



Hundreds say NO to 2 Child Cap and Rape Clause



The 21st of September saw over 200 people take over Bedford St in Belfast and the Guild Hall in Derry/Londonderry to say NO to this evil policy. The rally was organised by Reclaim the Agenda and Women's Aid with support from partner organisations including WRDA.

Speeches at the rally were provided by Louise Kennedy from Women's Aid, Maria Morgan from the NI Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and Jo Smit, advice worker at Windsor Women's Centre. Alison Thewlis went through the Rape Clause form women will be expected to fill in and explained that shockingly mothers will have to name the child they conceived as a result of rape. She argued that 'social security is a right' and left the assembled crowd in no doubt that this policy is an attack on the rights of women and children.

Part of the policy could require social workers, jobs and benefits workers and other professionals to assess the cases of women who have conceived children as a result of rape. This has a unique impact in Northern Ireland due to Section 5 of the Criminal Law Act which requires anyone with information about a serious crime to report it to the police.

The cap came into force for new applicants in receipt of child tax credit in April this year and will affect many more families as they move over on to Universal Credit in the coming months. One impact of this policy is that it is preventing women from leaving abusive relationships as they would have to enter a new claim for Child Tax Credits/ Universal Credit if they were to end the relationship. It will also have an adverse effect on child poverty which is already at devastatingly high levels with 24% of Northern Irish children living in poverty. These children need Child Tax Credits/ Universal Credit and those in large families need that money even more so. It is nonsensical and actually cruel to implement this policy in an area with child poverty as chronic as NI.

There was also a striking presence at the rally from three activists dressed as 'handmaids' who are characters in the novel and recent TV series 'A Handmaid's Tale' which deals with the state controlling women's fertility. The three silent figures were a strong reminder of how much this policy intrudes on women's rights. We will continue to fight this policy until it is withdrawn.

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Contact Details:

Women's Resource and
Development Agency
6 Mount Charles
Belfast BT7 1NZ

Phone
028 9023 0212

Email
info@wrda.net

Website
www.wrda.net

 WomensResource
andDevelopment
Agency

 @WRDA_team
@WSLobbyistNI

Open Call for Community Groups

The **Breast, Cervical and Bowel Screening Awareness training programme** is now in its third year of delivery through a contract with the **Public Health Agency**. We are looking for groups to take part in this facilitated programme.

(No cost to groups)

The programme would ideally take place on your premises and be delivered by experienced trainers qualified to **Level 3 in Training and Development** through WRDA's Community Facilitator training programme.

All resources are provided by WRDA and **the programme has proved to make a real difference to people's lives.**

If you are in contact or associated with a local community group that would benefit from this training feel free to get in touch with **Katherine Robertson** by calling **028 90 230 212** or emailing **katherine.robertson@wrda.net**.

We look forward to hearing from you!



Training Opportunity

We are pleased to offer an exciting new opportunity for women who are **interested in building up their skills as a community activist, campaigner or lobbyist**. Are there issues you are passionate about? Would you like to learn the skills to start a community campaign? Do you want to work with a team of people who can help make your campaign a success?

With support from the Belfast City Council's Capacity Building Fund, WRDA is running a programme for women who want to become more involved in shaping decision making and changing things for the better. With guest speakers from organisations like Women's Aid, the Equality Coalition, Participation and the Practice of Rights, Love Equality and Alliance for Choice, **you will get to learn from experienced campaigners and work on developing your own campaigns**. Please send your expression of interest to **kellie.turtle@wrda.net** by Friday **20th October** if you'd like to participate.

In selecting participants for this course priority will be given to applicants from non-funded community based groups or individuals who are currently outside of the structure of an organisation. This is to meet the objectives of the programme which are directed towards increasing access to political participation for women who face barriers.



Belfast City Council

March of The Mummies - Campaign to end Maternity Discrimination



Maternity discrimination is rife in NI. In 2016 the Equality Commission found that 50% of women surveyed felt that pregnancy and maternity leave had damaged their career prospects and 44% of mothers working part time do so because they can't find work that fits around their caring responsibilities. The campaign group Pregnant then Screwed has joined with Belfast Feminist Network, The Women's Resource and Development Agency and Reclaim the Agenda to call for an end to this discrimination.

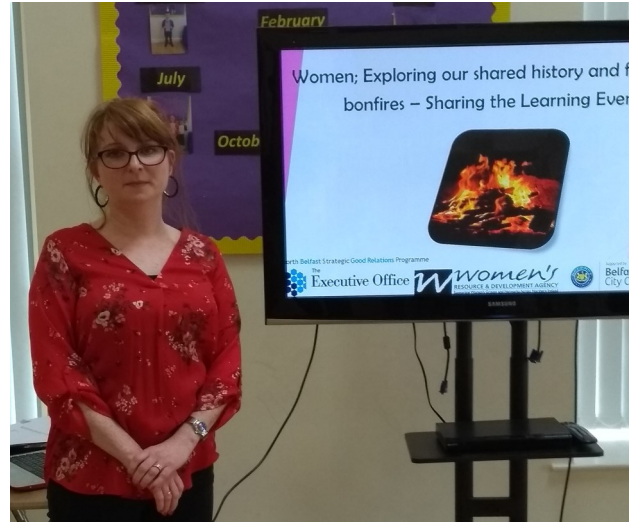
Join us in demanding positive change such as better access to flexible working and subsidised childcare from six months at our 'March of the Mummies' rally. The event will assemble at Belfast City Hall at 12 midday on Tuesday 31st of October and will be a family friendly event with costumes welcome!



Learning Report from Reclaim the Bonfires Project

WRDA's innovative Good Relations programme on Bonfires has come to an end with the successful launch of the learning report on the 19th of September at Small Wonders in Belfast. This project looked at the position bonfires occupy locally and explored the use of bonfires internationally. It created a space to discuss the use of bonfires today and looked at how they could be used as inclusive events. Workshops covered the international history of bonfires, local experiences, sharing stories and generating ideas for the future.

The project worked with groups from a Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist perspective and from a Catholic/Republican/Nationalist perspective as well as a cross community group. At the end of the process the groups came together and co-created recommendations for the future of bonfires.



Bonfires & Sites

- ⇒ Bonfires should be built on designated safe sites in areas with a low risk of damage to property
- ⇒ Height restrictions to prevent bonfires toppling over and a list of acceptable bonfire material such as wood
- ⇒ Community Stewards should be appointed to deal with antisocial behaviour
- ⇒ List of banned behaviour including dumping rubbish and burning tyres, election posters and effigies.
- ⇒ Provision of community storage space for the bonfire materials

Communities Managing Bonfires

- ⇒ Anonymous community consultations
- ⇒ Bonfire committees made up of local residents should be set up in each area to liaise with the PSNI, Housing Executive etc.
- ⇒ Committees should be gender balanced (50% women quota) and should include young people
- ⇒ Events should be advertised locally so people are aware of what is happening near them and at what times
- ⇒ Education workshops and a programme on the culture and history of bonfires.

Tackling illegal behaviour

- ⇒ PSNI enforcement and consequences for breaking the law
- ⇒ Education programmes on the consequences of criminal behaviour such as travel restrictions and employability problems

Media Coverage

- ⇒ Current media coverage creates competition between rival bonfires and presents a negative image of the communities in which they are built
- ⇒ Anecdotal evidence that media outlets are not interested in covering positive stories around bonfires and commemorations
- ⇒ Communities should make their own media content by contacting local providers such as NVTv

Creative Ideas

- ⇒ Themed bonfires
- ⇒ Traditional and modern youth led bonfires
- ⇒ Competitions to design a sculpture as the bonfire to get children involved

The full copy of this excellent report and a complete list of the recommendations is available from our website, www.wrda.net.



Membership

We offer membership to both individuals and groups that are interested in fostering stronger links with us and the wider women's sector. Becoming a member of the WRDA is easy and more importantly free to join. We continually strive to work towards women's equality and to keep our members up to date and although membership is free, we do accept donations to continue the vast amount of work we are involved in. To donate visit our Localgiving page on

www.localgiving.org/charity/WRDA.

If you are interested in becoming a member of WRDA please download the Membership Form from our website and return to us either by post or emailing it to info@wrda.net.

New Members



Families Beyond Conflict was originally called Families of Displaced, Dispersed and Distressed and developed in response to a Loyalist feud in 2000. FBC is a **grassroots organisation** helping those impacted by paramilitary violence to access services and increase their potential through training and counselling.

Services available include:

- ⇒ Provide Alternative Therapies
- ⇒ Women's Respite Trips Annual 4 week Summer Scheme
- ⇒ Drop-in service
- ⇒ Womens over 50 group
- ⇒ Referrals

To find out more visit <https://familiesbeyondconflict.wordpress.com/> or check out the group's Facebook page.



The Northern Ireland Foundation is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation that develops programmes relating to a shared future in Northern Ireland, local community activism and the exchange of international best practices.

Current projects include the redevelopment of Carnegie Oldpark, Fact Check NI and The Forum for Cities in Transition.

Find out more at <https://northernireland.foundation/>

WRDA Out and About

Reach Out! A selection of where we have been promoting and delivering the BCB programme in August and September.

- ⇒ Ballyduff Community Centre
- ⇒ Monkstown Jubilee Centre
- ⇒ Whiteabbey Community Centre
- ⇒ The Dunanney Centre
- ⇒ The Base, Antrim
- ⇒ Mica Day Centre
- ⇒ Fortwilliam Day Centre
- ⇒ Families Beyond Conflict
- ⇒ Newington Day Centre
- ⇒ "Our Time" Group Ballycolman
- ⇒ Milisle Health and Wellbeing Group
- ⇒ East Down Men's Shed
- ⇒ Matt Talbot Women's Group
- ⇒ Lenadoon Women's Group
- ⇒ Ballymena North Community Cluster
- ⇒ Dreen Group Cullybackey
- ⇒ Homestart Craigavon



If you are interested in the Breast, Cervical and Bowel screening awareness programme please contact our office on **028 9023 0212**.