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## National 24-Hour Helpline

- ▶ In 2021, there were 14,012 contacts to the National Helpline, up from 13,438 in 2020. Most were first-time contacts (7,900) with 3,711 in touch for a second or subsequent time and 2,401 undisclosed.
  - Some 81% of contacts were female, 18.7% male and 0.3% other.
  - Somewhat over half of contacts were Dublin-based (57.7%) with 42.3% hailing from elsewhere in Ireland. Most people contacting the line were Irish (96.1%).
  - The age of contacts ranged from under 16 to over 70 – the largest cohort was 50–59 year-olds (20.8% of contacts) followed by 18–23 year-olds (17.6%).
  - Where onward referrals were made, most were to another Rape Crisis Centre (37% contacts) or counselling service (11%) followed by a Garda service (10%).
- ▶ **Webchat:** The online chat service, which in 2021 ran 10am–2pm, Mon–Fri, supported 415 contacts via DRCC.ie (105 people October–Dec 2020).
- ▶ **Helpline Interpreting Service:** In December, we unveiled a new service which allows people to access helpline support in over 200 languages.

## Therapy & Counselling

Again in 2021, DRCC clinical services were delivered face-to-face, online and via telephone.

- ▶ DRCC had **580 therapy clients in 2021**, of which 289 were new and 291 were ongoing – a slight increase from 2020 when we had 570 clients.
- ▶ Some 91.2% of clients were female, 8.8% were male.
- ▶ Our therapists delivered **5,314 appointment sessions** to clients over the year with a take-up rate of 82%.
- ▶ Of completed sessions, 54% were crisis appointments for clients who had experienced sexual violence within the previous 6 months, and 46% for past sexual violence.
- ▶ Some 62.44% of DRCC clients disclosed sexual violence experienced as adult, and the remaining 37.6% had been abused as children – 6% had been subjected to sexual violence as a child and as an adult.
- ▶ Many of the 289 new clients who engaged with our therapists for the first time in 2021 had also suffered other types of violence:
  - For those subjected to sexual violence as adults, 31.1% also reported physical abuse, 31.1% psychological abuse and 26% harassment and intimidation.
  - Some 5% had received threats to kill and 3.4% had actual attempts made to kill.
  - Some 1.7% had been trafficked and a further 1.7% had experienced stalking.
  - For those who had been abused as children, 44% reported being abused psychologically, and 42% had been harassed or intimidated, with 8% being abused physically. Neglect, threat to kill and trafficking was reported by 2% of clients in this category each.

- The majority of new clients in 2021 knew the person who raped or assaulted them – 79.7% of those reporting abuse as adults and 90% of those abused as children.
- Some 39% of these new clients had reported the crimes against them to Gardaí.
  - Among these reported cases, over three-quarters (76.1%) related to recent or past rape cases, while 23.9% related to Child Sexual Abuse cases.
  - Where the rape or assault was recent, 60% of cases were reported where the client knew the assailant, and 20% where it was a stranger; for past rape or sexual assault, 16% of cases were reported where the client knew the assailant and 4% where they did not.
- ▶ In 2021, DRCC's **Client Support Service** assisted 35 of our clients with practical life issues, thus enabling them to focus better on their own healing. This encompassed 199 interventions across such areas as housing/homelessness, social welfare, other mental health services, asylum, education and employment. In 2020 this service helped 40 people; but note that in 2021 the service ran Jan–Aug.
- ▶ Our **Moving Forward from Sexual Violence** programme, developed with KRTS Ltd, offered a blended approach of online learning and coach-led support to 119 participants seeking to understand and manage trauma symptoms, up slightly from 110 in 2020.

### Accompaniment services

Our accompaniment support for victims/survivors in the justice system (mainly in courts and Garda stations) and at visits to the Rotunda Hospital's Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU). The service was heavily impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, but saw large increases in contacts in 2021 with more people requesting support around reporting and court processes.

- ▶ **SATU:** We supported 115 victims/survivors & 56 of their family & friends, an increase on 85 survivors and 47 supporters in 2020.
- ▶ **Justice system:**
  - In 2021, DRCC supported 210 victims/survivors in garda stations and other such settings, almost double the 106 people supported in 2020. The time devoted to such support also rose from 241 hours in 2020 to 367 hours in 2021.
  - We supported 45 victims/survivors in court and similar settings in 2021, almost the same as in 2020 when we supported 44 people. The time given to this work increased to 348 hours, up 80% from 2020 when we provided 193 hours of support.

### Education & Training

As for the previous year, in 2021 much of DRCC's training was conducted online.

- ▶ DRCC trained 500 people across a range of courses, from working with survivors of sexual violence to dealing with disclosures and coping with vicarious trauma.
- ▶ Our **BodyRight** programme for those working with young people around respect and healthy relationships and to prevent sexual violence ran seven times in 2021 training 78 participants.

- ▶ **#LetsGetReal**, a resource for those working with young people to impart more critical consumption of advertising, popular culture and pornography engaged with 82 people.
- ▶ Our **Youth Advisory Group** continued to guide our work with young people, with social media assets as well as a short animation on consent launched during the year.

### Policy, advocacy and outreach

In 2021, DRCC worked to inform and contribute to better structures and systems and an improved culture that combats and prevents sexual violence, including:

- ▶ Engagement with state bodies and structures on **improving supports and systems for victims/survivors**, including the ambitious *Supporting a Victim's Journey* programme of reform led by the Department of Justice as well as 'Still Here' campaign to highlight supports during the pandemic, and with the Citizens Assembly on Gender Equality which published its recommendations in 2021.
- ▶ **Supporting survivor and other stakeholder groups** including in the comedy sector, the trad music sector, the wider arts and the defence forces as well as on an individual level to amplify their knowledge and lived experience.
- ▶ Commencing a **national project to raise awareness of consent**, with initial campaign work including ground-breaking research on attitudes to and understanding of sexual consent in Ireland. This revealed that 70% believe Ireland has a problem with consent. An overwhelming 84% said we need age-appropriate sex education in all schools.
- ▶ Taking part in the **#123OnlineSafety campaign** led by Children's Rights Alliance to ensure that children and young people are protected online, with the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill 2021 as a main focus; and engaging directly with digital media platforms to inform users how to remove harmful content & access supports.
- ▶ Taking part in the '**Beyond Exploitation**' campaign against sexual exploitation in Ireland led by the National Women's Council in partnership with Ruhama & Immigrant Council of Ireland.
- ▶ Seeking **reforms in how rape trials operate**, including a webinar showcasing research from Dr Susan Leahy of UL School of Law.
- ▶ Engaging with legal professionals and stakeholders towards a **more trauma-aware courts & legal system**, including inputs to judicial and solicitor training.
- ▶ Developing a strategy to identify and combat sexual harassment in the workplace, with survey results, a working paper and a webinar on possible legal solutions towards a zero-tolerance culture.
- ▶ Participating in JUSTISIGNS 2 research project on the particular issues of sexual abuse and domestic violence for those in Deaf and migrant communities.
- ▶ Submitting policy & reform proposals to various bodies and government departments.
- ▶ Continued engagement with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on SPHE/Religious and Sex Education reform.