

Domestic Violence – The Issue

“Women and children from all socio economic, social and ethnic backgrounds are victims of domestic violence. Research shows that 1 in 5 women in Ireland who have been involved in intimate relationships with men have been abused by a current or former partner.” (O’Connor, M, & Kelleher Associates, Making the Links, Women’s Aid, 1995).

“In the middle of the bad storms last year, we had a woman and two children who badly needed refuge – she had multiple bruising and a black eye and going to family was not a safe option. The children were like two mice in the corner, completely withdrawn and terrified. We rang so many refuges looking for a space for this family but the only place we could get was down in the south east, miles from Galway and several change-overs of buses on the way. It was pitiful to see them heading off.” Wendy Heuston, Manager Waterside House Refuge.

Since 1996 in Ireland, 212 women have been murdered, and 63% of these in their own homes. In the resolved cases 87 women were murdered by a partner or ex-partner. 14 children were murdered alongside their mothers.

And in Galway we cannot currently accommodate the number of women and children who need refuge from violence and abuse in their own home.

“I didn’t know about refuges before, but having to leave with my baby so suddenly and so late at night.. it was amazing to find this place where everyone knew exactly what you were going through... I feel so safe and supported since I’ve been here...” Fatima, (mother of Lola, 10 weeks).

According to the EU Fundamental Rights Agency survey released in March 2014, violence against women is pervasive and extensive across the 28 EU states, including Ireland, with 26% - 394,325 Irish women – having experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or non-partner. Organisations working with survivors say this should be seen as a wake-up call because what the survey actually highlights is a lower level of disclosure by Irish women, a societal resistance to speak out about violence, and a dismally poor response to victims in desperate need of practical, physical and emotional supports.

Financial Summary COPE Galway Domestic Violence Refuge

Capital Funding

Premises at 47 Forster Street	Donated by Sisters of Mercy
Redevelopment and refurbishment costs	€2.5 million
Department of Environment Capital Funding	€1.2 million
FUNDING REQUIRED	€1.3 million
Fundraising to date	€.6 million
Funding required	€.7 million

Revenue funding streams are in place to cover the staffing and day to day running costs of services.

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO CONSIDER THIS.
WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.**



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Galway is a magical place...

And for most of us in Galway, when we close our front door at night, we know we'll be safe.

But for too many women and children in Galway, when they close their front door at night, they are in fear for their lives.

COPE Galway is developing a new state of the art domestic violence refuge for Galway, and we need your support.

Urgent Appeal

In 2015, 800 women and children sought refuge from domestic violence in Galway.
Only 102 could be accommodated.

Please will you help the women and children of Galway find safety when they need it?



“My husband changed after our marriage. Nothing made him happy and myself and the kids were on eggshells all the time – he could silence them with just a look. Things got slowly worse - on one occasion my friend called over after he had really lost it and saw the state of the place... a few weeks later she saw me with a black eye and she gave me the number of the helpline. That’s how I ended up in the refuge and it was the best thing I ever did. It wasn’t easy – to apply for social welfare, and a place to live, it was exhausting - all the form filling and running around but the staff were great. They really understood where I was coming from – you don’t make decisions overnight, it takes time.

Seeing the change in the kids had a big influence on me – they loved all the attention from the childcare workers – I knew we couldn’t go back to the way things were. We have our own place now and they are so much more relaxed and happy. When he started shouting at me again, I called back to Waterside House and they helped me to get a Safety Order – it means he can’t behave like that towards us anymore.”



The new Refuge will raise the standard of domestic violence services not just in Galway, but in Ireland.



Why we need your help?

For 35 years, COPE Galway has run Waterside House, the only 24 hour, seven day refuge in the Western region receiving referrals from counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, offering

- Safe and secure emergency accommodation for 6 women and 15 children
- A Childcare Unit providing specialised supports for children affected by domestic violence including play therapy
- One to one outreach for women who may not need refuge but who are in an abusive relationship. Support and information are provided on the dynamics of domestic violence as well as guidance on how to access legal protection through the courts.
- Drop in support, court accompaniment, parenting support
- Awareness raising and training on recognizing and responding to domestic violence for health and educational professionals, schools, third level educations and community groups.

But it is no longer able to meet the demand or the needs of those who come knocking on our door. In 2015 alone, we were unable to accommodate 288 women and their 405 children seeking refuge. There is no wheelchair access, no area for teenagers, no cooking facilities, and no play area. The new Refuge will raise the standard of domestic violence services not just in Galway, but in Ireland. The Sisters of Mercy have donated an excellent premises at 47 Forster Street that will be redeveloped to accommodate a modern refuge facility.

What your support will do?

Located in Galway City Centre with easy access to the range of housing, legal, health and social services which are vital to women during a crisis relating to domestic violence, the new facility will be secure, with gardens and play areas and will provide

- A 9 unit refuge (a mix of one and two bed self-contained units with cooking facilities to accommodate 9 women and 24 children)
- A state of the art childcare unit with facilities and sufficient spaces to work with children aged 0-18
- Meeting rooms, offices and communal spaces to facilitate support work

The result will be a safe place where women in crisis can have quality standard of living while caring for themselves and their children in a setting conducive to family life. Women will be able to cook meals for themselves and their children, and try to ensure that their children are able to continue attending school and have a warm safe environment to address the issues affecting them

Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

“My mum was crying and we came here.... It’s safe here...There’s a big lock on the door and everyone is safe here...” Eoin aged 8

More than half the people who turn up at our current refuge are children. Their needs are huge – from providing a safe place for them to play and recover, to somewhere they can receive specialised counselling and therapy. And often, simply a safe place to call home for a while. From new-born babies, through toddlers to teenagers, we need a Refuge that can cater for all their needs – a quiet place for a baby to sleep, a playground and garden to get fresh air and exercise, a computer room for a school child to do homework, and for a teenager to hang out in.

Domestic violence is not a once-off event. Rather, it is a relentless process of intimidating verbal, psychological and physical abuse. The impact on a young child witnessing such behaviour can have serious consequences (if not addressed).

They can develop deep-rooted feelings of fear, anger, depression, and anxiety, suffering physically with stomach cramps, headaches, and sleeplessness. These effects can continue throughout childhood without proper support. COPE Galway provides specialised supports to children of all ages who have been affected by domestic violence.

“You’re not allowed to shout here and be mean to anyone... my Mam is happier now, she laughs more... I hope she stays that way.” Maria, aged 10.

“Your investment will change the way Galway can support the women and children who are most vulnerable. Women and children who call Galway home, but who find no safety in their own home. Women and children who need a place of refuge, a place of support and a place to begin life anew. We currently do not have the capacity or facilities to cope with the number of women seeking refuge. We are having to turn away women and children of all ages - from babies to teenagers, who are desperate for somewhere to be safe and supported. Please help us make Galway the leading light in services for domestic violence in this country.”

Jacquie Horan, CEO, COPE Galway



“As Minister for Housing, I fully support this project to bring a state of the art domestic violence refuge and support services to the people of Galway.

This Government’s mission is to ensure that everyone can have access to a home. But that home needs to be a place of safety and security.

At the frontline, vital services such as this COPE Galway project provide safe refuge, information, court accompaniment, childcare and outreach support which are essential for women and children in order that they can rebuild their lives.”

Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government



The Future

In 2015, 455 children sought safety in Galway... Only 50 could be accommodated.



Now

