

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
RESPONSE LTD

THE COURTYARD, MAIN STREET

DOUGHTERARD, CO GALWAY. EMAIL DVR@INDIGO.IE TELEPHONE: 091
866740

WWW.DOMESTICVIOLENCERESPONSE.COM

ANNUAL REPORT

2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More clients than ever availed of the services of DVR in 2013; using telephone support, court advocacy and one-to-one counselling as well as a variety of services for children. The organisation continued to have a high level of demand from first-time users and return clients. 2013 was a very difficult year for the organisation because of a severe funding shortfall in the latter part of the year, which resulted in a deficit of €7000 being carried forward into 2014. Fundraising was a vital lifeline in ensuring the service stayed open. However, it promoted the profile of the organisation and created additional demand for services as well as diverting resources such as volunteers away from service provision. The Board engaged in a process to facilitate the transition of its core funding from the HSE to the Child and Family Agency and several meetings were held to discuss the ongoing severe shortfall in core fund.

The majority of other funding applications were successful – however the pursuit of the Maureen O’ Connell Fund from the St Augustine Conference, following a 16 month demanding and protracted process was stressful, wasteful of the resources of the project and ultimately unsuccessful. Spontaneous donations from the local community increased significantly in 2013 compared to other years.

Features which require comment with regard to 2013 include the changes in demand for our advocacy and telephone support service. **163** accompaniments were carried out by DVR in 2013. The vast majority of these were to Court but it also included accompaniment to Legal Aid, the Guards, Community Welfare Officers and to the local hospital. Changes in the law widened the opportunity for women to apply for Safety Orders, and this increased demand for our advocacy service in the first half of 2013. It committed DVR to a substantial increase in the allocation of Relief Work Hours and accounted for an €8000 increase in expenditure.

A feature of court accompaniment in 2013 was the knock-on effect of a 20% increase in applicants to the Family Law Court. Staff were required to remain for longer periods with clients, with some hearings requiring two days accompaniments.

The rise in Legal Aid fees from €50 to €130 per application in the latter half of the year, deterred some women from seeking help from the Courts. DVR’s Hardship Fund, which

normally covered the first application for women applying to Legal Aid, was not in a position to fund this in 2013.

The service provided 50 weeks cover and this averaged at approximately 18 calls a day. Almost 6000 calls were made and received on behalf of clients in 2013. The majority of calls were from women looking for crisis emotional and practical support. Staff who previously provided both volunteer and paid relief telephone cover were required to carry out court advocacy, and the consequent lack of staff cover impacted on our ability to provide consistent telephone support in 2013. Over 500 calls went unanswered in 2013, and many of these occurred during office hours.

155 children received services from DVR in 2013. Problems with access, behavioural problems with children, parenting issues and children impacted by domestic violence were the main reasons mothers sought our help.

A support group, **Paths to Freedom**, ran as an eight-week programme for women in Westside Resource Centre Galway, and was attended by nine clients of the service. This was funded by Galway County Council

Work began with the local Garda in looking at improving the response to domestic violence in County Galway. This work is ongoing.

Staff took part in a number of education and public awareness activities as they arose, including presentations to NUI Maynooth Community Development programme, The Deaf Society, Galway Traveller Movement and the Man-Up Campaign.

DVR agreed to participate in a major feature on domestic violence for the national newspaper, The Irish Times. Rosita Boland interviewed board members, advocacy workers and the Coordinator. Three clients met with her for over 4 hours to give their stories. The article appeared in early November.

Funding from The Ireland Fund was used to carry out an overhaul of our website and establish social media, including Facebook and Twitter. This was completed in 2013. See www.domesticviolence.com for details. A staff member, Sinead Bohan, updates all social media input on a regular basis.

DVR received a grant from Forum Leader Connemara in September to provide in-house training for staff, which included Self-Care and Safety issues and training on support work

interventions, telephone support and working with disclosure of domestic violence. Also, staff availed of Safe Ireland training on Social Media and Court Accompaniment. Activities such as training on domestic violence, continues to be in demand and over 45 individuals from statutory agencies attended a major training day that was presented by Don Hennessey and Elizabeth Power on Perpetrator Behaviour and Post-Separation Abuse.

Marie Galvin became a member of the Board of Directors and Natalie Harvey took up a position as a volunteer clerical worker. Pamela Keady offered her services as clerical and fundraising volunteer.

1. Introduction

Domestic Violence Response Ltd is a rural-based, community-led project responding to the issue of domestic violence in County Galway. Letterfrack Women's group set up the project in 1998 following years of campaigning and awareness-raising work. The project is managed by a voluntary Board of Directors comprised of five members, is a company limited by guarantee since 2002 and a registered charity.

1.1 THE AIMS OF OUR PROJECT ARE:

- To identify and respond to the needs of women and children in County Galway who are subjected to violence and abuse in the home
- To develop long-term responses that work towards the elimination of domestic violence.

Our work is prioritised under the following headings:

- Support for women and children who are subjected to violence in the home
- Education, training and awareness work
- Contributing to National Policy on Domestic Violence
- Lobby for and participate in research projects throughout the country.

The goals of the company in 2013 were to:

- a. Maintain our existing support service
- b. Continue to provide education and awareness training
- c. Develop long-term responses to the issue of domestic violence.

1.2 STAFFING

The project currently employs ten staff, comprised of a Coordinator, a part-time administrator, 3 Counselling / Support workers and 4 members of a relief Advocacy panel working on an on-call basis. We also have one person employed under the Warmer Homes Community Employment scheme and one clerical worker who is a volunteer. One student placement from NUI Galway Social Care Course and one trainee Counsellor carried out their work placements with DVR in 2013.

1.3 LOCATION

We are based in the town of Oughterard, Co Galway. We cover all of Connemara, including, Oughterard, Moycullen, Rosscahill, Tullykyne, Wormhole, Cleggan, Clifden, Renvyle, Ballyconneely, Ballynahinch, Carraroe, Claddaghduff, Inverin, Kilkerrin, Leenaun, Lettermore, Lettermullen, Maam, Recess, Rosmuck, Aran Islands, Inishbofin, Spiddal, Barna, Camus, Casla, Clonbur, Furbo, Corr na Mona, Lettercallow, Letterfrack, Maam Cross, Rossaveal. In recent years, our client base has extended to clients who contact our service from Galway County.

This administrative base includes offices, a meeting room and a counselling room for clients. In addition, we have outreach-counselling rooms in Triskel Healing Centre, Galway City. The decision to provide a counselling support service in Triskel was to:

- Make our service more accessible to clients from South Connemara
- Facilitate a continuation of service for clients who have moved to Galway city
- Increase our capacity to respond to clients who require one-to-one support
- Make essential savings in staff travel expenses

2. SUPPORT SERVICE

Our support service includes practical and emotional support for women in the geographical area of County Galway. These services include the following:

- Telephone support helpline
- Outreach service
- Court accompaniment
- Child Play-Therapy
- Free Counselling / Support and Information
- Accompanying women to other services including Gardai and solicitors
- Transport to refuge
- Liaising with service providers
- Attending case conferences
- Referral to other agencies
- Preparation of marital and relationship histories
- Arranging emergency accommodation and providing transport as required
- Writing letters on behalf of clients
- Seeking financial assistance for women
- Referral of children to appropriate agencies
- Securing private rented accommodation.

SUPPORT WORK FOR 2013

110 new clients presented to DVR in 2013. (See Table 1) Self-referral, word of mouth, newspaper advertisements, family members or friends referred the majority of clients to the project. Referrals from other agencies include Doctors, Social Workers, Community Welfare Officers and Community Development projects. Family Resource Centre workers, outreach workers, individual psychotherapists and counsellors made up the remainder of the referrals.

Client presentation included clients exploring the possibility that their relationship is abusive, clients who had reached breaking point in their relationship, clients in immediate danger and clients looking for support to recover from their relationship. Additionally, clients presented because of access issues and in need of immediate protection.

A feature of new clients approaching the service in 2013 was the continuation of an increase of clients from a professional/middle-class background. These clients are largely articulate with high expectations of support. A further characteristic is the high levels of shame, stigma and feelings of isolation that these clients experience.

Perpetrators were primarily partners and ex-partners but increasingly DVR observed children of clients as perpetrators of violence.

New clients were slightly down from 2012. The unprecedented number of missed calls to our office, recorded by DVR last year, may contribute to the slight fall in new clients.

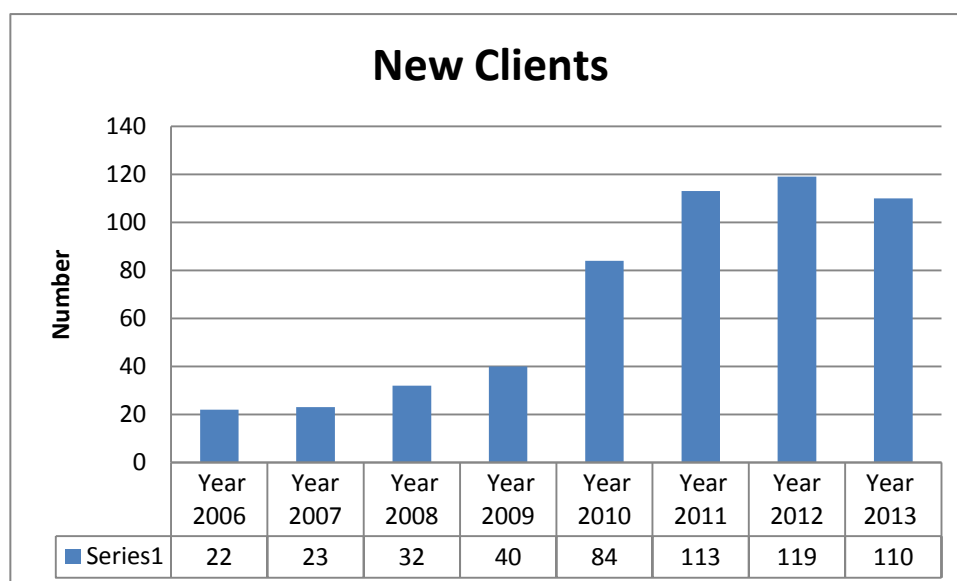


Table 1. New clients to DVR in 2013

Referral

The source of referral represents a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies who continue to ask our assistance for their clients. See Table 2. Community workers represent the highest number of referrals in 2013. These include Family Resource Centres, Citizen Information Centre (CIC) and Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS). Word of mouth continues to be the most frequent source of referral to our service.

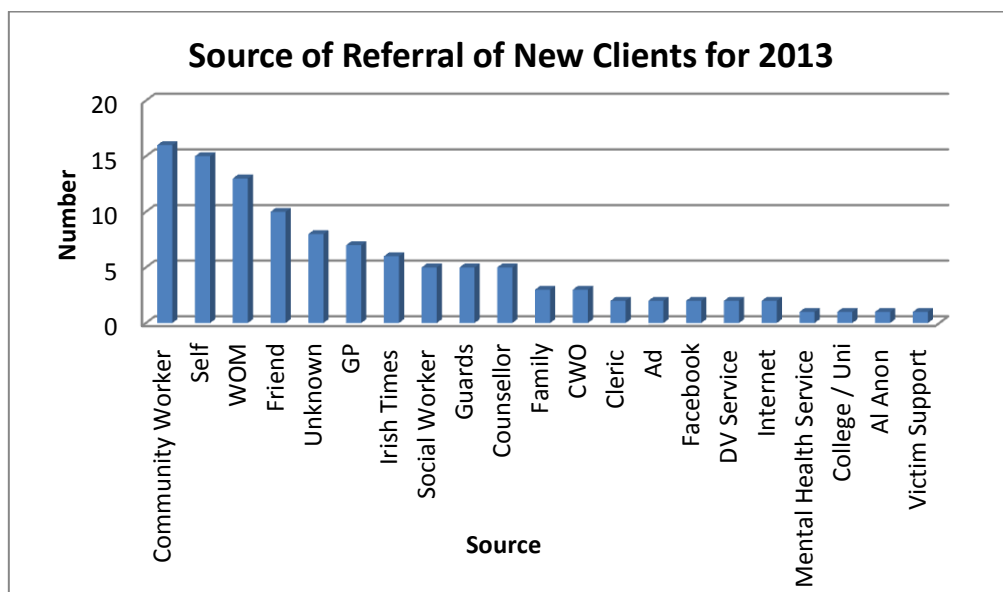


Table 2: Source of Referral of New Clients for 2103

Return clients

Return clients to the service increased substantially in 2013. See Table 3. Many women returned to the service to avail of advocacy and counselling support, in order to apply for Safety Orders. A change in the law occurred in relation to these orders in 2012, and in 2013 we saw an almost 25% increase in women who experienced post-separation abuse, look for support.



Table 3: Return Clients

Telephone Support

Almost 6000 calls were made and received on behalf of clients in 2013. See Table 4. The service provided 50 weeks full-cover and this averaged at approximately 18 calls a day. The majority of calls were from women looking for crisis emotional and practical support. The lack of staff cover impacted on our ability to provide consistent telephone support in 2013. Staff who previously provided both volunteer and paid-relief telephone cover, were required to carry out court advocacy, because of an increase in demand for this service. Over 500 calls went unanswered in 2013 and many of these occurred during office hours. See Table 5.

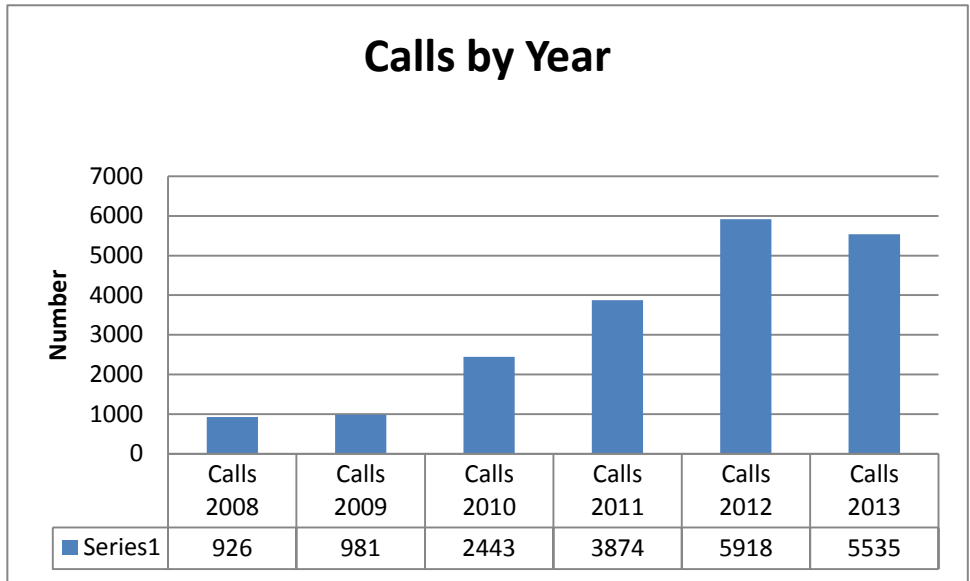


Table 4: Telephone calls

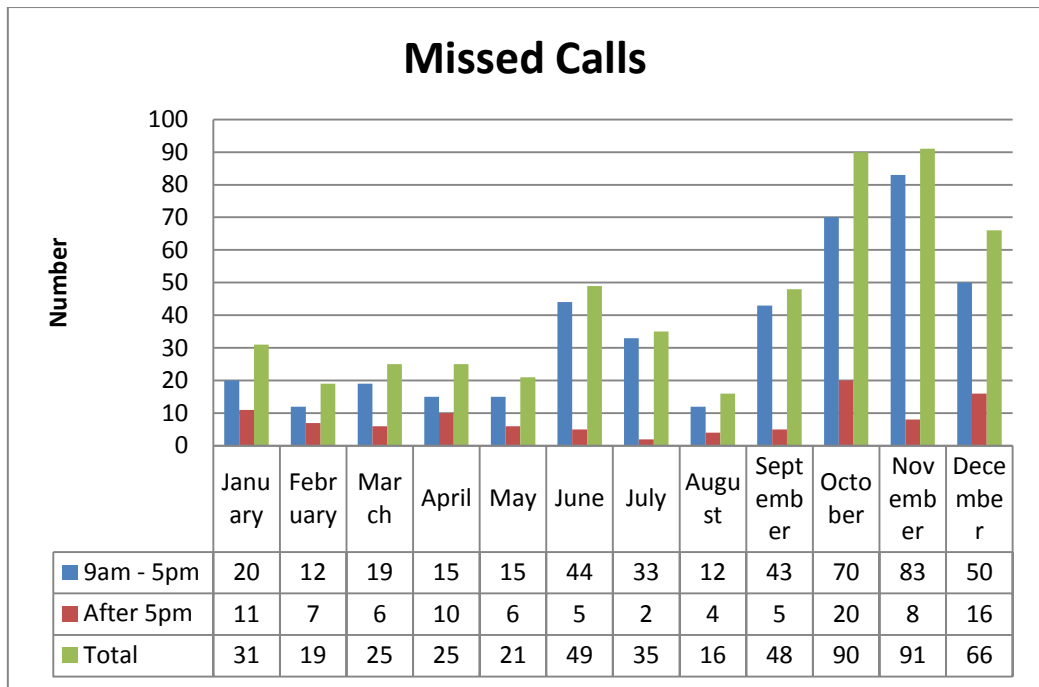


Table 5: Missed Calls

ACCOMPANIMENT SERVICE

163 accompaniments were carried out by DVR in 2013. See Table 6. The vast majority of these were to Court but it also included accompaniment to Legal Aid, the Guards, Community Welfare Officers and to the local hospital. Changes in the law widened the opportunity for women to apply for Safety Orders, and this increased demand for our advocacy service in the first half of 2013, from **82** accompaniments in January–June 2012 to **105** January–June in 2013. It committed DVR to a substantial increase in the allocation of Relief Work Hours to provide this service and has had a knock-on effect on Inland Revenue demands.

Numbers looking for this service fell slightly towards the end of the year. The rise in Legal Aid fees, from €50 to €130 per application, may be a factor in this. DVR’s Hardship Fund, which normally covered the first application for women applying to Legal Aid, was not in a position to fund this in 2013.

Overall, the demand for this service continues to grow. While numbers decreased, the actual hours of relief work required rose substantially and accounted for an €8000 increase in expenditure for advocacy. A feature of court accompaniment in 2013 was the knock-on effect of large number of applicants to the Family Law Court. Staff were required to remain for longer periods with clients, with some hearings requiring two days accompaniments. This trend has continued in 2014.

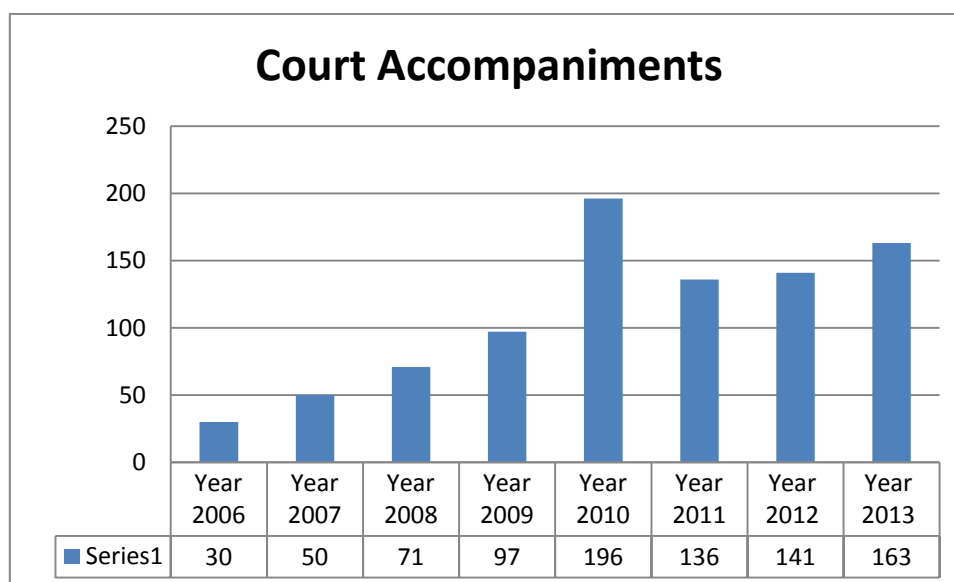
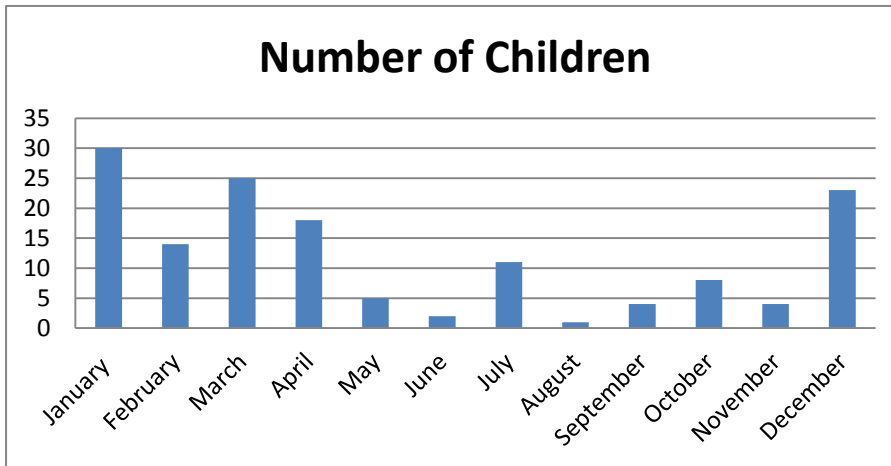


Table 6: Court accompaniments

3. CHILDREN'S SERVICES

NUMBER OF CHILDREN USING THE SERVICE

155 children received services from DVR in 2013. Problems with access, behavioural problems with children, parenting issues and children impacted by domestic violence were the main reasons mothers sought our help. See table.



SERVICES PROVIDED

DVR once again secured a grant from The Family Support Agency to provide funding for child counselling and a play therapist for children who are adversely impacted by domestic violence. These children presented with behavioural and emotional difficulties, including self-harm, aggressive behaviour, drug use, suicidal ideation, difficulty in adjusting to separation, and emotional and physical abuse, which occurred during access. Families were offered six free sessions with a child therapist.

Our project seeks to provide mothers with parenting skills to cope with the negative impact of domestic violence on children. They were also able to avail of limited support from a child therapist during 2013. In addition, information on Parenting in the Aftermath of Domestic Violence was included in the Paths to Freedom support group run in November 2013.

CHILDREN FIRST REFERRALS

Under Children First Guidelines, children were referred to the Duty Social Workers. Other referrals included children referred to Juvenile Liaison, Child and Family Services, ISPC, Peata House and School Services.

In 2013, the most common intervention in our one-to-one support service was providing women with support to deal with post-separation abuse of her, via her children. Such abuse included: Failure to pick up or return children on time from access, monitoring women's movements by interrogating children on access, partner not providing appropriate care for children during access and using access handover as an opportunity to inflict physical and emotional abuse on the woman.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

STAFF TRAINING

DVR received a grant from Forum Connemara in September to provide in-house training for staff.

- Self-Care with Michelle Gunning was held in September
- Dealing with Feeling, Jean Farrell, October
- Safety issues in working in Domestic Violence, Jean Farrell, November

Other training was provided by the Coordinator and included training on support-work interventions, telephone support and working with disclosure of domestic violence.

Staff also attended training by SAFE Ireland on social media and computer safety and court accompaniment training.

Two staff members availed of the Forum Connemara training fund to gain a Certificate in Counselling from the International College for Personal and Professional Development (ICPPD).

EDUCATIONAL WORK

V-DAY 1 BILLION RISING – EYRE SQUARE

This event was organised by DVR in conjunction with Galway Dance and Gwen Hale, Dance therapist. The event was held in solidarity with similar events taking place around the globe on the same day. The Galway event was held in Eyre Square on the 14th February. A video of this event is available on YouTube.

N.U.I. MAYNOOTH APPLIED SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS VISIT

The annual visit from the MA Community Development course took place in September 2013. It took the format of a discussion and information on domestic violence and was held in Oughertard Community Centre. Over 35 students attended it.

PRESENTATION TO CENTRE FOR SIGN LANGUAGE JUNE 2013

Two staff members presented a talk on domestic violence to the Deaf Society in Galway. Over 40 individuals attended this.

DON HENNESSY/ELIZABETH POWER TRAINING NOV 2013

This training was funded by the Forum programme and was held in Jigsaw in Galway. Over 45 statutory and voluntary agencies attended this event, which focused on perpetrator behavior and post-separation abuse.

WORKSHOP WITH KILLANNIN PARENTS AND STUDENTS YOUTH GROUP DECEMBER 2013

A talk on 'Life's Real Fairy Tales' and early warning signs of abusive relationships took place in November in the Killannin Community Center. Over 30 young people attended this event.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

A TALK ON DV IN SPIDDAL LIBRARY

This was held in July and attended by Irish speakers in the local community. The talk was organised by a previous client who wanted to promote the issue in the area.

MAN UP CAMPAIGN

Eight volunteers took part in a joint venture with COPE Waterside House, to promote the Man Up campaign on the Campus of NUI Galway. A visual display and leaflet campaign were carried out on-site. Four students from NUI Galway helped with this campaign. A further press campaign took place with an interview with the Galway Advertiser and photo with Mayor and other celebrities to advertise male support of the campaign.

ARTICLE WITH ROSITA BOLAND

DVR agreed to participate in a major feature on domestic violence for the national newspaper **The Irish Times**. Rosita Boland interviewed Board members, Coordinator and advocacy workers to get an overview of the work. Three clients met with her for over 4 hours to give their stories. The article appeared in early November and resulted in an increase in clients and over €2500 in donations following the article's appearance.

WORKSHOP IN GALWAY TRAVELLER MOVEMENT – DEALING WITH ATTITUDES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

DVR took part in a workshop with the Galway Traveller Movement to explore attitudes to domestic violence. Several meetings were held to establish the focus of the meeting. The event was attended by over 30 traveller and settled women and featured an input on Saint Rita, patron Saint of Domestic Violence, as well as an exploration of attitudes and myths about domestic violence. A follow-on is planned for 2014.

DEVELOPING OF WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Funding was received from The Ireland Fund to carry out an overhaul of our website and establish social media including Facebook and Twitter. This was completed in 2013 . See www.domesticviolenceresponse.com for details. A staff member, Sinead Bohan, updates all social media input on a regular basis.

DEVELOPMENT OF BOOKMARK WITH GALWAY RAPE CRISIS CENTRE AND COPE WATERSIDE HOUSE.

DVR took the lead in an application to COSC to develop a bookmark suitable to advertise all three Galway violence against women services. This was launched in November 2013 and widely distributed locally.

FUNDRAISING

€13,000 was raised by fundraising activities in 2013. Staff, volunteers and board members were engaged in a variety of activities to help DVR continue its services. In 2013, fundraising was a vital lifeline in ensuring the service stayed open. The activities included:

- An Sean Bothair Walk: sponsored walk in Connemara
- Bucket Collection: Joyce's Knocknacarra
- Bag Pack: Dunnes Westside
- Bag Pack: Dunnes Knocknacarra
- Table Quiz in the Huntsman, Galway City.
- Triskel Healing Centre fundraiser: an open day of free treatments with the proceeds going to DVR
- Church gate collections: Oughterard, Moycullen, Killannin, Salthill, Knocknacarra, Barna
- Cois Cladaigh Christmas Concert: DVR was the designated charity for this event.

FUNDING RECEIVED

CSVC (Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime)	€17,500.00
Family Support Agency	€4095.00
HSE (Health Service Executive) National Lottery Grant	€1000.00
COSC (National Office for Prevention of Domestic, Sexual & Gender-based Violence)	€1200.00
Vincent De Paul Funding	€2415.00
Galway Co. Council	€1620.00

Community Foundation of Ireland	€720.00
ESB (Electricity Supply Board) Grant	€4000.00
Forum	€1740.00
Donation	€3903.00
HSE	€73,256.00
HSE Retention	€3961.00
TOTAL	€115,410.00

9. MANAGEMENT

DVR is a company limited by guarantee, managed by a voluntary board of Directors comprising of 5 Directors plus a secretary. In 2011, we acquired charitable status.

Changes to our directors in 2013 included the appointment of Marie Galvin in July 2013.

10. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board comprises of 5 directors + a Secretary

Triona Nic GiollaChoille – Chairperson

Ann Lyons – Director

Grainne Rice - Director

Antony Previte – Treasurer

Marie Galvin – Director

Elizabeth Power– Secretary

