



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



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

2018 Annual Report



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Chairwoman's Address by Alison Langford

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2018 Annual Report on behalf of the Women's Centre board of management. The Women's Centre is 23 years working with women in Waterford, supporting and enabling them to remove barriers and reimagine their lives.

I wish to say a big thank you to everyone involved in the Centre, the core staff, both in the Women's Centre and the Childcare Centre, facilitators, volunteers, students, participants, TUS and Community Employment employees and 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: the NCCWN (National Collective of Community Women's Networks) in providing our core staff through the Department of Justice & Equality National Women's Equality & Development Programme, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Department of Social Protection Activation & Family Support Programme, Waterford Wexford Education & Training Board, Community Employment, TUS, HSE Lotto Funding, Waterford Area Partnership and Waterford Council Communities Facilities Scheme and Community Enhancement Scheme. I wish to thank 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. We look forward to continuing to work together in 2019.

Alison Langford Chairwoman 2018

About the Women's Centre - Breda Murphy - Project Coordinator

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

Management Committee

Directors: Helen Rafferty, Eleanor Murphy (Treasurer) and Alison Langford (Chairwoman)
Members: Maeve O'Grady, Ann Fitzgerald and Miriam Holt. Company Secretary: Breda Murphy

Staff Team

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

Childcare Workers: Amy Fanning, Michelle Flynn, Lorraine Ryan and Stephanie Bible

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

Outreach Development Coordinator: Kate Crotty

Local Training Initiative Coordinator: Maureen Tobin

MEND Partner Support Worker: Veronica Malone

Tus: Catherine McNena **Community Employment:** Joan Barry, Jessica Shortall, Serena McGrath, Maria Fitzsimons and Jennifer Dwyer **Students:** Kate Murphy, Valeria Piana, Almedina Shabani and Sidbebe Tougma

A panel of facilitators also support the work

National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks

In 2011 staff funding for 17 women's project 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 is based in the Waterford Women's Centre.

Vision

Recognising the impact of class & 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.

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.

Childcare provision removing barriers for women

The Women's Centre Childcare Service provides care for up to 42 children daily in its purpose built Centre. The Women's Centre acknowledges the key role, for many their primary role, women play in society as carers. In order to provide equality of condition in accessing programmes, supports & services for women, the provision of childcare is essential. Our Childcare Services in keeping with the ethos of the Women's Centre keeps 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; 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 women 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
- 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 Women's Centre 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

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.

About our 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.

What 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. 70% of families were one parent families headed by women.

15% of parents were supported by the CETS programme which supports the return to education, 70% were supported by ECCE free preschool and the rest supported by childcare subvention.

10% of parents attended programmes in the Women's Centre, 10% attended English classes and other supports for new communities. 60% of parents attended back to education programmes in further education or third level and 20% gained employment. The Childcare Service also provided work placement for 4 students in 2018.

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

The Health & Wellbeing programme, funded by WWETB, 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.

In 2018, 54 women attended this programme, delivered two days each week.

The Health and Wellbeing Programme provides an opportunity to build confidence, identify ways to reduce daily stress and develop coping strategies. Inter personal communication skills are also developed as is the ability to articulate needs and place value on personal and collective contributions to the world.

Participants own words

I now have new friends in my life. Before I came here, I was so isolated

I had no confidence when I started, I came from an abusive relationship and I felt worthless

This course has made such a difference to me and my family

Lead into Employment

The Lead Into Employment Programme, funded by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, through the Activation and Family Support Programme, aims to provide an opportunity for women returning to paid employment to explore options, build confidence, identify skills and develop a progression plan to further training, education or employment. In 2018, 32 women attended this programme, delivered three days each week.

Participants own words:

I can now think outside the box about what I want to do with my life

I feel more confident to apply for a job or a course, am better at talking to people in authority

I feel for the first time in my life I could go to college and I believe in myself

Pathways to Employment - Local Training Initiative

Maureen Tobin LTI Coordinator

The Women's Centre embarked on a new programme in 2018, Pathways to Employment. Though this new programme is targeted particularly at young women, we outreached and engaged 15 women from 18 years upwards. This programme is funded by WWETB under the Local Training Initiative (LTI) and is delivered four days each week. Outreach was undertaken with local secondary schools, with visits from transition year students and leaving certificate students to the Women's Centre. The programme was presented as an option for girls who had no clear progression identified post leaving certificate. It was described as 'a figuring out year'. This has been a very successful strategy and the programme has engaged women who otherwise might not have engage in further education or training. There were many additional supports and services accessed throughout 2018 to support the continuation of participation of this group.

Participants own words

I am delighted with the course. Everybody in here seems to 'get me'

I get great support from all my new friends in the group

If I wasn't here I would be at home on the couch all day

I never, until now, thought that I would even be thinking about going to college

I love the way everybody is treated the same here

2018 Events

International Women's Day

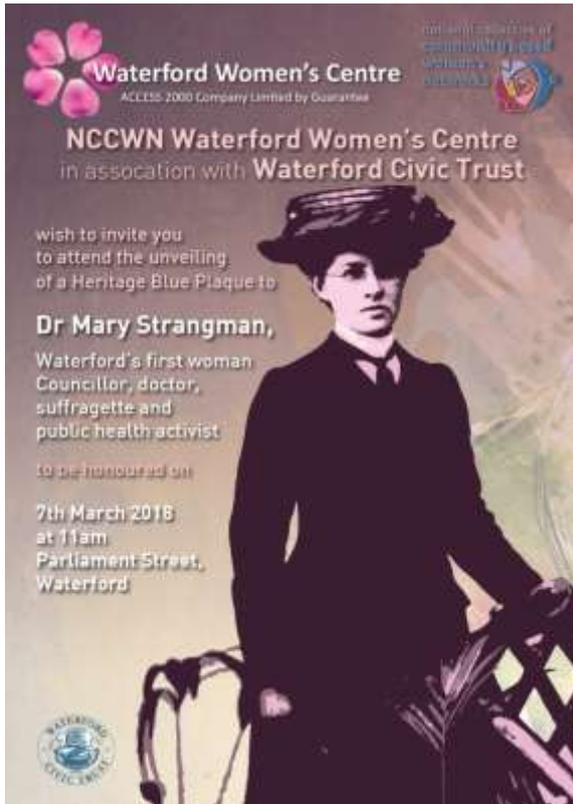
Waterford Women's Centre hosted a packed programme of events to celebrate International Women's Day 2018. On Monday 5th March Chairwoman, Alison Langford, launched the week's events at Edmund Rice Youth & Community Multiplex, Manor Street.



Circle Dance Workshop - meditation through movement 'Focusing on the Feminine' led by Kate Crotty



A women's walking tour of the City took place on Tuesday 6th March celebrating women significant to Waterford's history



Pink Plaque Campaign 2018

In partnership with the Waterford Civic Trust, NCCWN Waterford unveiled a Blue Plaque, on Wednesday 7th March, to Dr Mary Strangman who was the first Waterford woman city councillor, doctor, suffragette and health activist. This plaque is part of the Women's Centre's 'Pink Plaque Campaign' which aims to increase the number of Civic Trust Plaques dedicated to women in Waterford. The dedication was attended by the Mayor of Waterford, Councillor Pat Nugent, Senator Grace O'Sullivan and descendants of Doctor Mary Strangman who unveiled the plaque.



History Exhibition

On **International Women's Day**, Thursday 8th March, the launch of the annual women's history photographic exhibition took place in the Central Library. This exhibition is a collaboration between Historians' Andrew Kelly, Kilmacthomas and Waterford Women's Centre's Ann Fitzgerald. This extensive exhibition of 100 years of Waterford Women highlights their stories through photographs and written narrative. This year's exhibition focuses on the 1918-2018 Centenary of Women's Suffrage and the long and difficult campaign that took place before women got the right to vote.



The Bonnet Project

Artist Dr. Christine Henri, from Australia, brought the Roses from the Heart exhibition to Waterford once again and told the poignant story of women who were transported to Van Diemen's Land in the 19th and 20th centuries - their 'crimes' as petty as stealing a turnip. Over 300 Waterford Women were sent to Van Diemen's Land. The 'Roses from the Heart' exhibition, is a collection of handmade bonnets honouring each woman who was sent from Waterford. This year's exhibition had the addition of 17 bonnets made by members of the Women's Centre, funded by the WWETB.



The Women's Centre singing group which came together especially for these events, supported by local musician Jane O'Brien-Moran, sang a number of liberation songs including the suffragette anthem 'Bread and Roses' in honour of 100 years of Irish women getting the vote.

The Women's History Project - Ann Fitzgerald

From working with women for the past 23 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 whom we could not do what we do. When we look back and take pride in the work of ordinary women with whom we can identify, we learn from their successes and failures. The exclusion of women's input, whether written out or never recorded, and valuing men's contribution over that of women's can contribute to disempowerment of women in the present. Since 2012 the Women's Centre History Group has engaged in highlighting women's contribution in a number of ways: **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 and County. The Women's Centre is committed to supporting one new blue plaque to a Waterford woman each year. 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. The use of history in our community education programmes as a tool for building confidence and empowering women. **The Bonnet Project** above is one such programme.

16 Day of Action Opposing Violence against Women



The Local Area Network Opposing Violence Against Women held an event 'Breaking Down the Barriers' in Dungarvan County Waterford on the 4th December 2018, chaired by Women's Centre Coordinator Breda Murphy. The aim of the event was to highlight the impact of domestic violence and raise awareness of the supports and services available in Waterford. The event was attended by approximately 100 people.

Also launched at the event was the new Waterford City & County Domestic Violence Outreach Programme, funded by Tusla. This Programme is coordinated by Oasis House Women's Refuge in partnership with Tusla Child & Family Agency, Waterford Women's Centre and supported by An Garda Síochána and will begin in January 2019.

As part of the outreach programme the Women's Centre will, in 2019, facilitate two 10 week support programmes for women who have experienced domestic abuse. This programme 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 2018 - a big thank you.

