



RAPE CRISIS
M I D W E S T

Annual Report
2021

Rape Crisis Midwest is a member of Rape Crisis Network Ireland



The legend of the Phoenix speaks of its ability to heal itself, if injured during its lifetime. Our logo of the Phoenix Rising symbolises our belief that people can and do heal from the trauma of sexual violence.



ABOUT US

Rape Crisis Midwest was founded in 1980 as Limerick Rape Crisis Centre, by a group of women and men who were concerned about the lack of services for survivors of rape and sexual abuse. Since then it has worked to provide a quality professional, information, support and counselling service for survivors of sexual violence and abuse throughout the Midwest region.

Rape Crisis Midwest is an active member of Rape Crisis Network of Ireland (RCNI). Rape Crisis Network Ireland is a specialist policy agency on sexual violence. owned and governed by the member Rape Crisis Centres. RCNI have been serving survivors' interests and working towards the prevention of all forms of sexual violence since 1985. RCNI builds and sustains considerable expertise to identify, make the case for, and implement priorities for a whole of society and Government response to sexual violence. RCNI supports and promotes the work of Rape Crisis Centres and provides a national voice for survivors of sexual violence. Rape Crisis Midwest abides by the RCNI code of ethics, framework and practice.

Our Vision

The vision of Rape Crisis Midwest is of a society where all adults and children live free from sexual violence.

Our Mission

The mission of Rape Crisis Midwest is to improve the lives of those who experience sexual violence or abuse and to work towards the elimination of sexual violence and abuse in our society.

Our Ethos

Rape Crisis Midwest is guided by a Feminist Framework influenced by the following values and guiding principles

- All women and men have the right to safe and respectful relationships and to live free from violence
- In the historical context of Ireland, work to prevent violence against women and children cannot be separated from efforts to address patriarchy and intergenerational trauma.
- Recognition that the oppression of women exists at three main levels and sexual violence prevention must work to effect change at all these levels:

1. Broad social and cultural

2. Structural and systematic

3. Interpersonal, direct, face-to-face

- Violence against women and girls is perpetuated by, and reinforces unequal power relations between women and men, gender stereotyping, sexual discrimination, and structural inequalities. We will not effectively prevent gender-based or sexual violence unless structural inequalities are systematically addressed.
- Violence against women and girls is an abuse of power and a violation of human rights. It affects women and girls throughout their lives, regardless of cultural, religious, or socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Violence against women and girls, inclusive of sexual violence, cannot be eliminated by tackling sexism alone. We must work to end all forms of oppression such as class, age, sexuality, ethnicity, and disability that intersects to shape the forms of violence against women as well the experience of violence by women and girls. Thus, diverse backgrounds, contexts, and life experiences must be recognized and addressed in prevention strategies.

- All prevention strategies, programmes, and initiatives must ensure that accessible and appropriate systems of support are available to respond to existing violence.
- The whole community is responsible for the condemnation and elimination of violence against women and developing a culture of respect and equity. Engaging communities is essential in creating effective solutions to prevent, respond to, reduce, and mitigate violence.
- Prevailing forms of hegemonic masculinity including violent behaviour, aggression, resistance to expressions of emotion, and displays of toughness are toxic in nature and demonstrates a quest in proving masculinity by demonstrating power over women and other men. We endeavor to address stereotypical, social constructs of power that are dysfunctional for women, men and children who might encounter it.
- Men who are violent against women must be held accountable for their behavior and are expected to change. Non-violent men have a positive role to play in the prevention of violence against women, and in shaping respectful and gender-equitable

Our Board of Directors 2021

Helen Fitzgerald (Chairperson)

Lucy Smith (Vice Chairperson)

Brian Dunne

Fiona Quinn

Michael Howes

Mary Kelly

Yvonne Murphy

Caroline Holmes

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS 2021

Helen Fitzgerald, (*Chairperson*) Brian Dunne, Caroline Holmes Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Lucy Smith, (*Vice Chair*) Mary Kelly (*Co. Sec*), Mike Howes (*Finance*)

Date	Attendees Present	Apologies
Feb 8 th	Helen Fitzgerald, Brian Dunne. Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Mary Kelly, Caroline Holmes	Lucy Smith (<i>maternity leave</i>), Mike Howes,
March 29 th	Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Mary Kelly, Caroline Holmes Mike Howes	Lucy Smith (<i>maternity leave</i>), Brian Dunne
April 26 th	Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Mary Kelly, Mike Howes Brian Dunne	Lucy Smith (<i>maternity leave</i>), Caroline Holmes
May 31 st	Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy, Mary Kelly, Caroline Holmes	Lucy Smith (<i>maternity leave</i>). Fiona Quinn, Mike Howes Brian Dunne

July 26 th	Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Caroline Holmes, Brian Dunne	Lucy Smith (<i>maternity leave</i>), Mike Howes Mary Kelly
Sept 27 th	Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Caroline Holmes, Lucy Smith, Mike Howes, Mary Kelly	Brian Dunne
Oct 18 th	Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Brian Dunne, Lucy Smith, Mike Howes, Mary Kelly	Caroline Holmes
Nov 29 th	Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Brian Dunne, Lucy Smith, Mary Kelly	Caroline Holmes Mike Howes,
Dec 13 th	Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Lucy Smith, Mary Kelly Mike Howes	Helen Fitzgerald, Brian Dunne, Caroline Holmes
AGM 26th July	Brian Dunne, Fiona Quinn, Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy Caroline Holmes and Miriam Duffy	Lucy Smith, Michael Howes, Mary Kelly,

- Rape Crisis Midwest CLG is registered in the CRA's Register of Charities (No. 20024970)
- CHY Tax Exemption - Our Charity Tax Exemption Number is CHY9931
- Governance Code - we confirm that our Organisation complies with the Governance Code we have adopted the Governance Code for the community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations
- Commitments to Standards in Fundraising Practice - we confirm that we comply with the Statement of Guiding principles as set out in the ICTR website.



Executive Director Miriam Duffy 2021

Jan 2021 saw the 2nd Covid Lockdown and all work with clients again moved to phone or video sessions. Throughout 2021 Covid 19 continued to impact on the service. We returned to in person work in July but continue to provide a blended model of service, switching to remote /online sessions as appropriate, to meet client needs.

The RCNI Sexual Violence Specialisation Training for Counsellors in Rape Crisis Centres began in Sept 2021 (completion May 2022). This had been postponed in 2020 and I would like to thank the trainers Ruth McNeely and Michelle Walsh for their commitment to the delivery of this training.

Rape Crisis Midwest 5 - year Strategic Plan 2022 -2027 was developed. This will guide the service in the coming years. Our grateful thanks to all who engaged with us in this work and Alexis Amaye and the team at Free to Transform who led the project.

The JP Mc Manus Pro Am committee supported us with an early release of funds. RCM cleared the outstanding mortgage on Phoenix house in Dec. The monies from the core budget, which in past years were allocated to mortgage repayments, will be allocated to a 3-day training and Education post beginning Jan 2022.

Rape Crisis Midwest continued its directorship on Rape Crisis Network Ireland Board. As always, the RCNI team and our sister member centres were an invaluable support to our work.

Our work was supported by Tusla who provide our core funding

The Board, Staff and all of our Volunteers and Supporters have worked tirelessly to ensure that we continued to deliver our services to the people who contact us for help. We will continue to provide our services to meet the increasing demands.

Services

Our services continue to be provided from our three centres, the Limerick office and our part time satellite centres in Ennis and Nenagh. Again, this year saw an increase in numbers contacting us.

Our Limerick centre is open 6 days Mon – Sat and can offer some evening appointments.

Our Ennis centre is open Tuesday and Wednesday (by appointment only).

Our Nenagh centre is open Thursday and Friday (by appointment only).

All initial appointments are in the Limerick centre.

- **338 people were seen or accompanied**
- **138 new clients began counselling with us**
- **330 Survivors (138 were new clients and 84 clients finished counselling)**
- **8 Supporters**

4,033 counselling appointments were offered

(Limerick 3107, Prison Service 116, Clare 385, North Tipperary 425)

Counselling Service: Rape Crisis Midwest offers specialised counselling /therapy sessions to adult survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse. All our counsellors are professionally qualified and have had additional Sexual Violence Training. All of our counsellors are RCNI registered. We unfortunately need to operate a waiting list for on-going long-term counselling, but we endeavor to offer support sessions to people while they are on the waiting list.

Free Helpline:

Rape Crisis Midwest operates a free helpline service 1800 311 511. This service is generally available Mon – Sat 9am -5 pm. This is a confidential, non-directive service and is available to survivors, supporters, families, friends, other professionals and other services. We can also be reached at info@rapecrisis.ie.

2021 Contacts 1539 Voice calls 1023, Email 210, Text 299, Soc Media 6, Post 1.

1161 of these contacts were from Survivors, 171 from Supporters, 169 from professionals and 38 from other categories.

Midwest Forensic Medical Examination Service Support:

This service in the Midwest operates when a report of Rape or Sexual Assault is reported to An Garda Siochana. The service is out of hours operating from 6.30 each weekday until approx. 5am. The service operates 24 hours at weekends and Bank Holidays. Rape Crisis Midwest, RCNI trained, psychological support volunteers attend and provide vital support to the victim and their family/friends. Crisis counselling and support is offered and referral to STI screening can be arranged.

9 people were supported by this service in 2021.

Garda Accompaniment Service:

Rape Crisis Midwest will provide a support person to accompany victims who wish to make a statement. The support person will attend the Garda station with the victim or if it is the victim's preference, we can make a room in the centre available.

Court Accompaniment Service In 2021, 8 clients and their families were supported in court by Rape Crisis Midwest



My name is Terrie. I have been a volunteer with Rape Crisis Midwest for almost ten years. Part of the volunteer work I do includes the Court Accompaniment Service, this particular area of the support work is invaluable to survivors. I am there to support the client through one of the most difficult times of their lives. It is a frightening experience for the client, for not only are they coming face to face with their abuser, but they must also tell their story to a courtroom of strangers.

I always plan ahead and have a Victim Support room booked, open and ready in advance. This ensures a safe space and privacy for the client. This may sound like a small detail, but I know how much difference it makes to them and their families, as they always comment on this and are so grateful to have the room available to them.

It is often helpful for clients to visit the courthouse prior to the trial date, this is just to familiarise themselves with the layout of the building and of course the courtroom itself, it is a daunting place to visit and most have never been inside a courtroom before. I also plan and arrange the courthouse visit in advance; this helps to make the process of giving evidence before the courts less traumatic.

I have no doubt that the Court Accompaniment Service is a great support to the clients during their trial time, it helps so much to have someone there to keep them calm and reassure them that everything will be ok and that I am there to make sure that their time in the courthouse is as easy as it can be. It is an important and responsible role but it makes such a difference. I am sure that all the clients that have availed of the service will agree, the feedback speaks for itself.

When a court case is being heard in the Midwest we can provide a support person to accompany or if the case is heard elsewhere in the country we will link with the local RCC to access this service there

Supporters Group:

In 2021 we began to run a monthly group for people who are supporting survivors. The Supporters who attended found this very beneficial and this group will continue to run through 2022.

Training and Education:

Rape Crisis Midwest delivered training /awareness to several groups across the Midwest. As part of our commitment to our own ongoing learning the board, staff and volunteers attend training on an on-going basis.

The RCNI **Sexual Violence Specialization Training for Counsellors Course** began in September. We had been unable to run this in 2020 due to Covid constraints.

Fundraising and Events 2021

Our core statutory funding is delivered through Tusla, to facilitate delivery and expansion of agreed services. But we operate each year with a deficit of approximately €110,000 and depend heavily on donations and fundraising.

2021 was once again a year full of many positives as well as challenges for Rape Crisis Midwest. We returned to work after the Christmas break to face another 5 months of lockdown until April.

The background work carried out in 2020 with our online platforms paid dividends and we were fortunate to have a group of loyal supporters who carried out numerous Facebook and Instagram fundraisers. Members of the public also came up with inventive ways to support us. Orla Kinnane of Nadur Ceramics in Tipperary hosted a raffle raising hundreds for our centre whilst the wonderful Hannah Quinn Mulligan and her grandmother Catherine held an outdoor bake sale at their farm in Tory Hill, Croom. Equally, in Nenagh, John Tooher of Nenagh Eire Og was busy organising a lotto competition raising money for Rape Crisis Midwest. All these events took place before restrictions were eased.

The staff at Rape Crisis Midwest continued nonetheless to work behind the scenes planning a schedule of events for 2021 assisted by Ellen Mullins who was on placement with us from the University of Limerick as well as a number of students from Laurel Hill Colaiste FCJ

Once the country opened up in April, Limerick's newest brewing company 'Crew Brewing' in Thomas Street held their first 'birthday party' with proceeds going to Rape Crisis Midwest raising over €1,000.

The Canoeing Ireland awards were held in April and our 10k Paddle Kayaking event was named "Charity Event of the year 2020" – this was a great way to launch the date for our 2021 event held in August again. The weather was not as kind, but that didn't stop nearly 200 paddlers taking part. This event was a community effort involving organisations across Limerick including Limerick Suicide Watch, Limerick Sport Partnership, Kayaking Academy and many others. We were fortunate to have built a solid relationship with these groups over the years.

The summer months also allowed us to reach out to thank many of our corporate supporters – we consider ourselves fortunate to have countless companies and organisations who support our mission and donate every year. Unfortunately, we were not able to welcome volunteers to our centre for annual "corporate days" as many companies were only introducing staff back into their buildings in the summer of 2021. That said, we met with as many of our supporters as possible including Derek Walsh from Limerick Bar Association and Mark Coleman of St Francis Credit Union, Ennis who donate to us on an annual basis. We are privileged to have corporate donors who support larger projects within our centre – companies include EI Electronics and GECAS.

The Autumn brought our annual Thomond Park Quiz and for a variety of reasons, we went virtual with the event again in 2021. We felt due to rising cases of Covid-

19, that it might be too risky to book venues, food etc. It was still a great success and many of our loyal supporters tuned in to the online event by App. Martina Carroll also paid a visit to St Mary's Nenagh School in Autumn and collected a cheque from the proceeds of a fundraiser by the Transition year students.

Mark Dempsey from Limerick Masters Swimming Club also paid a visit to our centre in Autumn and had thoughts about a "Women in Sport" series of talks. His plans came to fruition and Rape Crisis Midwest co-hosted a series of 4 evenings of talks in November and December with International speakers with 100% of the proceeds to our centre.

As well as the seminar of talks, our Clare Committee had been working in the background on a new annual event – our experience has shown over the years that it takes many years to build the reputation of a new event. We launched our new event 'Step up for Change' in November 2021 and we hope to build on this over the coming years

December brought the usual flurry of book sales of our every popular "Ancient Irish Trees" and we sold approximately 60 books during December. Gerry and Carmel Cronin of Ennis decorated their house with hundreds of lights and collected over €2,100 for Rape Crisis Midwest. The Community Foundation also announced the recipients of their Capacity Building Grants and we were delighted to receive €10,000 towards enhancing our Digital Strategy over the coming years.

PINTS

People have been so generous to us over the last 12 months. In an effort to give something back to the community we have decided to donate 50% of proceeds from Crew beer sales on our birthday to a worthy cause.

Rape Crisis Midwest provides a range of supports and services to men and women who have survived any form of sexual violence.

RAPE CRISIS MIDWEST




WOMEN IN SPORT

Join us for a series of inspiring talks by Tiffany Quinn, Jacqueline McClelland, Aisling Armshaw, Rachael Lee, Rosie Foley, Fionnuala Walsh, Jen Schumacher, and Jaimie Monahan.

100% of the proceeds go to Rape Crisis Midwest





2021





www.rapecrisis.ie

Email: info@rapecrisis.ie



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