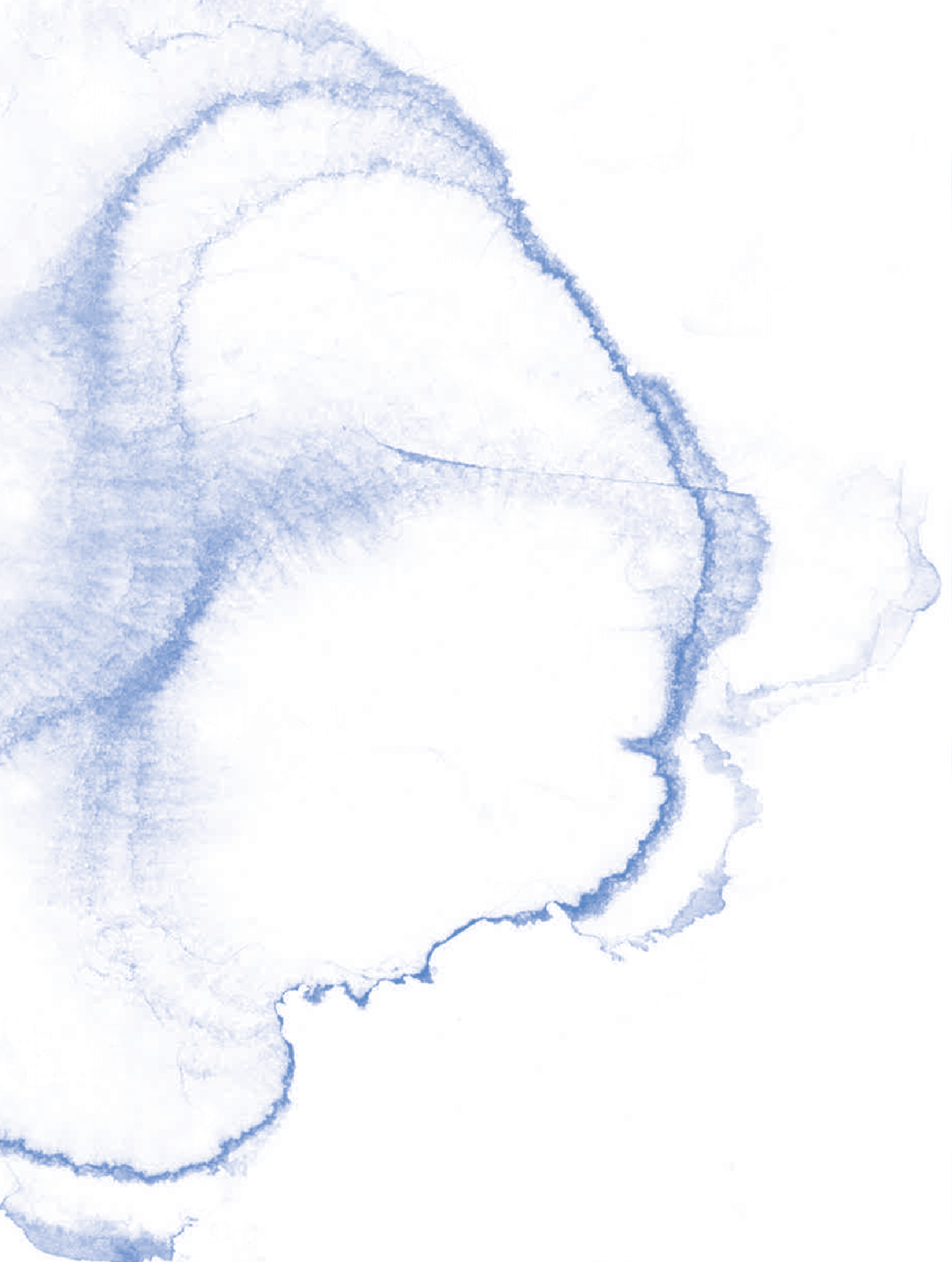


Dublin Rape Crisis Centre Annual Report 2021



DRCC

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre



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Message from Chair & CEO



Ann Marie Gill



Noeline Blackwell

2021 was another year where staff and volunteers working for the centre responded magnificently, working professionally and flexibly to deliver our services throughout a year where pandemic health restrictions continued to impact on our plans. While each adjustment demanded much from our personnel, we have also learned much about how we can better accommodate those whom we support, whom we train and with whom we advocate in new ways.

We in DRCC operate in a holistic way, not only resourcing survivors with a range of services and supports, but also working across multiple public sectors, including health, justice and education. We do so to build protection for survivors of sexual violence, support prosecution of those who commit sexual offences and continue to emphasise the need for our society to better understand how to stop sexual violence happening in the first place.

The work of our Client Support Service shows the broad spectrum of issues on which vulnerable victims of sexual violence may need support – not just in the sectors mentioned above, but also in housing, asylum, social welfare and other matters. The support we can give in overcoming such practical obstacles frees people up mentally and emotionally so they can get back on the path to healing, as one of our therapists so succinctly puts it. It is a tool for empowerment.

As more and more survivors recognise that it is abusers who carry all blame and shame for sexual violence, those survivors are looking to be heard. Demand for our services is growing. We anticipate that trend will continue until such time as our society genuinely calls out sexual violence – in whatever form it takes – and recognises that we will be happier, healthier and more equal as a community without this scourge. With this in mind, we advocated all through 2021 for survivor-centred and trauma-aware systems, laws and policies.

Reacting to flaws and difficulties in our systems however is not enough. It is now widely recognised that there needs to be a greater public understanding and practice of consent. We conducted ground-breaking research in 2021 on adult attitudes towards consent in Ireland, revealing that 70% believe we have a national problem in this area, for many reasons. People are unable to speak candidly about sex and sexual preferences, including consent, even with established partners. There is not enough public debate or educational formation about consent. Our 2021 research was the first step in what we intend to be a sustained focus in DRCC on consent in the coming years, building a national conversation on the topic.

We are sincerely grateful to all those who supported us in 2021. In another year where public fundraising events were severely constrained, dozens of people exercised their ingenuity and their muscles running, cycling, dancing and laughing for us. We were grateful for the statutory funding and moral support we received from Tusla, which is the main funder of our clinical health services, including the National 24-Hour Helpline and also from the Department of Justice which significantly extended its funding of our justice accompaniment, allowing us to spend the additional hours needed to support people engaging with the courts system. Even in a year when the courts were seriously constrained, we saw the terrible stress created by delay in cases for our clients, and how our skilled accompaniment support team can provide vital support to them.

Towards the end of 2021 we launched a Helpline Interpreting Service aimed at widening access, with more than 200 language options available. We continued to offer a wide range of training courses to groups ranging from colleges to consular staff, and again benefitted from the wonderful input of our youth advisory panel.

We must mention however continuing difficulties we had in 2021. This included having to say goodbye to a number of valued staff who could no longer afford to carry out therapy work for us in a difficult recruitment market, where the State has sanctioned pay restoration for people working directly for the State, but not for our Tusla-funded agencies who carry out essential work for the State but are not equally recompensed.

Our volunteers maintained their astonishing support to victims/survivors throughout 2021, despite the demands of their own lives – what a gift they give to our society. Our staff too worked unstintingly throughout this turbulent year, always embodying DRCC’s values: trustworthiness, respect, empowerment, empathy.

And finally, we pay tribute to all the victims/survivors we have worked with and supported, as well as those who wanted to come forward but for whatever reason could not: We hear you, we believe you, we stand with you.

Ann Marie Gill

DRCC Chairperson

Noeline Blackwell

DRCC Chief Executive Officer

Values



Trustworthiness



Respect



Empowerment



Empathy

Achievements and Performance

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre has three overarching goals under its current plan:

- Ensure that victims/survivors of current and historic sexual violence receive the supports that they need to heal;
- Eliminate tolerance of sexual violence in Irish society and support the rights of victims/survivors;
- Be a strong, sustainable organisation.

Each goal is to be achieved through delivery of relevant strategic objectives. These are laid out below with an account of the organisation's work in each area.

Goal

Ensure that victims/survivors of current and historic sexual violence **receive the supports** that they need to heal

1

Objective 1

Providing high-quality services to victims/survivors of current and historic sexual violence.

Objective 2

Building the capacity of Irish society to better understand and guard against the harm of sexual violence, as well as meet the needs of victims/survivors.

Objective 3

Recognising the diversity of those who are victims/survivors of sexual violence, ensuring our services are available to whoever needs them.

Objective 1:

Providing high-quality services to victims/survivors of current and historic sexual violence.

Our services to victims/survivors are delivered through:

- The freephone 24-Hour National Rape Crisis Helpline 1800 778888;
- An Interpreting Service for those wishing to access the National Helpline in a variety of languages;
- A text service for Deaf and hard of hearing callers;
- Face-to-face counselling and psychotherapy;
- An online chat support programme;
- A client support/welfare service; and
- Survivor accompaniment services

National 24-Hour Rape Crisis Helpline

The freephone **24-Hour National Helpline 1800 77 8888** offers free and confidential listening and support to victims/survivors of sexual violence. Trained Telephone Counsellors are on hand 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to provide non-judgmental support to anyone affected by sexual violence. The line can also support families and friends of victims/survivors as well as those who work with victims/survivors in their employment or volunteering.

Client feedback:

“Finally I had a safe space to talk about what happened to me. Everything was positive. From my first anxious phone call to the hotline, to the follow-up care and then the actual therapy - every step of the way, I was treated with care and made to feel safe.”

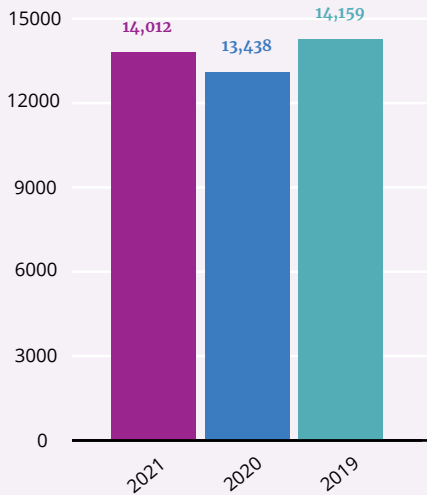
2021 trends: During 2021, there were 14,012 contacts to the National Helpline compared with 13,438 in 2020. Most contacts related to rape (43.5%) followed by Child Sexual Abuse (30%) and adult sexual assault (13.4%). Sexual harassment was cited by 1.1% of callers.

In terms of gender, some 81% percent of callers were women, 18.7% percent were men and 0.3% identified as other. Over half (7,900) were first-time contacts to the line. In terms of age, a significant cohort were those aged 50-59, at about 20.8% of contacts. Some 36.9% of contacts were from young adults aged under 30 years.

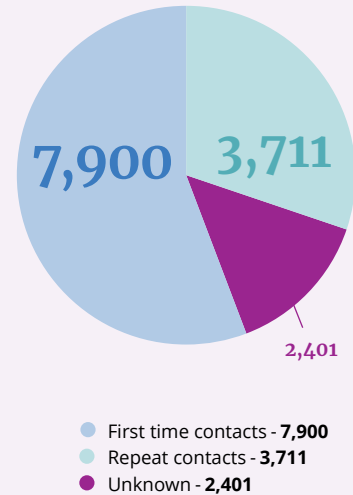
The line was at its busiest in September and November. These two months were also the busiest for first-time callers with 767 contacts in September and 745 contacts in November. Where identified by callers, contacts were roughly balanced between Dublin (57.7%) and the rest of Ireland (42.3%).

For more detailed information on National Helpline contacts, you can read our **Statistical Supplement 2021**.

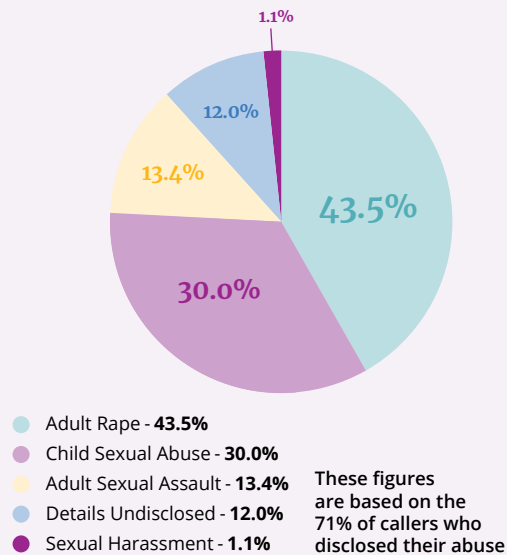
Contacts to National Helpline 2019–2021



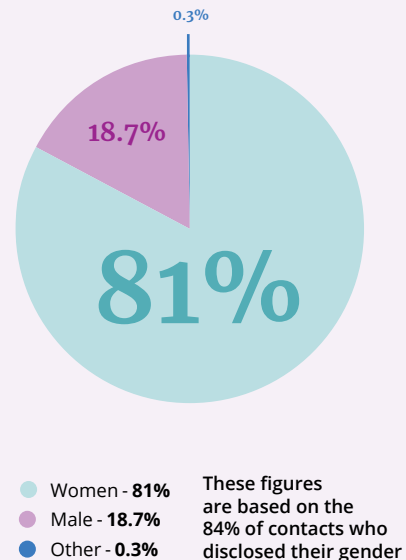
Who contacted us in 2021?



Breakdown by type of abuse



Gender of contact



Just under a third of people in 2021 contacted the Helpline for support in relation to abuse they had experienced in childhood, as restrictions on movement due to the pandemic and more time spent at home brought trauma to the surface for them.

Those who had experienced recent rape and assault disclosed additional anxiety around reporting for fear of sanctions for breaking lockdown rules. As restrictions were lifted, more people came forward and so the line was busier in the September to November period.

The closure or severe restrictions in community-based and statutory services during lockdown meant calls to our Helpline were longer and more complex with callers needing more assurances and support. This remained a feature when restrictions were lifting, as doubt and insecurity about the future added to the trauma caused by the sexual abuse they had suffered.

Helpline offering hope for past trauma exacerbated by isolation

An older woman living alone who had experienced Child Sexual Abuse in her past, called the Helpline feeling very isolated. She actually declined an option to have her shopping delivered because her time spent queueing at the super market was the only way she could talk to someone. She said ringing the line gave her hope and the feeling of being understood.

A further trend was for new contacts from older callers with past trauma who had been managing it independently for many years but were left without their usual outlets and support due to restrictions, and needed to reach out.

When restrictions were lifted, we noted a rise in new cases of rape and assault as people returned to colleges and workplaces as well as social outlets. Telephone counsellors noted calls relating to consent, with callers asking for help to understand their experience and their subsequent distress. In most cases, this involved assault or rape, with younger callers in particular struggling to identify this issue.

Coercive control was another emerging theme, again with callers describing their experiences and asking for help to understand what their experience might actually be. In many cases, these calls were in fact about very abusive situations.

Webchat as a pathway to healing

A young woman who had attended SATU made contact with our webchat, seeking advice on to what to do next. Following a chat online with our support worker, she made a Helpline call and subsequently became a client of our crisis counselling service.

Helpline services

Alongside the 24-Hour Helpline, we provide some additional specialist services for those seeking crisis help (note that these services are closed on Bank Holidays and national Holidays).

- A **text service** for those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, operating Mon-Fri from 8am to 6:30pm, at 086-8238443 – fielding 600 texts during 2021.
- A **Webchat Support Service** on our website [drcc.ie](https://www.drcc.ie), Mon-Fri, 10am to 5pm – offering a written mode of communications, particularly helpful to those who cannot verbally articulate their needs or who don't have a private space in which to speak. This service had 415 contacts during the year.
- A new live **Helpline Interpreting Service** for those who do not speak English, operating Mon-Fri from 8am to 6:30pm.



Helpline Interpreting Service:

In December, we were very pleased to launch a new service to broaden access for people whose first language is not English.

The **Helpline Interpreting Service** operates Mon-Fri, 8am-6:30pm. It provides live interpreting over the phone in more than 200 languages.

Case study: A young woman who had been recently raped contacted the Helpline via the interpreting service seeking support and specific information on her particular circumstances. After receiving information on all services relating to her needs, she was placed on the therapy waiting list. The caller noted it was so good to tell someone of her experience without judgement, in her own language.

Helpline feedback:

“The 24- Hour Helpline was also something I have utilised and continue to use as it is really reassuring to know that there is someone that will listen at any time.”

“I’m so grateful that I rang the Helpline and got all the help I needed. When I first rang I never expected anything other than someone to just listen to me and I am so grateful that the person that answered the phone to me that morning encouraged me to get the help that I didn’t even realise I needed.”

“The voice at the other end of the phone, understands, listens and helps. That is such a powerful support for survivors like me.”

Counselling & Therapy

Continuing pandemic restrictions in 2021 meant our team of therapists offered counselling and therapy in a number of ways, depending on clients' needs, either face-to-face, online or over the phone, in our city centre premises or in outreach clinics around Dublin.

As in 2020, anxiety among many of our clients remained high, exacerbated by fears around COVID19, and mirroring general anxiety in the wider population. For some, this anxiety displaced their focus on healing from the trauma of sexual violence, stalling their recovery. In some cases, this meant they required more supports due to the impact on their mental health, while in others the need for therapeutic intervention was prolonged.

The lockdown was particularly tough for clients who experienced sexual violence while socialising during restrictions, and as a result felt unable to speak about what had happened to them. The pandemic also highlighted that abuses can happen through online contacts, which became even more important as a way to connect with others, and one that can be very intense. In some cases sexual violence was inflicted on clients after restrictions were lifted and people could meet in person.

During the year, our therapy teams noted the serious challenge for clients living in difficult home environments or relationships to maintain a space for therapy. Others were very isolated, which exacerbated anxiety and for those who had survived childhood sexual abuse, echoed the loneliness they had suffered as children in that abusive situation.

For some clients, the added options of counselling online or via phone made it easier to access therapy, and the take-up rate was again very high this year. This wider choice of ways to access therapy was thus for some people a positive outcome. The combination of increased need from some existing clients, as well as a greater need for more timely care for those who have joined our waiting list, challenged DRCC in 2021 to review every aspect of our therapeutic services.

In addition to continuing to meet need, we have scrutinised our own services, developments in therapeutic practice and in case management. As a result of this, we began to roll out additional training for staff as well as upgrading our case management systems. We identified and must now address the need to strengthen our infrastructure so as to provide for a quality, specialised sexual violence focused therapy.



Client feedback:

“My counsellor has been brilliant - unwavering support, help, information invaluable to me. And while I say face-to-face sessions are my preferred method, phone sessions also have their benefits - I don't need to travel to and from meetings and also, there's a comfort in being able to talk but not having to be seen, if that makes sense.”

“I'm so grateful for the assistance and support DRCC offers and it has made a massive positive difference since the pandemic started. Thank you for all you do, I hope someday I can offer the overwhelming and phenomenal support like I have received since day one. DRCC has changed my life.”

“I have had a very positive experience with counselling during the pandemic and it has really helped me cope with all aspects of my life and the pandemic lockdowns etc.”

Overview of therapy services in 2021

A total of 5,314 appointments were delivered in 2021, down from 6,010 in 2020 but up from 4,619 in 2019. This was out of a total 6,455 appointments offered, showing a very high take-up rate at 82%. Among these appointments, more than half (54%) were for people who had experienced a recent rape or sexual assault within the previous six months.

Clients seen: DRCC worked with a total of **580 clients** in 2021, up slightly from 570 the previous year. Of these, some 289 (50%) were new clients, with the remaining 291 clients (50%) ongoing from before 2021.

Among clients in 2021, some 91.2% were female and 8.8% male. Twenty clients identified themselves as having a disability. Clients ranged in age from 16 to over 60. The largest age cohort was 18-23 years (making up 26.6% of clients), followed by those aged 30-39 (at 24.1% of clients).

In terms of sexual violence reported by clients, 35% cited rape with another 13% reporting marital or intimate partner rape, 13% sexual assault, and 1.2% sexual harassment. Smaller numbers indicated they had suffered aggravated sexual assault and suspected drug rape.

Survivor testimony – ‘Ben’

“The aftermath of experiencing sexual violence can be an isolating experience, and the Covid-19 pandemic re-awakened some of those feelings due to the physical separation from regular support networks, such as friends. Having the resources of the helpline and counselling from DRCC were invaluable in providing connection, reassurance, and assistance while navigating lockdowns and the pandemic as a whole. I am extremely appreciative of how quickly and effectively the centre was able to adapt to meet the needs of service users as much as possible.”

Some 37.6% of DRCC clients had been sexually abused as children, and 6% of clients disclosed they had been both raped as adults and sexually abused as children.

Most DRCC clients knew the person who raped or assaulted them, accounting for 94% of childhood abuse incidents and 84% of sexual violence incidents as adults.

Moving Forward from Sexual Violence programme

In 2021, DRCC progressed use of its e-health initiative, **Moving Forward from Sexual Violence**. Developed in collaboration with UK company KRTS International Ltd, it is a unique, blended online and therapist-supported programme, designed specifically to help victims/survivors of sexual violence to understand their experience and trauma and to develop tools and insights that will help them on their journey of recovery.

In 2021, there were 219 information calls and 610 information e-mails about the programme. It was delivered to 119 participants, with 585 coach support calls made and 660 coach support emails sent.

Feedback from participants:

“I learned so much about myself and how to deal with what I’ve been through. I didn’t even know I had any triggers or notice how much I disconnect myself from my life. I really enjoyed the programme.”

“It has helped me to understand how the trauma has seriously affected my life years later & given me the tools to allow me to change this and refocus the attention on rebuilding my self-worth.”

“I learned about how my brain reacts to trauma and I understand why I’m triggered and why I have reactions to certain things. It’s helped my loved ones understand what I’m going through a bit better.”

“I would 100% recommend to someone in a similar position.”

Accompaniment services

While it is important that victims/survivors of sexual violence are able to access health services including counselling, therapy and medical care, they are also entitled to seek justice following sexual violence. Society too has an interest in ensuring that those who commit sexual offences are held to account and stopped from committing further harm. Nonetheless, it can be daunting for someone who has been harmed to engage with the justice system to do so without support, without any idea of how the system works or where to go next.

DRCC accompaniment supporters, primarily volunteers supported by expert staff, are there with victims/survivors of rape and sexual assault when they attend the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) at Dublin’s Rotunda Hospital, when they report rape or sexual assault to An Garda Síochána, and when they attend court.

Our accompaniment support is available to all victims of sexual assault and rape, and to their families and friends.

SATU accompaniment

Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATUs) are specialised hospital services offering medical care and forensic examinations to those who have been sexually assaulted or raped. Our specially trained volunteers provide psychological support to victims/survivors attending the SATU at the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin 1.

COVID19 restrictions continued to have a large impact on SATU visiting arrangements in 2021, meaning that DRCC was limited to offering support over the telephone for the early part of the year. However, from late June we were once again able to attend in person and supported 115 people attending SATU, as well as 56 of their friends and family members, amounting to 235 hours in the SATU unit.

To support the work of the SATU, DRCC is part of a liaison committee of the Rotunda Hospital which advises on and monitors services there and DRCC is also represented on the national SATU Implementation Project Team.



Justice system accompaniment

For victims/survivors reporting a sexual offence to the Gardaí or other investigating authority, or who are going through a subsequent trial or other hearing, our service offers the reassurance of having someone knowledgeable and supportive with them. It is very helpful to have access to a person who can answer their specific questions, explain language and structures that are strange to them and help them to navigate what can be a complex criminal legal process. Even for those who have not yet decided to report, the act of talking through the process or voicing their worries may be a first step.

Thanks to increased statutory funding in 2021, we were able to expand our services to provide a dedicated court-based support in Dublin courts, to supplement the existing services. There was a marked increase over the year in the time spent supporting & accompanying clients, especially in

relation to those seeking support and information around reporting to the Gardaí for both recent sexual violence and historical cases.

COVID19 restrictions severely impacted sexual offences cases heard in court. Jury trials were suspended for the first months of the year and even where sentencing could take place after a guilty plea, there were substantial delays and adjustments when essential personnel were unavailable due to the virus. As a result, fewer cases took place, many trials lasted longer and several due for hearing in 2021 are still awaiting trial in 2022. Meanwhile, those whose cases could not proceed were supported by DRCC as they coped with the disappointment and the need to keep traumatic memories in their minds while awaiting their trial date.

In 2021, DRCC supported 210 victims/survivors in **garda stations** and other such settings, almost double the 106 people supported in 2020. Of these, 192 were female and 18 were male. The time devoted to such support also rose from 241 hours in 2020 to 367 hours in 2021.

In total, we supported 45 victims/survivors in **court** in 2021, almost the same as 2020 when we supported 44 people. Most were female (42 total). Notably, the amount of time this involved dramatically increased to 348 hours, up 80% from 2020 when we provided 193 hours of support. Venues included the Criminal Courts of Justice, Civil Courts, the Family Courts and the Workplace Relations Commission.

Towards the end of 2021, we were very encouraged to learn that we were to receive funding to expand our accompaniment services. This will allow us to provide greater support to victims/survivors who are considering reporting sexual crime and entering the justice system. This work will take place in 2022 and will provide expanded information on the justice system and structures via DRCC's website.

Client feedback on accompaniment service:

“When I think back to having to give evidence, I was feeling panicky and overwhelmed... I couldn't think straight. [The accompaniment support worker] just brought me through the simple things... I felt safe with her.”

“The Court Accompaniment was brilliant. The lady who looked after me guarded me fiercely even from my own family. It is a wonderful service and the volunteers are the perfect blend of knowledge and sympathy. They were a great source of strength for me.”

Objective 2:

Building the capacity of Irish society to better understand and guard against the harm of sexual violence, as well as meet the needs of victims/survivors.

Promoting an appropriate response for victims/survivors through frontline training:

We aim to help frontline services and professionals become more trauma-aware and better able to understand and support victims/survivors and their needs. As part of that, DRCC provides specialised training and information to staff and professionals who support those impacted by sexual violence.

Over the course of 2021, we provided 48 training sessions, some of which ran over a number of days. Almost 500 people took part in training courses over the year.

Topics included

- Working with victims of childhood sexual abuse;
- Offering support after sexual violence
- Coping with disclosures; and
- Dignity at Work.

Our courses were attended by many frontline groups, including therapy professionals, social care organisations, educators, social workers, community groups and medical staff.

Training for the Arts sector: In 2021, we facilitated two training sessions with comedians throughout Ireland around awareness and prevention of sexual violence. This was a result of an ongoing partnership with the Comedy Safety Standards group (CSS), which seeks to make the Irish comedy scene a safer, more inclusive and welcoming workplace within which comedians can flourish. We provided guidance and support to CSS during the year as well as giving training and support to other organisations within the Arts Sector.

Training for peer organisations: Thanks to a training grant, we brought together a national sexual violence network made up of Rape Crisis Centres from Rape Crisis Centre Forum Ireland, One in Four and the Men's Development Network. The first network meeting took place at the end of 2021, where themes and practicalities were teased out. Training will be rolled out throughout 2022/23 through facilitators of specialist topics.

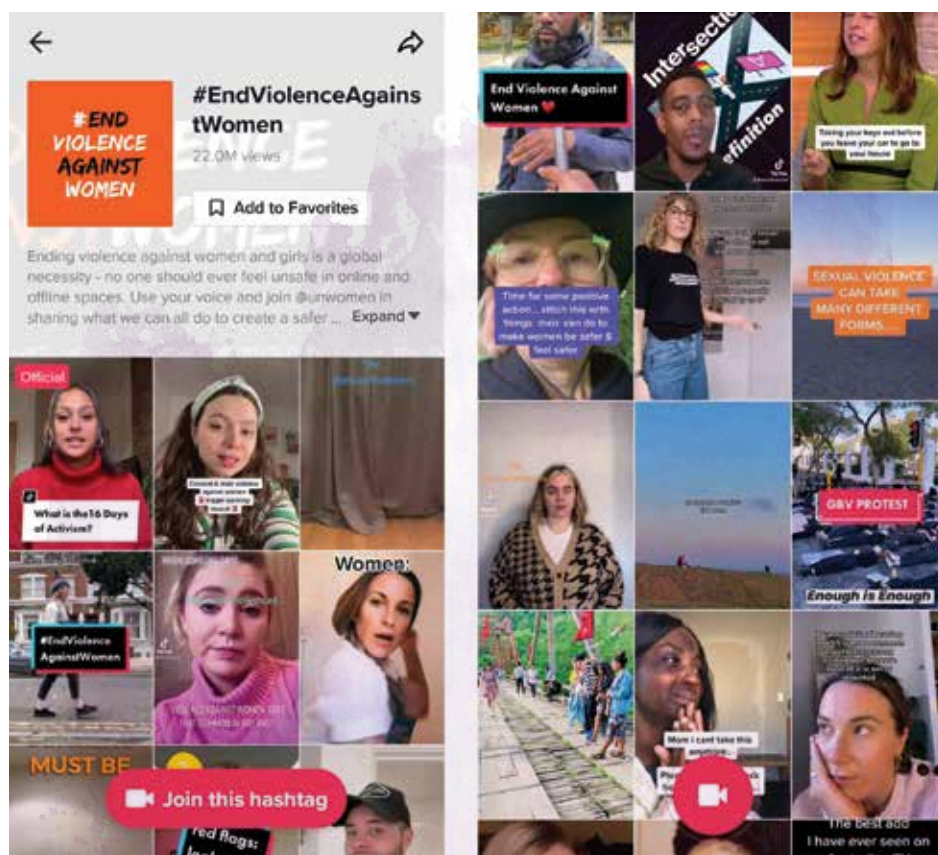
Tailored training for specific work areas: Those we trained included religious groups, consular staff, support services, health care staff, social care and homeless sector staff, student unions, helplines, and college staff from various departments. All of our training is tailored to the needs of the specific organisations.

Consultation and guidance on policies and resources: We worked with other non-governmental organisations, with academic and professional institutions, and with statutory bodies to provide guidance on how to offer support to victims/survivors following sexual violence. We provide a victim-centred and trauma-informed perspective to various organisations developing policies and resources for those impacted by sexual violence.

Youth programmes

We have continued to expand our ability to reach out to young people and develop materials specific to them and their needs in 2021.

Youth Advisory Group: This group of young people aged 18 to 25 years provides invaluable guidance and input on issues relevant to young people for our programme development, as well as our campaign work. One group member took part in a panel discussion as part of the Children's Rights Alliance online safety conference in Autumn. The group also worked on messaging for a youth audience around consent and online safety, and contributed to DRCC's *16 Days Campaign to Eliminate Violence against Women* in November. In the latter, two group members created some powerful videos for TikTok to raise awareness about consent and challenge common myths about sexual violence.



DRCC Youth Advisory Panel members **Ellie Horgan** and **Keara Caul** as well as staff **Jennifer Gavin** and **Edie Cunningham** created tiktoks for the campaign.

Rolling out our flagship BodyRight programme: Our training for BodyRight facilitators is a four-day programme designed to equip school and youth work staff to use the programme with young people to raise awareness of respect and healthy relationships, consent and online safety and to prevent sexual violence. Despite pandemic restrictions, we delivered BodyRight facilitator training on 7 occasions in 2021, training 78 staff to act as facilitators. Thanks to a funding grant, we were able to offer it to participants free of charge.

#LetsGetReal: Increasingly it has become clear we need to educate young people to become more critical in their consumption of advertising, popular culture and pornography. DRCC developed an educational resource for youth workers and school staff called #LetsGetReal. We were able to offer this programme 7 times in 2021, with 82 people trained, free of charge to participants.

Information portal: With grant funding, we began developing a portal for youth programmes alumni which was completed by end of 2021 and will begin operation in 2022. It will allow those who have completed our youth programmes to access relevant online resources and to share best practice.

Educational Outreach: With colleges and schools again closed or very restricted for much of 2021, it was challenging to conduct outreach work in schools to raise awareness and have dialogue with second level students. However, we were delighted to be able to take part in talks on issues like awareness of sexual violence and appropriate handling of disclosures with student bodies in some third-level colleges. Outreach talks kick-started again with school and college events towards the end of 2021, with plans in place to train new outreach volunteers for 2022.

Our Youth Programmes Coordinator was involved in the steering group for the 'Speak Out' anonymous reporting tool, launched by Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris TD and rolled out in participating third-level colleges in October 2021. This tool, led by Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education Ireland (PCHEI), funded by the Department of Further and Higher Education and supported by the Higher Education Authority, allows college students, staff and visitors in 18 higher education institutions to report incidents of sexual harassment and misconduct on an anonymous basis.

Our Coordinator also participated in the National Advisory Committee (NAC) of the ESHTe project on ending sexual violence and harassment in third level education, This has completed its original work to get colleges to commit to building a culture of zero tolerance for sexual violence on campus, and now maintains an observation brief.



In March, **Catriona Freir**, DRCC Youth Programmes Coordinator, and Aine Usher of our youth advisory panel participated in the **Shine Festival**, organised by **Shona.ie** with over 20,00 young people registered. They gave a talk on healthy relationships and consent which is available on our website.

Objective 3:

Recognising the diversity of those who are victims/survivors of sexual violence, ensuring our services are available to whoever needs them.

DRCC is conscious that those who seek our support may be particularly impacted because of status, disability, poverty or other discrimination or social exclusion factors. Our services are available to all. While those clients who can afford it will make a contribution to therapeutic services, those who cannot are welcome to access the service without charge. Our National 24-Hour Helpline was expanded in 2021 to include an interpretation facility allowing people to access the service in over 200 languages, alongside the existing text line for Deaf and hard-of-hearing callers. In addition to this, specific services were provided to support those who would benefit from additional supports.

Client Support Service

Many DRCC clients face multiple barriers in managing their lives which are made worse by the impact of trauma. Conversely, it can be difficult for them to effectively address their trauma through counselling and therapy when overwhelmed by practical issues. Our Client Support Service empowers and helps them to access rights and entitlements, find relevant information and seek referral to other services as appropriate, in a holistic way.

A large part of the work carried out involves making representations on behalf of clients to statutory bodies and services to ensure clients are accessing their rights and entitlements and appealing any decisions where they have been refused unfairly. It covers issues such as housing/homelessness, social welfare, health, immigration, the asylum process, education and employment.

Due to a change of personnel, the service was paused temporarily between September and December 2021, therefore the figures below relate to the period January to August 2021. The CSS helped **35 clients with a range of issues and queries. These amounted to 199 interventions covering 304 issues, and 80 contacts with external agencies**

Outcomes from this service include:

- Access to Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), priority housing lists and housing transfers;
- Access to mental health supports;
- Access to the health system;
- Securing of emergency accommodation;
- Asylum process issues;
- Immigration issues.

A therapist perspective on the Client Support Service: 'Tanya'

Clients who avail of our Client Support Service may have everyday issues which – because they have been traumatised – can trigger a stress response and take up a lot of their headspace. This prevents them from focusing on their own healing.

The support service can help sort out the practical obstacle, which frees them up mentally and emotionally and allows them to get back on the path to healing. It can really empower people to deal with issues themselves as far as possible, with our support. It is very important – also for their own healing – that they feel they can take things on themselves eventually, even if it is very daunting.

I had one client who was in a vulnerable place and living in a very damp bedsit that was affecting both her physical and mental health. With support from our service, she managed to get onto a medical priority list and find better accommodation. She got help to deal with things like setting up bin charges, find a suitable provider for electricity, and get back her deposit from her former landlord. Practical help allows them to cope better and creates space for therapeutic work. It's a really important, life-enhancing service.

Prioritising support for minority & vulnerable groups: People without homes, those who are suffering from addiction and those who are refugees or seeking asylum are particularly vulnerable as victims of sexual violence, as may be those who come from minority ethnic groups. DRCC aims to ensure that those supporting these groups have appropriate training on the impacts of sexual violence. During 2021, we provided training to 43 attendees working with minority and vulnerable groups, including 6 free training days to those in services working with homeless people or with refugees or asylum-seekers.

Supporting female prisoners: Counselling and therapy play an important role for people in prison, particularly those who have experienced childhood sexual abuse, which may be a factor in some criminal behaviour. During 2021 we were able to maintain cooperation with the Irish Prison Service and work with those confined to a congregated setting in Dóchas, the Irish Women's Prison.

Working with vulnerable communities: DRCC is part of the JUSTISIGNS2 project, a collaboration of experts from Ireland, Belgium, Spain and the UK undertaking research within Deaf, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking communities to investigate their experiences of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence and their interactions with victim support agencies. Building on the work of the original JUSTISIGNS project, its aims include improving access to support services and the legal process through raising awareness and providing accessible information and resources and training for key actors such as police, interpreters and health workers.

As part of this project, in 2021 we developed training for interpreters on working with those impacted by sexual violence, started work on a handbook for interpreters working with issues of sexual violence among Deaf and migrant communities, and contributed to the development of a training manual on the issues in collaboration with partners in Ireland, the UK and Spain.

Goal

Eliminate tolerance of sexual violence in Irish society and support the rights of victims/survivors

2

Objective 4

Providing high-quality services to victims/survivors of current and historic sexual violence.

Objective 5

Building the capacity of Irish society to better understand and guard against the harm of sexual violence, as well as meet the needs of victims/survivors.

Objective 6

Recognising the diversity of those who are victims/survivors of sexual violence, ensuring our services are available to whoever needs them.

Objective 4:

Building, maintaining and disseminating knowledge and expertise on the topic of sexual violence

A National Strategy against Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence: DRCC remained on the monitoring committee for the 2nd National Strategy and made submissions and consultations towards the audit of services in the Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) sector carried out by Ellen O'Malley Dunlop & Mary Higgins. The two consultants led the Programme for Government commitment to audit how responsibility for DSGBV is segmented across different government agencies. Their report published in July 2021 provided recommendations on what infrastructure is needed to ensure DSGBV issues are dealt with in the most effective manner possible. Throughout 2021, DRCC made verbal & written contributions to the team drafting the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence. The Department of Justice has pledged that in this strategy, the Government will radically improve services and supports for victims, making it the most ambitious plan to date for publication in June 2022.

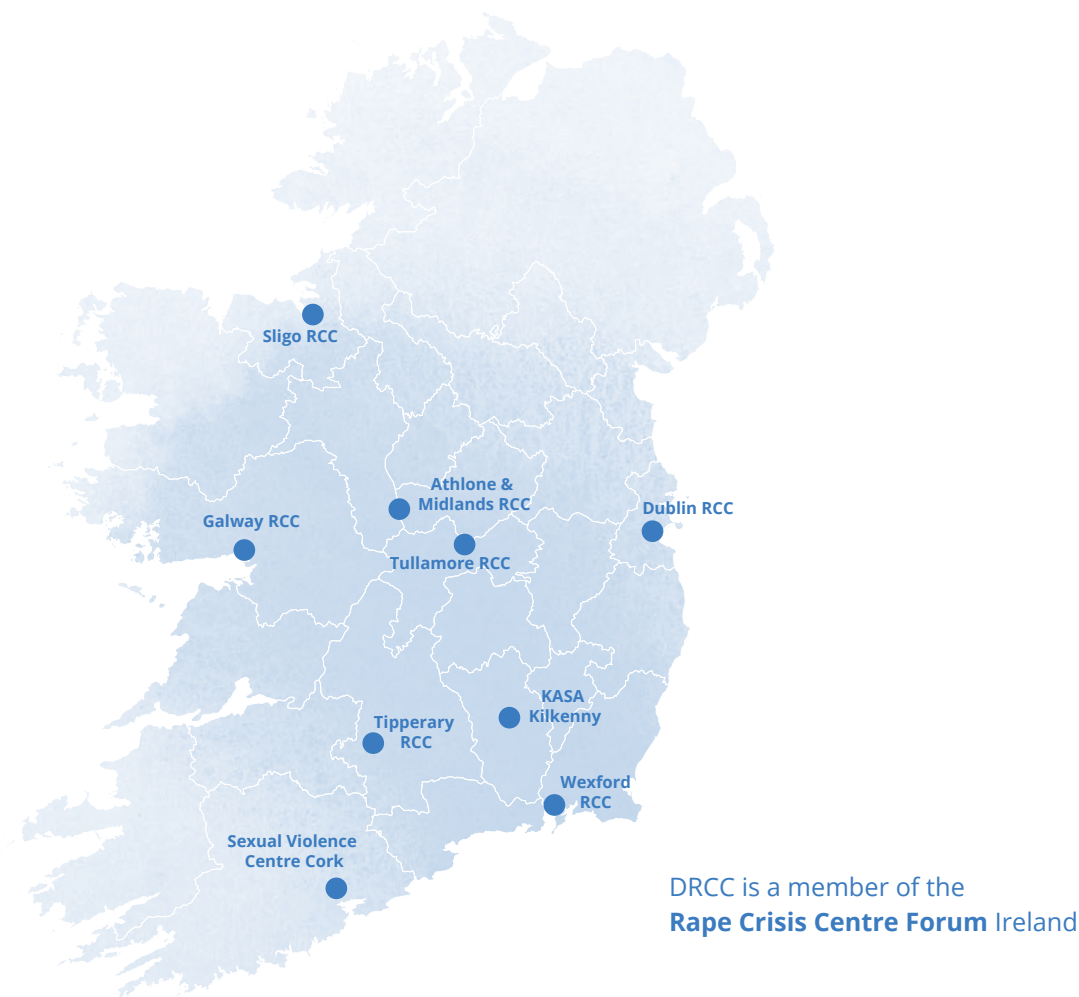
Ensuring a reliable evidence base for action: Almost 20 years have passed since the Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) report, the last large-scale national survey on the topic of prevalence and trends in sexual violence, commissioned by DRCC, was published in 2002. As a member of the Sexual Violence Survey (SVS) Liaison Group, DRCC has continued its engagement with the Central Statistics Office which is responsible for the forthcoming national survey, Sexual Violence Prevalence Survey. While substantially delayed due to COVID19 restrictions, a pilot survey ran in spring/early summer 2021, informed by the experience of survivors and supported by DRCC. The survey is planned to take place in the second half of 2022.

Working with others

Joining forces for bigger impact: While we aim to build our own organisational capacity and expertise, we recognise that we gain in knowledge and impact when we collaborate with colleagues in other organisations in the community and voluntary sector.

- DRCC is a committed member of the **National Women's Council** – our Policy Manager Shirley Scott is part of the NWC Board – and also of the Observatory against Violence against Women, which NWC chairs.
- We are a member of the **Rape Crisis Centre Forum** Ireland, a collective of nine of the country's 16 Rape Crisis Centres, which meets regularly for information sharing, pooling of experience, training and expertise and development of mutual objectives.
- We are also involved in the **Victims' Rights Alliance**. DRCC participated in a series of webinars in 2021, organised by One In Four for the Alliance, looking at the progress and challenges with the O'Malley Review of Protections for Vulnerable Witnesses in the Investigation and Prosecution of Sexual Offences.
- DRCC is a member of the **Children's Rights Alliance** and provided feedback and other input to its annual Score Card which evaluates the state's performance in upholding children's rights in Ireland, as well as participating in the CRA-led campaign for law reform and increased safety in online communications, as set out below.

- DRCC is also a member of **The Wheel**, which represents community & voluntary organisations around Ireland and engages with a wide range of organisations on an ad-hoc basis. In 2021 DRCC was part of The Wheel’s ‘WeAct’ campaign to celebrate the impact of Ireland’s charities and community groups as well as engaging in various forums of The Wheel.
- DRCC is part of the advisory committee to the Familicide Review commissioned by the **Department of Justice**, and is also on the Strategic Human Rights Advisory Committee of An **Garda Síochána**.
- DRCC participates in the National Advisory Committee to the Sex Offender Risk Assessment and Management group, **SORAM**.



Campaigning to reduce harassment and abuse: The Department of Justice continued its *No Excuses* campaign with a new phase in 2021, aiming to increase awareness and reduce incidences of sexual violence and harassment. The campaign was paused by the pandemic, but resumed in Autumn 2021 with new messaging for our lockdown times. *No Excuses* was supported by inputs from DRCC on national and local radio as well as to the Department’s stakeholder advisory group.

Highlighting domestic, sexual and gender-based violence support services during COVID19: DRCC continued its partnership in the government’s *Still Here* campaign, spearheaded by the Department of Justice. This **highlighted state and voluntary** support services to people experiencing domestic violence, including sexual violence in a dedicated website at www.stillhere.ie. There was an associated awareness campaign across media to ensure that anyone who needed support knew where to find it.

Working towards a safer online space: The increasing reach of the internet has created huge opportunities for information and knowledge sharing but such opportunities also bring risk. **Safer Internet Day**, 9 February 2021 saw the commencement of the Harassment, Harmful Communications, and Related Offences Act 2017 also known as ‘Coco’s Law’. This new law provides legislative protections against those who use their online presence to harass and abuse. We created an online resource to help explain the new law and its implications, and spread awareness of it through our social media channels.

The **#123OnlineSafety** campaign continued in 2021, led by the Children’s Rights Alliance with member organisations including DRCC. The aim was to ensure that children and young people are protected online, with the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill 2021 as a main focus. Campaign members met Oireachtas members around the need to ensure that the legislation allows for individual complaints when a digital platform fails to correct a fault, appointing a Digital Safety Commissioner and ensuring that digital rights and online safety are central to the next Children and Young People’s Strategy; a comprehensive digital literacy programme in formal and non-formal education and effectively resourcing the Gardai to investigate crimes involving images of child sex abuse.

Separately, DRCC worked with digital media platforms including Facebook and TikTok to improve systems to signpost ways for users of such media to remove harmful content or access appropriate supports.

Addressing exploitation: In June, DRCC joined with other groups to support a new campaign aimed at ending sexual exploitation in Ireland. ‘Beyond Exploitation’ is a civil society campaign for equality and freedom from sexual exploitation, led by NWC in partnership with Ruhama and the Immigrant Council of Ireland.

Research support: In 2021 DRCC was joined by Ashley Perry, a PhD student at the Irish Centre for Human Rights at NUI Galway, as a part-time junior policy analyst. We were also assisted in our policy and research work by interns Ciara Maguire, a postgraduate law and criminology student at the Department of Law in Maynooth University in spring and Camila Rivadeneira, a third-year law student at Suffolk University School of Law, Boston, USA, in summer. We are also most grateful for expert support we received from other volunteers working with us on a variety of papers and submissions.



The **#123OnlineSafety** campaign continued in 2021, led by the Children’s Rights Alliance.



‘**Beyond Exploitation**’ is a civil society campaign for equality and freedom from sexual exploitation.

Objective 5:

Building greater recognition in the law and throughout society on the key role of consent

A national consent project in Irish society: Over several years, DRCC has committed to a sustained focus on the topic of consent in order to identify sexual violence, prevent its occurrence and crucially, recognise that a more in-depth knowledge of consent in sexual behaviour will contribute to a safer society and gender equality.

Philanthropic funding allowed us to progress extensive groundwork for a national campaign in 2021, appointing a consultant to develop the project. In early summer, we organised training for survivors and DRCC staff on working with the media from a survivor perspective, moving the focus to the impact of sexual violence and how to address it.

Our ground-breaking quantitative and qualitative research into consent in Ireland, carried out by Language agency, Dr Karen Hand and Opinions Research, was launched in October. We looked at attitudes to and understanding of sexual consent in Ireland across all adult age groups. The findings indicate that there are many reasons behind problems with consent in Ireland – which was acknowledged by 70% of those surveyed – including inhibitions around talking about sex, a belief that consent can be ignored in some instances and lack of understanding around the right to withdraw consent. An overwhelming 84% believe we need age-appropriate sex education in all schools.

DRCC plans to apply and build on these findings with further research and will scale up its consent project from early 2022, across all sectors of society and with crucial input from survivors and other stakeholders to the project. Our vision is of an Ireland where nobody believes that sexual activity without consent is OK, where sexual violence and coercion are eliminated and conversations about consent are totally normal.

Promoting consent at third level: March saw the launch of the PROPEL (*Promoting Consent & Preventing Sexual Violence*) Project, an initiative of the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA). The overall aim of this project is to support the 10 technological higher education institutions in implementing the aims and outcomes described in the national framework for ending sexual violence and harassment in higher education institutions. DRCC had engaged with and provided feedback to Dr. Eavan O'Brien, the project lead.

In addition, DRCC's chief executive officer is a member of the Governing Authority of UCD and represents the Rape Crisis Centre Forum on the Higher Education Authority (HEA) advisory group on GBV and Harassment in higher education institutions. DRCC takes part in consent committees in some of the higher education institutions, as they tackle the issue of sexual violence and harassment.

Reforming education on sex and health relationships: DRCC continues to engage with and contribute to the work of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in relation to much needed change and reform of both primary and post-primary school's SPHE/RSE curriculum.

Objective 6:

Increasing the incidence of reporting offences of sexual violence

Supporting a Victim's Journey: The Department of Justice published a plan in October 2020 to improve reporting and criminal justice systems for victims and vulnerable witnesses in sexual violence cases. DRCC with other groups have been providing input to implementation of this plan. We are part of sub-groups established to help implement some of the recommendations, notably on advancing specialist training programmes for all those who deal with victims in sexual offence cases, and on mapping the journey faced by victims as they navigate the reporting and legal system. DRCC also offered feedback to Tusla's mapping exercise to identify the nature, spread and level of Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (DSGBV) services which they fund.

Reforming legal processes: In June we hosted a webinar on *'The Realities of Rape Trials'* where Dr Susan Leahy of the University of Limerick presented her research on the operation of rape trials in Ireland, drawing on the experience and views of legal professionals involved in such proceedings and court accompaniment workers supporting complainants. Recommendations include the need to address delay in the legal system, introduce pre-trial hearings, and provide better legal advice and information for complainants and those considering reporting a sexual offence. Dr Leahy's research was done in partnership with DRCC and with research funding.

Expanding information on accompaniment services: Additional funding received from the Department of Justice will allow us to provide accessible, comprehensive information about accompaniment and support services to those who may be considering reporting. We will build a set of resources which will allow anyone needing it to independently find information and guidance on the process, from visiting the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit to reporting through to the trial and afterwards, what services are provided, and what a victim/survivor and those supporting them should know. These resources will be for those who might not know that accompaniment services exist, those who are considering contacting a service, or even those already engaging with a service, to provide much-needed additional information.

Engagement with legal stakeholders: A key aim in the much-needed reform of our criminal justice system is a better understanding among those working in the system, including legal professionals and Gardaí, of the impact on victims/survivors of the experience of sexual violence as well as of reporting, the impact on family law and the potential for re-traumatisation of people through the legal process. During the year, DRCC participated in an event organised by the Judicial Council to present a picture of the lived experience of complainants in the criminal courts and also presented on the impact of the trauma of sexual violence on clients to law students at the Law Society of Ireland.

Retrospective Reporting of Childhood Sexual Abuse: DRCC along with One in Four and RCNI collaborated with Dr Joe Mooney, lecturer in social work in UCD, on research examining adults' experiences of disclosing childhood sexual abuse to child protection services in Ireland. The research report entitled *Pathways or Barriers*, outlined the need for a firm legal underpinning for social workers working in this area and a more robust process of data management and data sharing.

Objective 7:

Facilitating victims/survivors in making their voices heard and promoting innovation in strengthening protection for victims/survivors of sexual violence

Engagement with the Citizens Assembly: Although established in 2019 and convened in 2020, the Citizen's Assembly on Gender Equality, chaired by Dr Catherine Day, was impacted by the pandemic. DRCC was one of six organisations working against sexual, domestic & gender based violence which had originally presented to the Assembly in 2020. In April 2021 the Assembly published its findings, including a recognition that Ireland would never have a gender-equal society until we address gender-based violence. The Assembly gave 45 recommendations for action, several of which echoed DRCC's recommendations. A Joint Oireachtas committee on Gender Equality has been formed to follow through on the Assembly's recommendations and DRCC has continued to engage wherever possible to facilitate that work.

Working with law enforcement: In addition to engaging with individual investigating Gardaí who were dealing with our clients, we also engaged with the Garda National Protective Services Bureau during the year to further advance its focus on victims' rights.

Working with survivors: Victims/survivors of sexual violence are a diverse group of people coming from all social and economic strata as well as being of all genders. While they share many common concerns, they also have specific, lived understanding of other challenges and how that may impact on recovery or on seeking justice. Their knowledge and input is essential to addressing sexual violence in its very many settings, and they must be acknowledged, supported and encouraged. During 2021, DRCC sought to support groups in areas such as the comedy sector, the traditional music sector, the wider arts sector, and the defence forces as well as with many individuals who are seeking to use their experience to inform, reform and improve how our society tolerates sexual violence and how it treats its victims.

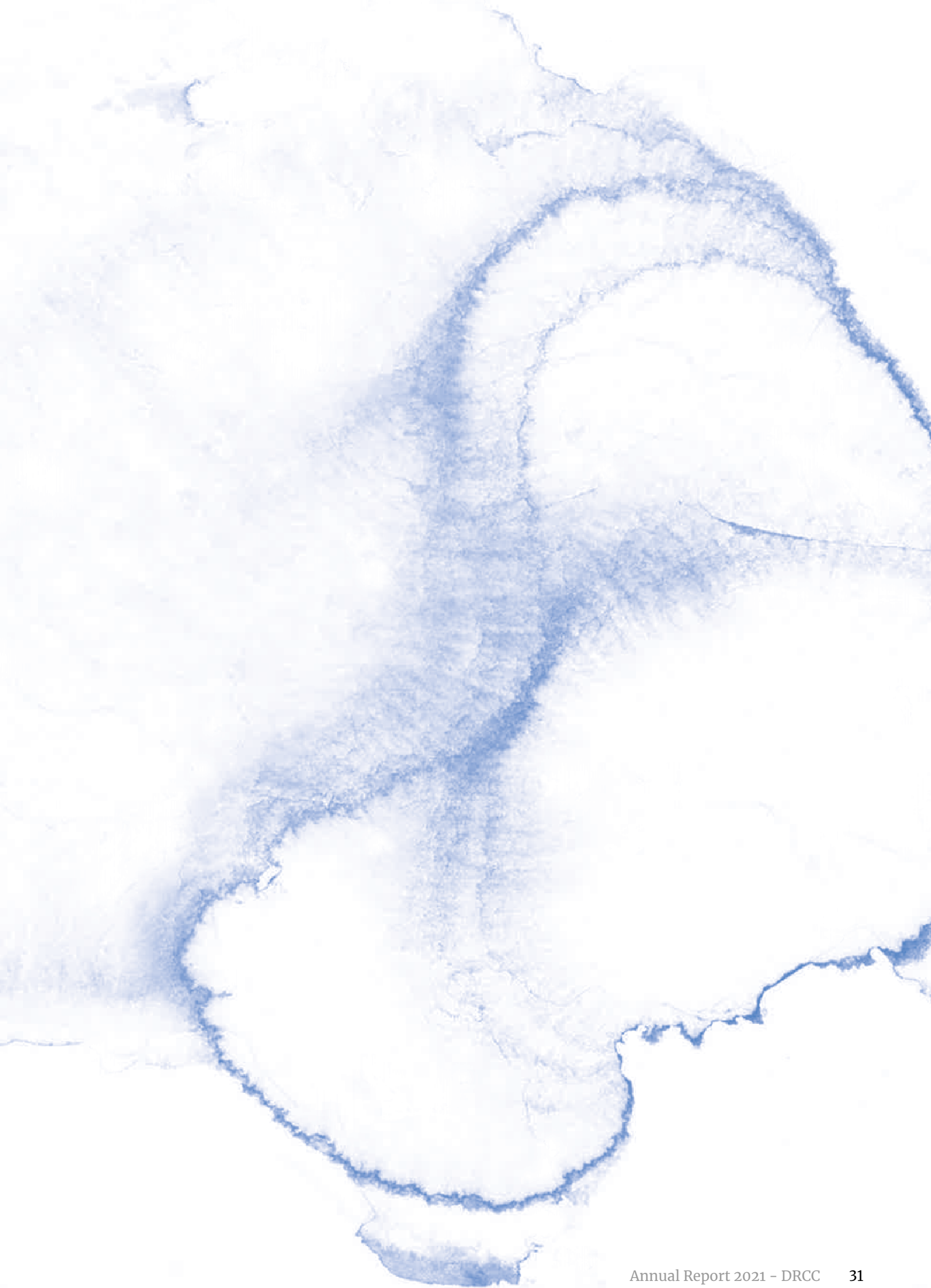
Devising a strategy to surface and combat sexual harassment in the workplace: DRCC has been exploring the prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace. This culminated in a working paper issued in October that included the results of a survey we had conducted on people's experience of sexual harassment in the workplace and analysis from law firm A&L Goodbody and solicitor Máille Brady Bates. It found that few people report harassment despite the lack of safety they feel in their workplace. The paper proposed solutions such as an anonymous helpline to report abuse and offer information and advice, online apps for reporting harassment, and a suggestion to explore other workplace approaches to find effective ways to address the culture of harassment in some workplaces.

A subsequent webinar in November engaged with a variety of key stakeholders across legal, business and trade union communities to identify possible legal solutions to the harassment occurring in workplaces and professional settings. We continue to build on the very useful feedback from the webinar and will continue to research and review possible reforms to strengthen existing mechanisms and promote a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of harassment and abuse in all workplaces in 2022.

Night-Time Economy Taskforce: DRCC made a contribution to the working group convened by the Department of Justice and gave the feedback towards a night-time economy charter, a draft of which was published in September.

DRCC policy submissions during 2021:

1. Submission to National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) on its Draft Primary Curriculum Framework.
2. Submission to the Joint Committee on Justice in relation to Victim's testimony in cases of rape and sexual assault.
3. Revised submission on Gender-Based Violence to the Citizen's Assembly on Gender Equality.
4. Submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht on the General Scheme of the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill.
5. Online commentary to the Policing Authority's Strategic Themes 2022-2024.
6. Submission in response to Minister Roderic O'Gorman's public consultation on the review of the Equality Acts (Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015).
7. Submission to Judicial Planning Working Group on efficient administration of justice, development of judicial skills and other themes.
8. Submission to the Department of Justice on the 3rd National Strategy on DSGBV.



Goal

Be a **strong, sustainable** organisation. This goal will be achieved through the delivery of the following objectives.

3

Objective 8

Maintaining and further developing the sustainable financial base for our work

Objective 9

Implementing a comprehensive and coherent communications plan

Objective 10

Maintaining a robust and accountable organisational structure

Objective 8:

Maintaining and further developing the sustainable financial base for our work

The State has recently ratified Ireland's international human rights obligations in the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. This treaty makes clear the State's duty to take all necessary measures to ensure that victims of sexual violence, amongst others, have access to services facilitating their recovery from violence. These include, where necessary, legal and psychological counselling. Victims should have access to health care and social services, and services from trained personnel should be adequately resourced.

For the most part, these health and victim support services are provided by the non-governmental sector, often called the voluntary or charity sector. These services are charities within the meaning of the law, often with volunteers carrying out vital work. Nonetheless, if victims/ survivors are – as a human right - entitled to proper support to enable them to heal and seek justice, then Government must take its funding obligations seriously to identify and consistently meet the total cost of providing services that enable and empower them to do so.

For an organisation like DRCC, government funding does not cover the full cost of services, training and innovating on new ways of working. Therefore DRCC supplements funding by partnering with donors and investors big and small who share our vision of preventing the harm and healing the trauma of rape and other sexual violence, and want to help us achieve it.

You can read more on our funding and finances in the appended financial statements.

Statutory funding

DRCC has two main statutory funders:

- Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, is in turn funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth which provides the bulk of our funding for therapy and counselling services.
- The Department of Justice, following an internal review of the level of support for accompaniment services, increased its budget and grants for such services nationwide in 2021 and provided funding for our accompaniment services as well as towards the provision of BodyRight programmes for youth workers.

We were pleased to note that both the Department of Justice and Tusla continued to recognise the additional strain on frontline Sexual and Domestic Violence Services in special need under COVID19 restrictions by way of additional emergency funding in 2021.

Public fundraising

Restrictions on in-person events meant that again in 2021, our public fundraising work was severely hampered. We moved most activities online and relied on incredible generosity from individuals, groups and corporate donors. That support means so much to us – we could not do our work without it. Some highlights included:

- In April DRCC benefitted from an online comedy gig hosted by some of Ireland's funniest performers who very kindly gave up their time in aid of our services, including Maeve Higgins, Jarleth Regan, Eleanor Tiernan, Gearoid Farrelly, Alison Spittle, Chris Kent, Colm O'Regan, Fred Cooke, Sikisa & MC Eve Darcy. The event was organised by the Comedy Safety Standards group.
- In May DRCC was shortlisted in the National Lottery Good Causes Awards 2021, and while we did not ultimately win we were delighted to be included with such brilliant charities and initiatives.
- September saw a return of the Women's Mini-Marathon – even if in virtual form – with people donning the jersey for DRCC and taking to their local streets to raise money.
- In October, in lieu of our annual bucket collection, we ran a week-long campaign under #Support4Survivors, highlighting across social media the importance of therapeutic services for survivors and growing demands on the Centre. We were very grateful to the public for their support as well as many more well-known individuals who kindly lent their voice to our campaign.



Online comedy gig organised by the **Comedy Safety Standards** group.



CEO Noeline Blackwell with Charlene Masterson who raised funds for DRCC in the VHI Dublin Women's Mini Marathon in September

Other public donations

DRCC is extremely grateful to the many individuals and groups who have put enormous effort and generosity into raising much-needed funds for our work, from birthday fundraisers to cake sales, charity runs, gigs, merchandising, tattoo festivals, 24-hour college events, black-tie galas, head shaves, DJ sessions, and much more. Thank you all so much!

Our Text Donate number is another way for people to easily donate small amounts towards our work

- Text **DRCC to 50300** to donate €4
- Texts cost €4.00. DRCC will receive a minimum of €3.60.
Service Provider: LIKECHARITY. **Helpline: 01 481 9311**

or

- Text **HELP to 50300** to donate €4 per month
- This is a subscription service. Text cost €4 per month. DRCC will receive a minimum of €3.60.
Service Provider: LIKECHARITY. **Helpline: 01 481 9311**



DCU Drama Society raised funds for DRCC throughout 2021

Objective 9:

Implementing a comprehensive and coherent communications plan

We highlight our services and work in multiple ways to further our aims of broadening understanding of sexual violence and its impacts, promoting our services and supports to victims/survivors, and campaigning for a society with zero tolerance for sexual violence.

- In 2021, we used our website, drcc.ie, to showcase information on our work, news and press releases as well as campaigns and events. The site hosted our webchat support service which allows people to chat online with a webchat support worker. In particular, we also issued downloadable resources throughout the year, focused on offering survivors information and tools to understand and manage trauma impacts.
- We issued quarterly online newsletters in 2021 to update those who subscribe on our work, campaigns and other relevant developments. Past issues and subscription at bit.ly/DRCCnl22.
- Our social media channels were active throughout the year, with information and campaigns on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok and YouTube.
- We work with media to highlight issues of concern and provide insights and evidence from our work. In 2021 we were privileged to facilitate approximately 650 briefings and/or pieces of coverage across media outlets at local and national level.

Campaigning for change: Alongside our larger work on consent, we ran some smaller campaigns, largely online given continuing pandemic restrictions. We highlighted issues such as gender-based violence and online safety, and marked International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Action against Gender-Based Violence.

Our **100consent campaign**, developed with pro bono partner Pluto and with PR support of Buck and Hound in 2020, continued to win plaudits in 2021, being shortlisted for an All-Ireland Marketing Award in Best Client/Agency collaboration. In May we were delighted to see it win in two categories as Best Issues-Led Campaign and Best Campaign by a registered charity in the PRCA/PRII Awards for excellence in PR.

Minister Josepha Madigan TD launched our **annual report and statistical supplement for 2020** in an online event on 7 September. Minister Madigan reaffirmed the government's commitment to addressing sexual violence, which she called a scourge on society that was 'oppressive, abusive and inhumane'. DRCC Chairperson Ann Marie Gill, Helpline Manager Michelle Grehan, Head of Clinical Services Angela McCarthy, Policy Manager Shirley Scott and CEO Noeline Blackwell spoke about different aspects of work in 2020. Gráinne Henry, a member of our Youth Advisory Panel introduced a new animation, on which the panel had collaborated.



CEO Noeline Blackwell with Minister Josepha Madigan at launch of Annual Report 2020 in September



Objective 10:

Maintaining a robust and accountable organisational structure

DRCC Staff

Our staff are essential to carrying out the mission and goals of DRCC. As in the previous year, much was expected of our dedicated personnel in times of pandemic restrictions. Particularly for those who provided face to face services in therapy, volunteer and staff support and in training, much of the year involved online provision and contacts, but when restrictions eased we had to transition back to in-person work in a safe way to protect staff and clients alike.

All our staff have worked extraordinarily hard and with great flexibility and professionalism. They given much of themselves to support survivors of sexual violence in an enormously stressful time. We are very proud of our teams' ability to maintain vital support to those they work with and empower them to progress in their healing journey.

As in many other organisations, we experienced a significant turnover of staff in 2021. In the light of significantly increased demand, recruitment of new staff was a constant theme throughout the year and has carried on into 2022.

Throughout the year, we continued to work on internal structures and systems. We have upgraded our internal databases and conducted reviews of our internal structures across several work areas as well as our bank of policies. We ensured IT and other skills were refreshed and that staff were kept up to date across work areas with our internal bulletin.

DRCC Volunteers

A considerable proportion of DRCC's supports and services depend not just on our committed staff but also on dedicated and passionate volunteers. Our volunteers are essential to delivering Dublin Rape Crisis Centre services to survivors of sexual violence in conjunction with our core staff. Thanks to their commitment and skill, key assistance is provided across a range of areas, including on the National 24-Hour Helpline, and in accompanying victim/survivors in the justice system, to court and on visits to Garda stations as well as to the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) in the Rotunda Hospital. We also benefit from volunteers who offer leadership and ensure governance oversight as Board members, and are very fortunate to see many volunteers come forward to assist us in raising funds to support all our work.

Volunteer testimonial: Barbara Galvin

My name is Barbara and I have been a DRCC volunteer since spring 2021. I volunteer on the phones and in SATU. My experience as a volunteer has been hugely positive. My hope when applying to be a volunteer with DRCC was to learn the skills to help survivors of sexual trauma and their supporters. One thing that I take away from every volunteer shift is that I have helped at least one person - something I am very proud of.

Recruitment & training: Helpline and accompaniment volunteers receive extensive training that includes inputs from SATU staff and Garda National Protective Services Bureau personnel. On duty, they are supported by access to expert advice and attend support sessions facilitated by the Volunteer Services team.

Volunteer recruitment and training was impacted by the pandemic and our induction and training were conducted largely online. Nonetheless we were able to transfer the in-depth, professional training we provide to an online format and have been very proud to see those we trained in this 'virtual academy' providing vital supports on the national helpline and at SATU.

Our volunteers on the National Helpline and those providing accompaniment continued to display enormous fortitude and commitment in 2021. In another very challenging year, DRCC's volunteers continued to give invaluable support to those seeking help, and in many cases actually took on further duties or extended their commitment. This is an extraordinary gift in extraordinary times. We remain profoundly grateful for their generosity and integrity.

DRCC Board

DRCC is led by a voluntary Board. During 2021, the full DRCC board met in 7 board meetings and one AGM. There are three board sub-committees: Audit & Finance; Human Resources & Remuneration, and Fundraising, which all met as required during the year.

Members of the Board of Directors in 2021

Ann Marie Gill (Chair)

Siona Cahill

John Fanning

Keith Herman

Philip Hyland

Anne-Marie James

Neasa Kane-Fine

Carol Keane

Madeleine McCarthy

Aibhlín McCrann

Cathy O'Donohoe

Grace O'Malley

Note: Board members are not remunerated for their services to DRCC, nor are any expenses reimbursed for travelling to/from board meetings.

Meeting governance obligations

DRCC complies with the Charities Governance Code published by the Charities Regulatory Authority.

DRCC continued to meet legal requirements, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Children First, providing relevant training to staff and ensuring all requirements were incorporated in organisational policies. Lobbying returns were submitted in a timely way to the Standards in Public Office Commission.

Satisfying funder duties

DRCC fulfilled its targets and reporting obligations for all funders during the course of the year. The financial accounts attached give a detailed picture of the income, expenditure and activities of the organisation for 2021.

Commitment to best practice: DRCC complies with the standards contained in the Charity Regulator's Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public. The organisation is compliant with the Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in Ireland (The Governance Code).

Company & Charity Registration: Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC) is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital, registered CRO 147318. The DRCC holds charitable tax exemption from the Revenue Commissioners (CHY 8529) and is also registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority (RCN 20021078).



Independent Auditors Report

- Statement Of Financial Activities
- Statement Of Comprehensive Income
- DRCC Employee Salary Range
- Statement Of Financial Position

Financial Statements

Statement Of Financial Activities (Incorporating An Income and Expenditure Account) For Year Ended 31 December 2021

Income and Expenditure 2021					
	Designated funds €	Unrestricted funds €	Restricted funds €	Total 2021 €	Total 2020 €
Income:					
Donations and legacies					
Donations	-	371,094	2,900	373,994	529,289
Fundraising income	-	262,803	-	262,803	328,309
Income from charitable activities					
Government grants	-	-	1,706,167	1,706,167	1,496,632
Education, counselling and other services	-	138,117	514,841	652,958	157,488
Total income	-	772,014	2,223,908	2,995,922	2,511,718
Expenditure:					
Cost of raising funds	-	184,667	-	184,667	155,217
Expenditure on charitable activities	-	219,181	2,223,968	2,443,149	2,004,343
Administration and other expenditure	-	253,437	-	253,437	200,800
Total expenditure	-	657,285	1,780,317	2,881,253	2,360,360
Net income/ (expenditure)	-	114,729	(60)	114,669	151,358

	Designated funds €	Unrestricted funds €	Restricted funds €	Total 2021 €	Total 2020 €
Transfer to/ between funds	226,701	(226,761)	60	-	-
Net movement in funds for the year	226,701	(112,032)	-	114,669	151,358
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	2,413,720	609,967	-	3,023,687	2,872,329
Total funds carried forward	2,640,421	497,935	-	3,138,356	3,023,687

Statement of Comprehensive Income

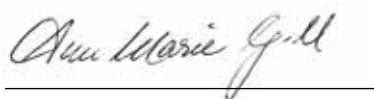
	Total 2021	Total 2020
Surplus for the financial year	114,669	151,358
Total Comprehensive Income	114,669	151,358

Statement Of Financial Position For Year Ended 31 December 2021

		2021 €	2020 €
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	10	1,157,027	1,202,567
Current Assets			
Debtors	11	23,005	15,482
Cash at bank and in hand	15	3,639,600	2,755,863
		3,662,605	2,771,345
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		(155,928)	(138,417)
Net current assets	12	3,506,677	2,632,928
Total assets less current liabilities		4,663,704	3,835,495
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	13	(1,525,348)	(811,808)

Net Assets		3,138,356	3,023,687
Funds of the charity			
Accumulated funds - unrestricted	17	497,935	609,967
Accumulated funds - designated funds	17	2,640,421	2,413,720
Total funds of the charity		3,138,356	3,023,687

Approved by the board of directors and signed on its behalf by



Ann Marie Gill
Director

Date: 8 September 2022



Keith Herman
Director

Date: 6 September 2022

DRCC Employee Salary Range

A total of three employees earned remuneration in excess of €70,000 per annum as follows:

	2021	2020
€60,000 to €70,000	2	1
€70,001 to €80,000	2	2
€80,001 to €90,000	-	1
€90,001 - €100,001	1	-

DRCC Annual Report 2021

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Photos by DRCC, Derek Speirs, DCU Drama Society, Comedy Safety Standards, Shona.ie

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