



women's

RESOURCE & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Supporting Women's Groups and Networks Across Northern Ireland

Newsletter ~ October/November 2020

Annual General Meeting 2020 'Bringing The Strategic Plan To Life'



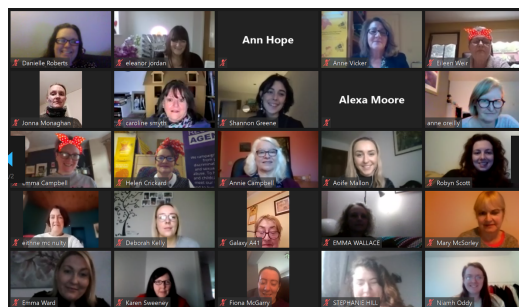
WRDA celebrated our 37th Annual General Meeting on the 5th of November. The chair of our Management Committee, Anne O'Reilly, welcomed all to our first Zoom AGM. She thanked the Director, Anne McVicker and the staff for their adaptability and resilience during an uncertain year and thanked the board of WRDA for their expertise and energy.

Our Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (available on the website) was developed with the input of members at the AGM in 2019 and so the theme of the AGM

this year was 'Bringing the Strategic Plan to Life'. Presentations focusing on the different aims of the plan were given by Deirdre Quinn (Training and Development Coordinator), Elaine Crory (Good Relations Coordinator) and Megan McClure Botha (Communications and Membership Worker). The Annual Report 2020 was presented by Anne McVicker and the accounts were presented by Geraldine Burns (Finance and HR Manager).

Three special resolutions were passed and the Management Committee was reelected to serve another year.

You can watch an abridged recording of the Annual General Meeting on our YouTube channel (Womens Resource Development Agency) and the Annual Report 2020 and Strategic Plan 2020-25 are available on the website (wrda.net/about-us/).



The meeting was closed by Anne O'Reilly who thanked everyone for attending.

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Maternal Advocacy and Support Project Gets Rolled Out

WRDA is excited to introduce the Mas Project (Maternal Advocacy Support). Following the success of the pilot project, we have received 3 years funding from Big Lottery Community fund to work with 8 Women's Centres, setting up peer support groups with women who have been impacted by perinatal mental health related issues. The groups are open to women who are pregnant or have children age 0-3, childcare and lunch is provided. WRDA has delivered induction training to women's centre staff. We are working closely with Aware NI who will deliver training and support the project workers in women's centres. Ballybeen, Greenway, Atlas and Windsor have received training and the peer support will start December and January in these centres. Falls, Footprint, Women's Centre Derry and Strathfoyle will also have groups in place in January/ February 2021.

1 in 5 women will experience a mental health problem during pregnancy or in the year after giving birth



In year 2 and 3 of the project, women with lived experience of maternal mental health issues will engage in the campaign for change for improved perinatal mental health service provision. We are excited to see the development of this new project that will encourage women to support each other and use their lived experiences to be motivation for creating future change for women in Northern Ireland.

Good Relations Webinar Series Launched

Our Good Relations Coordinator, Elaine Crory, has created a series of webinars as part of our Community Relations Council funded Good Relations project. The first of four lectures is available now on our website. This lecture is an introduction to Good Relations and further lectures will be announced on our social media channels in the coming weeks.

- **What is Good Relations with a gendered lens?**
- **What is UN1325 and why is it important?**
- **What is / has been the role of women peacebuilders?**
- **What can be the role of women going forward?**

Catch Up on The Feminist Recovery Plan Webinar Series

The webinar series to accompany the Women's Policy Group *Covid-19 Feminist Recovery Plan* is still ongoing and the next event will be on the 10th of December. This event looks at women's rights in the context of Brexit, a Bill of Rights and UNSCR 1325.

If you have missed the previous five events in this series, they are available to view online and summaries for each event are also available. You can find the series on the WRDA website (wrda.net/feminist-recovery-plan/).

Stormont and Westminster Update Launched



We have launched a new monthly digest of everything of interest to women from Stormont and Westminster. The digest starts with an easy summary and then provides more information on specific Bills.

You can read the digest on our website by going to the lobbying page and clicking 'Stormont and Westminster Update'.

In the period 1st October – 19th November 2020, there have been a number of political developments surrounding three key themes as highlighted within the Women's Policy Group COVID-19 Feminist Recovery Plan. One of the core areas that has witnessed development in NI is around domestic violence legislation and support services. In Westminster, we witnessed similar developments, however, there have been additional developments in support for women's employment and women's health services, mainly abortion access.

Domestic Violence has been a prominent agenda point in both the Northern Ireland Assembly and Westminster governments. Developments in relation to the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill in Northern Ireland have been particularly significant. The bill, as well as increased resources to Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland, aims to address the exacerbated issue of domestic violence in NI postCOVID-19. In real-world terms, the aim is to provide a comprehensive system whereby women and families who experience domestic violence have legal and practical support to escape the situation in addition to receiving justice.

In Employment, there have been a range of political developments. Most notably, those in Westminster aiming to tackle the negative effect of COVID-19 on women's engagement in the workplace. Additionally, childcare provisions and the Equal Pay Legislation debates both focus on more specific barriers to women's labour force participation. These developments affect women's lives as they aim to mitigate barriers to women's employment. This challenges the gender pay gap and the disproportionate economic effect on women through COVID-19. This will hopefully further economic stability for women and diminish economic marginalisation through encouraging labour force participation and equality within the workforce.

In terms of women's Health, the most significant development seen here is the introduction a bill to legislate within Great Britain for buffer zones around abortion clinics. This would hinder harassment and intimidation faced by women and eliminate this as a barrier to accessing services.

