RAPE CRISIS NETWORK IRELAND

RAPE CRISIS MIDWEST

RAPE CRISIS
MIDWEST

Annual Report

2022

Rape Crisis Midwest is a member of Rape Crisis Network Ireland

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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 2022

Helen Fitzgerald (Chairperson)

Lucy Smith (Vice Chairperson)

Brian Dunne (retired)

Fiona Quinn

Michael Howes

Mary Kelly (Vice Chairperson)

Yvonne Murphy

Caroline Holmes

Marguerite O'Neill

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS 2022

Helen Fitzgerald, *(Chairperson*) Brian Dunne, (*Retired May)* Caroline Holmes, Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Lucy Smith, *(Vice Chair)* Mary Kelly *(Co. Sec)*, Mike Howes *(Finance)* Marguerite O'Neill *(From May)*

Date	Attendees Present	Apologies
Jan 24th	Helen Fitzgerald, Mary Kelly, Brian Dunne, Fiona Quinn, Mike Howes, Caroline Holmes	Yvonne Murphy, Lucy Smith
Feb 21st	Helen Fitzgerald, Brian Dunne. Fiona Quinn, Mary Kelly, Caroline Holmes, Mike Howes, Lucy Smith	Yvonne Murphy,
April 11th	Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Mary Kelly, Mike Howes, Brian Dunne, Caroline Holmes, Lucy Smith & Marguerite O Neill.	Mary Kelly
May 16th	Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy, Mary Kelly, Caroline Holmes, Brian Dunne, Lucy Smith, Marguerite O'Neill	Yvonne Murphy

June 8th	Helen Fitzgerald, Lucy Smith, Marguerite O'Neill, Mike Howes, Yvonne Murphy,	Mary Kelly, Fiona Quinn,
June 27th	Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Caroline Holmes, Lucy Smith, Mike Howes, Marguerite O'Neill	Mary Kelly
Sept 12th	Helen Fitzgerald, Fiona Quinn, Mary Kelly, Marguerite O'Neill	Yvonne Murphy, Caroline Holmes, Lucy Smith, Mike Howes,
Oct 3rd	Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Brian Dunne, Lucy Smith, Mike Howes, Marguerite O'Neill	Caroline Holmes, Mary Kelly
Nov 14th	Fiona Quinn, Brian Dunne, Lucy Smith, Mary Kelly, Caroline Holmes, Marguerite O'Neill	Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy, Mike Howes,
Dec 13th	Helen Fitzgerald, Caroline Holmes, Yvonne Murphy, Fiona Quinn, Lucy Smith, Mary Kelly, Mike Howes, Marguerite O'Neill	
AGM 26th July	**Fiona Quinn, Helen Fitzgerald, Yvonne Murphy, Lucy Smith, Michael Howes, Caroline Holmes and Miriam Duffy.**	**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.

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Executive Director Miriam Duffy

2022 was the final full year of my work with Rape Crisis Midwest as I will be retiring in April/May 2023. For the past 21 years it has been my privilege to lead the incredible organization that is Rape Crisis Midwest. Looking back over the years there have been so many changes and development. The purchase and move to Phoenix house, the restructuring of the organization from the founding collective to a Company Limited by Guarantee. The work with the Regional planning committee which resulted in the setting up of the FME out of hour service in the Midwest and our role in providing psychological support to victims. The setting up of the satellite services in the Nenagh & Ennis centres. These are some of the high points but there were many more – Conferences and seminars to create awareness, training and work with many different groups and organisations.

None of this would have been possible without the support of the dedicated staff, board and volunteers who give so much of their time and energy to the work of the centre. My sincere and grateful thanks to all of you.

Our policy and work practices and procedures are continually reviewed in conjunction with Rape Crisis Network Ireland and the other Rape Crisis member centres to provide safety for our clients. The support of RCNI and our sister Centres has been invaluable over the years.

Looking Forward.

As I exit, a 5 year strategic plan (2022 – 2027) was developed by the board and all relevant stakeholders to guide the work in the coming years. The development of a training post, which has been a long-standing aspiration of mine, was put in place in January 2022. Another key element of the strategy is the Digital Transformation which will be needed as we broaden our reach. Through 2022 a plan for this work was developed. The external environment will change in 2024 when the DSGBV sector moves to the Dept of Justice which I am certain will bring new challenges and opportunities.

My very best wishes for the future to all of my Rape Crisis Family.

Love to you all Miriam

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.

- **397 people were seen or accompanied**
- **133 new clents began counselling with us**
- **3,781 counselling appointments were offered**

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.

Contacts to helpline in 2022 927, 686 of these contacts were from Survivors, 112 from Supporters, 121 from professionals and 17 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.

19 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

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

In 2022, 13 clients and their families were supported in court by Rape Crisis Midwest

Supporters Group:

RCM runs a monthly group for people who are supporting survivors. This is offered to supporters who whether or not the survivor is attending the centre.

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Training and Education:

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.

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www.rapecrisis.ie

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