



“On the 4th November 2008”



**A National
One Day Count of
Women and Children
Accessing SAFE IRELAND
Domestic Violence Services**



SAFE IRELAND and Domestic Violence Service Provision in Ireland

SAFE IRELAND is the national representative body for women's frontline domestic violence services in Ireland. We have forty member organisations that provide a range of services and supports to women and their children experiencing or at risk from domestic violence. The majority of member organisations also lobby and advocate for societal change in relation to state and community responses to women at risk of violence.

There are 40 dedicated domestic violence services in Ireland. Nineteen¹ of these are refuges providing emergency accommodation for women or women and their children experiencing domestic violence. As well as safe, secure accommodation, refuges in Ireland also provide emotional and practical support to women, aftercare, support groups, court accompaniment and advocacy. The majority of refuges also provide dedicated child supports including childcare, art therapy, group support and one to one emotional supports.

A further 19 member organisations of SAFE IRELAND provide a range of non-accommodation based supports to women including advocacy, support, information, helplines and court accompaniment. A number of SAFE IRELAND members provide transitional housing for women experiencing domestic violence. One member is dedicated to providing this type of housing, together with long term aftercare support.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the support and expertise we received from Cindy Southworth, NNEDV² in applying the census methodology to an Irish context. We would also like to thank members of the board of SAFE IRELAND and Professor Cris Sullivan, Michigan State University, for their input and advice on the development of this document. We especially want to thank the members of SAFE IRELAND who collected and compiled the information on Census Day.

¹ In addition, one of our members is currently developing a new refuge which is not yet operational
² National Network to End Domestic Violence in the United States of America

On the 4th November 2008

On the **4th November 2008**, 38³ frontline domestic violence services in Ireland participated in a National Census⁴ co-ordinated by SAFE IRELAND. On census day we counted the number of women and children receiving support and accommodation due to domestic violence within a 24 hour period. The purpose of this census was to obtain a sense of both the magnitude of the problem in Ireland and the amount of support currently being provided to women and their children. We also hoped that in releasing these figures it would raise awareness of the issue amongst the general public and encourage more women to access support.

When presenting the results of the one day census, we also want to give an understanding of the context of these statistics, in particular how a woman's experience of domestic violence may impact on her ability to seek and obtain safety for herself and her children. Therefore, we have incorporated stories from a PhD⁵ thesis that explores how we experience and embody trauma, especially in relation to violence against women. The stories are based on experiences of working within a domestic violence refuge. They aim to capture and then engage the reader with the essence of some of the most difficult and challenging issues in responding to women and children experiencing domestic violence.

It is important to highlight that domestic violence may take many forms and beyond the stories and figures we present to you here, there are many more stories and experiences not yet captured. Every woman's experience may be different but every woman at risk or living in fear has the right to safety and peace, as do her children if she has them. Please see page 12-15 for a full list of the domestic violence services in Ireland, as well as details of safety planning and other relevant helpline numbers.

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- 3 SAFE IRELAND currently has 40 members. One member is building a refuge and the remaining service did not participate in the Census.
 - 4 A national census is a well recognised, valuable methodology used internationally. Annual one day counts have been carried out in the US since 2006 and the UK since 2005. The data in this document represents a 24 hour snapshot and should not be multiplied by 365 to give a full year picture.
 - 5 Stories taken from the **The Unsaid and The Walking Away: Seventeen Stories about Horses, Violence, Trauma and Women**. © Morton (2008) Phd Thesis. University of Bath.

On the 4th November 2008...



263

263 WOMEN WERE ACCOMMODATED AND/OR RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE

216 CHILDREN WERE ACCOMMODATED AND/OR RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE



216



239

239 HELPLINE CALLS WERE RECEIVED FROM WOMEN

17 WOMEN AND 15 CHILDREN WERE ADMITTED TO REFUGE ON THIS DAY



17



6

6 WOMEN COULD NOT BE ACCOMMODATED IN REFUGE BECAUSE THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH SPACE

Women accessing domestic violence services

In total **263 women** got support or were accommodated in domestic violence services in Ireland. Of these, 87 women were accommodated in refuge, 48 women were in transitional housing and the remaining 128 accessed a range of one to one supports or a support group.

Seventeen women were admitted to refuge during the 24 hour census. Seven women left the refuge they were staying in on the census day. Six women were turned away from refuge because the refuge was full.

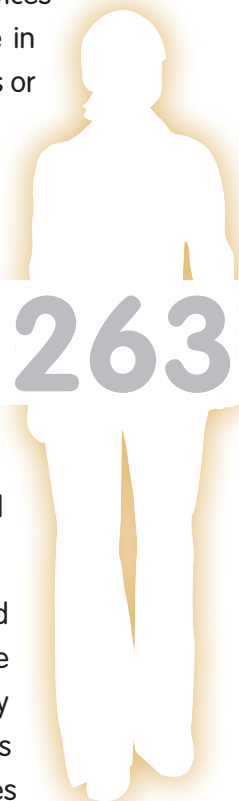
Two hundred and sixty-three women

I suppose you might be thinking why doesn't she just leave, why all these refuges and other supports? But then there are the complex dynamics a woman deals with when she is experiencing abuse and violence. How hard it is to free herself and find safety. The subtle mix of fear, and so few options and normalisation of violence.

Sometimes we forget all the things every woman does to resist the violence. She did not want this violence, did not choose it or ask for it. She may not leave or it may be easier for her to go back but still, somewhere, somehow, she is saying 'no'. It may be silently, it may be in how she holds her body or protects her child, in how she tells no one in case it makes it worse, in how she avoids the violence, minimises, does everything she can to make it right.

Maybe the only resistance you recognise is her leaving. But perhaps it is so much more difficult than that. Maybe there is so much more she would have to endure if she does try to get safe. Into refuge. Back home. Through the court system. The awfulness of the custody and access hearing where the violence inflicted on her doesn't even count. How can we explain that any woman does what she has to every day. To stay alive, to stay normal, to keep it all together. That sometimes she stays because it is the safest thing to do. That leaving is so often not the end of the violence.

On the **4th November 2008**, we know that at least 263 women were doing everything they could to be free from this violence. At the very least, two hundred and sixty-three women wanted to be safe.



You see, she tells me. I just don't think they understand. Understand how she sits at the window, looking out at the vacant street.

Waiting for him to come.

There she is, she tells me, with her barring order.

Tucked away safely in her handbag.

The children all up in bed.

And she sits at the window, staring out onto the vacant street, waiting.

And sometimes it is just too much, the feeling. The feeling that it will be tonight. That it will be tonight that he will come.

And so she gets up, and digs the children out of bed.

Wakes their warm, sleeping, gently curled little bodies.

And then, she tells me, it is nearly midnight before we get them all settled into a room and asleep. So she sleeps and the children sleep.

But tomorrow, she tells me, it is the same. She will go home, with her barring order tucked neatly into her handbag. To wait for him to come.

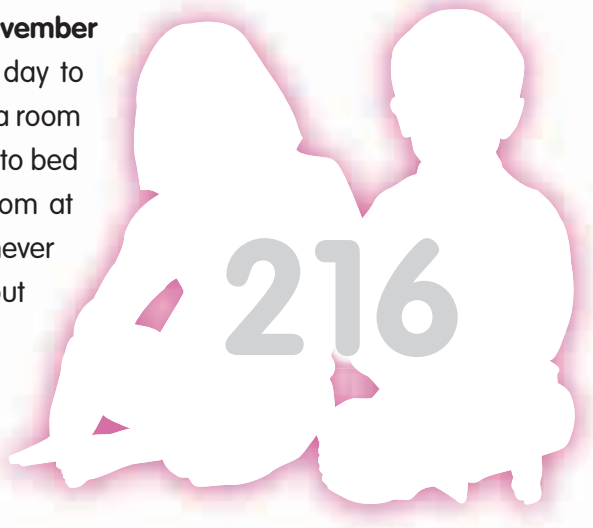
Children accessing domestic violence services


Two hundred and sixteen children received support and/or accommodation from domestic violence services in Ireland on the **4th November 2008**. One hundred and thirteen children were accommodated in refuge with their mothers, 63 children were living in transitional housing and 40 children received one to one or group support.

Two hundred and sixteen children. We are wondering did you drop your child to the school this morning. Were there 216 children in the playground? Racing around in that raucous kind of shouting way that means the bell will be going soon and they will have to sit quietly and behave. And in the classroom, with their copy books and the smells of crayons, paint and packed lunches and the order of lessons and news and reading and art, they will be safe.

Two hundred and sixteen children on the **4th November 2008**, some of them maybe leaving school that day to return to the hustle and bustle of a refuge. Sharing a room with their sisters and brothers, snuggling maybe into bed with their mum, surprised to have her in their room at night. Sharing the TV with the other kids they had never met before, the locks on the door, wondering about the weirdness of it all.

Two hundred and sixteen children, who on the **4th November 2008** were staying in a refuge or in a transitional house, or getting one on one support. Two hundred and sixteen children who had had their lives turned upside down and inside out. But on the 4th November 2008 we know at least two hundred and sixteen children that were safe.





He has killed himself. Hung himself. Away in one of the old stone cut slated outbuildings, way up behind the house.

And so we gather. For she must be told. And the building hums with whispers, and quiet talking and shushed children. And then there is wailing and crying and the screaming. The screaming no, no, no.

And us, we hover together, murmuring quietly. She is left now and he has gone. Removed himself, horrifically.

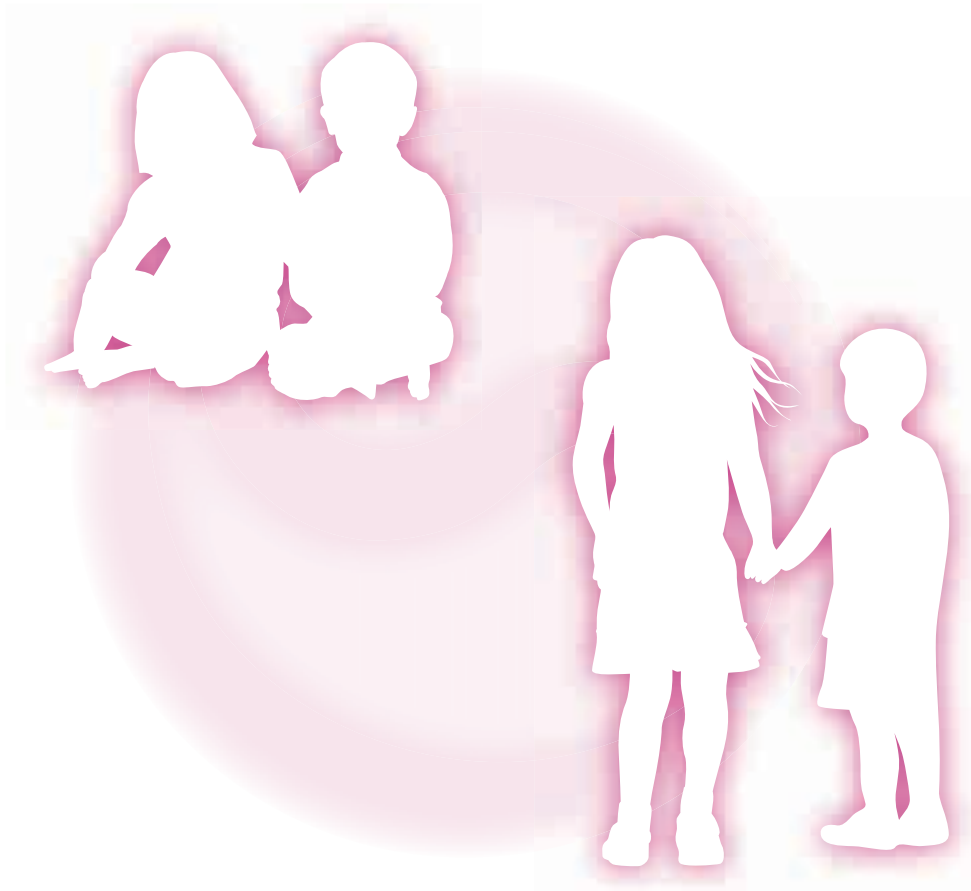
And we gather the drawings together. The pictures they painted and scrawled, before they knew he was dead. Awful, dreadful, nightmare pictures. Her family come and eventually she leaves, with them and with her children.

And that is all we are left with. The pictures. The awful black truth that was held in those nightmares, drawn and scrawled, late in the night, by the children.

Children accessing domestic violence services

Sometimes the fear is that it is too late. The child you meet in the hallway that was last a toddler. The look you will never be able to remove from her eyes, the nervous glancing off quality she may, now, always have. The children we never meet. The children that we watch, returning, glad as we are that they are safe. For this moment, or day or week. But noticing their resilience, their belief, breaking apart in that awful insipid quiet fear.

Sometimes we know it is not just a little bit too late, that there is less hope than before, than last week or last month. The child who has grown up with domestic violence, lost for now, to the possibility, the feeling, of safety.



And she came to the door. And we opened it because she was there, child, at the door, looking for her mother. Even though we knew. Knew about the rage cased in her lean child's body. We let her in, because for a moment, we understood. And we knew what he had done to her.

And then she unleashed herself, at us, at her mother. Unleashed the rage that consumed her damaged stained body of a child. Unleashed it at whoever was there, whoever was not him.

So there she was at the door of the kitchen, her mother safely locked on the other side, already bruised. She screamed and kicked and yelled.

We stood beside the door, beside her. We told her she must leave. The Gardai have been called, we told her. You must go, we said. Mammy she cried and cried, Mammy, just let me in. Mammy, mammy, she screamed and yelled and kicked. Oh mammy, please. Just let me in. But her mother stayed, safely locked on the other side.

It was a young male Garda. She fought and struggled with him wildly and totally, whole bodied.

You fucking bastard, I am going to fucking kill you, she screamed at him.

You shower of bitches, she said, screamed, to us as he took her out.

And afterwards we sat around the table, gently holding our mugs.

And all we heard was what had been done to her, the fourteen year old girl, woman, child.

The horror of what was inscribed on her body, what was buried in her screams. And that is all we could hear, her crying, screaming. Mammy, mammy, please, mammy. Help me.

Helpline

During the count period **239 helpline calls** were answered by domestic violence services in Ireland.

She phones us because we have a freephone number and she has no more credit on her phone. She phones us because today, just this morning, in this minute, she can't take it anymore. She phones us because she wants us to know she is ok. She phones us because she wants to see if she can come in. She phones us because she wants us to know she is afraid. She phones us in the middle of the night. She phones us first thing in the morning. She phones us last thing in the evening. She phones us because she is scared. She phones us because she does not know what to do. She phones us because she knows what to do but is so, so frightened about what he may do next. She phones us because she is worried about the kids. She phones us just to know we are there. She phones us.

On the 4th November 2008

On the **4th November 2008**, 263 women and 216 children accessed or were accommodated in domestic violence services in Ireland.

Two hundred and sixty-three women.

Two hundred and sixteen children.

Domestic violence is horrific, insidious, seeping destructive. Women say no. Resistance can be subtle, awful, risky and sometimes, impossible. But on the 4th November 2008 at the very least, two hundred and sixty-three women said no. And they were as safe as they could be. And we supported them. And that gives us hope.

The stories in this report are taken with kind permission from **The Unsaid and The Walking Away: Seventeen Stories about Horses, Violence, Trauma and Women**. © Morton (2008) Phd Thesis. University of Bath. Copyright Sarah Morton 2008 ©

We know of course that he could kill her.

We all know that. But he hasn't. Not yet.

She is apart from him a long time now, but we all know he could kill her, at any time.

And we know all about him. Because she tells us, each time. Each time she comes in, she tells us. A bit more about him. We know the horror of what he does, all the things he does, all the time. Not just to her.

And sometimes she says, maybe I will go away. And we nod silently. But why should I, she says. And anyway, he will always find me. And again we nod. Because we know he will. He will always find her.

So we say, indeed, come in, for a while, as long as you want. And each time we are glad to hear her voice. To hear her on the end of the line, to know she is there, that she is phoning us, that she is telling us, that there is indeed the possibility of being safe.

Safety Planning for women experiencing domestic violence

Safety Plan

For a detailed safety plan please see www.safeireland.ie

If you are in an abusive relationship, having a Safety Plan worked out in advance can help you get out of the home safely if necessary. It may be helpful to look at the suggestions below even if things are going smoothly.

You may want to think about:

- **A safe place that you can go to make a telephone call**
- **A safe place that you can stay in an emergency – this could be with a friend or relative or a refuge**
- **How you might get to the safe place**
- **Having the number of a local taxi firm**
- **Having important numbers and documents/copies of documents kept in a safe place or places.**
- **Having some emergency money**
- **Having an extra set of keys for your car and home**

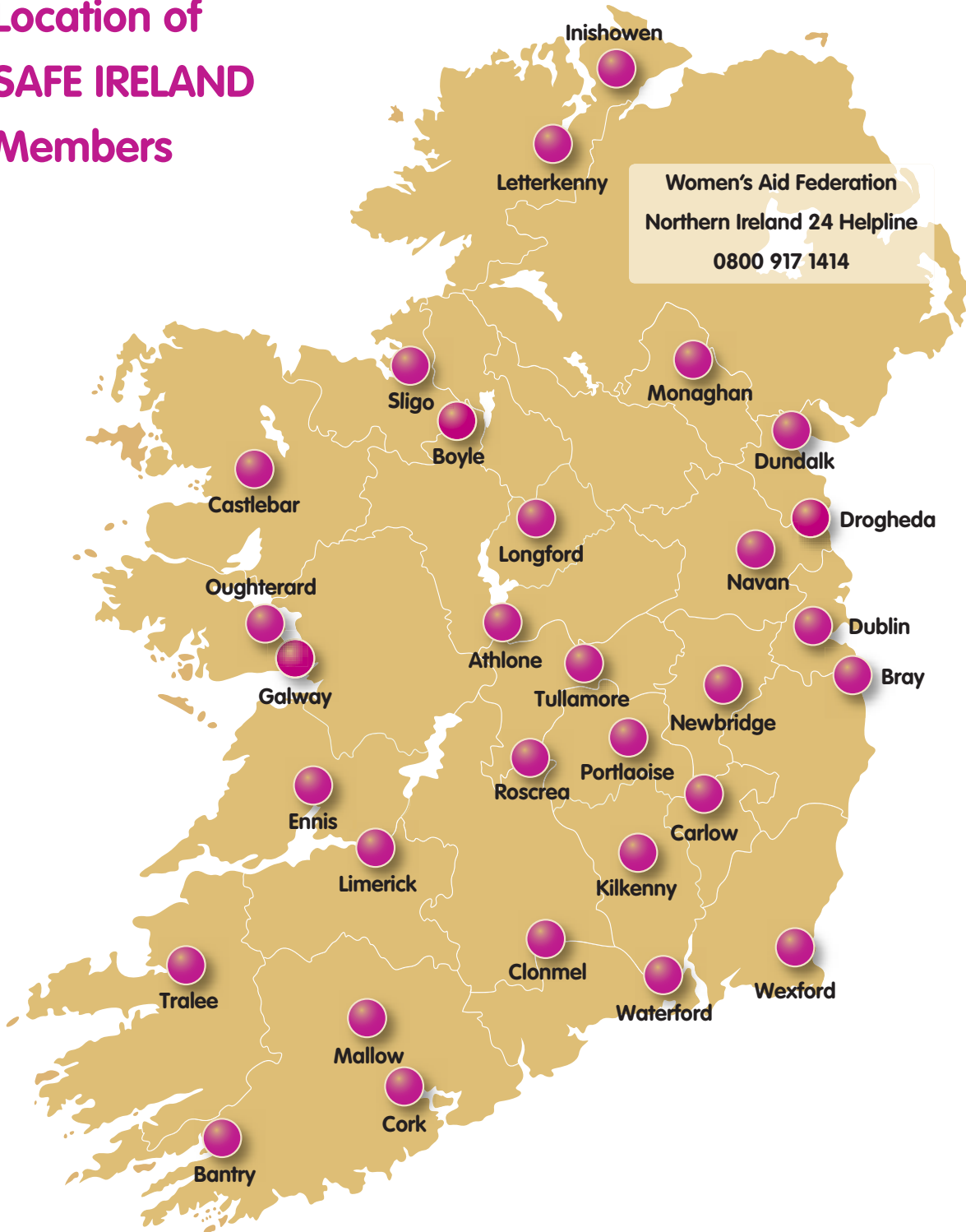
Think through all the practical steps you may need to take if you or your children are at risk. You may also want to talk to a friend or relative about your safety plan. You can also contact your local domestic violence service for practical and emotional support.

Support if you are affected by Suicide

If you are affected by suicide or are having suicidal thoughts please contact:

The Samaritans 1850 609090 (Republic of Ireland)
or **08457 909090** (UK including Northern Ireland)

Location of SAFE IRELAND Members



List of SAFE IRELAND Domestic Violence Services

- Donegal Women's Domestic Violence Service 1800 262 677
- Inishowen Women's Outreach, Co Donegal 074 9373232
- Domestic Violence Advocacy service, (DVAS) Sligo 071 9141515
- Mayo Women's Support Services, Castlebar, Co Mayo 094 9025409
- COPE Waterside House Womens Refuge, Galway 091 565985
- Domestic Violence Response, Oughterard, Co Galway 091 866740
- Family Life Centre, Boyle, Co. Roscommon 071 9663840
- Clare Haven Services, Ennis, Co Clare 065 6822435
- Adapt Services, Limerick 1800 200 504
- Southill Domestic Abuse Project, Limerick 061 313025
- Ascend women's Support Services, Roscrea, Co Tipperary 0505 23999
- Women's Aid, Dundalk Co Louth 042 9333244
- Drogheda Womens and Childrens Refuge, Drogheda, Co Louth 041 9844550
- Meath Women's Refuge & Support Services, Navan, Co Meath 046 9022393
- Tearmann Domestic Violence Services, Monaghan 047 72311
- Aoibhneas Women's Refuge, Dublin 5 01 8670701
- Saoirse Women's Refuge, Dublin 24 01 4630000
- Bray Women's Refuge, Co Wicklow 01 2866163
- The ANU Centre⁵, Blanchardstown Women's Refuge blanchrefuge@gmail.com

⁵ The Anu Centre is not yet open at time of publication of this document. This refuge is currently being developed.

List of SAFE IRELAND Domestic Violence Services

- Inchicore Outreach Centre, Dublin 8 01 4545239
- Dublin 12 Domestic Violence Service, Dublin 12 01 4563126
- Sonas Housing Association, Dublin 7 01 8309088
- Teach Tearmainn, Newbridge, Co Kildare 045 438461
- Esker House Women's Refuge, Athlone, Co Westmeath 090 6474122
- Longford Women's Link, Longford 043 41511
- Offaly Domestic Violence Support Service, Tullamore, Co Offaly 057 9351886
- Oasis House Women's Refuge, Waterford 1890 264 364
- Wexford Womens Refuge, Wexford 1800 220 444
- Amber Women's Refuge, Kilkenny 1850 424 244
- Cuan Saor Refuge & Support Service, Clonmel, Co Tipperary 1800 576 757
- Carlow Women's Aid, Carlow 1800 444 944
- Adapt Kerry, Women's Refuge & Support Service, Tralee, Co Kerry 066 7129100
- Cuanlee Refuge, Cork 021 4277698
- OSS Cork, Cork 1800 497 497
- Y.A.N.A. North Cork Domestic Violence Project, Mallow, Co Cork 022 53915
- West Cork Women Against Violence Project, Bantry, Co Cork 1800 203 136
- Women's Aid, Dublin, National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900

Results from a National One Day Count of Women and Children accessing SAFE IRELAND Domestic Violence Services

CHART 1:

NO OF INDIVIDUAL WOMEN ACCESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES ON NOVEMBER 4TH 2008

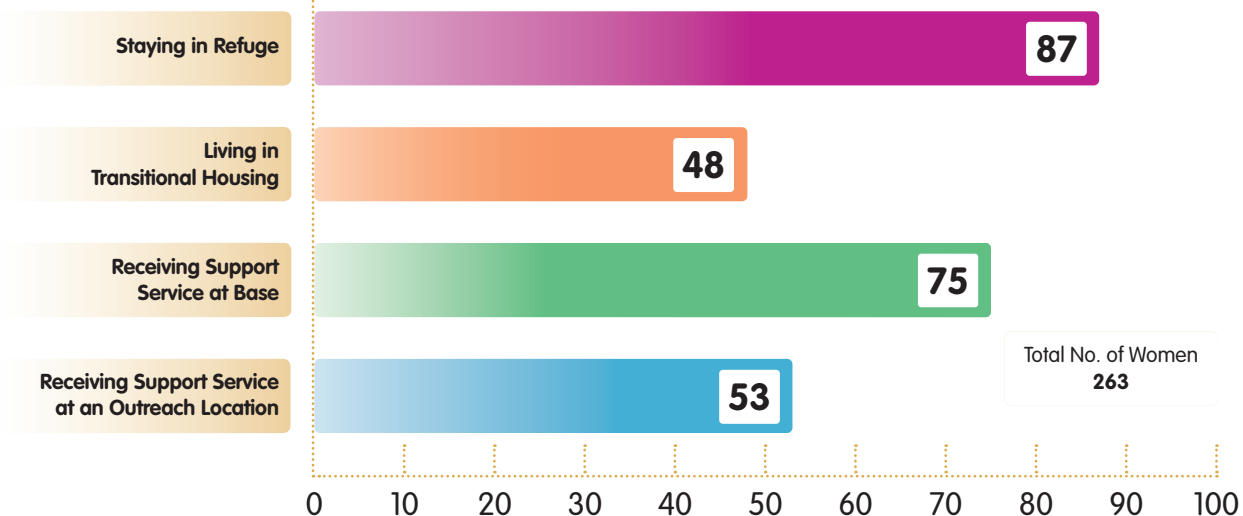
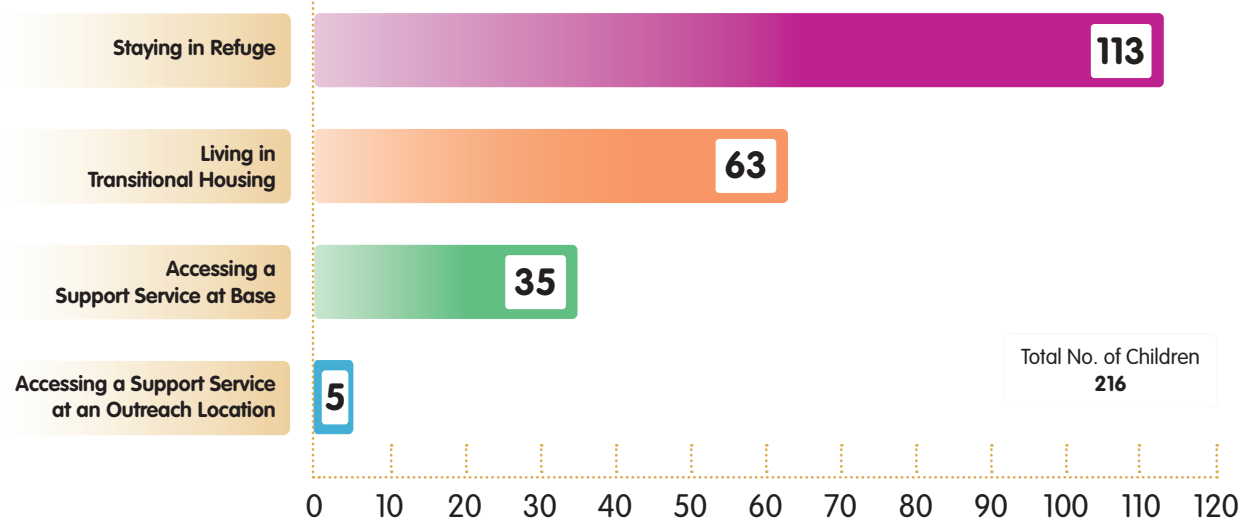


CHART 2:

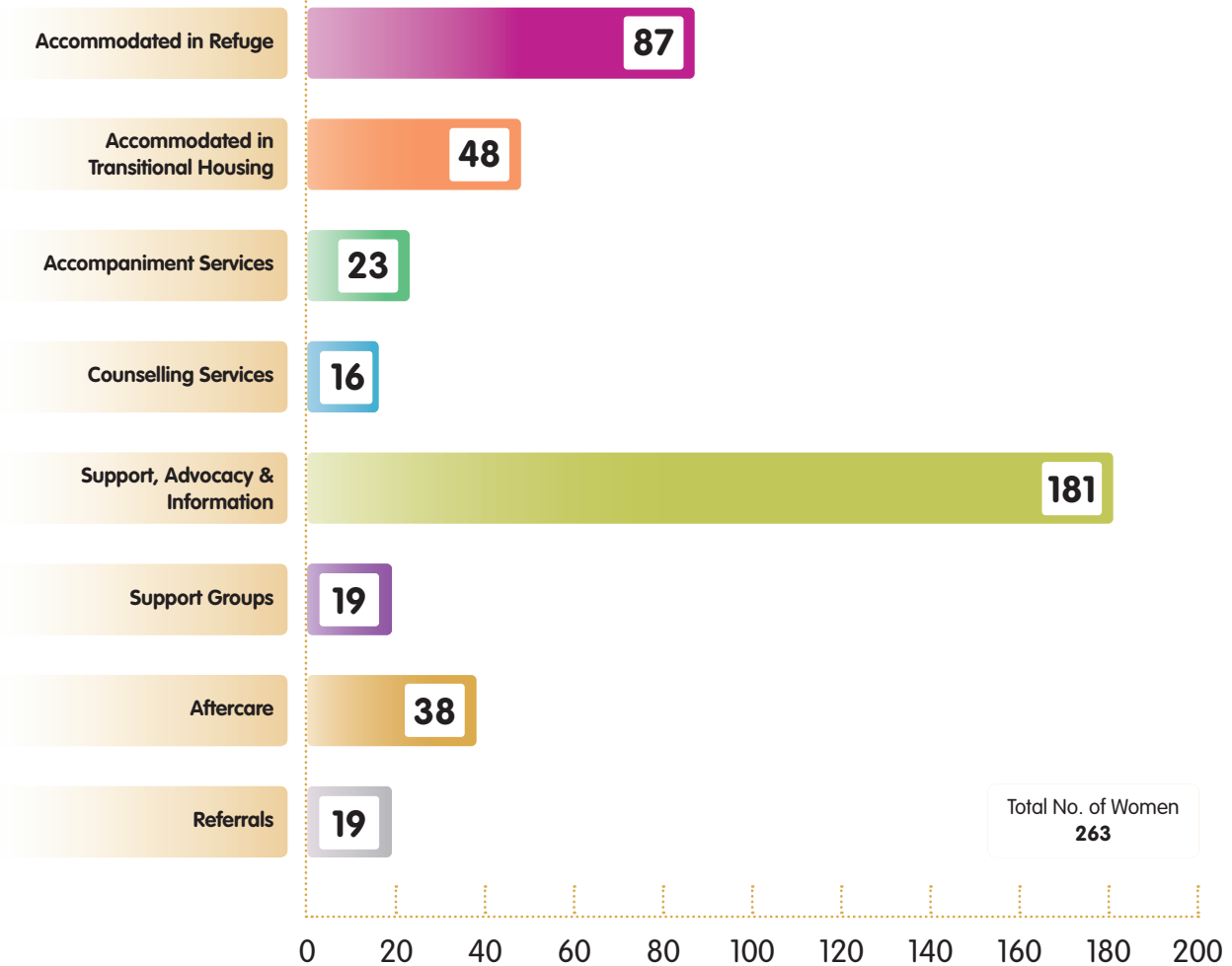
NO. OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN ACCESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES ON NOVEMBER 4TH 2008



Results from a National One Day Count of Women and Children accessing SAFE IRELAND Domestic Violence Services

CHART 3:

**RANGE AND TYPE OF SERVICES
WOMEN RECEIVED ON NOVEMBER 4TH 2008**

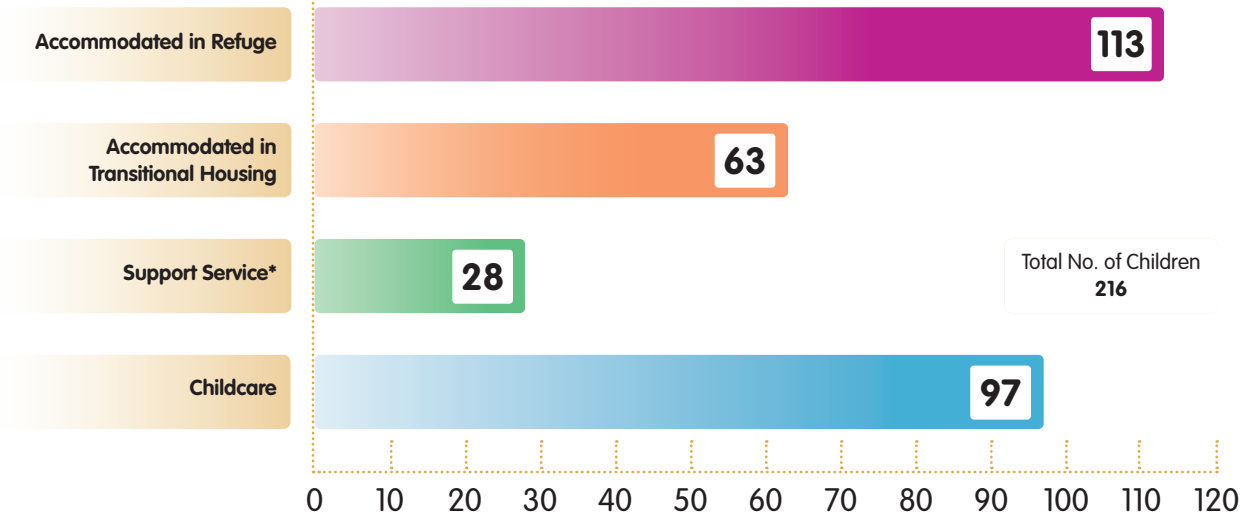


The above chart shows the range of services received by women. Some women will have received more than one type of service on the day.

Results from a National One Day Count of Women and Children accessing SAFE IRELAND Domestic Violence Services

CHART 4:

RANGE OF SERVICES THAT CHILDREN RECEIVED ON NOVEMBER 4TH 2008



Support Services for Children include Access Visits, Aftercare Services, Counselling Services and Play Therapy

Results from a National One Day Count of Women and Children accessing SAFE IRELAND Domestic Violence Services

CHART 5: AGE RANGE OF WOMEN (%) ACCESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT SERVICES ON NOVEMBER 4TH 2008

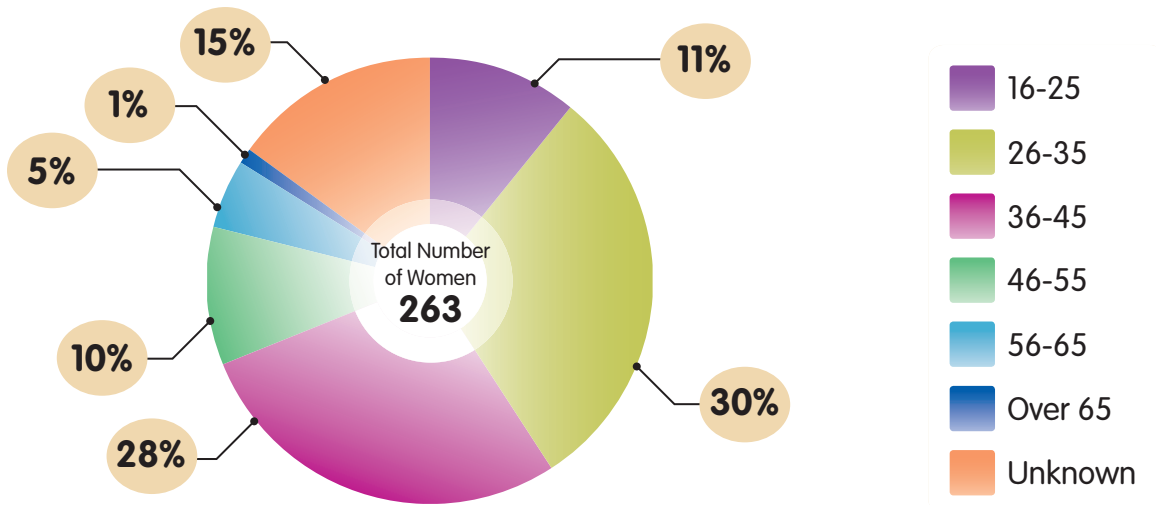
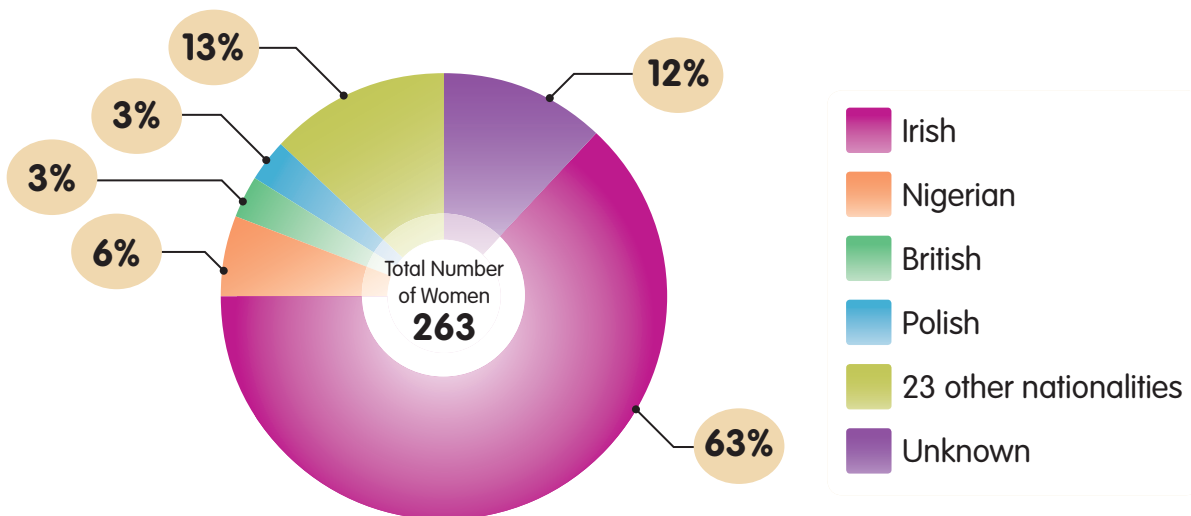
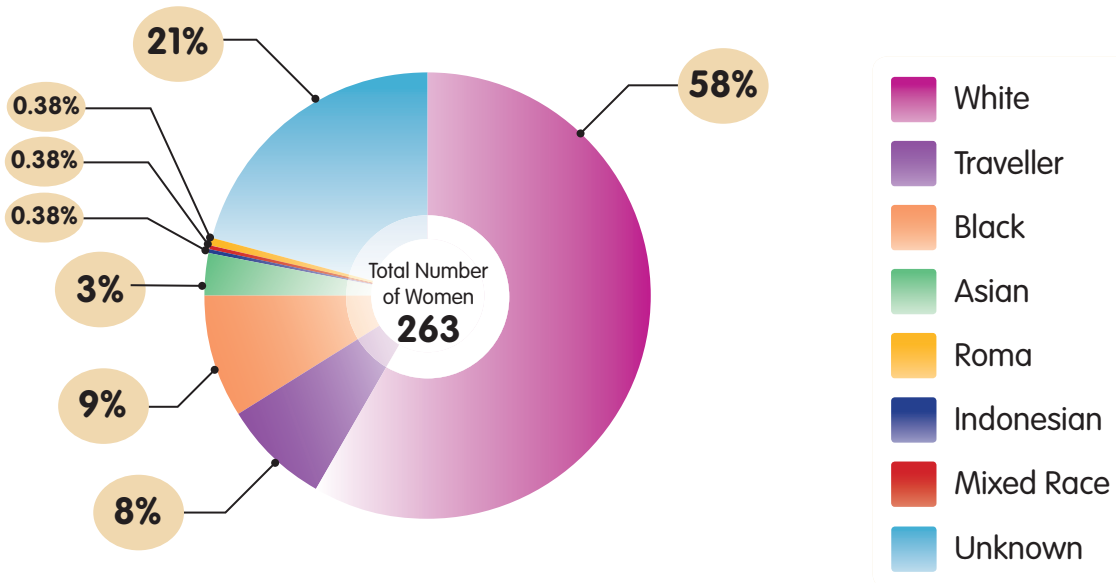


CHART 6: NATIONALITY OF WOMEN (%) ACCESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT SERVICES ON NOVEMBER 4TH 2008



Results from a National One Day Count of Women and Children accessing SAFE IRELAND Domestic Violence Services

CHART 7: ETHNIC ORIGIN OF WOMEN ACCESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES ON NOVEMBER 4TH 2008 BY (%)



It is important to note that in the charts numbered 5, 6 & 7 above, that this data was reported by Services based on the information that they were given by women. In many cases it may not have been appropriate to ask for specific information and/or it may not have been available to the workers when completing the forms. There are significant numbers of women whose age, nationality and ethnic origin has not been identified.

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Transforming Ireland



An Roinn Gnáthai Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta
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