



women's

RESOURCE & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Newsletter - September 2016

WRDA Health Awareness Event



We would like to **thank all individual members and community partner organisations** who attended our Health Awareness Day on Wednesday 3rd August. The hugely successful event attracted nearly 100 participants, aiming to **inform and inspire** through interactive sessions which included:

Women's Tec – Offering advice on gardening as a 'green gym' and how to grow your own herbs and plants to support healthy eating; **Cancer Focus** – Providing skin checks on their skin scanner and advice on protecting your skin; **Complementary Therapies** – Hand, head and shoulder massages; **HEART Project** – Blood pressure, Glucose and Cholesterol testing; **DANCE** – Taster session of ZUMBA and dance; **WRDA** – Breast check demonstrations and Screening services information and advice; **Community Pharmacist** – Carbon dioxide testing and smoking cessation advice and support; **Food sampling** – Health and nutritious salads, dips and breads.



Emma Gray, Training & Development Outreach Worker, said: 'These type of events are vital to support health awareness particularly amongst those from rural and disadvantaged backgrounds. The event was tremendously attended reaching women from as far as Malinhead and Fermanagh. We were delighted with the engagement amongst attendees and health providers. I even learnt a few things myself.'

The event was funded by **Building the Community- Pharmacy Partnership** and WRDA have partnered with Peggy Flanagan of Botanic Pharmacy in delivering the health day as part of WRDA's Health Lobbying project.

The overall aim of the project was to work in partnership with our local community pharmacist in building the capacity of Community Facilitators to develop and deliver Lobbying programmes in local communities. The programmes explored health and wider socio – economic issues that impact on local women including finance, debt, relationships and being connected.

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WomensResource
andDevelopmentAgency



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@WSLobbyistNI

Findings from the British Journal of Cancer September 2016

- ⇒ Nearly **2,000 women's lives are saved** as a result of **cervical cancer screening** in England each year. Researchers from Queen Mary University of London said the biggest impact of screening was among women aged 50-64.
- ⇒ **Around 800 women die from cervical cancer** in England each year.
- ⇒ Cervical cancer screening is offered to women in the UK aged between 25 and 64. Between 25 and 49, women are invited for screening every three years, and up to the age of 64, every five years.
- ⇒ A research team analysed the records of more than 11,000 women in England who had been diagnosed with cervical cancer. The researchers found that **350 extra lives could be saved if all women aged between 25 and 64 were screened regularly**. And if there was no screening among 50 to 64-year-olds, five times more women would die from cervical cancer.



Prof Peter Sasieni, lead researcher based at **Queen Mary University of London**, said **many women were alive and healthy thanks to the screening programme**.

"The cervical screening programme already prevents thousands of cancers each year and as it continues to improve, by testing all samples for the human papilloma virus (HPV), even more women are likely to avoid this disease."

Dr Claire Knight, health information manager at **Cancer Research UK**, recommended that women take up the offer to attend cervical screening when invited.

"It's important to remember that cervical screening is for women without symptoms. Women who have any unusual or persistent bleeding, pain, or change in vaginal discharge - even if they've been screened recently and whatever their age - should get it checked out by their GP."

WRDA offers a **Breast, Cervical and Bowel Screening Awareness Programme**. If you are interested in BC&B Sessions please contact **Katherine Robertson** on katherinerobertson@wrda.net, or phone 02890230212. These programmes can also be tailored for those with additional needs.



Celebrate our 33rd Annual General Meeting

**When? 20th October 2016,
1pm-4pm**

**Where? Crescent Arts Centre,
Belfast, BT7 1NH**

**Launch of 'Why Women Only?'
research paper**

Refreshments provided

**Book your place
info@wrda.net**

Programme For Government Framework Public Consultation Analysis Of Responses



Following Executive agreement to the **draft Programme for Government Framework on 26 May 2016**, a public consultation was launched to seek views on both the approach taken and the content of the Framework. A report was then released **detailing the consultation methodology and analysis of responses**.

The Programme for Government (2016-21) will be the third produced by the Executive since the restoration of devolution in 2007. However, the approach being taken in developing the new Programme is markedly different to that used previously. **The decision to adopt an "outcomes-based" approach was endorsed by the parties to the Fresh Start Agreement in November 2015**, and is based on its successful application in other jurisdictions including in parts of the United States, in Finland and in Scotland.

Our response to the PFG 2016-2020 can be accessed on our website at www.wrda.net

The full analysis of responses by the executive can be accessed via www.northernireland.gov.uk/

Sexual Harassment & Violence at 'Shocking levels'

This month the **Women & Equalities Select Committee** published a report revealing **shocking levels of sexual harassment and sexual violence in UK schools**, as well as a widespread failure to deal with the problem and a lack of national strategy to support schools and teachers. The report **calls for compulsory, high quality sex and relationships education in all schools** as one of its major recommendations to the government to tackle the problem. With the publication of this report, pressure is growing on the government to take action, with yet more voices joining the call for **#SREnow**; an on-line petition. (www.srenow.org)

Dr. Fiona Bloomer of the **University of Ulster** commented on the state on SRE locally saying, *"SRE education in Northern Ireland is seriously underdeveloped at best and non-existent at worst. We need a comprehensive SRE programme that outlines the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up, relationships, sex, human sexuality and sexual health. This would go some way in tackling the mis-information and ignorance around appropriate and inappropriate behaviour"*

While some parents may speak to their children about these issues individually, not all will, and sadly some children will already be experiencing sexual abuse outside the classroom. **We owe every child clear, age-appropriate information, so they can understand that abuse isn't normal**, and learn how to navigate healthy relationships.

Young people are bombarded with confusing and often misogynistic messages from the world around them -- **60% have seen online porn by the age of 14**. Teenage girls are getting pressured into having sex, and a recent BBC Freedom of Information request revealed that **5,500 sexual offences, including 600 rapes, were reported to police as having taken place in schools over a 3-year period. That's almost exactly one rape per school day.**

This is why **we need compulsory sex and relationships education (SRE)**. It's a scandal that our schools do not equip young people with the skills they need to understand consent, healthy relationships, LGBT rights and relationships, gender stereotypes and online pornography.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT. KNOW WHERE THE LINE IS.

Earlier this year, the **TUC commissioned polling to provide a snapshot of women's experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace**. The results probably won't come as a surprise those who have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment or to shop stewards who have dealt with cases of sexual harassment. TUC polling carried out earlier this year found that **over half of women in work had experienced some form of sexual harassment. For young women (age 18-24) the proportion shot up to 63 per cent.** <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/SexualHarassmentreport2016.pdf>

A 2014 study Violence Against Women by the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency found that **one in three women who has experienced sexual harassment felt fearful as a result, while one in five felt ashamed of what had taken place**. Subsequently, feelings of vulnerability were experienced by 20 per cent of women, anxiety by 14 per cent and loss of self-confidence by 13 per cent. These findings are corroborated by our polling which pointed to the serious professional, financial, and psychological impact of sexual harassment.

Watch RTA's programme on Sexual harassment here <https://vimeo.com/182515510>

WRDA Welcomes New Staff Member

Kellie O'Dowd joined WRDA in August 2016 as **Good Relations Worker**. She is a Politics graduate from Queen's University Belfast and has held a number of positions including National Women's Rights Officer for the Union of Students in Ireland, Training and Education worker for the Women into Politics Project, Project Co-ordinator for Ardoyne Women's Centre and elected representative on Unite the Union's Women's Committee.



She worked in the private sector for 5 years heading up a team of 4 Trainers and was responsible for the design, development and delivery of accredited personal, management and leadership development programmes across the public, private and community and voluntary sectors.

Kellie worked for Trademark for 10 years; a social justice organisation linked to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. Trademark specialise in training, research, evaluation and mediation in the areas of anti-sectarianism, anti-racism, feminism, human rights and equality.

Kellie graduated from Ulster University in 2012 with a Master's Degree in Education (with Contemporary Society Specialisms of Conflict Transformation and Peace Building) and worked for 6 years on an integration project with Travellers and Migrant Workers. She is a feminist and Trade Union activist.

If you wish to contact Kellie in relation to her work for WRDA please mail kellie.odowd@wrda.net

Save the Date: Women's at the Cutting Edge: The impact of Austerity on the Women's Sector and the Way Forward

On **Tuesday 15th November** Reclaim the Agenda are hosting a major **Women's Conference to explore the impact of the cuts on service delivery to women**

RECLAIM THE AGENDA

and children in local communities and to plan how we as a sector challenge these decisions. The venue is Riddell Hall, Stranmillis Road, Belfast, BT9 5EE.

In the morning of the conference we will explore the situation in Northern Ireland and compare it with the Republic and the rest of UK. We will hear from Professor Eileen Evason about chairing the working group set up to offset the impact of welfare reform in NI and she will share ideas on how we can offset the impact in our own groups and organisations.

The afternoon will be spent looking at the difficulties we may face when trying to work as a sector in fighting these cuts and also ideas on how best to challenge government decisions that are impacting detrimentally on the women and children in our communities.

Keep your eyes peeled for more information to follow.

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.

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.

Member of the Month



Tar Anall provides a range of support to Republican ex-Prisoners and their families. They believe that **every human being is equal in dignity**, they promote an ethos of self-help, personal achievement and self-empowerment and support Republican ex-Prisoners and their families in **making their human rights a reality**.

Tar Anall has been providing a service to republican ex-prisoners in West Belfast since 1995.

The longest running republican ex-prisoner support group, Tar Anall, opened it's new custom built premises on Tuesday 26 February. Tar Anall is situated behind Conway Mill, just off the Falls Road. The drop-in centre was originally located beside the Felons Club in Andersonstown before moving to its current location in modern premises at Conway Mill.

The centre caters to over **3,000 ex-prisoners** in the community through a wide variety of classes and activities aimed at building their confidence and personal development.

Tar Anall offers needs-based assistance in that they understand the experiences of their users and know the services that are most beneficial. They offer advice, counselling, family support and training and education support.

Tar Anall has been a member of WRDA for over 4 years and have recently took part in our Breast Cervical and Bowel screening awareness programme. The work they carry out in the community is **vital to the development of society** and due to this fact we have selected Tar Anall as this issues Member of the Month.

If you wish to know more about the work of Tar Anall you can visit their website on <http://taranall.ie/cms/> or contact them using the details below.

Address: 5-7 Conway Street, Belfast BT13 2DE
Phone: 028 90 323631

A Fresh Start – the Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan

A Fresh Start – the Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan was published by the Executive and the UK and Irish Governments on 17th November 2015. This agreement set out proposals for addressing some of the most challenging and intractable issues impacting our community, including **commitments to tackle Paramilitarism and organised crime**. The agreement stated...*it is imperative that we work towards an end to all forms of paramilitary activity and to promote the use of a peaceful and democratic means and the rule of law across all communities...*

Implementing A Fresh Start is a priority for the Executive, as set out in the Draft programme for Government Framework 2016-2021.



As part of the commitments through A Fresh Start, the Executive appointed an independent Three Person Panel to report to the Executive with recommendations for a strategy for disbanding paramilitary groups. The Panel's report was published on 7th June and makes 43 recommendations classified in four sections:

A: Promoting Lawfulness

B: Support for Transition

C: Tackling Criminality

D: Addressing Systemic Issues

The Department for Communities-DfC are leading on B5-Support for Transition – **The Executive's programme for women in community development should be designed not only to enable women's organisations to continue to carry out transformative community development work in our communities but also to ensure that women are equipped to take on more leadership roles in public decision-making.** The DfC have set up Co-design meetings made up of representatives from women's & community/ voluntary organisations and two other government departments TEO & DOJ who have been meeting fortnightly from June tasked with developing a proposal which will build women's capacity & leadership in communities with high levels of Paramilitarism.

Once the programme proposal has been agreed it will be presented at cluster meetings throughout NI for consultation & feedback and it is envisaged that all members of the co-design workshops/meetings will participate in this exercise. Following this the proposal will go to the Inter-departmental Programme Board for final approval prior to tendering and it is expected to go live from April 2017.

If you are interested in learning more about this **Fresh Start Intervention Programme** or would like to attend a consultation workshop please contact our office on **02890230212** or email info@wrda.net.