compared with 2,444 in 2017, thus representing an increase of 19%. There were 2,656 assessment appointments offered, an increase of 6.45% on 2017. The ratio of crisis appointments to assessment appointments has reversed since 2016 as a result of the sharp increase in the number of crisis appointments.

Appointments delivered

Of the 5,564 appointments offered, a total of 4,228 were delivered (2,187 crisis, and 2,041 assessment), an increase of 9% on 2017. The take-up rate was 76%, with similar rates recorded for crisis and assessment appointments. Six therapists facilitated two workshops and a rape recovery group during 2018. This represented a total of 246 group therapy hours, an increase of 196 on the 83 group therapy hours delivered in 2017. The number of crisis appointments delivered (2,187) was up 16.89% on the 2017 level of 1,871. Assessment appointments (2,041) showed a marginal increase. In line with the trend noted earlier, the ratio of crisis to assessment appointments delivered was 52% to 48% respectively. This was the first time in at least 12 years that the number of crisis appointments actually delivered exceeded the number of assessment appointments.

The 65% increase in demand for crisis appointments since 2016 has had a significant impact on the waiting list for assessment appointments. We simply cannot keep pace with demand for assessment appointments, and the unfortunate outcome is that people who we know need and deserve help had to wait longer on the assessment list in 2018.

ACCOMPANIMENT SERVICES

Our accompaniment services are entirely dependent on volunteers. They accompany people who are victims of rape and sexual assault in difficult situations when they attend at the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) at the Rotunda Hospital Dublin, report rape or sexual assault to the Garda Síochána, or attend court. The service provided is psychological support. It is non-judgemental and confidential. It is available to all victims of sexual assault, including rape. It is particularly appreciated by those who are especially vulnerable, who are attending alone and have no other support. It is also appreciated by families and friends who often find themselves at a loss when seeking to support those they love. Our specially trained volunteers accompanied and provided psychological support to 211 people at SATU during 2018. They also offered support to 148 of their family and friends. This is a specialised unit with highly trained staff which provides care and treatment to victims. In addition, this is the place where any necessary forensic evidence will be collected as potential evidence in future court proceedings.

The number of our visits to the SATU in 2018 (211 visits) was down on 2017, when 251 visits were undertaken. This is largely due to the fact the SATU at the Rotunda Hospital was closed on a number of occasions during 2018 because there were insufficient trained staff available to allow it to be operated safely. We noted 140 12-hour shifts when our services were not required as a result of the closure of the unit. Many of these were at weekends. We commented publicly on this and on our concerns that victims had to travel to other SATU units around the country. In the last quarter, the staffing complement was increased, and we noted with satisfaction that the Health Service Executive (HSE) is training new staff who will be available for duty in mid-2019. We also contributed to a review undertaken of SATUs generally. The results of this review are expected in the first half of 2019.

In April 2018, we sought to enhance and expand the accompaniment services offered by employing someone to coordinate volunteers supporting those who were reporting into the justice system. The service offers support to victims of sexual violence through support and accompaniment when someone is reporting to the Gardaí or attending a trial. The expansion of the service allowed for an increase in the number of volunteers available for both Garda and court accompaniment.

During 2018, there was a 53% increase in victims supported during the court process through accompaniment, familiarisation and support by telephone. There was also more than a 100% increase in people supported who were making, or considering making, statements in relation to sexual violence, through accompaniment to Garda stations and support by phone and text. Throughout 2018, 43 victims of sexual violence were provided with support at court and in Garda stations. 15 victims were supported by phone, text and email.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

DRCC volunteers who commit to a two-year service period are essential to delivering our services. Without them, the DRCC would be unable to provide a round-the-clock service to survivors of rape and sexual assault. The volunteers demonstrate outstanding commitment to supporting survivors of sexual violence, completing an initial 72 hours of intensive training, regular supervision and debriefing sessions, as well as giving their time.

At present we have 93 trained, active volunteers, and 39 new volunteers were recruited and trained during 2018.

The volunteers are trained to staff our National 24-Hour Helpline outside of office hours and at weekends and public holidays. Their commitment to providing this service ensures that, whenever someone calls for support, a trained telephone counsellor is ready to listen and to provide information.

Our volunteers also provide crucial support to clients attending the SATU in the Rotunda Hospital, making a statement to Gardaí, or attending court.

Volunteers have access to 24-Hour support from one of the three accredited psychotherapists who run the Volunteer Services Department, and who also facilitate debriefing and provide guidance on difficult situations. This service means that our volunteers are never on their own when supporting others.

In autumn 2018, we undertook a pilot project on the inclusion of male volunteers for telephone counselling. Two male volunteers were recruited and undertook the full telephone counselling training in October 2018, and both men are now working on the Helpline. Both have undertaken training in outreach work, including talks to schools, and this is working well. Feedback from clients to date has been almost entirely positive, and the pilot programme will continue in 2019.

OBJECTIVE 2

Building the capacity of Irish society to better understand and guard against the harm of sexual violence as well as meet the needs of victims/survivors.

The DRCC provides training and information to a number of other frontline services which support people who have experienced sexual violence. During 2018, our Education and Training team provided 148 training days to 2,816 people working in those services. About half of those trained were Garda Trainees at the Garda Training College in Templemore. We continue to highlight the need for our Garda services to understand the impact of rape and other sexual abuse on its victims. As Commissioner Drew Harris put it when he attended the launch of our 2017 report, this will enable Gardaí to better deal with victims and to better collect good evidence for prosecution.

Other frontline workers trained included nurses, mental health service workers, counselling services, non-specialist psychotherapists, and student union officers. We also provided our Dignity at Work Course on 46 different occasions to statutory bodies, non-governmental organisations and other institutions. Much of our training work in 2018 addressed young people. Our BodyRight programme is designed to empower teachers, guidance counsellors, youth workers and others to raise awareness of respect and healthy relationships, and to prevent sexual violence among young people. This is a four-day programme, which was delivered on six occasions in 2018.

In addition, the DRCC is a partner in the TúsIa and the Galway Rape Crisis Centre-led 'Manuela' programme, an experimental programme similar to BodyRight. We supported one of the workers on that programme through accommodation and other supports in 2018, and we participated on its Advisory Committee.

In addition to these training courses, we attended a large number of events at various Dublin university fresher and health weeks, alerting students and staff alike to our services and to the importance of understanding consent. Volunteers from the DRCC also spoke to 21 educational institutions about the work of the Centre and the concept of sexual violence.

OBJECTIVE 3

Recognising the diversity of those who are victims/survivors of sexual violence, ensuring our services are available to whoever needs them.

While the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, as its name implies, is based in the capital city, we continued to have a national reach in 2018 through the National 24-Hour Helpline and the delivery of training services around the country. In addition, we work in collaboration with other services throughout Ireland, including making referrals as appropriate. In 2018, we referred those who called the National 24-Hour Helpline to other services in our own Centre, to the other 15 rape crisis centres around the country and to other services.

People without homes, and who are refugees are particularly vulnerable as victims of sexual violence. They avail of a variety of services, and work with those services was prioritised during 2018. During the year, we provided training to 65 people in services working with homeless people, and to 72 people working with refugees, including those in direct provision.

The DRCC has outposts at Tallaght University Hospital and at the Northside Civic Centre, Coolock. In 2018, we entered into discussions with Túsla in relation to the establishment of a further outpost in Fingal. This is to be developed in 2019.

GOAL 2

Eliminate tolerance of sexual violence in Irish society and support the rights of victims/survivors.

THIS GOAL WILL BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE DELIVERY OF THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES:

Objective 4: Building, maintaining and disseminating knowledge and expertise on the topic of sexual violence

Objective 5: Building greater recognition in the law and throughout society on the key role of consent

Objective 6: Increasing the incidence of reporting offences of sexual violence

Objective 7: Facilitating victims/survivors in making their voices heard and promoting innovation in strengthening protection for victims/survivors of sexual violence.

OBJECTIVE 4

Building, maintaining and disseminating knowledge and expertise on the topic of sexual violence.

SEXUAL ABUSE AND VIOLENCE IN IRELAND (SAVI) REPORT

The DRCC has for many years been calling for a follow-up study to the 2002 Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) report. The fact that we do not know the true extent of the problem is a huge impediment to ending sexual violence and holding perpetrators to account. In January 2018, the DRCC made a written submission and an oral presentation to the Scoping Group established to research the prevalence of, and emerging trends in, sexual abuse and violence in Ireland. Following completion of the group's work, the Department of Justice and Equality announced in November 2018 that the Central Statistics Office will undertake the development and delivery of a new national survey. This long-overdue announcement was warmly welcomed by the DRCC. However, we also expressed our concerns in relation to the five-year time frame proposed for the study. It is also a concern that no decision has been made to undertake the further research that will be needed to better understand the prevalence and trends of sexual violence in minority and hard-to-reach groups.

RESEARCH BY THE DRCC

The #MeToo hashtag and movement enabled people, some for the first time, to report publicly the sexual harassment and abuse they had suffered. During the latter part of 2018, the DRCC carried out a survey asking those who have experienced sexual harassment whether they reported their harassment, what mechanisms facilitated or impeded reporting, and whether they were satisfied with the outcome. The survey, promoted via DRCC social media channels, received 952 responses, 86% from women, 13% from men and 1% unknown, ranging in ages from 16 to 84. At the end of 2018, analysis of the findings was still underway. These findings will feed into legal research undertaken for us on a pro-bono basis by A&L Goodbody Solicitors. The survey findings and the research will assist us in developing recommendations for improving reporting mechanisms and investigative procedures for sexual harassment cases.

The DRCC is one of a number of non-academic partners in the TCD Centre for Global Health CONTEXT (The Collaborative Network for Training and Expertise in Psycho Traumatology) project. The overarching goal of the project is to better understand the contextual factors at play in psychological responses to trauma, its prevention, assessment and treatment. Two of the project's doctoral researchers are based in, and are conducting their research, in the DRCC.

Using our own experience and expertise and the lived experience of our service users, we continually expand our knowledge and understanding of sexual violence. We use a range of communication tools, including our social media channels and website, to share our views and findings. During the course of 2018, we provided analysis to journalists, students and the general public on a number of issues including adequacy of services, treatment of victims by various services, the experience of victims in the health system, as well as in the justice system, sentencing and trials.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

Our connection to others is part of our strength. The DRCC is a committed member of the National Women's Council of Ireland and the Observatory against Violence against Women, which it houses. We are also fully engaged in our collaboration with other Rape Crisis Centres through the Rape Crisis Centre Managers Forum, a collective of eight of the country's 16 Rape Crisis Centres. We also participated in the Turn Off the Red Light Campaign and in the Victims' Rights Alliance.

In 2018, the DRCC was a member of the Monitoring Committee for the Second National Strategy on Sexual, Domestic and Gender-based Violence and the Advisory Committee to Túsla on Commissioning. Our CEO Noeline Blackwell was a member of the Commission on the Future of Policing, which reported in September 2018.

OBJECTIVE 5

Building greater recognition in the law and throughout society on the key role of consent.

LEGAL AND SOCIETAL REFORM

During 2018, the DRCC responded to the call from the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Skills for submissions on its review of sexual health and relationship education, including contraception, consent and related matters. We welcomed the opportunity to input into the work of the Committee given our strong interest in the topic and long history of building a framework for education in the area of sexual health and healthy relationships.

In our submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) on its review of Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in schools, we focused on how education about consent is essential for building healthy and respectful relationships, and should not be limited just to consent to sexual activity. We stressed how younger children can learn about trust, respect and communication, and that those ideas could be tied into a greater understanding and awareness of sexual consent as young people progress through the education system. We also pointed out that where consent does relate to sexual activity, it is important for young people to know and understand that even if they do consent, they are absolutely free to change their mind. The NCCA is due to publish its review in mid-2019.

The new definition of consent contained within the recently commenced Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 centres on 'free agreement'. It sends out a clear message that, to be legally valid, consent must be negotiated and communicated between sexual partners. The DRCC submission to the Law Reform Commission on Knowledge or Belief Concerning Consent in Rape Law emphasised how the 'honest belief in consent' defence must be reviewed and reformed if it is not to undermine the practical benefits of the new definition. Throughout the year we provided briefings, insights and expertise to organisations and agencies that have sought our input in relation to consent. Assistance included inputs to policies they were drafting, scripts they were writing, and participation at talks, workshops and seminars. We continue to lead and combine with others to drive this topic forward.

We continued our public campaigning work in 2018, including lighting up the Mansion House to Turn Dublin Orange – part of the worldwide annual 16 Days of Action against violence against women campaign which takes place between 25 November and 10 December each year.

We combined with Tipperary Rape Crisis Centre and others to create a safe space at the Body & Soul Festival 2018, where we shared our understanding of consent with festival goers and identified that what most of them wished they had known when they were younger was how to communicate. Our #AskConsent badges were very popular and were much in evidence throughout the festival space.

OBJECTIVE 6

Increasing the incidence of reporting offences of sexual violence.

RESEARCH AND POLICY

We coordinated a joint submission with a number of our colleague Rape Crisis Centres to the Commission on the Future of Policing in which we collectively highlighted the need for specialist training and personnel to improve the detection and prosecution of sexual offences. The best way to safeguard both the care of victims of sexual crimes and the collection of early evidence is to ensure that all frontline Gardaí have thorough training in handling reports of sexual violence and to place the investigation of these crimes in the hands of dedicated, specially trained members of An Garda Síochána.

The service provided by An Garda Síochána to victims of sexual crime should be delivered by a professional workforce equipped with the skills and capabilities necessary for policing now and into the future. Long before the Belfast rape trial, the DRCC has been concerned about how victim complainants are treated in court. The Minister for Justice and Equality's commitment to reviewing the prosecution process for sexual offences presented the DRCC with an opportunity to practically inform our submission to that review by consulting both survivors and a number of legal practitioners in order to obtain their expert insights.

We made our submission to that review in December 2018 and expect a report from that review in the first half of 2019. Reform which takes account of a victim's rights throughout the entirety of the criminal justice process is most likely to advance justice and the rule of law for the benefit of society.

In making a submission to Sir John Gillen's review of serious sexual offences in Northern Ireland, we recognised the differences in some aspects of the legal process in that jurisdiction. And yet, similar to Northern Ireland, we know that more needs to be done in the Republic of Ireland, in order to reassure victims that the process through which they make a complaint of rape will be as fair to them as it is to the accused.

Clearly, the system as it stands in both jurisdictions does not encourage this. Victims of sexual crime should be afforded every possible support during their journey through the criminal justice process, to ensure that not only their rights as victims of crime as well as all of the rest of their human rights are upheld.

A submission to the Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LRSA), which we again coordinated with a number of other rape crisis centres, recommended that all legal practitioners should be trained to deal professionally with victims of sexual violence. We also proposed that those involved in prosecuting, defending or otherwise bringing to trial cases involving sexual violence, undertake further specialist training to ensure that victims are not subjected to re-traumatisation.

OBJECTIVE 7

Facilitating victims/survivors in making their voices heard and promoting innovation in strengthening protection for victims/survivors of sexual violence.

ADVOCACY – ENSURING THAT THE VOICE OF SURVIVORS IS HEARD

The DRCC advocates on behalf of victims of sexual violence to help ensure that they have access to responsive and sensitive services provided by law enforcement officials, medical personnel and the courts. We work with Government, non-profit organisations, academic institutions, and the general public to ensure that all available resources to prevent sexual violence are utilised. As previously stated, all of our work is informed by those who are experts because of their experience.

The verdicts of the Belfast rape trial opened up a public debate and highlighted the important role that Rape Crisis Centres play in the support of victims of rape and abuse. The DRCC issued statements and engaged in public debate where we noted the verdicts and highlighted the serious questions raised about the conduct of such trials and the rights of complainants, especially in cases where consent is contested. We also pointed to the need for much greater appreciation of respect for the dignity of others in light of the social media messages produced as evidence in that trial.

The protests which followed the trial both north and south of the border underlined the public's concerns about sexual violence and the treatment of victims, particularly in the justice system. From our experience over the years, through research and analysis, accompanying victims to court, listening to people on the National 24-Hour Helpline, and working with them in therapy, it does not surprise us at all that people are reluctant to report, and to follow through to giving evidence in court.

We make every effort to ensure that the voice of the victim is heard in the work we do. We have already reported on where we have asked those who experienced harassment to engage in our survey on sexual harassment. We use the issues and concerns we hear in various fora to inform all of our policy work. Our 2018 submission to the Law Reform Commission on its new programme of law reform focused on why we believe reform of the law would benefit victims of sexual crime; an examination of why so few victims of sexual crime make and/or complete their journey through the criminal justice process; and whether the process is one that supports the rights of this group of people.

By conducting an audit of the existing system, identifying the difficulties that victims encounter on their journey through the criminal justice system, and what changes are needed in law to remedy those difficulties, we believe that the Law Reform Commission can establish a modern framework for the investigation, prosecution and sentencing of sexual crime in a better way to protect the rights of all those involved.

While we regularly heard privately from survivors through our work, we had the honour of hearing Lavinia Kerwick speak at the launch of our 2017 Annual Report. Thanks to her courage in 1991 in waiving her anonymity and her subsequent campaigning, the law was changed to allow victims to make a statement in court about the impact of the crime on them, and for the first time, prosecutors could appeal leniency of sentence.

Lavinia spoke about the loneliness of the victim in the court system and the need for change, and she has joined the DRCC in its campaign for law reform.

In our December 2018 submission to the Department of Justice and Equality on reform of sexual offence trials, we raised a number of issues which had been directly advised to us by survivors of sexual violence, as well as by a number of frontline workers in the justice system.

The impact of all we heard throughout 2018 informed our Pre-Budget Submission. We took the opportunity to remind Government of the need to reduce the prevalence of sexual violence and to improve the lives of those experiencing it. We pointed out how this work is inter-departmental in nature, with a number of Government Departments having a role to play in ensuring that necessary resources are dedicated to fostering and promoting societal change in relation to sexual violence.

GOAL 3

To be a strong, sustainable organisation.

THIS GOAL WILL BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE DELIVERY OF THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES:

Objective 8: Maintaining and further developing the sustainable financial base for our work

Objective 9: Implementing a comprehensive and coherent communications plan

Objective 10: Maintaining a robust and accountable organisational structure

OBJECTIVE 8

Maintaining and further developing the sustainable financial base for our work.

In 2018, we continued our work to establish an ever more sustainable financial base. There was an unexpected but very welcome surge in income during March and April 2018 from text and online donations from the general public, resulting in an unbudgeted sum of €70,000.

This was clearly linked to public concerns about the treatment of sexual offences victims in our courts and, accordingly, this money was ring-fenced to better support those who are going to court or to Garda stations. The money will be used to support a part-time coordinator for three years to develop our pool of support personnel.

As the accounts show, we have been able to better support and extend our policy work thanks to philanthropic funding. And, as a result of an increase in funding from Túsla, we have increased the numbers who could avail of our therapy services.

The majority of our funding for the Helpline and Therapy Services comes from a grant from Túsla, which is in turn funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The DRCC commits to meeting certain targets in relation to service delivery in return for this funding, and is pleased that all commitments to the funder were met in full during 2018.

However, we must still depend on the generosity of the general public to supplement this funding as we attempt to keep pace with increasing demand for our services. The need for services, analysis, research, and general support is far greater than we can meet, and we will therefore continue to explore and seek additional funding to carry out our mission.

OBJECTIVE 9

Implementing a comprehensive and coherent communications plan.

We continued to develop our communications capability during 2018. We commenced installation of a modern IT system in 2017 thanks to grant funding and donations. Work on that continues, with the objective of ensuring that we can communicate externally and internally as needed.

OBJECTIVE 10

Maintaining a robust and accountable organisational structure.

The full DRCC board met on six occasions during 2018. The Audit and Finance Committee met on three occasions. A fundraising committee was also established. The DRCC complies with the Governance Code of practice for good governance of community, voluntary and charitable organisations for Type C organisations as described at www.governancecode.ie.

The National 24-Hour Helpline also successfully achieved Helplines Standard accreditation at the end of 2018. This accreditation, awarded by the Helplines Partnership, will be for the next 3 years.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on 25 May 2018. Like other organisations, we devoted significant time and attention to that issue, and we can confirm that all of our systems are fully compliant with GDPR.

The organisation met its targets for all funders during the course of the year, and provided reports as required. A new accounting package was installed in 2018, thereby upgrading a package which had become obsolete. The financial accounts attached give a detailed picture of the income, expenditure and activities of the organisation for 2018.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT*

OPINION

We have audited the financial statements of The Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (the 'company') for the year ended 31 December 2018 which comprise the Statement of financial activities, Statement of comprehensive income, Statement of financial position, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes. The relevant financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

In our opinion the financial statements:

Give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at 31 December 2018 and of its surplus for the year then ended;

Have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and

Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

BASIS FOR OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) ISAs (Ireland) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

CONCLUSIONS RELATING TO GOING CONCERN

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (Ireland) require us to report to you where:

The directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or

The directors have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

OTHER INFORMATION

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

OPINIONS ON OTHER MATTERS PRESCRIBED BY THE COMPANIES ACT 2014

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that in our opinion:

The information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements; and

The Directors' Report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, and the financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

MATTERS ON WHICH WE ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT BY EXCEPTION

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the directors' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of our obligation under the Companies Act 2014 to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of director's remuneration and transactions specified by sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIRECTORS FOR THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As explained more fully in the Directors' Responsibilities Statement, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA's website at: [http://www.iaasa.ie/Publications/Auditing-standards/International-Standards-on-Auditing-for-use-in-Ire/International-Standards-on-Auditing-\(Ireland\)/ISA-700-\(Ireland\)](http://www.iaasa.ie/Publications/Auditing-standards/International-Standards-on-Auditing-for-use-in-Ire/International-Standards-on-Auditing-(Ireland)/ISA-700-(Ireland)). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

THE PURPOSE OF OUR AUDIT WORK AND TO WHOM WE OWE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

JPA Brenson Lawlor, Chartered Accountants

Date: 14th March 2019

*For full details of the DRCC 2018 accounts, please refer to publications on the DRCC website: www.drcc.ie

THE DUBLIN RAPE CRISIS CENTER (A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARENTEE)
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND
EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

	DESIGNATED FUNDS €	UNRESTRICTED FUNDS €	RESTRICTED FUNDS €	TOTAL 2018 €	TOTAL 2017 €
INCOME					
DONATIONS & FUNDRAISING INCOME					
DONATIONS		354,816	46,000	400,816	1,130,086
FUNDRAISING INCOME		354,892		354,892	238,004
INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES					
GOVERNMENT GRANTS			1,284,500	1,284,500	1,253,427
EDUCATION, COUNSELLING & OTHER SERVICES		198,702	47,860	246,562	240,630
INCOME FROM OTHER ACTIVITIES					
OTHER OPERATING INCOME		15,960		15,960	15,960
INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS					
INTEREST RECEIVED		72		72	1
TOTAL INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		924,442	1,378,360	2,302,802	2,878,108
EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES					
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES		171,532	1,318,317	1,489,849	1,357,906
COST OF RAISING FUNDS		195,640	870	196,511	160,416
ADMINISTRATION		192,929	69,212	262,141	244,565
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		560,101	1,388,399	1,948,501	1,762,887
NET INCOME		364,341	(10,039)	354,302	1,115,221
TRANSFER TO/BETWEEN FUNDS	49,057	(59,096)	10,039		
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS FOR THE YEAR	49,057	305,245		354,302	1,115,221
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD	1,464,663	678,169		2,142,832	1,027,611
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD	1,513,720	983,414		2,497,134	2,142,832
SURPLUS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR				354,302	1,115,221
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME				354,302	1,115,221

THE DUBLIN RAPE CRISIS CENTER (A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARENTEE)
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

	NOTES	2018 €	2017 €
FIXED ASSETS			
TANGIBLE ASSETS	13	1,280,881	1,344,195
		1,280,881	1,344,195
CURRENT ASSETS			
DEBTORS	14	41,336	32,163
CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND	20	1,791,231	1,415,864
		1,832,567	1,448,027
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	15	(89,069)	(83,765)
NET CURENT ASSEST		1,743,498	1,364,262
TOTAL ASSEST LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		3,024,379	2,708,457
CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR	16	(527,245)	(565,625)
NET ASSETS		2,497,134	2,142,832
RESERVES AND FUNDS			
ACCUMULATED FUNDS - UNRESTRICTED	21	983,414	678,169
ACCUMULATED FUNDS - DESIGNATED	21	1,513,720	1,464,663
TOTAL RESERVES AND FUNDS		2,497,134	2,142,832

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DATE: 14 MARCH 2019

EMPLOYEE SALARY RANGE

A total of two employees earned remuneration in excess of €70,000 per annum as follows:

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES EARNING	2018	2017
€85,000 TO €100,000	1	1
€70,000 TO €85,000	1	1

The DRCC's remuneration package includes salary and employer pension contributions.

THE DUBLIN RAPE CRISIS CENTER (A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARENTEE)
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

	NOTES	2018 €	2017 €
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
CASH GENERATED FROM OPERATIONS	28	418,606	1,199,965
INTEREST PAID		(15,062)	(16,314)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		403,544	1,183,651
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
PAYMENTS FOR TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS		(4,845)	(91,448)
		72	1
NET CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		(4,773)	(91,447)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
BANK LOAN REPAYMENTS		(24,749)	(23,499)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		(24,749)	(23,499)
NET INCREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		374,022	1,068,705
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT BEGINNING OF FINANCIAL YEAR		1,415,864	347,159
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR		1,789,886	1,415,864

REMUNERATION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Board members are not remunerated for their services to the company, nor are any expenses reimbursed for travelling to/from board meetings.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN 2018

Ann Marie Gill (Chair)	Grace O'Malley
Anne-Marie James	Helen Jones
Aibhlín McCrann	John Fanning
Carol Keane	Keith Herman
Cathy O'Donohoe	Neasa Kane-Fine

COMMITMENT TO BEST PRACTICE

The DRCC complies with the standards contained in the Charity Regulator's Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public.

The DRCC is compliant with the Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in Ireland (The Governance Code).

COMPANY AND CHARITY REGISTRATION

The Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC) is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital, registered CRO 147318. The DRCC holds charitable tax exemption from the Revenue Commissioners (CHY 8529) and is also registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority (RCN 20021078).

DRCC - A YEAR IN PHOTOS











RCC

40 YEARS | 1979-2019

 Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
McGonnell House, 70 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2

NATIONAL 24-HOUR HELPLINE
1800 77 88 88

 01 661 4911

 01 661 0873

 info@rcc.ie

 drcc.ie

 facebook.com/dublinrapecrisiscentre

 @DublinRCC

 www.youtube.com/user/DublinRapeCrisis