



national collective of
**community based
women's
networks**



**NCCWN Waterford Women's Centre - ACCESS 2000 CLG
removing barriers for women in Waterford since 1995**

2019 Annual Report



GIY Therapeutic Horticulture course for staff October 2019 funded by Waterford Chamber Skillnet

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Chairwoman's Address by Alison Langford

My last task as Chairwoman is to introduce the 2019 Annual Report as I step down as Chairwomen and director of Access 2000 at the end of 2019. I am delighted to have served three interesting years as Chair and work with a very proactive, enthusiast and inclusive team.

The Women's Centre is working for 24 years in Waterford, supporting and enabling women to remove barriers to their participation and to reimagine their lives.

I wish to say a big thank you to everyone involved in the Centre, the core staff of the Women's Centre and the Childcare Centre, our facilitators, volunteers, students, participants, TUS and Community Employment employees and the management committee. Thank you all for your generosity and commitment to the Women's Centre.

I would like to express my gratitude to our funders: NCCWN (National Collective of Community Women's Networks) for the provision of our core staff through the Department of Justice & Equality National Women's Equality & Development Programme, Department of Children and Youth Affairs for funding our Childcare Centre, Department of Employment and Social Protection funding our Lead into Employment Programme under the Activation & Family Support Programme, Waterford Wexford Education & Training Board, funding, Health & Wellbeing, Bonnet Project, the Pathways to Employment LTI and the Community Certificate. Thanks to Community Employment & TUS for the provision of essential workers; Tesco Community Fund; Waterford City & County Council for supporting the Centre through Communities Facilities Scheme and Community Enhancement funding for supporting us to do essential maintenance to the building and garden. Thanks to Energia Get Ireland Growing Fund that supported the rebuilding of the Women's Centre garden, enabling us to use it as an outdoor classroom and to Waterford Chamber Skillnet for funding GIY Therapeutic Horticulture Course for our staff. Thanks also to Creative Ireland Waterford for supporting the International Women's Day women's history exhibition and to Oasis House for funding the Domestic Violence support group.

Thanks to management members, staff and their families and women attending programmes for their voluntary donation weekly to the Women's Centre. We are also most grateful for the annual donation from the Waterford Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity.

Finally, thanks to all the agencies who work with us on a daily basis in Waterford City and County, for your cooperation, collaboration and trust in the Women's Centre, without whom we could not do what we do. We look forward to continuing to work together.

I have enjoyed my time as Chairwoman of the Waterford Women's Centre and look forward to returning to my work as a facilitator in the Centre over the coming years.

Alison Langford Chairwoman 2019

About the Women's Centre - Breda Murphy - Coordinator

Established in 1995 by women for women, the Waterford Women's Centre & Childcare Service (ACCESS 2000 Company Limited by Guarantee) has provided an independent meeting/learning space for women in Waterford and Childcare Centre for the past 23 years. The Women's Centre & Childcare Service is run by a committed team of employees and overseen by a voluntary board of management.

Management & Staff Team

Directors: Helen Rafferty, Eleanor Murphy (Treasurer) and Alison Langford (Chairwoman)

Members: Maeve O'Grady, Ann Fitzgerald and Miriam Holt. **Company Secretary:** Breda Murphy

Staff: Childcare Centre Coordinator: Sarah Walsh **Assistant Coordinator:** Amie O'Shea-Daniels

Childcare Workers: Amy Fanning, Michelle Flynn, Lorraine Ryan, Stephanie Bible, Jessica Shortall and Lisa Stone.

Coordinator: Breda Murphy **Administrator:** Francesca Jordan

Outreach Development Coordinator: Kate Crotty

Local Training Initiative Coordinator: Maureen Tobin

MEND Partner Support Worker: Veronica Malone

Tus: Margaret Troy **Community Employment:** Catherine McNena, Anna Filipobic, Andrea Pejzic and Jennifer Dwyer **Students:** Valeria Piana, Michelle Murphy, Laura McCormack, Nicole Rusu, Geraldine Dermody, Michelle Tyler and Ann Kavanagh.

A panel of facilitators also supports the work.

National Collective of Community Based Women's Network

In 2011 staff funding for 17 women's projects across the country was redirected through the NCCWN (National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks). The NCCWN Waterford Women's Centre became part of the DJE National Women's Equality & Development Programme, collectively providing needs-based supports and services for women throughout the country. The NCCWN national coordinator, Miriam Holt, is based in the Waterford Women's Centre.

Vision

Recognising the impact of class and gender conditioning and the way cultural, political and economic structures impact on our lives, the Women's Centre aims to provide a safe space where women can overcome barriers and collectively challenge structures that block our development.

Promoting educational, cultural & social opportunities for women through removing barriers to participation. This is aided by the provision of affordable community childcare, supporting the physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social development of children.

From the personal to the political – our values



As part of a National Women's Programme the Women's Centre, along with 16 NCCWN Projects, utilises the potential and strength of working collectively to influence policy that impacts on women's lives, at a national level. In providing a space locally for women to participate in community education, build confidence, express opinions, learn skills, the Women's Centres across the country build capacity so that voices not usually heard can be.

Sergeant Dave Butler, Waterford Garda Station, Community policing, in the Women's Centre who registered 18 new voters in time May 2019 European and Local Election

Childcare provision removing barriers for women



The Childcare Service provides care for up to 42 children daily. Women play a key role in society as carers, for many their primary role. In order to provide equality of condition in accessing programmes, supports & services for women, the provision of childcare is essential. Our Childcare Service, in keeping with the ethos of the Women's Centre, places children's needs central. We recognise the invaluable work our childcare workers do, which is often undervalued and underpaid, as is women's role as carers in society.

Outreach

The Waterford Women's Centre is the only Women's Centre in Waterford and can provide a first point of access for women to relevant supports and services, helping remove barriers to participation. The Centre has developed outreach strategies that support the engagement of women who may not otherwise engage. A key part of the outreach process is the strong referral relationships with relevant community and statutory agencies in Waterford, ensuring those who most need the Women's Centre programmes can avail of them and of other supports and services they require.

Women are supported to participate in a variety of community education programmes and to engage in community events, access public spaces they otherwise might not access such as their local library, museums, art galleries, local festivals and exhibitions.

Existing participants are themselves our greatest advocates and key outreach workers both in their families and local communities, knowing first-hand what the Women's Centre offers and how it benefits them and their families.

One to one interviews take place with each woman before joining a group to ensure the most appropriate placements are made, whether within the Women's Centre's Programmes or on to other programmes or services. If additional supports needs are identified at this stage or at any stage throughout the programme relevant referrals are made.

The work

- Outreach and engagement
- Delivery of Community Education programmes
- Enable access to relevant supports and services
- Maintain and develop a democratic organisational structure with equality at its heart
- Engage in policy analysis and highlight issues that impact on women's lives
- Provide care for up to 42 children to support women's participation and progression
- Issue-based support groups for women
- Network and collaborate with relevant local agencies
- Raise the profile of Waterford women through the Women's History Project
- Network and work collaboratively with the other 16 NCCWN Women's Projects
- Social Enterprise development

The Childcare Centre – Sarah Walsh Coordinator



The Childcare Service can accommodate 42 children from 15 months to 6 years. We are open from 8.45am – 5.15 pm Monday to Friday. Our small numbers support children, parents and staff to get to know each other, thus building strong relationships. Telephone or call in to make an appointment if you would like to come and see our facility. We would be delighted to show you around and give you the opportunity to meet our staff and to see our well-equipped and spacious indoor and outdoor facilities.

Ethos

We aim to provide a safe, comfortable and happy environment for children and parents. We have an open door policy which ensures that there is always a staff member available to meet with parents.

Childcare Service Mission Statement

The Childcare Service is committed to providing an environment that promotes the physical, intellectual, language, emotional, social and spiritual development of the child.

Fees are dependent on family income and the following schemes are offered:

E.C.C.E (Early Childhood Care and Education, Free Preschool Year); C.E.T.S (Childcare Education & Training Support) part paid childcare place for parents attending a further education course; C.C.C.S (Community Childcare Subvention Scheme) subsidy scheme for eligible parents in community childcare facilities; NCS National Childcare Scheme support for parents to meet their childcare costs.

Our Childcare Staff

Our Staff are fully qualified and carefully selected in order to provide a caring and professional service. Our goal is to provide the best possible care for your child.

We believe children learn mainly through play and interactions with their peers and promote a social atmosphere which facilitates them to make friends. Children are encouraged to express themselves, to work and play together.



The curriculum offered is varied, stimulating and flexible and allows all ages to learn at their own pace. Fun is central to all activities. We follow Siolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

We provide

A safe environment where children can learn through playing. We have dedicated sleep rooms with flexible sleep routines based on the child's needs.

The Childcare Centre works hand-in-hand with the Women's Centre to support women remove barriers to accessing training, education, information, services and employment.

In removing barriers to participation for women the provision of childcare is still key. In 2018 the Women's Centre Childcare Service cared for a total 110 children across 60 families. 40% of families were one parent families headed by women.

15% of parents were supported by the CETS programme which supports the return to education, 50% were supported by ECCE free preschool and the rest supported by childcare subvention.

15% of parents attended programmes in the Women's Centre, 10% attended English classes and other supports for new communities. 50% of parents attended back to education programmes in further education or third level and 25% gained employment. The Childcare Service also provided work placement for 3 students in 2019.

Community Education Programmes Kate Crotty – Outreach Development Coordinator

The Waterford Women's Centre provides a first point of reference for many women to access community education programmes and other relevant supports and services.

All our programmes employ community education methodologies; challenging inequality and limited conditioning and promoting a feminist approach underpinned by an ethos of equality. Personal development together with social analysis builds capacity to identify and address not only personal issues but also community and social issues.

Health and Wellbeing

Health & Wellbeing is a very successful programme which was shortlisted for an AONTAS Star award in 2019. The programme is funded by WWETB, and aims to provide a springboard to personal health and wellbeing for participants, through improving levels of confidence, increased ability to cope with and address stress and develop strategies towards wellbeing. 51 women attended this programme two days a week in 2019.



Health & Wellbeing shortlisted for Aontas Star Award in 2019

Outcomes

- Development of groupwork skills
- Increased sense of happiness (having something positive to look forward to is very important to participants, and some suggest the course is “a lifeline”)
- Making friends
- The development of reflective thinking (which is important towards taking learning from any situation and making appropriate changes if necessary)
- Ability to recognise stress and employ strategies to reduce stress
- Increased belief in self and own ability (developed through examining transferable skills)
- More of an understanding of how society is set up and more awareness of the equalities that exist
- Enhanced ability to communicate more positively (participants suggest that they are getting on better with friends, neighbours and family)
- The development of personal awareness
- Appreciation of cultural diversity and diversity in general
- Increased confidence, self-esteem and the enhanced development of life skills
- More informed about other education and training opportunities

Lead into Employment

The 'Lead into Employment' course is for women who are parenting alone and are on a Social Welfare transitional payment. This course is funded by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, through the Activation and Family Support Programme. This course involves working intensely with the participants to identify and address barriers to their progression. The course aims to provide an opportunity for the participants to explore options, build confidence, recognise and identify transferable skills, develop new skills as well as develop a progression plan to further education, training and employment. Participants attended three mornings each week throughout the academic year from September to June. In 2019 this course was delivered three mornings each week and 26 women attended.

Outcomes

- increase in confidence
- a more positive outlook
- recognition and willingness to deal with barriers to progression
- improved sense of self-esteem
- development of groupwork skills
- work experience skills in retail
- Study skills
- The development of a progression plan



Break time in the Women's Centre

Certificate in Community Studies

In partnership with Waterford Institute of Technology, the Women's Centre delivered a Level 6 Community Certificate which consists of the following three modules:

- Personal Effectiveness
- Groupwork & Facilitation Skills
- Community Development

The special purpose award in Community Studies is for people working in their community in a voluntary or paid capacity and facilitates practical and theoretical training and education for community workers. Participants have the opportunity to continue on and complete a full higher Certificate in Community Education and Development in Waterford Institute of Technology. Progression to ordinary degree and honours degree is also available in WIT. This programme was funded by the Waterford and Wexford Education Training Board (WWETB). In October 2019 12 participants of the Certificate in Community Studies graduated with a special purpose award at QQI level 6.

Bonnet Project



The **Bonnet Project** supports participants to make a bonnet and be part of the **'Roses from the Heart'** annual exhibition in Waterford City Central Library. The **'Roses from the Heart'** exhibition is an international project and commemorates the numerous Waterford women unjustly transported to Van Diemen's Land as criminals. It enables participants to learn the skills necessary to make a bonnet and have an appreciation of these heroic women in our shared history.

Pathways to Employment - Local Training Initiative

Maureen Tobin LTI Coordinator



The Local Training Initiative programme, Pathways to Employment, began in the Women's Centre in 2018 and continued throughout 2019. This programme was funded by WWETB under the Local Training Initiative (LTI) and delivered over four days each week. The programme was presented as an option for young women without clearly identified progression pathway post leaving certificate.

It provided the opportunity to get a QQI Level 4 Major Award in General Learning. During 2019 all the group (eleven in total) were successful in acquiring Minor Awards and many of these results were made possible, according to feedback from the participants, through the supportive group environment provided in the Women's Centre and the 'one to one' encouragement and support they received ongoing. Along with providing accreditation the programme also provided 'a figuring out time' a space for the participants to identify what they wanted to do next and how to go about it. This was a successful strategy and the programme engaged women who otherwise might not have engaged in further education or training. There were many additional supports and services accessed throughout 2019 to support the continuation of this group. One of the modules 'Work Experience' provided an opportunity to experience working in various settings throughout Waterford City. The women were supported and challenged to overcome barriers to access employment experience which contributed greatly to their participation and completion of this module. Increased levels of confidence are evident in this group since the start of the programme and many have clear progression pathways in place.

Women's History Group

In working with women for 25 years we are aware of the necessity of including history in our work and in acknowledging the role played by women who came before us and who made this path, this foundation for us to build upon. Without them we would not now be able to do what we do. We understand that when we look back and take pride in the work of ordinary women with whom we can identify, we unlock power in the present as we learn from their successes and failures. The exclusion of women's contribution, whether written out or never recorded, and the valuing of men's, contributes to gender inequality in the present. The Women's History Group coordinates the following:

1. Coordinates annual **International Women's Day Festival**.
2. The **Pink Plaque Campaign** aims to increase the number of Waterford City Civic Trust Blue Plaques dedicated to women and acknowledge their contribution to our City. In 2019 the fourth plaque was dedicated to the Waterford Cockle Women.
3. The ongoing development of **Women in History Photographic Exhibition** recording Waterford women's stories including present day women. Exhibited annually for International Women's Day.
4. The use of history in our community education programmes as a tool for building confidence and empowering women as in **The Bonnet Project**.
5. **Women's History Walk** to relevant sites throughout the city, honouring such great Waterford women as; Annie Brophy, Anna Manahan, Rosamond Jacob, Teresa Deevy to name but a few.

2019 Events

International Women's Day Festival



NCCWN Waterford Women's Centre presented an International Women's Day Festival with a number of free events beginning with a Circle Dance workshop in Edmund Rice Youth & Community Multiplex, Manor Street from on Tuesday 5th March.

On the 6th March in Waterford Central Library, Lady Lane the Women's Centre History Project presented a rich and extensive photo exhibition '**Women at Work**'. This work showed a selection of historical images of "Women at Work" from the 1860s to the early 1900s. It contains many familiar images from both urban and rural settings. The exhibition represents many years of collaboration between Andrew Kelly, Kilmacthomas and Waterford Women's Centre's management members Ann Fitzgerald. The central theme of this year's exhibition are the Waterford cockle women, who were honoured as part of the festival with a Civic Trust Blue Plaque. Also on exhibition are bonnets, made by women from the Women's Centre 'Bonnet Project', funded by the WWETB. The bonnets are part of the larger 'Roses from the Heart' exhibition remembering Waterford women who were transported to Tasmania in the 1800s.

The Women's Centre hosted its annual women's history walk on the 7th March, honouring such great Waterford women as; Annie Brophy, Anna Manahan, Rosamond Jacob and many more.

On International Women's Day, March 8th, a Civic Trust Blue Plaque was unveiled to the Waterford Cockle Women in **Arundel Lane**. For many generations women sold cockles on the streets of Waterford, with evidence as far back as 1870 but probably longer. The unveiling of a Civic Trust Blue Plaque to the Waterford cockle women was the final event in the Women's Centre week-long programme. Despite the rain there was a great turn out for the event. The plaque was unveiled on the corner of Arundel Lane at the spot where Masher (Mary Cleere), a Passage cockle woman, sold the cockles for 40 years up to the 1970s. Over 40 descendants of the cockle women family attended the event.

16 Day of Action Opposing Violence against Women



Approximately 100 people attended 'Learning from the Legacy of Loss' Information & Awareness Event on Thursday 5th December 2019 in Carrickphierish Library, Carrickphierish Road, Gracedieu, Waterford City. This event was hosted by the Waterford Local Area Network Opposing Violence Against Women and highlighted the impact of domestic violence as well as identifying supports and services available in Waterford.

The Women's Centre is part of the **Waterford Local Area Network (LAN)**, a network of statutory, community and voluntary groups that provide services to those experiencing domestic abuse. The LAN aims to raise awareness and improve communication between service providers, enable access to services and address issues that place barriers to women and childrens safety. The event was supported by Tusla Child & Family Agency and the LAN member organisations.

The updated 'Enough Is Enough' booklet, produced by the Waterford Local Area Network and funded by Waterford Court Services and Waterford City and County Council was launched at the event.

Supporting women experiencing domestic abuse

MEND Partner Support Programme

The Women's Centre provides supports for the partners of men attending the MEND Male Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse through the Men's Development Network. This programme provides one to one support, advocacy, information and referrals. 29 women were supported in 2011/19.

Domestic Violence Support Group

A support programme for women who experienced domestic abuse offers a safe, confidential space, providing women with a needs-based programme to support recovery and rebuild confidence.



Appreciations

To everyone who contributed in any way to our work in 2019 - a big thank you.



Clár Éire Ildánach
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2017-2022

