



Cancer is the Leading Cause of Death In Northern Ireland: Self-Examination and Screening Vital for Early Detection

Cancer of all types is the leading cause of death in Northern Ireland and by 2020 almost one in two people will get cancer at some point in their lives. Cancer of all types is much more treatable if diagnosed early. Unfortunately **45% of cancer patients in Northern Ireland are diagnosed at the later stages**, stage 3&4. Self-examining, attending for screening when invited and knowing what to look out for really can make a difference.

WRDA's ground breaking Breast, Cervical and Bowel Screening Awareness programme was developed to tackle the low uptake of screening invitations by women living in some areas of Northern Ireland. The programme is delivered by Community Facilitators who have completed our accredited Level 3 Certificate in Learning and Development. The programme consists of three sessions and aims to raise awareness of the screening available, encourage participants to attend for screening and explores and addresses any fears surrounding the screening process.

Session One

Following the programme **98% of participants** said they would regularly check their breasts.

"This was an excellent session, really well delivered by Pauline. I will pass on this information to my sister and mother. Really well worthwhile."

Session Two

99% of participants would **recommend the session** to others.

"Great presenter. Easy to understand and very worthwhile."

Session Three

After the programme willingness to use the FOB kit increased from **74% to 98%**

"Really good session. Provided information that I genuinely was unaware of, like the FOB kit."

The programme can also be tailored to meet the requirements of groups with additional needs such as sight impairment, learning disability and speakers of other languages. The programme is available free for community groups, if you would like to find out more call the office on 028 9023 0212.

In June WRDA's social media accounts will be focussing on promoting awareness of breast, cervical and bowel cancers and what you can do to protect yourself. To stay informed follow us on Twitter ([@WRDA_team](https://twitter.com/WRDA_team)) and Facebook ([@WomensResourceandDevelopmentAgency](https://www.facebook.com/WomensResourceandDevelopmentAgency)).

Inside this Issue

= Cancer is the Leading Cause of Death in NI

= Raise Your Voice

= Women, Peace and Security

= Hellos and Goodbyes in Good Relations

=WRDA Out and About



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

Raise Your Voice

WRDA, along with partners Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network (NIRWN), Women's Support Network (WSN) and Reclaim the Agenda (RTA) are excited to begin a **new project aimed at tackling sexual harassment, sexual violence and the attitudes that cause this behaviour**. This project is called Raise Your Voice and will be launching shortly with financial contribution from Rosa and the Justice and Equality Fund Advice and Support programme.



Sexual harassment and violence is endemic in our society. Harassment in public spaces is a problem worldwide, with around 90% of women and girls experiencing it before age 18. **Northern Ireland has a higher rate of workplace sexual harassment than elsewhere in the UK or the Republic of Ireland** and, while Unions are working hard to tackle this problem and supporting those who have experienced harassment, the problem will remain as long as certain sexist attitudes remain. As for sexual assault and rape, our conviction rates remain low, and the Gillen Report into the prosecution of such crimes has recommended sweeping changes including a public awareness campaign to tackle the myths that surround such incidents.

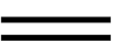

Such a public awareness campaign will be a central plank of our project, and it will centre the experiences of the participants in our project, both because human stories reach people more effectively than statistics, and because we want to ensure that those who are most impacted by this problem are then empowered to challenge it.

Across two years we will be working directly with the community to consider the problem of sexual violence not as a string of isolated incidents, but as part of a larger and deeper problem. Initially we will work with groups of women, girls and non-binary people and later with groups of boys and men. These workshops will involve sharing stories, drawing the threads of different experiences together, firming up our understandings of sexual violence and empowering people to tackle these behaviours and beliefs in ourselves and in others.

As well as this, we will also lobby for changes to laws that would make it easier to deal with these kinds of incidents. **Northern Ireland, for example, does not have a law against "upskirting", unlike the rest of the UK, resulting in incidents in Northern Ireland being prosecuted under different laws which do not centre the fact that the offence had a victim.** We believe that there are small changes that could have a very significant impact on the way that the law here treats these kinds of offences, and this would have a knock-on effect on the social climate.

We are very excited about this project and we hope that it will bring about a sea change in how we as a society see the problem of sexual harassment. We have set up an Anti-Sexual Harassment Forum with stakeholders from across the sector and beyond to advise on the direction of the project and ensure that our work will be as inclusive and exhaustive as possible.

If you are interested in learning more or in taking part email elaine.croly@wrda.net

**Justice
and 
Equality
 Fund**



Women Peace and Security: The Talks Process and Women's Inclusion

By Women's Sector Lobbyist, Kellie Turtle

In the women's movement we continue to demand that UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security should be implemented here. This would create measures to ensure women are equally represented at all levels, from the negotiating table to grassroots community decision making spaces. We might have powerful women leaders in the main parties but we still encounter a gender blindness that can allow for a public body like the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition to appoint 14 men and just one woman. We hear from women on the frontline in community leadership roles that they have to fight harder for influence than they did a decade ago with many working in increasingly unsafe environments due to paramilitary attempts to control the community narrative.

While the Irish government has always recognised the importance of UNSCR 1325 in Northern Ireland and includes us in their National Action Plan, the UK government does not take this approach due to its official position on the nature of the conflict here. Women here still hold many stories that have never fully been told of the gendered nature of conflict, the sexual violence that was ignored or covered up because there were bigger issues at stake. The women left at home to raise children when husbands and fathers were interned or murdered, many with no financial support from the state; the women whose lives have been entirely consumed by caring for those injured and disabled by violence and the epidemic of post-traumatic stress disorder. These are the issues that remain unresolved and the most frustrating part about our exclusion from the process and the narrative is that the quality of the peace process is diminished as a result. International longitudinal research on UNSCR 1325 shows clearly that in post-conflict societies where this resolution is fully embraced and implemented, the result is longer lasting, more stable peace. Not the endless cycle of failure and short term fixes that Northern Ireland is becoming famous for. I recently had the privilege of participating in an international dialogue on women and peacebuilding hosted in Belfast by the Commonwealth Foundation.

My colleagues from countries like Kenya, Uganda and Sierra Leone could not believe that we don't have the mechanisms of 1325 in Northern Ireland. While they have had the opportunity to participate in initiatives like gender commissions and quotas for representation, we don't even have a basic gender equality strategy. It ran out in 2016 and no one bothered to renew it.

A delegation of women's movement representatives attended the recent civil society engagement with party leaders as part of the talks process. I was unhappy with the opening remarks from Secretary of State, Karen Bradley who told us we should not come to 'complain' or to 'make demands' but rather to support the politicians in the difficult job they have to do. Tánaiste, Simon Coveney continued by accepting that this meeting did not constitute an in-depth consultation but was merely an opportunity for conversations to begin. What followed for the next hour was somewhat of a scrum, as civil society representatives from sectors as diverse as farming, hospitality, health, education, Irish language, children's services and women's rights gathered round party leaders hoping to pitch their issues. We all said our piece, the politicians nodded and smiled and took on board as much as they could in the circumstances, I handed out briefing papers, and we all left wondering what exactly had been achieved. We had been invited to come and show our support for the talks process but explicitly asked to leave our issues at the door. I think this approach betrayed a lack of understanding of the deep passion for justice, equality and rights in civil society in Northern Ireland. As this phase of talks is due to close in the next fortnight it seems unlikely that there will be further opportunity for those of us who represent communities affected by the legacy of the conflict and the current stalemate to really influence the process. We must rely on the parties having enough courage to put the issues we have brought to them many times in the past at the heart of their priorities. For the women's movement we live in hope that this will be the time for genuine commitment to end the inequalities that in 20 years of peace we have not been able to dismantle.

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 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 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 contact the Communications and Membership Worker, Megan McClure Botha via info@wrda.net.



Goodbyes and Hellos in Good Relations



North Belfast Women's Voices
EXPLORING IDENTITY,
CULTURE AND THE FUTURE



Everyone at WRDA would like to wish our colleague Harriet Long, all the very best as she takes up her new post with Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR). Harriet joined WRDA as Good Relations Worker in October 2017 and her last day was the 17th of May 2019. During that time she developed the 'Oh Woman' programme and continued the North Belfast Women's Voices project.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome Elaine Croy to the team as our new Good Relations Co-ordinator. Elaine's academic background and experience of research methods has helped with developing and delivering training programmes. She has been a feminist activist for several years and has been involved in groups such as Belfast Feminist Network, Alliance for Choice and Reclaim the Night. She will take forward our work in Good Relations and a new project (featured on page 2) tackling sexual violence.

If you would like to find out more about our Good Relations work please contact Elaine on elaine.croy@wrda.net.

WRDA Out and About

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

- ⇒ Day Opportunities Craigavon
- ⇒ Whiterock Day Centre
- ⇒ Clanrye Group
- ⇒ Mindwise Lurgan
- ⇒ Larne Adult Centre
- ⇒ Inspire Wellbeing Lisnaskea
- ⇒ Inspire Wellbeing Enniskillen
- ⇒ Lisburn Hard of Hearing
- ⇒ Ballycastle GAA Club
- ⇒ Belfast Community Sports Development Network
- ⇒ Cancer LifeLine Belfast
- ⇒ Homestart Warrenpoint
- ⇒ South Fermanagh Foundation
- ⇒ Omagh Breathing Better Group

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

