



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESPONSE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESPONSE LTD

ANNUAL REPORT

2016

The Courtyard, Main Street,

Oughterard, Co. Galway.

Charity No. CHY18394

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The chronic underfunding of Domestic Violence Response, (hereafter known as DVR) came to a head in 2016 with the auditor of DVR flagging up a very serious financial situation which could lead to insolvency. DVR Board met several times during the year to specifically address this situation and to safeguard the services. The continued lack of funding affected clients who sometimes could not access support when needed. DVR was not in a position to provide full office cover Monday to Friday and this was detrimental to the service. **612** calls were missed by our service in 2016. Our preventive school work, at which DVR has excelled, was put on hold. DVR's public awareness work was severely curtailed because of financial constraints. Currently, two of DVR's support workers provide one to one support to clients, each working 7 hours per week. This does not allow them to participate in Meitheal or allow them to work to enhance multi-agency tasking in relation to clients.

Client work was prioritised. We were in a position to provide clients with one to one counselling support and information sessions, advocacy services, educational programmes as well as a variety of services for children. During the year, the organisation continued to have a high level of demand from first-time users and return clients. The number of advocacy accompaniments, to a range of statutory agencies, including Gardaí and Court was also significantly higher in 2016. Almost **5,500** calls were made and received on behalf of clients in 2016. The majority of calls were from women looking for crisis emotional and practical support. The number of telephone support calls was significantly higher in 2016 than in previous years.

75 children received services from DVR in 2016. Problems with access, behavioural problems with children, parenting issues and children impacted by domestic violence were the main reasons mothers sought our help. Services provided included ongoing referral to counselling services, child therapy, child protection referrals to Social Workers, court accompaniment around access.

An educational support programme **Paths to Freedom** ran twice, each programme ran for 10 weeks for women in the Triskel Healing Centre, Galway and was attended by 18 clients of the service. DVR ran one preventative workshop: **Exploring Healthy Relationships**, that 12 women attended. DVR facilitated an **Awareness workshop** for students of NUIG. DVR worked with community partners Galway Traveller Movement on its domestic violence policy and co-facilitated a workshop with Galway Traveller Movement as part of the 16 days of action against violence against women. .

DVR continued to be involved in a new initiative in Galway to address perpetrator behaviour. Our support worker continued to provide support to women as partner contact to the MOVE programme in 2016.

A new panel of court advocacy workers were recruited, the panel were trained by DVR staff members and commenced employment on an on-call basis.

This year saw the end of a CE scheme which was vital in providing staff to provide office cover.

A small increase in core funding towards the year of the year improved the situation for the service. Also, fundraising was a vital lifeline in ensuring the service stayed open; it promoted the profile of the organisation however, and this created additional demand for services, as well as diverting resources away from service provision. The Board regrets that its members and staff have to fundraise for core staff wages and basic costs as well as deliver services in what is a stressful and complex work setting.

Despite the limitations on funding, the Board was pleased that staff could avail of some ongoing professional training and development. Training included Children First training for all staff members. Training on case management of clients, peer led supervision and reflective practice, and leadership and mindfulness were attended by staff. When funding was available, staff took part in education and public awareness activities.

A limited number of public awareness events for Radio and magazine were carried during the year. We continued to maintain a social media presence and regularly updated our website: domesticviolenceresponse.com.

The Board notes the resilience of its members, staff and volunteers and the strength and dedication of its workers to continue to provide a high quality of care in these extremely difficult circumstances.

1.0 INTRODUCTION TO SERVICES

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. DVR is a company limited by guarantee since 2002 and a Registered Charity and is managed by a voluntary Board of Directors comprised of five members.

1.1 The aims of our organisation 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:

1. To support women and children who are subjected to violence in the home
2. To provide education, training and awareness work
3. To Contribute to National Policy on Domestic Violence

Goals FOR 2016:

- To respond to the needs to DVR clients
- To maintain our existing support service
- To continue to provide education and awareness
- Maintain the sustainability of the service

1.2 STAFF

The project currently employs 8 staff, comprising of a co-ordinator, an administrator, 3 Counselling / Support workers working on a part time basis and 3 members of a relief Advocacy panel working on an on-call basis.

VOLUNTEERING

DVR was grateful to our 10 dedicated volunteers who took part in fundraising activities throughout the year. This included people who initiated fundraising events in their own right for DVR as well as those helping with DVR organised events.

1.3 Location

We are based in the town of Oughterard, Co Galway and we provide domestic violence services as needed in Galway City and County. Our administrative base in Oughterard includes offices, a meeting room and a counselling room for clients. In addition, we have outreach-counselling rooms in Triskel Healing Centre in Galway City. The decision to provide a counselling support and information service in Triskel was:

1. To make our service more accessible to clients from South Connemara
2. To facilitate a continuation of service for clients who have moved to Galway city
3. To increase our capacity to respond to clients who require one to one support
4. To make essential savings in staff travel expenses

2.0. INTEGRATED SUPPORT SERVICES

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

- Telephone support
- Counselling, Support and Information one to one service.
- Accompanying women to other services including Court, Gardaí, Solicitors & Government Agencies
- Transport to refuge
- Liaising with service providers/Attending case conferences/Referral to other agencies
- Preparation of marital and relationship histories
- Writing letters on behalf of clients
- Seeking financial assistance for women
- Referral of children to appropriate agencies
- Providing support for women whose partners are involved with MOVE programme

2.1. NEW CLIENTS & REFERRALS

106 new clients presented to DVR in 2016. (See Table 1) This includes clients who were referred by MOVE. 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.

22% of DVR clients in 2016 were not from Ireland. (Table 2) While 5% of those that were Irish are from the Travelling Community. (Table 3)

Table 1: New Clients 2014 -2016

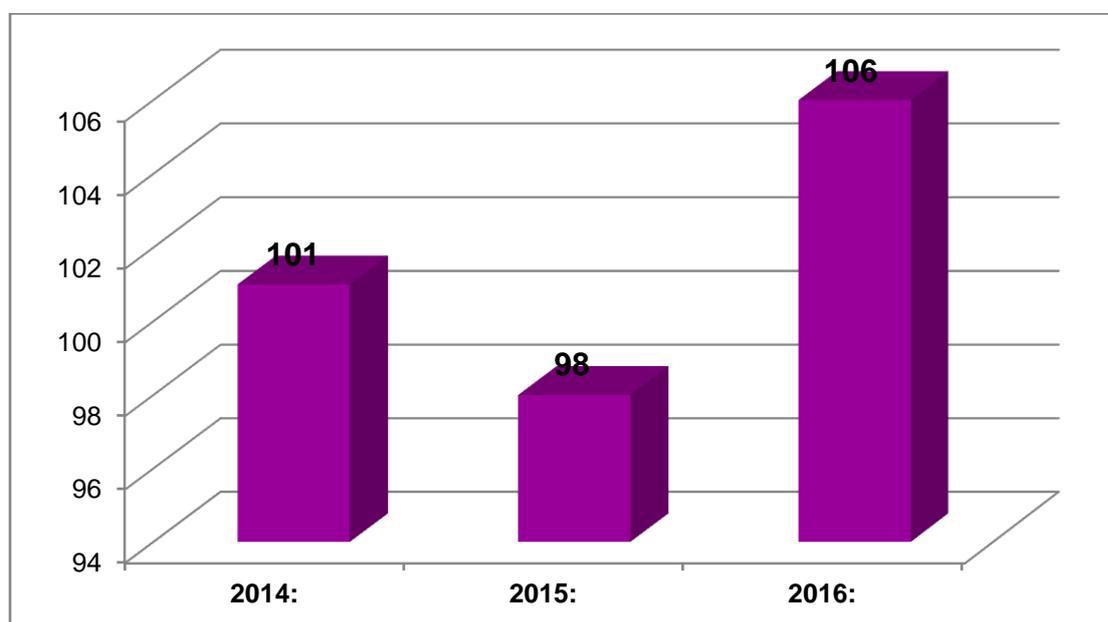


Table 2:

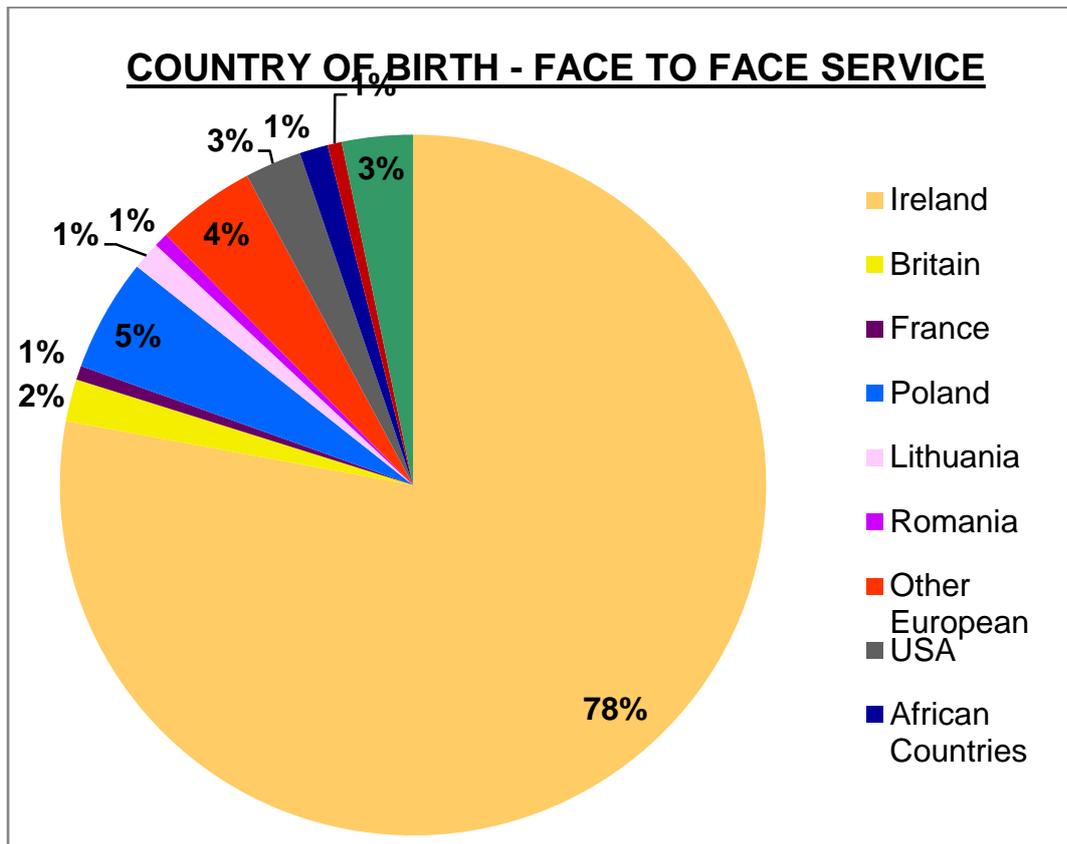
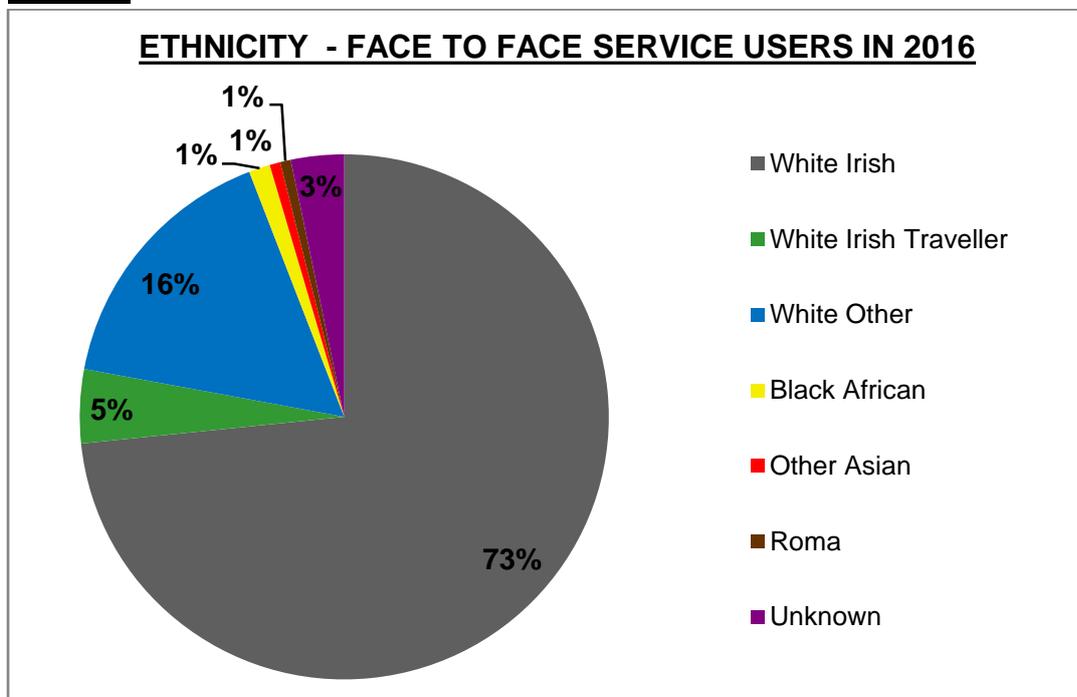


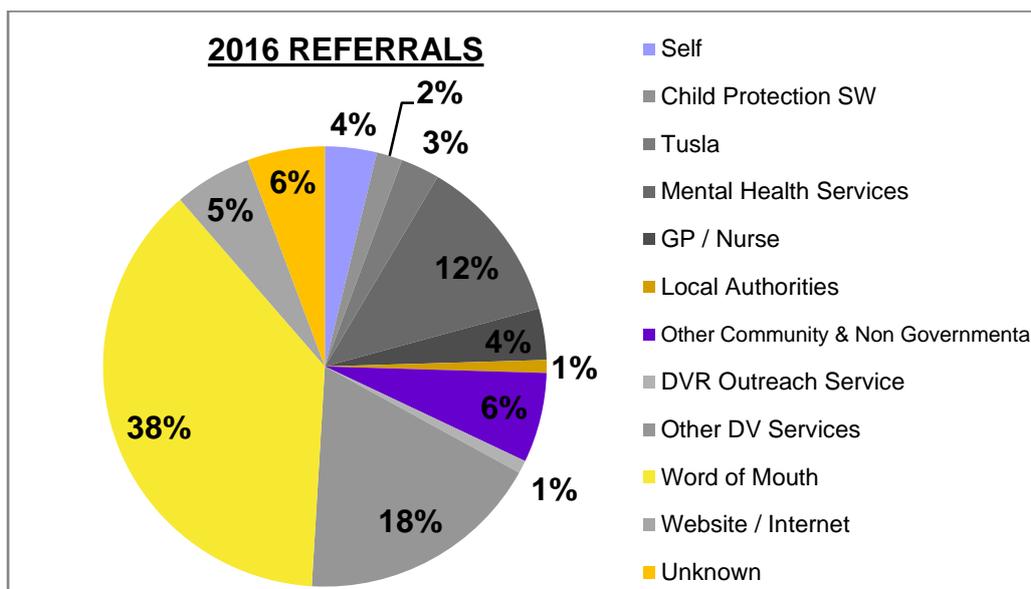
Table 3:



REFERRALS

Word of mouth referrals from clients who have used the service continues to be the most frequent source of referral to our service and is responsible for our highest number of referrals in 2016 at 38% of clients being referred by word of mouth. (Table 3)

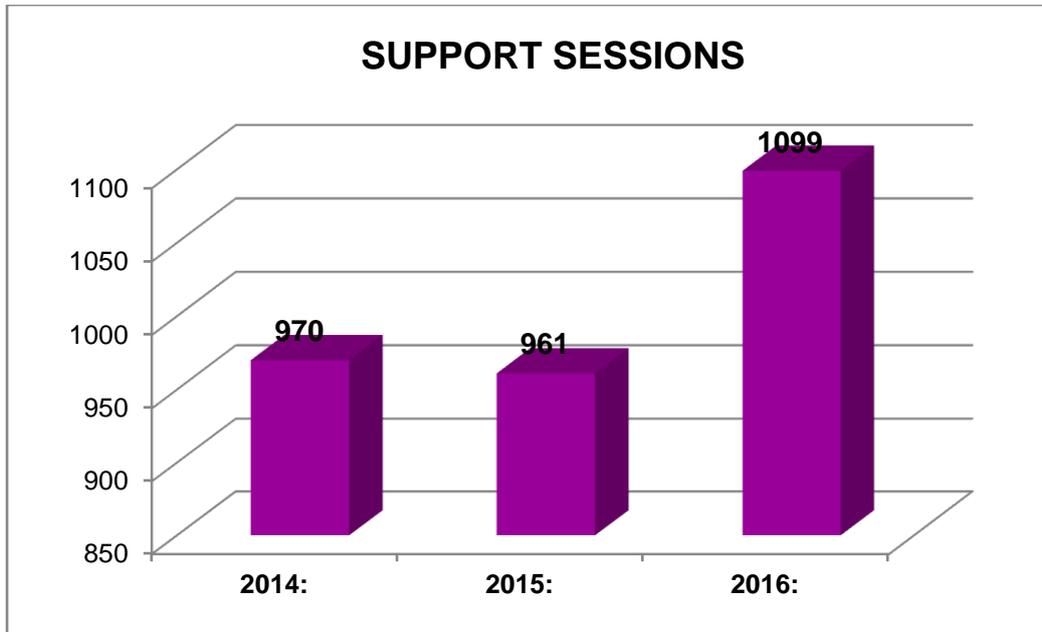
The remainder of referrals represents a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies who continue to ask our assistance for their clients. These include GPs, Family Resource Centres, Citizens Information Centres, other domestic violence services. Other sources include; counsellor/psychotherapists, DVR leaflets and the DVR website.



2.2. COUNSELLING SUPPORT AND INFORMATION: ONE TO ONE SUPPORT FOR WOMEN

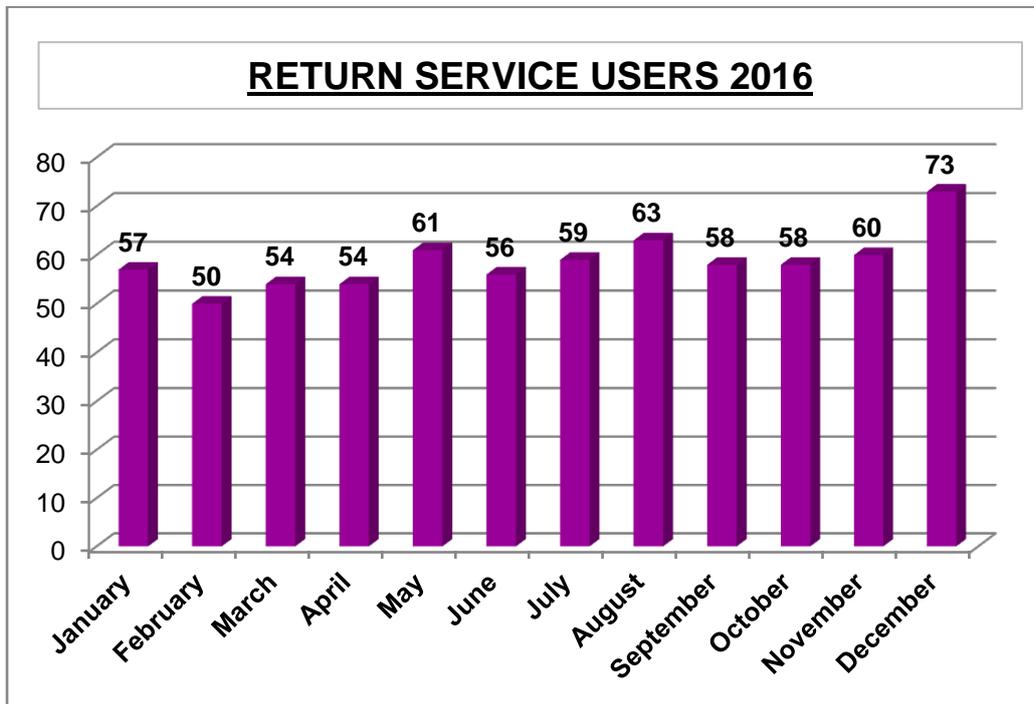
There has been a significant increase in our support sessions in 2016, with **1,099 Support Sessions** provided by our support workers to clients (Table 3). New clients are assigned their own support worker. Support workers do an initial assessment with each new client, exploring immediate danger and risks with clients. Thereafter, they continue to work with clients, exploring their abusive relationship and the impacts of domestic violence. They provide each client with information on coping strategies, self-care, perpetrator tactics, types of abuse, parenting issues, and healthy relationship dynamics.

Table 3:



2.3. RETURN CLIENTS

Table 4:



2.4. TELEPHONE SUPPORT

Nearly 5,500 calls were made and received in 2016. There was a significant increase in calls in 2016 from the previous two years. (Table 5) The service provided 50 weeks full cover and this averaged at approximately 100 calls per week. The majority of calls were from women looking for crisis emotional and practical support. Again due to the lack of staff funding, our ability to provide consistent telephone support in 2016 was impacted. Over 600 calls went unanswered in 2016 and most of these occurred during office hours (see Table 6). Further to phone calls, we continued to roll out the use of text to cut down on administration. Over 400 texts were sent each month and most of these texts were sent to clients in relation to support sessions and advocacy appointments, to volunteers and staff regarding fundraising events and awareness raising events.

Table 5: Incoming & Outgoing Calls 2014 - 2016

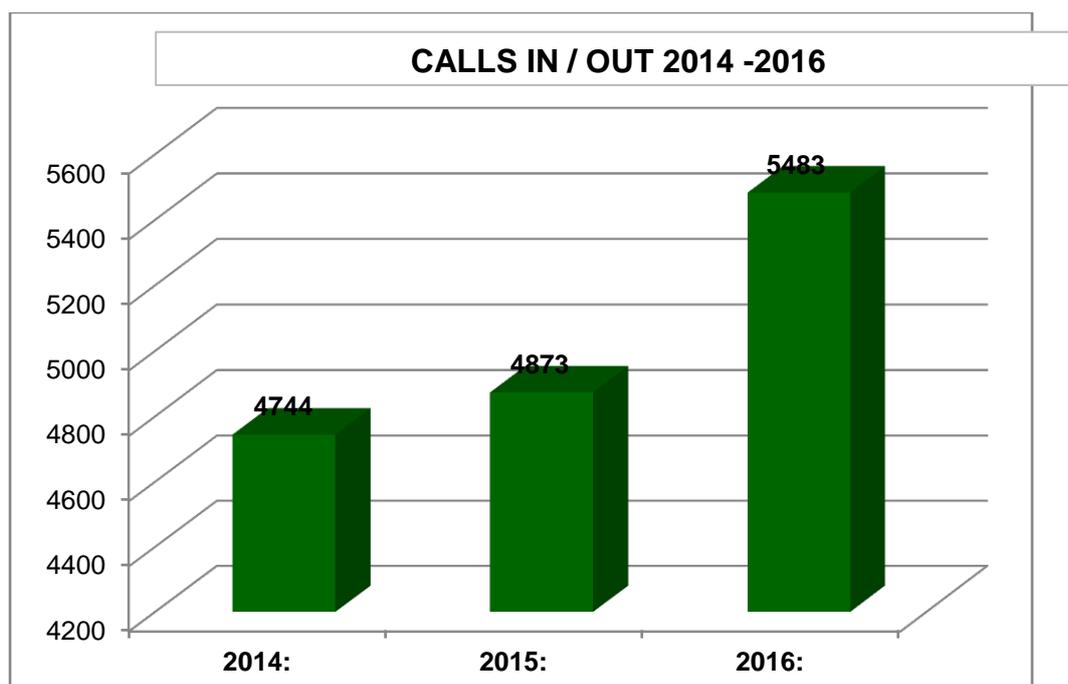
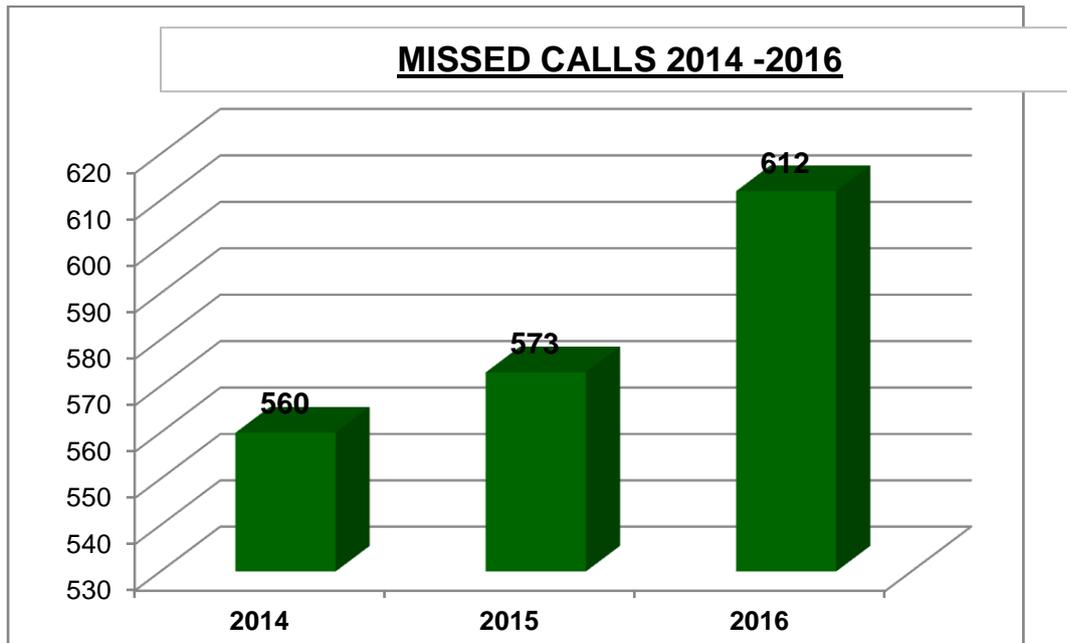


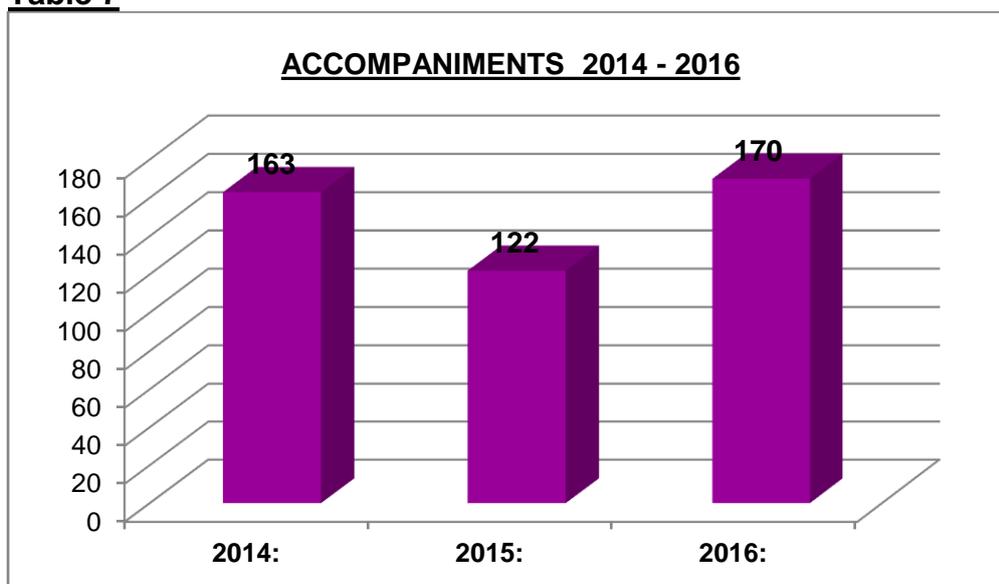
Table 6: MISSED CALLS 2014 – 2016



2.5. COURT ACCOMPANIMENT SERVICE

170 accompaniments were carried out by DVR in 2016. There was a significant increase in the number of accompaniments carried out by our advocacy workers in comparison to 2015 (See Table 7). The vast majority of these were to Court but it also included accompaniment to Solicitors, Legal Aid, the Gardaí, Community Welfare Officers, Social Welfare Office and TUSLA.

Table 7



3.0. CHILDREN'S SERVICES

This year saw huge changes in the services offered for children, due to funding shortfalls; DVR could no longer afford to offer services as in previous years. Issues with access, behavioural problems with children, parenting issues and children impacted by domestic violence were the main reasons mothers sought our help.

DVR seeks to provide mothers with parenting skills to cope with the negative impact of domestic violence on children. Information on **Parenting in the Aftermath of Domestic Violence** was included in the Paths to Freedom support groups run in 2016.

In 2016, 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.

Children First Referrals

Under Children First Guidelines, 75 children were referred to the Duty Social Workers in 2016. Other referrals included children referred to outside Counselling Services, Rainbows, GP, Family Resource Centres and School Services.

4.0. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES / PUBLIC AWARENESS

Paths to Freedom Educational Support Programme:

The **Paths to Freedom** educational support programme was provided to clients who had availed of DVR services and who have left their abusive relationships. A total of 18 clients attended the programme. The course provided information and group work on the following topics: understanding domestic violence, naming and recognising types of abuse, perpetrator tactics, exploring the impact of abuse on women, reclaiming power, communicating with ex-partner now, exploring the impact of living with abuse on children, creating violent free homes, safety/ access/ maintenance and custody issues, healing and moving on from abuse. DVR facilitated the course twice in the year, for 10 weeks each term one commenced in spring and the other in autumn.

Healthy Relationships Training:

The Healthy Relationships workshop took place on October 20th 2016. A total of 12 Participants attended on the day. This one day workshop gives participants an opportunity to learn about Healthy relationships, understand and respond to patterns in emotional abuse, and understand issues of personal power and control in relationships.

OTHER EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES / PUBLIC AWARENESS

Date:	Event:
August 23 rd	Connemara Community Radio Interview
September 14 th	Thornton Charity Swim
November 14 th	Safe Ireland Summit
November 16 th	Galway Traveller Movement Collaboration Process
December 5 th	Radio Interview on TG4
December 5 th	Radio Interview on Galway Bay FM
December 5 th	Co-Presentation of Galway Traveller Movement, domestic violence policy.
December 15 th	Article in Corrib News

6.0. STAFF

STAFF SUPERVISION

Staff delivering front line services and the Coordinator received external supervision. Clinical supervision of client load was carried out every three weeks by the Coordinator. Advocacy staff also received peer support and supervision from the Coordinator as needed.

STAFF TRAINING

Date:	Event:
June 15th	Leadership and Mindfulness Skills
November 14 th	Safe Ireland Summit
November 17th	Children's First Training
December 9 th	Case Management Training
December 9 th	Peer Led Supervision and Reflective Practice

7.0 OTHER ACTIVITIES / EVENTS

DVR continued its affiliation with Safe Ireland and attended 1 meeting in 2016. We also participated in Safe Ireland Research on legal Issues.

DVR chairperson gave a number of interviews to TG4 and Raidió na Gaeltachta throughout the year..

8.0. FUNDRAISING

Events:

Date:	Event:
01/02/16	St. Brigid's Day Coffee Morning Fundraiser, Kitchen Museum
18/03/16	Galway City Street Collection
05/05/16	Mayfly Church Concert Fundraiser
06/06/16	VHI Women's Mini Marathon Fundraiser
14/09/16	Sarah Thornton Charity Swim, Salthill
14/10/16	Breathnachs Bar Pub Quiz Fundraiser
23/10/16	Triskel Complementary Healing Day Fundraiser
15/11/16	NUIG Table Quiz Fundraiser, Monroe's
26 th 27 th /11/2016	Church Gate Collections
10/12/16	Galway Feminist Collective Fundraiser Night

9.0. MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

- DVR is a Company Limited by Guarantee, managed by a voluntary board of Directors comprising of 5 Directors plus a secretary. DVR acquired charitable status in 2011.
- In 2016, DVR proactively reviewed and monitored policies, to ensure adequate governance was in place for all financial and administrative transactions of the service.
- The Board of Directors oversaw its obligations of staff in relation to Health and Safety policies, which are clearly set out in the DVR Employment Manual.
- Accounts were audited and these accounts are reviewed by the Board at the AGM each June.
- Financial statements were prepared by the Treasurer, Coordinator and Accounts Technician prior to each Board of Directors Meeting. These reports were presented and reviewed by the Board at monthly meetings.
- It is policy of DVR since 2007 that a service user of the service should be elected annually as a full director on the Board of Directors.
- The Board reviewed a report on client uptake of all its services at its monthly meeting.

The Board met on a monthly basis, with additional meetings taking place in 2016, to facilitate funding issues, fundraising and the TUSLA facilitated process.

MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors is elected annually and comprises of 5 Directors & a Secretary.

Triona Nic Giolla Choille – Chairperson

Ann Lyons – Director

Grainne Rice - Director

Antony Previte – Treasurer

Marie Galvin – Director

Elizabeth Power– Secretary

Day-to-Day Management

The organisational is managed by the Coordinator, Elizabeth Power, who oversees the day to day provision of services.