



## 16 Days 365 All-Ireland Trustee Board Update 9<sup>th</sup> October 2021

An All-Ireland 16 Days 365 information and planning evening took place in mid September. Ten of the twelve dioceses were represented.

### 16 Days Resources

- All-Ireland 16 Days Prayer Diary – 12 copies for each cure in your diocese plus 50 copies. Delivery to arrive in dioceses during October
- MSH MU 16 Days Prayer diary – 3 bookmarks – keep 1, give away 2 with a conversation
- Purple scarves/bandanas - £3.50 each; expected in MSH mid October for a bulk order email - [adam.sach@mothersunion.org](mailto:adam.sach@mothersunion.org)
- Posters, Banner, Handout leaflets
- 16 Days Activism / Global Day Resources
- Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Live Streaming
- Global Moment 1:03 Outline
- Template Press release

### Additional 16 Days and Global Day Action Supports:

- Prayer Vigil Guide
- Survivors' voices
- 'No more 1 in 3' sermon / intercessory prayer – *pass on to clergy please*
- Practical supports for Survivors / Refugees
- Advocacy - See below
- Relaunch of 'Thursdays In Black'
- 16 Days Feedback Form

**Global Day Events Form – *please complete online (MSH) by 8<sup>th</sup> November.***

**Please forward your plans to Margaret and Jacqui so details can be placed on [www.mothersunion.ie](http://www.mothersunion.ie)**

### GENDER JUSTICE COURSE - Power to Change

***Please keep Mondays at 7.30pm in November FREE – 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>***

These five sessions are in the making. Bishops' Appeal. Mothers' Union and Tearfund are delighted to have attracted high profile advocates to deliver the talks – *Sabine Nkusu*, Tearfund's Gender & Protection Unit; *Bekah Legg*, Restored; *Mandy Marshall*, Anglican Communion Director of Gender Justice and *Robyn Boosey*, Mothers' Union, recently returned from Melbourne where she led transforming diocesan initiatives to combat domestic abuse.

Talks are informative, practical and relevant. Following tweaks this series will be launched in time for Lent 2022.

**The Restored Church Pack** is being updated. Bishops' Appeal, Mothers' Union and Tearfund are currently working on providing information pertinent to Ireland.

## GENERAL SYNOD

On invitation from CASC, June and Jacqui gave a presentation on the work of MU in relation to domestic abuse entitled, *Surely love shouldn't hurt – isn't it time to act on our watch?*

This has generated much interest and very positive feedback has been received from lay, clergy and Bishops.

*'This is a fantastic presentation – just what we need to hear. '*

*'A very powerful presentation – Thank you for highlighting this. '*

*'We need to open our eyes and our hearts. Thank you MU. Extraordinary!'*

One speaker noted the role of alcohol and alcohol abuse in acts of violence and indicated that the use of pornography by male perpetrators was the seed of much of what was going on and a lot of what was going on with traumatised teenagers. He urged the Church to acknowledge this.

Another reminded us that particularly during the Covid period children were exposed to their families. "As a Church we must be conscious of the fact that we should never stop working for vulnerable people and support organisations that work at the dark face of intimate relationship violence,"

### ***Initiatives suggested for parish engagement included:***

#### **1. Toilet Door Poster**

Organise a poster in your church toilets so survivors of domestic abuse know where they can locally receive help (and what some signs of an abusive relationship). [Restored \(restored-uk.org\)](http://restored-restored-uk.org)

#### **2. Developing a relationship with your nearest refuge**

#### **3. Supporting the Mothers' Union 16 Days of Activism**

Join in our Global Day of Action on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November, and during the 16 Days let's open up and speak out about domestic abuse...., invite a specialised speaker, include prayers etc. Your support will open a door to awareness and understanding

#### **4. Engaging with the 16 Days Prayer Diary**

#### **5. Knowledge is power - Do you wish to become better informed?**

Mothers' Union, Bishops' Appeal and Tearfund creating an Irish resource. This 5 part course introduces the topic of Gender Based Violence general release in time for Lent 2022.

#### **6. Safe Church**

**Restored**, have an excellent church pack.

Create a **Domestic Abuse Charter**

**Courses** to support individuals, clergy and church communities. [www.restored-uk.org](http://www.restored-uk.org)

**(Restored are marking the beginning of the 16 Days on the 25<sup>th</sup> November with a conference on line focussing on 'How we change the story for survivors through our churches'.)**

In Northern Ireland receive **Safe Church** Status through Onus NI training.

#### **6. Mothers' Union Souls of Our Shoes Exhibition**

*On average, victims experience 50 incidents of abuse before getting effective help* <sup>UK</sup>

#### **7. The World Council of Churches initiative, Thursdays in Black-**

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/thursdays-in-black>

**MSH Domestic Abuse Steering Group** met on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October. We discussed where we are now and where we would like to be. Robyn Boosey, Advocacy Manager, is consulting at present and by January will have the first draft of a three year proposed strategic Domestic Abuse Plan. The MSH Community of Interest on Domestic Abuse meet next Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup> October. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> October a group will meet to consider the draft of the three year plan.

**All-Ireland 16 Days 365 Committee** met on Wednesday evening. We noted that

- Considering the impact of General Synod, it is important we keep the momentum going and encourage branches / parishes on their journey - see suggestions for parishes above.
- The more we share and involve people in our 16 Days events the better and the stronger our campaign will be – website will be updated regularly.
- Relaunch and encouragement for *Thursdays in Black*
- A webinar / Zoom Conference on Domestic Abuse proposed for 2022

### **ADVOCACY UPDATES:**

*We welcome Robyn Boosey to the role of Advocacy Manager in MSH. On reflection with the MSH Steering Group on Domestic Abuse it was decided to leave advocacy until the New Year, when a meaningful advocacy time could be launched.*

This is likely to centre on **Migrant Women** who have no recourse to public funds and on advocating for **implementation and resourcing of the Istanbul Treaty and Domestic Abuse Laws** in full in each jurisdiction – particularly in relation to HOUSING and HOMELESSNESS.

*Please note: Relevant services have seen the preliminary findings of the Tusla National Accommodation Review. They await circulation of the wider document, and indications are that the depth of the challenges have been identified and the interdepartmental engagement and willingness is there to work towards addressing the issues identified.*

Two recent RoI publications have insightful information to share regarding refugees and homelessness.

**Womens' Aid** [Submission to the Joint Committee on Justice on women's shelters/domestic abuse refuges \(womensaid.ie\)](https://www.womensaid.ie)

**Safe Ireland** [Microsoft Word - Safe Ireland Pre Budget Submission 2022 Proof](#)

No NI document on this issue could be sourced at this time.

**A recent conversation with a Domestic Violence Service made the following observations:**

#### **Republic of Ireland – Migrant Women**

- No recourse to public funds – need Stamp 4 to receive a social welfare payment
- Can be weeks/ months without payment – not permitted emergency payments but may be given a once off payment – become destitute and poverty stricken.
- Women afraid to go to Gardaí as they have a fear of police from their country of origin, and many have come from highly patriarchal societies.
- They are afraid to speak out as they may have to return to their country of origin.
- Migrant women receive help more quickly if it is domestic violence – domestic abuse eg. emotional abuse, is much harder to prove
- Language barrier leads to isolation. A phone translator costs €60, so most refuges interpret through google

### **HOUSING**

**UNLESS YOU HAVE A HOME EVERYTHING ELSE IS A BATTLE – EVERY REFUGE IS BED BLOCKED!**

- If a safe home is not available, family support is impaired, mental health of all is affected, proper resources cannot be put in place, you don't have an address for a bank account etc.
- All services are underfunded and piecemeal. There are no sustainable solutions in place. currently many survivors and families are in hotel bedrooms for months
- Many survivors return home, or don't leave home because the proper resources are not available to cater sustainably for them.

- Most supports for a survivor are in place after three months, and a survivor is ready to move to an independent home
- Many are still in a refuge after 18 months, become institutionalised, world becomes scary
- Safer for a woman to leave than to get a barring order - but refuges cannot cater for the demand.
- Landlords have withdrawn properties and put rents up.

## CHILDREN

**In NI some provision has been made for children in the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Bill 2021.** Children’s Court Welfare Officers represent the voice of the child/children in court proceedings. They will advise the court on matters that impact upon the children and make recommendations as to what may be in the child's best interests.

**In RoI all children under 18 years come under the guardianship of Tusla,** the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children. It represents reform of child protection, early intervention and family support services. *It is severely under resourced.*

- Gardaí, domestic abuse providers, social workers etc. report all concerns to Tusla – this can take 2-3 weeks
- A social worker, child care worker etc. may only be able to visit a child once – this means a relationship based on trust cannot be built up.
- Children are manipulated and are under tremendous pressure from perpetrator
- Perpetrators threaten children if they talk, may be forced to withdraw statements etc. – *“Your Mammy will go to jail if you tell,”*
- Access to perpetrator is nearly always granted by the court. Some women return home because they feel at least they can keep an eye on them when perpetrator is present.
- Practically impossible to get a Guardian Ad Litem

## OPERATION ENCOMPASS (NI)

**Operation Encompass,** was promised in the new domestic abuse law provisions being introduced in Northern Ireland.

It is being piloted in 60 schools in County Down, and it aims to help get children affected by domestic violence immediate emotional support in school.

*Before each school day, police will tell schools if any pupils have been affected by an incident of violence in the home in the previous 24 hours.* It will eventually be rolled out across all schools.

The scheme is a partnership between the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland (SBNI), the Education Authority (EA) and schools.

## ‘Have your SAY, BUST the myths’ Survey (NI)

Following a Facebook post on Women’s’ Aid NI northern dioceses were encouraged to go online and take the ‘*Have your SAY, BUST the myths*’ survey by the Department of Justice, seeking views on which rape and sexual offences myths are most prevalent in our society. These responses will help shape a campaign to raise awareness and to challenge some of the false myths surrounding serious sexual offences.

There are two opportunities to place a comment raising the problem of faith based myths and the extra layer of complexity for victims/ survivors of faith. Information on myths from a faith based point of view from the Restored Church Handbook was forwarded to each diocese.

Make a difference and take part today: <https://bit.ly/3k1bDH2>

Jacqui Armstrong, All-Ireland 16 Days 365 Coordinator, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021