

A Visible Force for Change



2019

Annual Report

Vision, Mission & Aims

WRDA's vision is of a fair and equal society where women are empowered and are a visible force for change and influence in all areas of life.

WRDA works regionally to advance women's equality and participation in society.

Strategic Aims

Empowerment and Tackling Inequality

To develop the capacity of women from disadvantaged urban and rural communities to tackle inequalities affecting them.

Policy and Advocacy

To advance women's equality and participation in all aspects of policy and decision – making.

Leadership and Infrastructure Support

To provide leadership, infrastructure support and advocacy within the women's sector/ movement.

Organisational Development

To strengthen the capacity of the organisation to carry out its role effectively.

To view our Strategic Plan for 2017-2020 in full, please visit the resources section of our website, [**www.wrda.net/resources**](http://www.wrda.net/resources), to download a copy.

Contents

Chairperson's Report	04
Director's Report	05
Our People	07
Training and Development	08
Breast, Cervical and Bowel Screening Awareness Programme	10
Training and Development Outreach	12
Lobbying, Policy & Influencing	14
Good Relations	20
Communications	22
Membership	23
International Women's Day 2019	24
Women's Regional Consortium	25
WRDA Representation	26
Accounts 2018/19	27
Acknowledgements	30

Chair's Report by Anne O'Reilly

Welcome to WRDA 36th AGM

WRDA as a 'visible force for change' describes well the focus of the organisations efforts over the last twelve months . The organisation is as strong and stable as it has ever been in its long history which was affirmed by the wide engagement efforts involving the board, staff ,our membership and key partner organisations . The outcome is a three year strategic plan that will drive us further forward in advancing women's equality in all areas of life .

We also achieved our goal to strengthen our governance , increase our income diversity , widen our membership, and attract new board members and this drive will continue as we work though our new strategic plan hopefully welcoming further board members that reflects the range and depth of our membership .

WRDA is also a mature and steady force continuing to actively campaign and advocate for positive change with key partners when all around seems politically chaotic and uncertain as the recent progress on the decriminalisation of abortion and gay marriage testifies. They say that the measure of the successful organisation is the ability to keep a cool head when all those around you are losing theirs .

If you read our Annual Report you will also see that in addition to the policy and advocacy successes to date every aspect of our work has been strengthened the Community Facilitator programme and the outstanding success of the screening programmes ; embedding the work on good relations ; improved communication and membership engagement; strong trusted partnership working with a range of partners .

This year in particular I have benefited from the support of a strong cohesive Trustee Board and delighted to see stronger and more emboldened leadership from Anne as Director with an integrated teamworking ethos now very firmly at the heart of the organisation .

Finally I would like to particularly pay tribute to Eithne McNulty who is standing down from the Board after many years for her wise counsel and support to WRDA over the last number of years and also to thank Lisa Parks who has also stood down . Can I also thank Cathy Chambers and Robyn Scott as new board members this year for their high level of commitment and support .



Director's Report by Anne McVicker

At the time of writing this report, this has been an historic week because as of midnight on 22nd October abortion in NI was decriminalised, all made possible by the cunning tactics of a great friend of Alliance for Choice-AFC Stella Creasy and her colleague Conor McGinn who moved the amendments to the Emergency Executive Functions Bill for NI on 5th July paving the way for abortion reform and Marriage equality in NI. WRDA will continue to take a keen interest in the imminent consultation process as to how abortion services be will rolled out with provision in place by April 2020 and celebrate this development as no longer will over 1,000 women per year have to travel for healthcare that women in the rest of the UK can access.



The Brexit saga continues pushed down the road until 2020 at least and yet there still appears to be no understanding by the British government of NI's special circumstances and the devastating impact a no-deal or hard deal will have on people, trade, services and travel in Northern Ireland.

With no sitting assembly our concerns on Universal Credit have been realised as numerous reports indicate the negative impact on women and the catastrophe that will ensure if the mitigation package is removed this leaves us deeply offended by the lack of movement to put in place our assembly to deal with these extremely pressing issues.

No doubt 2020 will be a year of great challenges, Extinction Rebellion has put our environment at the top of the agenda and our work will examine how we can best respond to ensure we play an active role in creating lasting changes. I am confident that WRDA will contribute positively as I look over our past year and the enormous amount of work that we have undertaken that is led by our members and their engagement that feeds into our work is greatly valued.

This year's annual report highlights the extensive range of activity undertaken by our small staff team of nine and community facilitators working in partnership delivering breast, cervical & bowel cancer awareness raising sessions, leadership, good/community relations, capacity building, training and support programmes.

The fourth year of the PHA contract included the delivery of our award-winning Breast, Cervical and Bowel Cancer Screening Awareness programme and workshops for people with additional support needs. Once again delivery targets set by PHA were exceeded due to the sterling work of the staff team led by Deirdre Quinn along with Katherine Robertson, Emma Gray and Paula Murray in the promotion of informed choice and the uptake of screening contributing to the reduction of health inequalities in NI.

Elaine Crory, our Good Relations Coordinator, continues to facilitate good relations workshops through a gender lens across NI and this year the *Women's Charter for Change* (a piece of work funded by St. Stephen's Green Trust) in was published. The Charter was launched by the Lord Mayor and focused on the structural issues behind social problems such as sectarianism, paramilitarism and the mental health crisis, as well as proposing a set of principles for tackling these issues. We hope that this will help the women involved in the project as well as their immediate community, and ultimately provide a template that can be used to tackle similar problems in communities across Northern Ireland.

Director's Report by Anne McVicker

Continued

Our Women's Sector Lobbyist, Kellie Turtle continues to provide a comprehensive advocacy service to members and the wider sector to inform the development of public policy. Over the past year the lobbyist met with elected representatives and officials on issues such as Universal Credit, domestic abuse, childcare, the gender pay gap and abortion access. Kellie also represented the women's sector as part of the NIWEP delegation at the United Nations CEDAW examination of the UK government, lobbying committee members to ensure that Northern Ireland was a priority in their recommendations. Sadly for WRDA and the wider women's sector Kellie has returned to university to complete her PhD on Abortion & faith in NI however, I have no doubt Kellie will continue to champion meaningful issues that advance gender equality.



We continue work in partnership with the Women's Regional Consortium providing infrastructure support to women in disadvantaged and rural areas throughout NI. We lead on the Advocacy and Leadership function and are responsible for communications via the website and social media. This year we have collaborated with regional women's organisations tackling sexual harassment within communities in NI. This two year project – Raise Your Voice will be delivered in partnership with NIRWN-Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network, WSN-Women's Support Network and RTA-Reclaim the Agenda supported by ROSA.

The theme for this year's International Women's Day-IWD 'The Time is Now, Women Rise Up' highlighted continuing discrimination and inequalities in relation to same sex marriage and abortion services, rights that exist in the UK and RoI yet denied to people in NI. This year the programme of over 80 events spread over three weeks with talks, lectures, dances, poems, workshops, plays and films shone a light on increasing levels of domestic & sexual abuse, endemic racism, homophobia and transphobia. As ever the Rally was empowering as up to 2,000 people with banners and drums marched to City Hall, led this year by Windsor Women's Centre.

Finally, I would like to thank my staff for all their work and commitment over the past year especially Geraldine and Megan who are essential to the smooth operation in all our work and activities. WRDA said goodbye this year to Harriet Long and Kellie Turtle and welcomed the new women's sector Lobbyist, Rachel Powell into an established energetic and exciting staff team working collectively towards the realisation of our strategic aims while being responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Our People

Management Committee

Chair	Anne O'Reilly	Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network (NIRWN)
Deputy Chair	Patricia Donald	Advice NI
Secretary	Caroline McCord	Women's Information Northern Ireland (WINI)
Treasurer	Karen Armstrong	Individual
Member	Eileen Weir	Shankill Women's Centre
Member	Sandra McCarry	Belfast HSC Trust
Member	Eithne McNulty	Individual
Member	Robyn Scott	Individual
Member	Adrianne Peltz (until September 2019)	Individual
Member	Catherine Chambers	Individual
Member	Roisin Kelly	Individual
Member	Lisa Park (until August 2019)	Individual

Staff Team

Director	Anne McVicker
Finance and HR Manager	Geraldine Burns
Training and Development Coordinator	Deirdre Quinn
Women's Sector Lobbyist (Until September 2019)	Kellie Turtle
Women's Sector Lobbyist (From September 2019)	Rachel Powell
Good Relations Coordinator	Elaine Crory
Training and Development Programme Worker	Katherine Robertson
Training and Development Outreach Worker	Emma Gray
Training and Development Outreach Worker	Paula Murray
Communications and Membership Worker	Megan McClure Botha
Good Relations Worker	Harriet Long (until May)

Training and Development

Community Facilitator Programme Update



In October 2018 we delivered our new Open College Network (OCN) Level 3 qualification in Learning and Development for the first time. The course was very popular and recruitment was strong. We ran the programme in Derry/Londonderry and Newry and all 24 learners successfully completed. Eleven Learners from Derry/Londonderry and 13 from Newry were presented with

their certificates and had a celebration of their learning in WRDA on International Womens Day. The coursework was externally verified by OCN and WRDA is now an approved OCN Centre.

In 2019 the Community Facilitator course is running in Atlas Womens' Centre in Lisburn and we currently have 15 women enrolled. We have chosen Lisburn because this area has been identified as an area of need by the Public Health Agency. We look forward to seeing our newest cohort of Community Facilitators graduate.



Community Facilitator Forum

We hold Quarterly Community Facilitator Forum meetings on different evenings and at different locations to try and accommodate different preferences. We have held Forum meetings in Belfast, Dungannon and Cookstown and they are well attended and feedback is always good.

In addition to a networking opportunity, Community Facilitators are given a platform to air their thoughts on delivery, are updated on changes in paperwork and offered training that may be relevant. We ran two sessions of Breast, Cervical and Bowel Screening Awareness Programme refresher training for Community Facilitators who have not delivered in a while. In May 2019 the Community Facilitators contributed to the development of a health consultation on reshaping breast assessment services. We also ran training on the General Data Protection Regulation and more recently awareness training for transgender and non-binary groups.

Community Facilitator Forum Continued

The December 2019 Forum will include a training session delivered by Alexa from TransgenderNI on specifically using the Breast, Cervical and Bowel Screening Awareness materials.

Our Online Forum has been up and running for almost a year and is used to post updates, paperwork and for general comments. It is an important tool for those who can't make the forum meetings and who live in a rural area.

Forum for Adult Learning

WRDA is an active member of FALNI. We attended the annual conference, "Towards a Lifelong Learning Strategy for Northern Ireland", where treating lifelong learning as a human right was discussed. This is the position adopted by Wales and the UK Labour Party and would ensure greater access to learning for adults. Concluding remarks noted that the benefits of adult learning extended beyond the individual and the boundaries of employment and the labour market. Health and well-being, life expectancy and mental health are all improved by adult engagement with learning.

WRDA is also a member of the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) Project Advisory Panel. The PAG is looking at Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for learners with a view to standardising the process to help adults return to learning.

Aontas STAR Awards

WRDA was pleased to be shortlisted for the Aontas STAR Awards in the *Adult Learning Initiatives that Support Health and Wellbeing* Category. As part of the shortlisting process two learners shared their experiences which was very well received by the judging panel.

Grow, Lead, Change

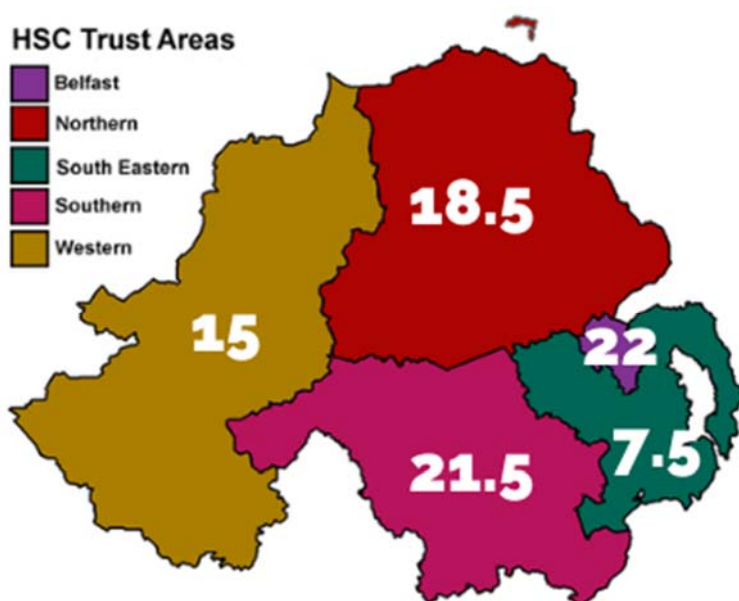
WRDA designed a pilot leadership programme called Grow, Lead Change for Belfast City Council. There was strong interest in the programme and we enrolled 20 learners who all successfully completed the four week course. The course covered a wide range of topics and was well received by the council who are considering rolling it out as part of their Peace IV programme.

Breast, Cervical and Bowel Cancer Screening Awareness Programme

This is the fifteenth year of delivering the Breast, Cervical and Bowel Cancer Screening Awareness Programme in partnership with the Public Health Agency. The programme has gone from strength to strength and in 2018 WRDA has continued to deliver Breast, Cervical and Bowel Cancer Screening Awareness training to groups in all five Health and Social Services Trusts areas across Northern Ireland. Consequently the geographical spread and diversity of groups taking part has increased even further. Reaching women in communities who are most in need has always been an aim of the Breast, Cervical and Bowel Cancer Screening Awareness Programme and we have delivered over 263 sessions to a wide range of groups across Northern Ireland.

Engagement

The Training and Development Programme Worker uses a variety of methods to engage hard to reach groups, from writing articles for WRDA and other organisations, e-zines and newsletters, attending health events, direct contact with groups and word of mouth.



Number of Breast, Cervical and Bowel Cancer Screening Awareness programmes delivered in each Trust area.

As a result of delivering the Breast, Cervical and Bowel Cancer Screening Awareness Programme to four Homestart Family Groups in the Kilkeel area the Organisation has filtered the information to the other geographical locations. We subsequently also delivered the “BCB” to Homestart in Warrenpoint and more areas are planned over the next year.



Attending a programme can be life changing as these quotes from participants across NI show:

(The facilitator was) Very informative, down to earth and speaks with ease about difficult topics
Participant Loughinisland GAC (South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust)

The session went well with good participation all very interested in the breast model and beads. Community Facilitator Homestart Warrenpoint (Southern Health and Social Care Trust)

Very informative session. Knew nothing about bowel cancer signs and symptoms etc. But I am more confident now on how to improve my diet etc. to prevent the chances of getting it. Thank you. Great Facilitator. Participant on Bowel session with Omagh Sure start (Western Health and Social Care Trust)

Didn't realise importance of bowel health or to know the risks. Would pay more attention to bowel health in future. Participant South East Fermanagh Foundation. (Western Health and Social Care Trust)

I learned to self-examine up to the collar bone and under arm and I learned a lot from the quiz. Participant on Breast Session with Colin Sure Start (Belfast Health and Social Care Trust)

I learned that women can self-refer for screening after the age of 70 and I learned that men can also get breast cancer. Participant on East Belfast Mission Women's Group (Belfast Health and Social Services Trust)

I will make an appointment tomorrow with the nurse at my GP surgery. Participant on East Belfast Mission Women's Group (Belfast Health and Social Services Trust)

Some women finds it hard to find the time to check their breasts but will now make more of an effort. Voices Women's Group West Belfast (Belfast Health and Social Services Trust)

The pharmacist working with Voices Women's Group from the Community Pharmacy Project (CDHN) participated in the sessions found a lot of information which he will be able to pass on and the group also benefited from his pharmacy knowledge too. Voices Women's Group West Belfast (Belfast Health and Social Services Trust)

Some of the facts were not to be as we expected. I learned how to examine my breasts properly. The Facilitator was very informative and made it us aware how important it is to go for breast screening. Participant Breast Session Coyle's Cottage Women's Group near Cookstown. (Northern Health and Social Care Trust)

A lady who was grieving for her first sibling who had died during the year got her request to go for routine breast screening. She was not in a good place and had ignored the screening letter. She only went because her daughters encouraged her when the second reminder was received. The mammogram picked up a very small lump. It was cancerous, she got it removed and both her breasts. Now five years later, after chemo and radio she is alive and well. Her two daughters were with her in the group - a very courageous lady. Community Facilitator delivering Breast Session Coyle's Cottage Women's Group near Cookstown. (Northern Health and Social Care Trust)

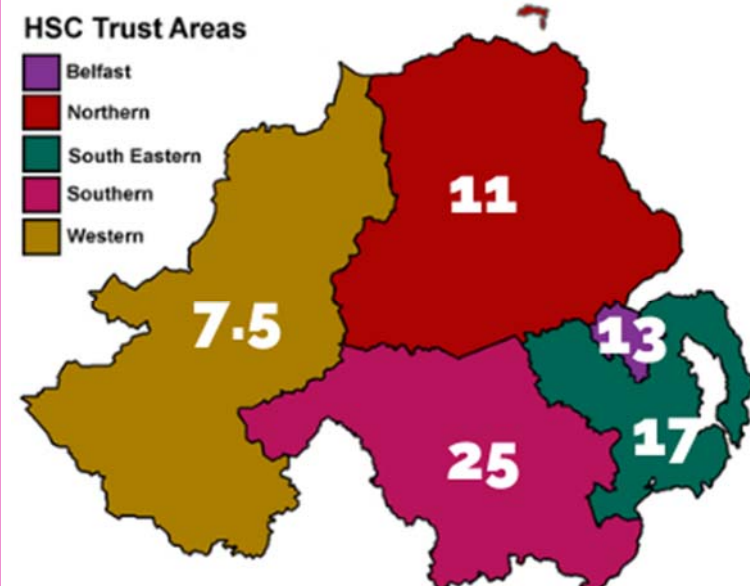
Training and Development Outreach

WRDA's Outreach Work aims to raise awareness of the value and benefits of Breast, Cervical and Bowel Cancer Screening for women and men with additional support needs. Additional support needs include physical disability, learning disability, sensory disability, mental ill health, addiction, traveller community, ethnic minority (BME), and the LGBTQ+ Community.

The aim of WRDA's Outreach Work is to engage with groups with additional support needs who may find traditional learning settings do not meet their specific requirements. WRDA's Outreach Work encourages diversity and guarantees accessibility for all participants. It provides bespoke training sessions for the groups. It offers a positive learning environment and affords the Outreach Worker the opportunity to change any negative learning experiences participants may previously have had. The sessions are tailored to meet individual and group needs whilst still delivering the high impact message WRDA's Breast, Cervical and Bowel Cancer Screening Awareness Programme is designed to convey. That is, to promote awareness and to inform participants of the screening services available and to give them the confidence to access them.

WRDA's Outreach Team have established great working relationships with many groups, day centres, voluntary and statutory organisations and we continue to widen our reach by attending and networking at community and grassroots events regionally.

Between September 2018 and September 2019 WRDA's Outreach Team have facilitated 214 awareness sessions reaching 955 men and women with additional support needs.



Number of Breast, Cervical and Bowel Cancer Screening Awareness programmes adapted for additional support needs delivered in each Trust area.

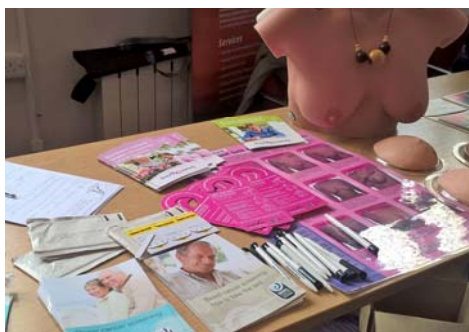
WRDA currently have an active partnership with Linenhall Street, Belfast and South Eastern area Breast Screening Unit, in promoting informed choice. We promote special clinics for women with additional support needs. From 2019 this service will extend to include the Breast Screening Units in the Northern, Southern and Western Trusts.

'People with a learning disability are 45% less likely to be screened for cancer. With this in mind the SHSCT had an opportunity to work with the PHA on a project to improve the uptake of breast screening for women with a learning disability. Screening awareness training for service users, carers and staff was key and we made contact with the WRDA. They instantly agreed to support us with the training and dates were secured. I have to say the style and delivery of this training was excellent and enabled both service users and carers to feel comfortable and confident in asking questions etc. Paula, WRDA trainer also had a number of fantastic visual resources she used as part of the training and these were received very well from all who attended. The learning disability healthcare facilitators were so impressed they are exploring purchasing some of the breast resources stating that they will make such an impact in clinic and during health promotion delivery for people with learning disabilities. I am also delighted to say that we are now partnering with the WRDA in that they are now offering their training (Breast, Cervical and Bowel awareness) through our Promoting Wellbeing training brochure. This is a privilege for us in Promoting Wellbeing to be able to offer a platform for the WRDA to deliver this hugely beneficial training to both staff, service users and community and voluntary groups in the Southern Trust area. I am hoping this will become a regular occurrence and would highly recommend others to link with the WRDA who offer a fantastic, tailored, user friendly Breast, Cervical and Bowel Cancer Awareness training.'

Sinéad Hughes, Promoting Wellbeing Specialist Lead at St Lukes Hospital, Armagh

In addition, WRDA's Outreach Team:

- ⇒ Presented the BCB Cancer Screening Awareness Programme to learning disability staff in the Northern Trust, South Eastern Trust, Western Trust and Southern Trust.
- ⇒ Met with Team Leads from the Nigerian Community NI (NICONI)
- ⇒ Were invited by Deirdre McNamee (Public Nurse Consultant SHSCT) to deliver the Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Awareness sessions to a 'targeted group' of people with learning disability, carers and mammographers
- ⇒ Attended a meeting for the Health Improvement Team Leads (SHSCT)
- ⇒ Participated in Learning Disability Week 17th – 21st June (within the SHSCT)
- ⇒ Hosted an information stand at Learning Disability Pride
- ⇒ Attended the Soroptimist NI Conference
- ⇒ Participated in Belfast Trust 'Safetember' campaign
- ⇒ Promoted the BCB programme at Lord Mayor's Day at Belfast City Hall
- ⇒ Attended networking events with Linking Generations NI
- ⇒ Contributed to the Public Health Agency and HSCNI 'Healthy Places' pilot in The Glens Electoral Area



Lobbying, Policy and Influencing

As the women's sector dealt with another year without a functioning government in Northern Ireland, we continued to speak out about the impact on women. The Women's Sector Lobbyist met with elected representatives and officials on issues such as Universal Credit, domestic abuse, childcare, the gender pay gap and abortion access. Kellie also represented the women's sector as part of the NIWEP delegation at the United Nations CEDAW examination of the UK government, lobbying committee members to ensure that Northern Ireland was a priority in their recommendations.

Welfare Reform and Universal Credit

**DO YOU RECEIVE
UNIVERSAL
CREDIT AS PART
OF A COUPLE?**

**YOU HAVE A
RIGHT TO SPLIT
PAYMENTS**

You might benefit from split payments because:

- Having payments paid into individual accounts means you won't be affected if your partner is sanctioned
- Split payments give you more independence and minimise the risk of financial control

To claim split payments, just make an appointment at your local Jobs & Benefits office or call 0800 012 1331

If you experience problems accessing your right to split payments please contact us on policy@wsn.org.uk as we are monitoring any barriers people face.

women's
NORTHERN IRELAND
Welfare & Social Security Agency

WSN



The Lobbyist has continued to work on issues related to welfare reform. Having fought hard for mitigations like automatic split payments to those who receive Universal Credit as part of a couple, the women's sector has been disappointed to discover there was no uptake of this service until very recently and numbers remain incredibly low. The Lobbyist met with officials in Department for Communities to clarify their split payment policy and seek their support for making it more effective. We have also produced awareness raising information about the right to split payments and shared it in grassroots community organisations. We continue to oppose measures like the two child cap and submitted evidence to the Westminster inquiry into welfare policy in Northern Ireland.

**RALLY AGAINST THE 2 CHILD
CAP AND RAPE CLAUSE**

This welfare cut is an attack
on women and children.
No woman should be forced
to prove she was raped to
get support for her child.
We have to stand up and fight back.

21st September @ 1pm
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street, Belfast

#ScrapTheRapeClause
#ScrapTheFamilyCap

Childcare for All Campaign



The Childcare for All campaign has gone from strength to strength since its launch in Stormont. In November we facilitated a family engagement event at which the Lobbyist brought elected politicians face-to-face with parents who want action on universal childcare. We produced a 'parent voices' film using interview with families on the day. We also successfully delivered a childcare policy conference in February that brought together academics, policy experts, officials from a range of government departments, and practitioners from a range of voluntary

sector organisations. We discussed all the urgent drivers for action on childcare policy, and explored solutions to some of the barriers. A conference paper is now available and a cross-party working group has been set up to try to make progress in very challenging political circumstances.

The MAS Project



The MAS Project – Maternal Advocacy and Support – completed its 6 month pilot in Belfast. The Lobbyist facilitated 24 workshops in four women's centres and two MAS network events. During this time 25 women had the chance to get support with perinatal mental health issues as well as being able to tell their story, give their views on the services they had received during and after their pregnancies, and lobby decision makers directly for urgent

investment in perinatal mental health care. Kellie supported the women to deliver a showcase event at Belfast City Hall in April that included presentations from participants, an exhibition of their poetry on the theme of motherhood, and the launch of a short film they made about their journey. We are seeking funding for the future roll out of this project and the Lobbyist continues to campaign for the implementation of services such as an inpatient mother and baby unit, specialist clinical support workers in each health trust and investment in community based peer support programmes such as MAS.

Decriminalisation of Abortion

There have been significant legislative changes in recent months in relation to women's right to access abortion services. This has come about as a result of the CEDAW Committee's report into the UK which required the Westminster government to take action in the absence of any progress at Stormont. The Lobbyist submitted evidence to the Westminster inquiry on the issue and aimed to highlight the particular impact of such restrictive abortion law on marginalised and disadvantaged women, in line with WRDA's remit. As future changes in law and services are agreed, the Lobbyist will continue to engage with women in grassroots communities about the issue in order to promote their participation in the decision making process.



October 2019 – Hello from the New Women's Sector Lobbyist Lobbyist – Looking to the Year Ahead:



Rachel Powell is the new Women's Sector Lobbyist for WRDA. Her background is working in human rights, economics, disability rights, opposing welfare reform and more. The Lobbyist would like to continue the momentous work done the previous Lobbyist through the Childcare for All campaign, the All Party Group on Childcare, the Women's Policy Group, campaigning for abortion decriminalisation and a fair and accessible consultative process to follow. In addition to this, the Lobbyist intends to lobby to mitigate the impacts of Brexit on women, campaign against the negative impact of welfare reform and austerity on women, engage on a grassroots level with disabled women, young women, rural women, working class women and women of colour.

Within the first few weeks in the role, the Lobbyist worked on mental health through presenting the barriers women face in healthcare to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health; facilitated workshops on decriminalisation of abortion and the relationship between abortion and disability, strategised with the Childcare for All campaign aims

for the year ahead, met with women's centres across Belfast and Dublin, met with the judge working on the hate crime legislation review and contributed to funding bids for future projects. The Lobbyist has also compiled a report on the Impact of Brexit on Women in Northern Ireland which has been summarised below. This was completed through analysing reports of the Human Rights Consortium, NIRWN, NIWEP, WSN and several other sources.

Brexit and the Impact on Women In Northern Ireland

Women's Rights Achieved Through EU Membership

Many of the rights we enjoy today have come through membership of the EU over the past four decades; particularly in areas of economic activity and employment law. For women, there are great concerns that Brexit will erode many of these protections. Some of these protections include: Equality between men and women; the right to equal pay for equal work; protection against discrimination on the ground of pregnancy and maternity; introducing measures to provide specific advantages to the underrepresented gender; prohibition of discriminations on the grounds of sex; introduction of paid holidays. Furthermore, the EU recognises the need for wide-spread structural change to deal with systematic gender discrimination through their commitment to Gender Mainstreaming and the Gender Recast Directive 2006. The Gender Recast Directive covers a range of areas including access to employment, promotion, vocational training schemes and working conditions to ensure the rights of women are considered central to decision making. The Gender Mainstreaming approach involves five main priority areas:

1. Increase women's participation in the labour market
2. Reduce the gender pay gap, pension gap and levels of poverty women face
3. Address gender disparity in decision making and promote greater representation of women in public life across a range of sectors
4. Combat gender-based violence and support victims
5. Combat gender equality beyond the EU and advocate for women's rights across the world

Other areas of EU legislation, representation and funding that are relevant to the protection and enhancement of women's rights and participation include the European Protection Order; the Rural Development Programme; the European Social Fund; the European Parliamentary Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, alongside various EU funding streams that support the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland.

What Next for Women's Rights Post-Brexit?

EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

Whilst the UK government would still be required to abide by the European Convention of Human Rights, the removal of the EU Charter is deeply worrying as it has a much broader level of protection for human rights. Articles relevant to women in Northern Ireland include, but are not limited to, Article 20 on the right to equality before law; Article 21 which prohibits discrimination; Article 23 on the right to equality between men and women; Article 34 on the right to social security (which is significant in cases of maternity pay) and Article 35 on the right to healthcare.

What Next for Women's Rights Post-Brexit?

Existing EU Law – Court of Justice of the European Union

Future case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) will no longer be binding in UK courts post-Brexit. Any existing CJEU laws before Brexit will still be binding, however, these can now be overturned in future cases in UK courts and a departure from current jurisprudence may lead to a divergence on human rights standards on either side of the border in Northern Ireland. As EU human rights instruments will be seen as invalid post-Brexit, it will be difficult to enforce human rights through the courts or hold UK government failures to account in courts outside of the UK.

Human Rights Act 1998

Since the 2016 referendum, the UK Government has failed to provide commitments that it will not repeal or replace the Human Rights Act. Many are deeply concerned with the impact this, and the removal of the EU Charter, will have on human rights. The EU human rights framework is much more robust than the UK Human Rights Act, however, the removal of both the Human Rights Act and the EU Charter will make it much more difficult for people to access their rights through the courts, as the ECHR is nowhere near as broad or strong as a standalone human rights framework.

Good Friday Agreement

With Northern Ireland still the crux of disagreements on how the UK should leave the UK, and ongoing political instability growing as a concern, it is essential to point out the importance of avoiding a divergence of rights on either side of the border. For example, areas of protections such as violence against women, or child maintenance payments, rely on EU wide measures to ensure the legal systems on the island of Ireland are coordinated to protect vulnerable people through the criminal justice and family law systems. This is essential to ensure that people cannot avoid the repercussions of violence against women, or refusing to pay child maintenance, by simply crossing the border. All aspects of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement need to be protected and implemented; including a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland where specific focus can be given to the rights of women.

Missed Opportunities: Current EU Work on Rights

The EU has also sought to extend parental rights to leave and encourage better childcare support for families with the strategic aim of reducing the gender pay gap and advancing women's rights more generally. Furthermore, there is a new, ongoing consultation of trade unions and employers launched at EU level focusing on a new package of rights to improve work-life balance, including proposals for carers' leave, flexible working and stronger protections from dismissal for new mothers.

Conclusion

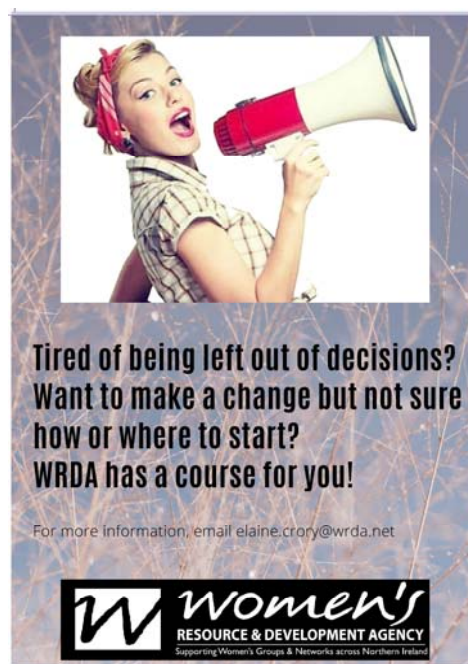
The UK Women's Budget Group maintains that women will be adversely affected by the economic impacts of Brexit. This can only get worse for the women of Northern Ireland, who have greatly suffered from the past decade of austerity and are deeply concerned about the impact of welfare reform and future austerity on gender equality. The economic consequences of Brexit are set to have disproportionately negative impacts on rural women, disabled women, LGBTQ+ women, women of colour, women living on the border, migrant women and more as they lose many human rights protections and funding streams supporting their participation and empowerment.

Women in Northern Ireland are already facing great barriers due to political instability, an arguably failed peace process, a collapsed Assembly, the lack of implementation of the UNSCR 1325, an outdated Northern Ireland Gender Strategy, unprecedented levels of poverty and having limited representation in Brexit negotiations. With all the hard fought women's rights protections won at an EU level now at risk, and many human rights still failing to have been implemented at all, there are many reasons to be deeply concerned about the impact of Brexit on the women on Northern Ireland.

Good Relations

WRDA's Good Relations work has continued this year with the 2018-19 programme of work, funded by the Community Relations Council and finished in March having exceeded targets by a significant margin. That programme offered a gendered perspective to the issue of identity and the role of women in peacebuilding. We built upon the lessons learned last year to develop the programme for the 2019-20 core-funded Good Relations work, and developed a new programme working with five groups of women in Coleraine, Lisburn, Ballybeen, Turf Lodge and the Newry, Mourne and Down council area.

The current programme involves more in depth work with each group, looking at the issues the women have identified in their own communities and examining the structural issues behind them in order to work towards a solution. At the end of the programme we plan to have the groups meet with each other to share their learning and insights, in order to strengthen our findings. This work has begun and will complete by the end of March 2020. A number of these groups are groups that we have worked with in 2018-19, which demonstrates the strong relationship we have built with the women we work with, and a number of other women's groups we have worked with previously are eager to work with us again in coming years.



This year we also completed a project called North Belfast Women's Voices, which was based on findings in our 2017 research report, *North Belfast Women's Voices: Exploring Women's Perceptions of Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition*. The project ran for two years and finished in September 2019, with the full report launched in the Lord Mayor's Parlour in Belfast City Council during Good Relations Week. The ultimate goal of the project was to produce a Women's Charter which looks at the structural issues behind the social problems in the area including sectarianism, paramilitarism and the mental health crisis, as well as proposing a set of principles for tackling these issues. Over a period of two years the participants took part in training on; human rights;

difference and othering; gender inequality; health inequalities and more before beginning the more difficult conversations. We are grateful for the courage and determination of these women who were willing to tackle some very sensitive issues with us. Their hard work allowed this project to be a success.

The full report is available on our website, and the summary of the Charter is as follows :

- ⇒ **People want a better future for the next generation but fear this may not happen**
- ⇒ **Integration, whatever way that happens, is key.**
- ⇒ **Understanding and education can help us understand the difficult parts of our history, as well as the reasons for certain traditions.**
- ⇒ **This understanding enables genuine respect and that must be mutual.**
- ⇒ **There is a feeling that certain vested interests want to keep us divided and suspicious; what more can be done about that?**
- ⇒ **There is a role for women, specifically, who are more willing to engage in cross-community work and healing.**
- ⇒ **There is an enormous well of trauma and grief and not enough help available for those who need it.**

This year we received a Justice & Equality fund grant from Rosa, the UK Fund for Women and Girls and TIMESUP UK to begin an exciting two year project that we have called *Raise Your Voice*. This project will tackle sexual harassment and sexual violence across Northern Ireland through a number of different approaches. We will be working directly with the community by delivering workshops that look at consent, victim blaming and examining the breadth and depth of the issue. In addition we will be working to increase public awareness, helping organisations to implement best practice and lobbying for legislative and other advances on this and related issues. This programme was launched in August 2019 and so it is in the early stages at the moment, but we are encouraged by the level of interest so far and excited to see what we can deliver in two years of working on this persistent issue. Workshops have begun to be rolled out with dates upcoming in Derry/Londonderry, Belfast and more. Details are available at www.raiseyourvoice.community



In addition to this, Belfast City Council awarded WRDA funding to work on a capacity building programme looking at sexist attitudes and sexual harassment as a barrier to women entering public life. Called *Breaking Down Barriers*, this programme sits alongside the Raise Your Voice project as an attempt to examine the seriousness of this issue and to record just how common and how damaging it is. We are going to work with four groups of women, focusing on those who are especially marginalised or targeted because of their membership of a particular demographic, these include LBT women, BME women, young women and older women. So far this project has resulted in some fascinating insights, and we hope that, along with Raise Your Voice, it will represent an opportunity to more fully understand and therefore to tackle the presence of sexism in the lives of women.

Communications

WRDA's mission is to advance women's equality and participation in society and communication is a key tool in achieving that transformation. Since our beginnings in 1983 WRDA has been a reliable source of information for the women's movement and this is a legacy we will build on in the year ahead.

We distribute monthly ezines and bi-monthly newsletters covering WRDA news and events as well as the wider women's sector. Our printed newsletter is an important source of news for women who don't have a computer or smartphone. We are always looking for new ways to use technology in our work but inclusion is at the heart of what we do. Our newsletter is delivered to over 600 addresses including our members, funders and statutory bodies and our ezine is emailed to over 900 subscribers. If you would like to be added to the ezine mailing list please email Megan on info@wrda.net.



Our Facebook and Twitter accounts continue to be valuable engagement tools. Over the past 12 months we tweeted over 700 times and increased our following by 15%. We have also posted on Facebook over 300 times and our page is now liked by 2,363 people, an increase of over 20%. Our website was redesigned in July to make it more user friendly. The website has been viewed 10,884 times in the four months since the redesign. Our blog, Bold Women Blogging has covered topics as diverse as women drivers, maternity discrimination at work and Christmas consumerism. It is a public submission blog so any woman can write a piece for it, if you are interested please contact Megan via info@wrda.net. The blog is available on our website.

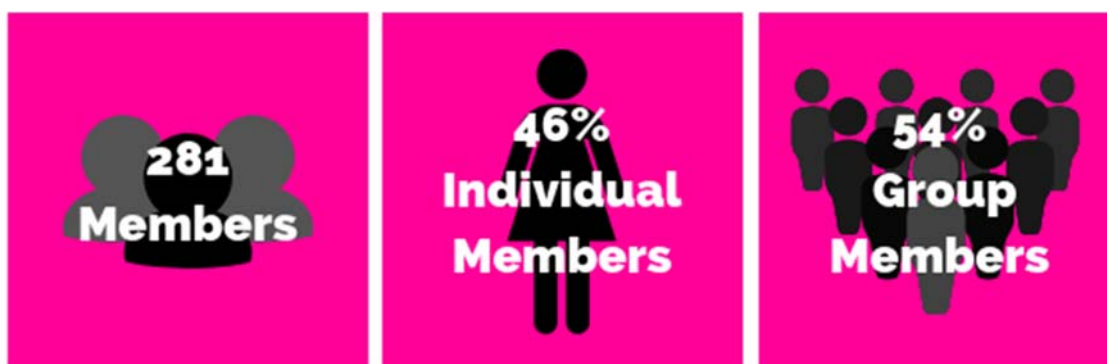
Find us on Facebook **@WomensResourceandDevelopmentAgency**

Follow us on Twitter **@WRDA_team**

Membership

Our members are a key part of WRDA, they keep us relevant and ensure we are working on the issues which really matter to grass roots women. We keep our members up to date with the latest developments in the wider women's sector and provide them with opportunities to publicise their own work in our ezine, blog and newsletter.

Our membership increased by 10% over the course of 2019 and membership applications can now be completed online.



Through our member's events and campaigning we create an accessible path for women to engage in activism. Over the past 12 months we held members events on reproductive rights and a quiz which will become an annual event. Other events planned for 2020 include a talk on fertility options and a talk on the history of the Trans community. If you would like to suggest a topic for a members event please contact Megan on info@wrda.net.

In 2020 we will continue to work for our entire membership by offering an extensive range of membership events, increasing the resources available to our members and ensuring we are responding to the needs of our members by regularly canvassing their views.



Emma Gallen, Captain of the winning team, the Boo Radleys.



Emma Campbell of Alliance For Choice with Brenda Callaghan at our 'Talking about Abortion' members event.

International Women's Day 2019

'The Time is Now. Women Rise UP'

The theme for this year's rally was 'The Time Is Now: Women Rise Up!' and the past 12 months have shown how important it is for NI women to rise up and demand our rights. On 8th March 2019 we were still reeling from the verdicts of several sexual assault cases which demonstrated how hard it is for survivors to get justice, after long years of active campaigning we still didn't have basic reproductive rights or marriage equality and welfare 'reforms' continued to savage women's income. There were reasons to be hopeful too - our sisters in the Republic of Ireland had won partial reproductive rights, those terrible trials started a real conversation about consent and trial reform and 2019 was the largest IWD rally yet. Throughout 2019 women in NI continued to rise up and demand our rights. The Gillen Review has secured some important trial reforms and a grass roots fightback movement has blossomed into the 'Raise Your Voice' project. Marriage equality has finally been achieved with the first weddings to take place in February 2020 and at midnight on the 21st of October abortion was decriminalised in NI. This has been a truly momentous year.



One chant during the rally particularly resonated with me, 'the women united, we'll never be divided'. We must make sure that over the next year NI Feminism continues to be a welcoming space for Trans women, non-binary and gender fluid people. We must be proactive against all attempts to divide the women's movement because only as a huge mass shouting loudly will we make sure all our concerns are listened to.

The Women's Regional Consortium



WRDA is one of seven partners who make up the Women's Regional Consortium (WRC) which is funded under the Department for Communities' Regional Infrastructure Support Programme (RISP). The aim of WRC is to provide a strong voice for women from disadvantaged and rural areas by providing advocacy and leadership, policy and research analysis, service support and engagement to ensure that their views are respected by decision makers.

During this reporting period the Consortium responded to various government department consultations including, the BEIS Good Work Plan, Reshaping Breast Assessment Services and the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill. A comprehensive communications plan was also developed to maximise the Consortium's reach.

WRC's membership was surveyed in November 2018 to gauge Partner members' current engagement with, awareness of and satisfaction with the work of the Consortium. The feedback from the survey was very positive with 71% of respondents rating the information provided by the WRC as excellent or good. The results of the survey were used to plan future work.

The Consortium's social media channels are used to raise awareness of the work of the partners and so operate as a booster for their social media presence. The Consortium's Facebook page is liked by nearly 400 people and the WRC's twitter has over 1,000 followers. Both cover a wide range of content from all Partners. The website is updated monthly and has a large resources section.

Find us on Facebook @WomensRegionalConsortium

Follow us on Twitter @WRC_NI



nirwn
Northern Ireland
Rural Women's Network



FWIN



Women's Centre Derry
ACCESS & EMPOWERMENT

WOMEN'STEC
Enabling women into non-traditional employment

WSN
WOMEN'S SUPPORT NETWORK

WRDA Representation

Policy and Advocacy

- Women's Regional Consortium
- Women's Policy Group
- Northern Ireland Women's Budget Group
- Rural Women's Policy Forum
- Gender Advisory Panel
- Brexit and Human Rights Working Group
- Equality Coalition
- Early Years Strategic Alliance
- Northern Ireland Consultative group on Women, Peace and Security

Health Inequalities

- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (South & East) Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Community of Interest
- Health Forums across Belfast
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Community of Interest
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Equality and Disability Action Plan
- Self-care Pharmacy Project Reference Group

Leadership and Infrastructure Support

- Government/Community and Voluntary Sector Joint Forum
- Board of Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network (NIRWN)
- Forum for Adult Learning Northern Ireland (FALNI)
- Board of Northern Ireland Women's European Network (NIWEP)
- Management Committee of Reclaim the Agenda (RTA)



**NI
WOMEN'S
BUDGET
GROUP**



nirwn
Northern Ireland
Rural Women's Network

**NI
WEP**



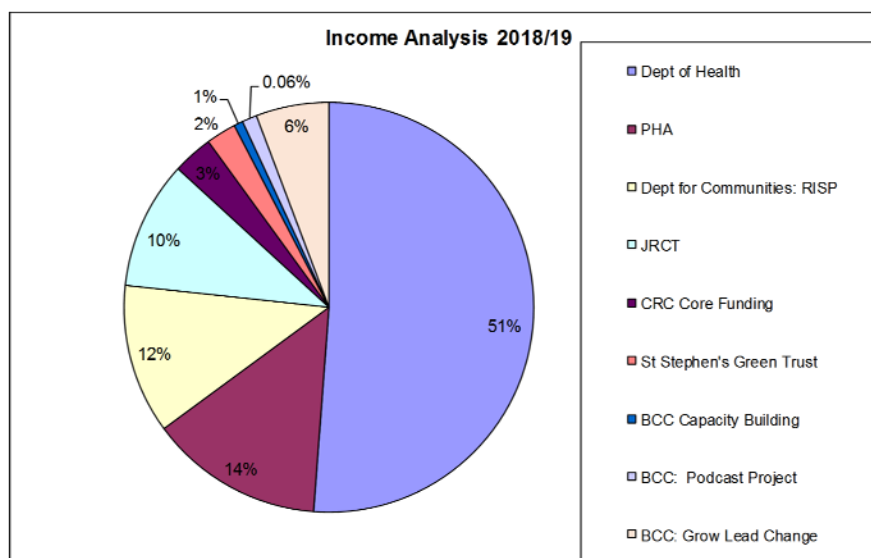
**Women's Regional
Consortium**

Explanation of 2018/19 Accounts

The audited accounts have been adopted in line with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice which is applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) which was effective from 1 January 2015.

Income

Income this year was £444,030 an increase of £40,869 on the previous year with £420,418 of restricted funding. Last year's restricted income was £383,440, an increase this year of £36,978.



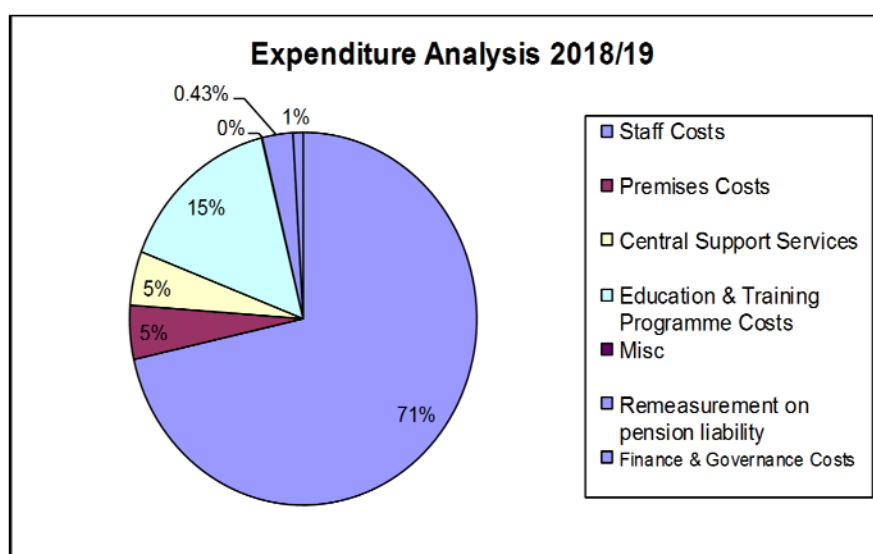
The breakdown of unrestricted funding (£23,475) for 2018/19, was as follows:

- Use of premises £8,737
- Bank interest £104
- Other £14,634 (Rent, earned income, donations and HMRC).

Last year's unrestricted income was £19,243 an increase this year of £4,232

Expenditure

Expenditure this year was £397,279, last year the expenditure was £371,084, an increase this year of £26,195. This increase was due mainly to increased programme costs, staff travel and refurbishment costs. The largest expenditure which is on salaries decreased by £9,553 from £293,160 to £283,607.



Financial Position for the Year Ended 31 March 2019

This year the accounts show a nett surplus of £46,751, with an unrestricted surplus of £12,955. At 31 Mar 2019 the pension liability has been calculated at £219,158.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

			31.3.19	31.3.18
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS				
Donations and legacies	137	-		478
Charitable activities	-	420,418	420,418	383,440
Other income	23,475	-	23,475	19,243
	<u>23,612</u>	<u>420,418</u>	<u>444,030</u>	<u>19,161</u>
EXPENDITURE ON				
Charitable activities				
Direct charitable expenditure	-	385,929	385,929	372,595
Other	-	11,350	11,350	(1,511)
	<u>-</u>	<u>397,279</u>	<u>397,279</u>	<u>371,084</u>
Total	-	397,279	397,279	371,084
NET INCOME	<u>23,612,</u>	<u>23,139</u>	<u>46,751</u>	<u>32,077</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total funds brought forward	(10,657)	168,949	158,292	126,215
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>12,955</u>	<u>192,088</u>	<u>205,043</u>	<u>158,292</u>

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2019

	31.3.19	31.3.18
	£	£
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible Assets	241,759	241,759
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	65,038	62,180
Cash at bank	170,524	129,288
	<u>235,562</u>	<u>191,468</u>
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year	(3,120)	(3,120)
	<u></u>	<u></u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>232,442</u>	<u>188,348</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES CREDITORS	474,201	430,107
Amounts falling due after more than one year	(50,000)	(50,000)
PENSION LIABILITY	<u>(219,158)</u>	<u>(221,815)</u>
NET ASSETS (LIABILITIES)	<u>205,043</u>	<u>158,292</u>
FUNDS		
Unrestricted funds	12,955	(10,657)
Restricted funds	192,088	168,949
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>205,043</u>	<u>158,292</u>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice,) including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. The financial statements also comply with the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 26 September 2019 and signed on behalf of WRDA by Anne O'Reilly, Chairperson, Patricia Donald, Director and Caroline McCord, Company Secretary. The financial details provided in this report are intended to provide a summary of the full audited accounts. A full copy is available.

Acknowledgements

The staff would like to thank our Management Committee, Community Facilitators, and members for their support and commitment throughout the year. We would also like to express our gratitude to the following organisations for their financial assistance and support for our work:



**Justice
and \equiv
Equality
 \equiv Fund**

**NOW'S
THE
TIME**

MANAGED BY ROSA



Notes

© 2019 Women's Resource & Development Agency.

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC100149.

Registered Office: 6 Mount Charles, Belfast, BT7 1NZ

Tel: 02890230212

Email: info@wrda.net

www.wrda.net

A Visible Force for Change



women's
RESOURCE & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
Supporting Women's Groups and Networks Across Northern Ireland