



Rape Domestic, Sexual

ANNUAL REPORT 2023







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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

As Chairperson of Wexford Rape Crisis (WexRC), it is a privilege to be part of the infrastructure that supports our clients – victims of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, abuse or harassment, either current or historic. WexRC is also very committed to supporting the Consent programme for students and youth groups to educate towards preventing harm in the future.

In 2023 the organisation was focused primarily on new developments in clinical care and exploring ways to engage and sensitively manage our waiting list (as outlined in the Manager's report). This followed on strategically from 2022 which was concentrated on recruiting additional staff and developing a new staff structure to respond to an ever-increasing demand for the service.



Wexford Rape Crisis is also committed to continuously improving our outreach service to the other towns and in 2023 two additional Counsellors were recruited for the Gorey area to provide more capacity in adolescent counselling there.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank Tusla DSGBV (core services), Tusla (Waterford/Wexford) and Dept of Justice (Victims of Crime funding) for continuing to fund our service and respond where possible to our need for extra resources.

An organisation cannot respond to a need without adequate resources and the best resource we have are our committed and professional staff who carry out a difficult job daily with care, concern and dedication to the clients they work with. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to acknowledge their commitment and contribution to the excellent reputation and standing that Wexford Rape Crisis holds as an organisation that provides high quality counselling and support to those who access our service. This staff team is strongly supported by our frontline Administrator, Joanne and led by our very diligent and innovative Manager, Clare and Clinical Team Leader, Alison who work tirelessly to respond to the demand for the service while maintaining our standards of care and continuous improvement.

On behalf of Wexford Rape Crisis, I want to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to all of you who so generously donated the proceeds of fundraising events, made personal contributions throughout the year and contributed to our annual bucket collection in December. We are very grateful to you for enabling us to fund more counselling hours and support the service.

Our annual bucket collection requires a lot of time and effort to organise each year and I would like to thank all those volunteers who assisted us throughout the county and in particular, our key volunteer, Freda Quinn who co-ordinated it with dedication and maximum effort.

In relation to our Consent Education programme, the EU contract target of training up to 450 teachers to deliver this programme has begun with online workshops and upskilling sessions and this will continue into 2024. The Consent Ed team have been working in collaboration with NCCA (National Council for Curriculum & Assessment) to have the Teacher's Handbook & Resources approved for inclusion in future SPHE modules and resources. We are very grateful to our Consent Education worker for her stalwart efforts in progressing and continuously evaluating this programme as part of the Consent Ed team.

The Board greatly appreciates the commitment and dedication of our Finance Officer for her immense contribution to keeping our finances on track and working closely with the Board to carefully manage and monitor our financial resources.

In May 2023, the Wexford Rape Centre building was officially opened by the Chairperson of Wexford Co Council, George Lawlor. The Board of Directors (past and present) and the Management of WexRC got the opportunity to thank all those people who made an immense contribution to providing and completing our new fit for purpose building. I would like to again acknowledge their contribution and express our heartfelt thanks.

The new Wexford Women's Refuge is currently being built adjacent to the Wexford Rape Crisis building and will hopefully be open in 2024. We look forward to working more closely and in more collaboration with our colleagues there when fully open for service.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge our Board of Directors who volunteer their time and expertise so generously to ensure excellent governance of the organisation. As Chairperson, I appreciate their support and absolute commitment to the crucial service we provide at Wexford Rape Crisis.



Pictured at the official opening of the Wexford Rape Crisis centre in May 2023: from left; Rob O' Callaghan, Board Member, Mairead Sinnott, Former Chairperson, Kate O Donnell, Board Member, Laura Lawlor, Chairperson, George Lawlor, Cathaoirleach, Wexford Co Council who performed the official opening, Dr Moira Slevin, Board Member & Sean Mernagh, Board Member.

Inset picture is Joan Roche, Board Member.

MANAGER'S REPORT

In November 2023, Legislation to establish Cuan, (the new state agency dedicated to minimising Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence), completed its journey through the Houses of the Oireachtas and was signed into law by President Higgins. This was a fundamental step for the government in making a commitment to tackle the serious problem of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence in our country.

At a local level, Wexford Rape Crisis (WEXRC) experienced a further growth in the demand for its services. New referrals for counselling rose by 33% from the previous year, 2022. Waiting times for counselling grew and WEXRC began to develop further strategies to support those seeking help.



One of these strategies was the development of a new counselling model (Compassion-Focused Therapy with Polyvagal Theory). The centre began an in-depth, intensive training programme that continues into 2024. The second strategy was the development of a new role, Clinical Support Worker. This role will focus on supporting clients on the waiting-list who need interim support while waiting for a longer-term counselling slot.

After many years of developmental work by the team, WEXRC presented our Adolescent Counselling Framework to the Rape Crisis sector in Dublin at the end of November 2023. This framework began in Clifford St (our previous premises) and continued with the input from all the adolescent counsellors delivering this model over the past 7 years. WEXRC now delivers this model in 2 location in the County, Wexford and Gorey (since beginning of 2023). WEXRC would like to acknowledge the skills and expertise from Tipperary and Kilkenny Rape Crisis Centres, along with Anita Clancy-Clarke (Tusla) and Dr. Rosaleen McElvaney. Further detail on the framework can be found in this report.

The Consent and Education Programme was further developed in 2023 with a focus on training up and supporting teachers in schools to deliver the programme to young people. The contribution of the Wexford Consent and Education Worker cannot be underestimated, particularly with the positive outcomes for young people.

2023 was the first full year in place for a number of new roles; WEXRC's dedicated Finance Worker, Clinical Team Leader and Full-time Administrator aswell as new Counsellors to the team. I am very grateful to all members of the team for all they do. The team in the centre has grown hugely with 15 front line team members at the end of 2023. This growth has not stopped. I would like to extend a huge thank you to the entire team for the dedication, commitment and enthusiasm you bring to the work, work that is not easy. I would also like to thank our volunteers Freda, Claire, Ruth and Neels who show up when they are needed and are always eager to make a difference.

Without a committed and experienced board, an organisation cannot flourish. WEXRC flourishes year after year, leading the way in spearheading new initiatives to ultimately, benefit our clients. I would like to thank each board member past and present for all they do/have done. A thank you also to our funders and benefactors, without whom the work would cease. We thank you for investing in a high quality client-led service.

Finally, to our clients. We hope that the service is a small part of a large healing process for you that will bring peace and happiness.

Overview of the Organisation

In 1995, Wexford Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Service was established as an indirect result of the Kilkenny Incest Investigation, providing a free counselling service for survivors of sexual violence and their families in the Co. Wexford area. The service quickly expanded as more and more survivors sought counselling. With the increased numbers, outreach services were developed in Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross.

In 2017, the service was rebranded as Wexford Rape Crisis (WEXRC). The service also formally expanded it's remit to providing Counselling support to those who also experienced domestic and gender-based violence. Wexford Rape Crisis became the designated Counselling service for clients of Wexford Women's Refuge. Strong links operate between both services to help our community in Co. Wexford. All our counsellors are professionally qualified and accredited to relevant recognized Accreditation Bodies such as the IACP, IAHIP and NAPCP.

Our Vision

Is for a society free from sexual violence.

Wexford Rape Crisis Mission Statement

"Wexford Rape Crisis is a client-centred support service for those who have been affected by domestic, sexual or gender-based violence, including women, men, young people and all persons of different sexual or gender identities".

Core values underpinning Wexford Rape Crisis

Violence and sexual abuse in relationships must always be viewed as an abuse of Human Rights. It should not be rationalised or minimised and there must never be an acceptable or tolerable level of violence. Anyone can be a victim of sexual violence, irrespective of age, race, income or employment status. Underpinning all aspects of the work of Wexford Rape Crisis is an ethos which offers support, empathy and understanding. We provide a non-judgemental, empowering and compassionate service which facilitates healing and recovery.



Aims & Objectives

Through our counselling service, advocacy and awareness-raising work, we aim to support our clients by:

- Implementing best practice in all we do with survivors of domestic, sexual or gender-based violence (DSGBV).
- Supporting partners, families and friends of those who have been affected by DSGBV.
- Developing therapeutic relationships.
- Ensuring survivors have access to services which are responsive and appropriate to their needs.
- Supporting clients to make informed choices.
- Providing accessible, sensitive, confidential and quality services.
- Working on behalf of our clientele with other organizations and agencies when appropriate.
- Working preventatively in communities through education, media campaigns and public awareness strategies.
- Monitoring and evaluating our service provision.
- Ensuring the safeguarding of children in situations of domestic, sexual or gender-based violence.

Current Board of Management

Board of Directors:

Laura Lawlor (Chairperson) John Cuddihy (Secretary) (resigned 29/03/2023, finished 8 year term), Damien Jordan (resigned 22/02/2023 after a 6 year term), Dr. Moira Slevin, Joan Roche, Kate O'Donnell, Rob Callaghan and Sean Mernagh.

Audit Sub-Committee:

John Cuddihy, Annette O'Neill and Lorene Crowley.

Director Biographies:

Ms. Laura Lawlor: With extensive experience in community development initiatives for over thirty years, Laura worked as a Career Guidance Professional. Laura has previously served with boards of management in the education, community and communications sectors and from 2009-2018 she assumed the role of Safeguarding Representative for the Parish of Wexford. Laura has also engaged in voluntary work in the PR, Local Radio and publications areas, and has a particular interest in supporting the wellbeing, personal progression and development of the people with whom she works.

Mr. John Cuddihy: John is a retired Regional Director with AIB Bank having served in excess of forty years in the Retail Banking Sector in Ireland. John is a member of several Audit Committees both private and Semi State and is the Company Secretary.

Dr. Moira Slevin: Dr Moira Slevin, now retired, has been a GP for over 30 years and has had a special interest in Women's Health including Mental Health issues in the community throughout her career.

Mr. Damien Jordan: Damien was Educated at FCJ Secondary School, Bunclody, Griffith College Dublin and the Law Society of Ireland. He is currently a Partner with the legal firm Redmond & Co. Solicitors Enniscorthy, a member of the Probate, Administration and Trusts Committee of the Law Society of Ireland, and a former Secretary of the Wexford Solicitors Association.

Ms. Kate O'Donnell: Kate O'Donnell is a Certified Bank Director. She served as Bank of Ireland's Regional Director for South Leinster and has over 37 years in Financial Services, retiring in 2016. Having previously been a member of the Audit Committee, Kate joined the Board of Wexford Rape Crisis in 2019 and serves on a number of Boards in the Arts and Culture Sector.

Ms. Joan Roche: Joan trained in St. Vincent's Hospital, Elm Park, Dublin as a registered General Nurse. Joan has extensive nursing experience in both medical and surgical nursing case having worked in St. Vincent's, Blackrock Clinic, The National Rehabilitation Centre and The Emergency Department, Wexford General Hospital. Joan retired from nursing in 2017.

Mr. Rob O'Callaghan: Rob has a lifetime spent in education, culminating in 24 years in St Peter's College, Wexford, the final 10 years as Principal. Rob completed a Masters of Arts in Management in Education in 2011. Retired in 2020 but continuing his involvement in education, as a Physical Education Tutor with Dublin City University and a Regional Ambassador with the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals.

Mr. Sean Mernagh: Sean is a retired Accountant who worked in practice for 40 years. He has been involved and a member of various voluntary organisations.

Board Meetings 2023



25th January
22nd February
29th March
26th April
31st May
28th June
6th Sept – BOM and AGM
4th Oct
29th Nov
13th Dec



Group Management & Governance Code

Governance 2023

During 2023 all of the activities undertaken by the organisation related directly to furthering our charitable purposes and all income and property has been applied towards those purposes.

We continue to rely heavily on the generous support of our funders (Tusla DSGBV, Tusla Waterford, Department of Justice & Benefactors) and have ensured compliance with all aspects of our Service Level Agreements with them.

Trustees, led by the Chair, undertook a full review of all aspects of the Charities Governance Code to monitor compliance to the core principles. This review consolidates the Boards commitment to the 'Code' and built confidence in our regulatory compliance standards. The organisation has confirmed compliance with the 'Code' in our annual report to the Regulator.

In tandem with our Audit Sub Committee the Board continued to conduct a thorough review of our current Risk Register in order to update relevant aspects affected by internal and external environmental factors. The review was conducted via Board meetings focusing on risk categories: Governance, Operations, Finance, Environmental, and Reputational.

Our Strategic Planning Programme for 2022-2025, commenced in 2021 and work is on-going. In the spirit of transparency, we continue to publish Annual Activity Reports and Annual Financial Reports both on our website and with the Charities Regulator, where this information may be easily accessed by the public and our stakeholders.

Frontline Team

Clare Williams, Manager Wexford Rape Crisis MSc, BSc, B.A., Dip Mgt, Dip Addictions, Dip Group Work. MIACP, M.T.A.I.

Clare commenced as Manager with WEXRC in Nov 2014. Her working background includes work as a counsellor supporting and helping clients with addiction, depression, anxiety, and trauma. Clare has also held a range of senior managerial roles, mainly in Dublin in a variety of work settings. These include managing a Residential Alcohol & Drug Detox Unit, an emergency Shelter for homeless people with mental health challenges, a Transitional Housing Project for people exiting prison and a residential service for women affected by Domestic & Sexual Violence. She worked mainly with organisations such as Dublin Simon Community, De Paul Trust and The Vincentian Housing Partnership.

Alison Barry, Clinical Team Leader

Alison is a psychotherapist who has been working in the field of mental health and wellness for 13 years. She is fully accredited with the Irish Council of Psychotherapy (ICP) and with APPI (Association for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy in Ireland). She has worked for the HSE for the last 10 years, as well as in private practice and with charities. She has worked with clients of all ages and backgrounds. Alison is passionate about people and her mission is to provide a safe space for all to come and find healing

Catherine Murphy, Staff Counsellor B.Sc., Dip. MIACP

Catherine has worked with Wexford Rape Crisis since 2000. She has many years' experience working with adults, both men and women, who have experienced all types of sexual violence (including childhood sexual abuse,) domestic violence and gender-based violence. Her therapeutic approach is humanistic/integrative with person-centred values. At the core of therapy is the bond that develops between client and therapist. This facilitates the establishment of a strong foundation of trust and care. Catherine recognises that every client is unique, and she tailors her approach based on the needs of the individual. She facilitates a safe, supportive, nurturing environment which helps clients work toward self- healing and recovery from their trauma. She is currently training to be a Reiki Practitioner.

Jessica Du Bois, Staff Counsellor, Dip. Counselling MIACP

Jessica has been a counsellor for Wexford Rape Crisis since 2004. She is a fully accredited Humanistic Integrative Therapist who began her career as a Rape Crisis counsellor at Portsmouth Area Rape Crisis Services in the south of England in 1998. She is also a fully qualified and certified Equine Assisted Mental Health Professional. As a humanistic counsellor, she believes, that through deepening self-awareness, we can all connect with the counsellor within ourselves, and strive to fulfil our true potential in life. For Jessica, being a counsellor is a great honour and privilege.

Bernadette Lacey, Staff Counsellor, Dip Gestalt, Dip HE, RGN, MIACP

Bernadette is a Gestalt Psychotherapist. She works very much on a holistic level encompassing mind body and spirit of clients. She has a deep interest in working with childhood trauma and its effects in adulthood. She also has an abiding love of nature and a passionate belief in the healing and therapeutic powers of the connection with our natural environment and in particular, trees, and feels this to be a very valuable and profound resource which forms an intrinsic part of her work with clients. Bernadette feels the earth has a very forgiving, soothing and calming effect on our system when we spend time with nature, and helps us to regulate our physical, emotional and psychological selves in order to manage life's challenges better. She believes that sometimes there just aren't words for what has been suffered and the earth doesn't need them in order to heal us.

Ciara Murray, Panel Counsellor, Dip Psychotherapy MIAHIP

Ciara Murray is a qualified accredited Psychotherapist and she currently work part time with Wexford Rape Crisis since 2018. She also has a private practise based in Ferns for over five years, working with clients suffering with depression, anxiety, trauma, loss & bereavement. Before this she worked on a voluntary basis in Living Life Counselling & Enniscorthy Vocational College. She also has experience as working as a social care worker in a residential setting working with adolescents in care. Ciara trained in the Tivoli Institute, and qualified from the 'Professional Training Course in Psychotherapy & Counselling' (2010–2014). She continues to do professional development workshops varying from different topics such as mindfulness, children's play therapy to suicide prevention. Ciara offers a safe, non-judgmental space for her clients. She works in a humanistic and integrative way. She likes to focus on helping the client recognise their own capabilities through personal growth and choice.

Sarah Farrell, Staff Counsellor. BSc (Hons) Counselling & Psychotherapy MIACP

Sarah joined the team at Wexford Rape Crisis in June 2022, having worked as an Adult Counsellor since 2018. Sarah has a BSc (Hons) in Counselling and Psychotherapy from PCI college and is a fully accredited therapist with the IACP. Sarah likes to incorporate a Humanistic and integrative approach to her work, combining Psychodynamic theory, CBT skills, Mindfulness and Trauma informed practices with clients. Fundamentally, she maintains a person-centered approach to her work and strongly believes that the establishment of a safe, trustworthy relationship is central to the healing process. Sarah completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Palliative care from UCC in 2016, incorporating the knowledge and theory gained in relation to grief and bereavement, into her Counselling practice also. Sarah considers it a privilege to be a part of each individuals unique healing journey and is very pleased at the opportunity to be a part of the team at Wexford Rape Crisis.

Fiona Clancy, Adolescent Counsellor, BSoc Sc, Diploma in Psychotherapy, MIACP.

Fiona is a fully accredited Humanistic & Integrative Psychotherapist and has worked as a Psychotherapist with adults who have experienced trauma since 2005. Fiona has also gained post-graduate qualifications in Child & Adolescent Psychotherapy and Therapeutic Play and has been working therapeutically with children and adolescents since 2007. Fiona's work experience also includes working in family centres, in homeless services and in a residential setting for adolescents in care. Fiona's role in Wexford Rape Crisis is to provide psychotherapy to adolescents and young adults who have been impacted by sexual, domestic or gender-based violence. Fiona believes that at the core of therapy is the therapeutic relationship and that the relationship or bond between client and therapist is central to healing. Fiona uses a variety of therapeutic approaches and creative mediums to support clients to begin to heal physically, emotionally, cognitively and spiritually from their trauma.

Claudia Blaess, Adolescent Therapist, B.A. (Hons) in Psychology, Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy, NAPCP, PSI, MSc Child and Adolescent Mental Wellbeing.

Claudia is a fully accredited Psychotherapist and has been working with adults since 2014. Being passionate about working with young people, she has continuously engaged in training in this area, including how to care for vulnerable children, and has been working with adolescents since 2018. Claudia completed her degree in Psychology in 2021 with Dublin City University and is currently doing her MSc in Child and Adolescent Mental Wellbeing with Anglia Ruskin University. In Wexford Rape Crisis, Claudia provides Psychotherapy for young people that have been impacted by sexual, domestic or gender-based violence. Claudia feels that a trusting and compassionate therapeutic relationship is the most important part of therapy to help the client to engage and face their emotions, a difficult and challenging process for any survivor of trauma. She uses a personcentred approach, as well as tools from cognitive behavioural therapy or creative mediums to give the young person a safe space to heal. Claudia also provides parenting support for parents looking to gain tools in supporting their children during these difficult times and after.

Kit Kenny, Counselling Psychologist. BA (Hons) Psychology, MSc in Counselling Psychology, Certificate in CBT, Cert in Sand Therapy MIACP

Kit is a Counselling Psychologist and works therapeutically with children, adolescents, and adults. Using a person-centered approach, she explores clients issues and goals and offers appropriate evidence based therapy. Her experience has included working with primary and secondary school students. Therapy for children includes the use of play therapy techniques as appropriate. Conditions treated include loss, through death or separation, anxiety, anger management, adhd, and Asperger's to name a few.

As a contract worker for the HSE for 10+ years she worked with Adult clients; In Wexford Self Harm Intervention Programme – Counselling for suicidal thoughts and self-harm. Counselling in Primary care; Issues included working with Depression & anxiety, panic attacks stress, low self-esteem and relationship problems

Kit is a member of the Psychological Society of Ireland and abides by its Code and practice

Billie-Jean Byrne, Adolescent Counsellor, MSc in Counselling & Psychotherapy, Cert in Telephone and Online Counselling, MIACP

Billie-Jean is a fully qualified and accredited psychotherapist working with adults and adolescents. She continues to further her training with a variety of professional development workshops and is currently completing her MSc in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy. She works from a humanistic and integrative perspective drawing on a range of theories and creative mediums to meet the unique and individual needs of each client and their families. She believes the therapeutic relationship is paramount for healing and therefore aims to provide a collaborative, supportive and compassionate space to her clients.

Lorraine Horrell, Adolescent Counsellor, MIACP Dip Counselling & Psychotherapy, BSc. Counselling & Psychotherapy, MSc Adolescent Psychotherapy. Cert in play therapy skills.

Lorraine is a qualified and accredited adolescent and adult Psychotherapist and has been working for Wexford Rape Crisis since 2023 providing counselling to people affected by Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence. Lorraine works in a humanistic and integrative way, using gestalt, person centred therapy and creative approaches when working with clients. She trained with Bronagh Starrs, where she completed an MSc. in adolescent psychotherapy, she also trained with the Irish Gestalt Centre, Cork Counselling Centre and ICPPD where she started my training. Lorraine has had experience in many different organizations and settings, including Pieta House, Families First in Dublin, residential care, where she worked as in house psychotherapist for children in care ages 11-18. She also haas extensive experience working with children in care and their families. Lorraine worked in Pieta house as a psychotherapist and as interim lead therapist. She recognizes that every client is unique, and that the importance of the therapeutic relationship is paramount to working with clients and their families.

Carolyn Brohan, Education Project Worker, M.A., B.A., Dip

Carolyn has been a member of the team since Sept 2017. She delivers Wexford Rape Crisis Consent & Sexual Violence Prevention Programme along with workshops, programmes and training to young people, and professionals, throughout County Wexford. She formerly delivered the EU funded pilot of the Manuela Programme with Wexford Rape Crisis who was one of four centres in the country providing this initiative. For the past twenty years she has worked as a Senior Youth Worker in a myriad of settings and diversity of roles including youth work services, working with minority groups, in residential care and a Tutor in adult education. She also works part-time as an Associate Lecturer in the third level sector.

Joanne O'Leary, Administrator

Joanne joined the Team in June 2022 as the full time Administrator. Joanne has a long history of working in administration and worked in Law Firms as a Legal Secretary for almost twenty years. Joanne carries out all the administration work within WEXRC and provides administration to support to management and staff.

Kathleen Atkinson, Finance Worker, FCA

Kathleen joined the team as Finance Worker in November 2022. She qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1987. Having worked in Industry for 34 years, she decided to pursue part time work in a non-profit organisation. She provides expertise to the role which is very busy as numbers in the Centre increase. She believes that it is an honour to work with such dedicated staff in amazing premises.

Freda Quinn, Volunteer

Freda began volunteering for WEXRC in 2012. She has been volunteering in many different capacities over the years but mainly as a fundraising volunteer and assisting with the day today running of the premises. Freda travels between her native Dublin and her home in Wexford on a regular basis and as such volunteers any free time she has when she is back in Wexford. Freda also volunteers for many other large organisations throughout Ireland. When a job needs to be done, Freda is the person to call.



Counsellor Profiles

Billie-Jean Byrne, Adolescent Counsellor, MSc in Counselling & Psychotherapy, Cert in Telephone and Online Counselling, MIACP

Billie-Jean is a fully qualified and accredited psychotherapist working with adults and adolescents.

She continues to further her training with a variety of professional development workshops and is currently completing her MSc in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy.

She works from a humanistic and integrative perspective drawing on a range of theories and creative mediums to meet the unique and individual needs of each client and their families. She believes the therapeutic relationship is paramount for healing and therefore aims to provide a collaborative, supportive and compassionate space to her clients.





Lorraine Horrell, Adolescent Counsellor, Dip Counselling & Psychotherapy, BSc. Counselling & Psychotherapy, MSc dolescent Psychotherapy. Cert in play therapy skills.

My name is Lorraine Horrell. I work with adolescents and adults as a fully qualified and accredited psychotherapist. I have been working with Wexford Rape Crisis Centre since February 2023 providing counselling and psychotherapy to people who have been affected by Domestic, Sexual and Gender based Violence. I work with adults, parents and their adolescents to help them through this difficult time.

I initially did my core training with ICPPD and graduated with a Diploma in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy. I continued my studies at the Cork Counselling Centre where I graduated with a degree in humanistic counselling and psychotherapy. Straight after I graduated from Cork Counselling Centre in 2017, I went on to study with Bronagh Starrs for two years where I graduated with a masters in adolescent psychotherapy. I continue to do CPD in various different trainings including DBT, Trauma Informed Care, skills in play therapy etc... to help me to support my clients and their needs.

I have worked with various organizations over the years such as Pieta House, It's Good to Talk, FDYS. I gained invaluable experiences in each of these organizations through working with diverse clientele and their needs. I also worked with children in care and their families in a therapeutic setting, which was very interesting and rewarding. I continue to work in private practice with adults and mostly children in care.

I incorporate a lot of art and creative interventions when working with clients, especially with teenagers because sometimes, they just "don't have the words". Giving clients space and time to experiment with clay, sand, paints etc... Making sense of their experiences can be very healing for clients when they find a way to express those emotions.

Being part of WEXRC has so far been a privilege. It is such an innovative, collaborative and exciting team to be a part of. I feel honored to be part of such a professional, ethical and pioneering company.



Current Active Projects

 Helpline: Free Telephone Counselling & Support is available for survivors who can speak confidentially to a trained counsellor, set up an appointment, have their questions answered or get any information needed on counselling.



- Adult Counselling: Wexford Rape Crisis offers long and/or short-term counselling to female and male survivors of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. Support counselling is also available to a partner, family member or friend who often feels powerless when someone close to them has been raped or sexually abused.
- Adolescent Counselling: Adolescent counselling available to any young person from age 12
 who has or been impacted by experienced sexual, domestic or gender-based violence in their
 lives. The service offers a familial model involving parents and guardians in the counselling
 process.
- Parental/Carer Support: Parental/Carer support is offered in WEXRC's Adolescent Counselling service, to any parent/carer who needs support in helping their adolescent through the trauma they have suffered. The parent/carer's adolescent may or may/not be attending counselling with WEXRC.



- **Court Accompaniment:** Wexford Rape Crisis offers court accompaniment and help with victim impact statements for those who are going through the legal process.
- **Garda Accompaniment:** The Service provides Garda accompaniment to clients who wish to make a Statement reporting their abuse.
- Consent & Sexual Violence Education & Prevention Programme for Young People: This is an educational interactive programme offered to young people in schools aimed to reduce levels of sexual violence in Ireland by the engagement of young people 13-17 years.



- **Domestic Violence:** Wexford Rape Crisis is the designated one-to-one counselling service for clients of Wexford Women's Refuge.
- Cost of Service: Counselling sessions are 50 mins and usually take place once per week. Counselling sessions are charged at €20 per session. Clients will not be denied counselling due to financial challenges. A receipt will be issued for all fees.

Interagency: Wexford Rape Crisis is an active member of networks both nationally and in County Wexford (see chart below). Wexford Rape Crisis advocates on a National and local level for survivors of Sexual, Domestic and Gender-Based Violence via the Rape Crisis Centres Forum.



Adult Counselling 2023

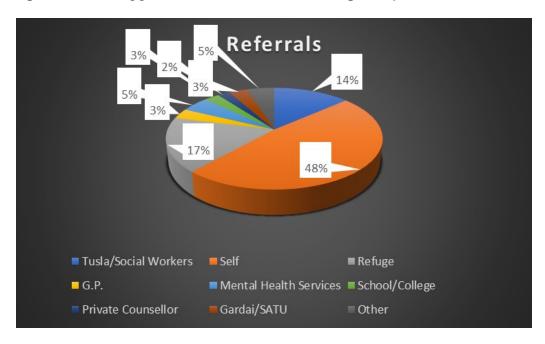
Wexford Rape Crisis provides one to one counselling for any adult who has been impacted in any way by Domestic, Sexual or Gender-based violence. To access the service, clients call the freephone number/email the service and the Clinical Team Leader arranges an initial meeting with them to begin the process of accessing counselling.

The growth in the demand for WEXRC's Adult Counselling Service was significant in 2023. The number of new referrals grew by 33% from the year before in 2022.



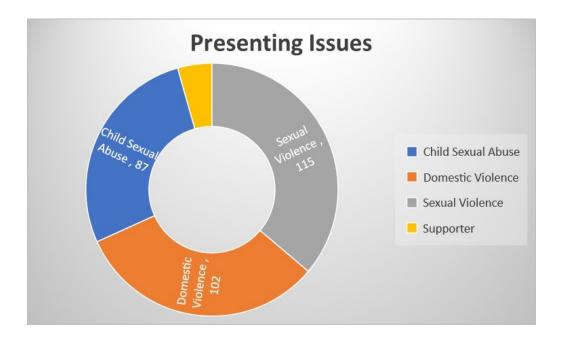
Of the adults who presented to the service, the majority (48%), self-referred. This means that clients themselves made the initial contact with the service. This may have been prompted by a discussion with their GP because of low mood, or a close friend or relative who encouraged them to seek help.

For some, this can be following years of deliberating as to whether the time is 'right' for them, in terms of 'facing' what has happened in their lives and being ready to deal with it.



WEXRC prides itself with ensuring that the response rate to initial contact calls is within 5 working days (at the latest), however, in reality it is a lot quicker than this. The service understands how important it is to 'be there' when a client has the courage and motivation to seek help.

Historical child sexual abuse, sexual violence and domestic violence were the 3 main areas of support sought by clients in 2023. The demand for support in each of these areas grew with an increased demand in each category.



In January of 2023 there were 25 adult clients on the waiting list for counselling. This increased to 52 clients in the month of May and finished at year end with 59 adult clients on the waiting list. This trend is worrying for the service in terms of having the capacity and resources to ensure clients (following their initial contact) do not have to wait for extended periods of time to access counselling. The service strives to be as responsive as possible with the resources it has, however this can be challenging.

In 2023, the service expanded the availability of counselling hours by providing extended hours in the evening to be more flexible in terms of client's availability.

In the fourth quarter of the year, funding became available to offer short-term counselling to adult clients. Counsellors were able to offer certain clients (who were suitable and open to the offer) 10 weeks of counselling with a focus on a specific piece of therapy. This worked well for clients and for the service a conversation began about the possibility of the provision of a shorter-term model of counselling. This is a current development being 'rolled out' in 2024.

Adult Case Study

Historical Childhood Sexual Abuse (Adult Male Client)

Sean is in his 50s. He started attending the Centre a year ago after he almost lost his life to alcohol abuse.

Sean was sexually abused by a male teacher in Primary School. The abuse began when he was 6 years of age and continued for his remaining years in school. The teacher would verbally abuse him, physically intimidate him and regularly rape him. Sean tried to disclose what was happening to him but always ended up being punished for it so he gave up and resigned himself to this nightmare reality he lived in as young child.

He started drinking from a young age and would have been seen as a reckless youngster that was always ending up in trouble.

In adult life, he got married and had children and did his best to be 'normal' but he always relied heavily on alcohol to mask the pain and this became detrimental to his health and to his marriage.

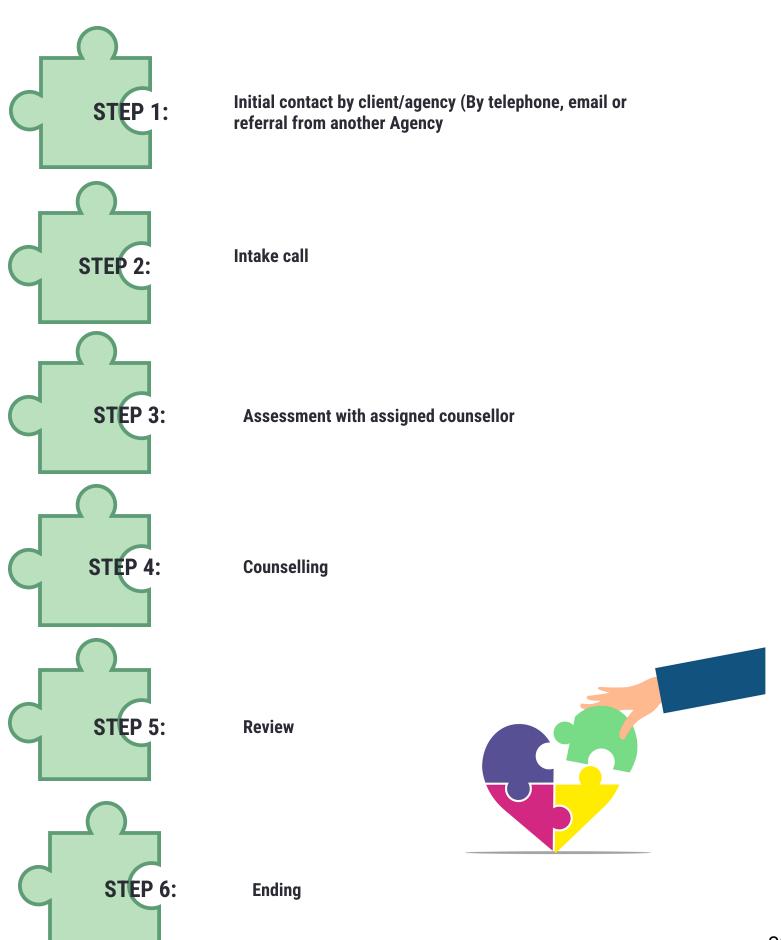
Counselling has given him a safe space to finally be able to share his story and not be punished for it. He's made a statement to the Gardai and there's a court case on the way. He's been sober for just over a year now and he's slowly mending his life.

Sean has had suicidal ideation most of his life but has finally come to the realisation that he does in fact want to live.

The counselling journey is far from over for someone like Sean who's suffered through severe trauma but he's on the path to healing now.



Referral Process for Counselling with WEXRC



Adolescent Counselling Service

Wexford Rape Crisis Adolescent Counselling Service:

Wexford Rape Crisis (WEXRC) Adolescent Service provides one to one counselling and parent support for any client aged 12 and over, and their parent/ caregiver(s), who have been impacted in any way by Domestic, Sexual or Gender-based violence.

WEXRC Adolescent Counselling Framework:

In 2017, WEXRC began the development of the current adolescent framework that has since been sanctioned as the best practice model by Tusla for the Rape Crisis sector. A clear distinction between the provision of adult and adolescent counselling ensued with the recruitment of a qualified and experienced adolescent counsellor. Policies and procedures were developed that encompassed the needs of the young person as an individual but also in the context of the wider family. From 2017 to 2020, the adolescent counselling service grew by increasing the number of days of counselling. However, the full potential of the service was limited due to the limitation of space in our 'old' premises.

In 2019, the research study carried out by Tusla in partnership with DCU was published (McElvaney, R., Monaghan, A., Treacy, C. & Delaney, N. (2019). 'It makes you feel a little less heavy': Review of therapeutic services for young people in Rape Crisis services in Ireland. Dublin City University.) At this time Tipperary Rape Crisis along with Kilkenny Rape crisis began collaborating with Wexford Rape Crisis to further develop the framework and began to document the model.

In January 2021, WEXRC moved to its new, state of the art premises at The Rocks, with a dedicated adolescent counselling room. The room is bright and youth-friendly and full of resources for young people to work with as part of their therapy.

From 2019 to 2023, the 3 Rape Crisis continued to meet and document the policies and procedures. Tusla DSGBV were key to this process particularly with the help and support of Anita Clancy Clarke (Sexual Violence Co-ordinator, Tusla). The service is also hugely appreciative of the expertise, skills and knowledge from Dr. Rosaleen McElvaney who met with the 3 centres and guided the work as it progressed.

In November 2023, Wexford, Kilkenny and Tipperary Rape Crisis along with the support of Tusla and Dr. Rosaleen McElvaney presented to the Rape Crisis Sector in Dublin on the adolescent frame work. This was a pivotal day for the sector with the sharing and collaboration of the work. The adolescent counselling framework document has now concluded and is available to the sector to help develop other centres adolescent counselling framework.

WEXRC now employs 5 Adolescent Counsellors with a new dedicated service available in Gorey (as well as Wexford town).

A significant part of the development of this framework was the commitment, dedication and work from the front-line counsellors in WEXRC to whom the service is eternally grateful.

Overview of the adolescent service:

To work with any client under the age of 18 requires specialist training and experience and to facilitate this, Wexford Rape Crisis has a team of five therapists specialised in the clinical treatment of adolescents. To access the service, clients can call the freephone number/email the service directly or be referred into the service by Tusla, school, Wexford Women's Refuge, the Guards or SATU (Sexual Assault Treatment Unit)



On receipt of a referral the Clinical Team Leader carries out an initial contact call with a parent or guardian. This is to get some basic information about the adolescent and what has happened. The adolescent will then be placed on the waiting list for therapeutic service.

Once a counselling space becomes available, the young person and their parent or guardian, are invited for an assessment with the therapist who will be working with the adolescent.

During the assessment the therapist outlines the plan and purpose of the assessment. The boundaries of confidentially are explained to everyone at this point. This is to allow all parties to have a choice in what they do or do not wish to disclose to us. The assessment usually lasts up to an hour and this time gives a chance to the Adolescent and their parent/ guardian to speak a little about their life, back ground and history of their family, to understand some of what has happened to bring the client to the service and to understand what it is that the adolescent would like to get for themselves in coming to our service. From this the Therapist and the Clinical Team Leader can build a plan of support for the adolescent and their parents/ guardians in order to allow them all move forward in healing from their trauma.

ADOLESCENT COUNSELLING SERVICE

GOREY STATS 2023

No. of adolescents referred to the service No. of adolescents offered a service No. of adolescents attended for 28 counselling 12-24 Age range of adolescents 299 No. of sessions attended 59 No. of sessions cancelled 21 No. of sessions DNA Total sessions offered 51 No. of parent support sessions







Adolescent Service

1,504 counselling hours were offered to adolescents in **County Wexford in**

2023!





Face to Face Sessions 1,379



Telephone Sessions 68



115 parent support hours offered in **County Wexford in** 2023!



112 clients attended the adolescent service in 2023



Adolescent Case Study

Daisy, 14 years old, started coming to therapy in Wexford Rape Crisis five months ago.

Daisy is living with her mum and two older brothers. The reason she came to our services was domestic abuse at home. Daisy and her family had been living with their grandparents, who were emotionally abusive to the whole family, financially abusive towards Daisy's mum and physically abusive towards Daisy's brothers. The family could not afford to leave until early this year.

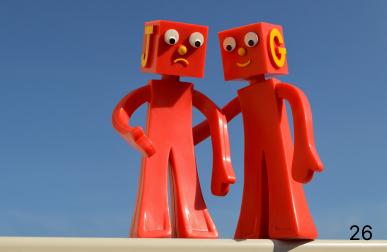
Daisy is a bright girl and joyful at the outside, however struggles with allowing emotions, especially sadness and anger. She feels making everyone happy is her duty. Daisy has the tendency to keep things that bother her to herself as she finds it difficult to express what is going on for her. 'We had no voice' is what she said early on in therapy and she is working on finding it again. Therapy has focused on Daisy exploring her emotions in a safe environment, especially anger.

Working with mum has allowed to address what will help Daisy to talk about what's going on for her more. Daisy's main request to mum in one of the reviews was to just listen and not try to fix things. Mum took this on board, which has led to Daisy being more comfortable talking about her worries at home. Reviews have helped mum to find ways to be more supportive for Daisy at home, with being more attentive, listening more and being more present.

Being 14, school and friendships are also very important areas for Daisy to discuss. She finds making friends difficult at times and feels she doesn't fit in. In therapy, she explored her identity and we looked at ways for her to meet new people and express herself. At the moment one possibility she is considering is joining a drama club. Daisy still has a bit of a journey ahead of her, but has grown in confidence over the last months and has been more able to just be herself in therapy.

This year will be Daisy's first Christmas in her own home.





Supervision

Jennifer Foran MSc, H.Dip (MIAHIP, SIAHIP, ECP)

Jennifer Foran commenced as WEXRC's Clinical Supervisor in September 2022. She provides both group and one to one supervision to the counselling team at WEXRC.

Jennifer is an IAHIP registered clinical supervisor and psychotherapist. She has experience working as a clinical supervisor across several settings, including Wexford Rape Crisis, Kilkenny Rape Crisis Centre, Let's Get Talking and the Defence Forces. In her private practice, Jennifer works with adults, adolescents and their parents and provides clinical supervision to counsellors and psychotherapists.

Whilst continuing her psychotherapy, counselling and supervision practice, she has also provided seminars and has prepared workshops for secondary school students, parents and teachers on adolescent mental health issues.

She is a tutor on the MSc Adolescent Psychotherapy programme and a Core Tutor on the MSc Counselling & Psychotherapy programme at Dublin Counselling & Therapy Centre, validated by the University of Northampton, UK.

Jennifer is passionate about supporting adolescent growth and development.



My Anxiety & Me Workshop

Wexford Rape Crisis, Anxiety Workshop 2023- 'My Anxiety & Me'

Wexford Rape Crisis provides one to one counselling for young people aged 12 years and upwards who have been impacted by Domestic, Sexual or Gender-based violence. Throughout 2022 and 2023, it became apparent that many young people presenting to counselling were experiencing varying degrees of anxiety.



As such, in late 2022 it was proposed to look at the possibility of a dedicated series of workshops for adolescent clients. Over the next few months, a 6-week workshop was created, looking at a different aspect of anxiety and anxiety management in a 60-90 min session each week. The course was kept as 'light' and informal as possible while still being educational.

The course was divided into 3 levels, as outlined below:

• Level 1 - 'Understanding Anxiety'

The first session gave a basic understanding of anxiety, including symptoms and causes and invites participants to become more familiar with how their own anxiety was presenting.

Level 2 - 'Anxiety Management'

Level 2 was divided in 4 themes – relaxation, activities, thoughts and school anxiety.

- The relaxation session included different breathing and relaxation techniques, like belly, bumblebee and lion breathing, visualisation, progressive muscle relaxation and more.
- The activity session was designed as a very interactive session that started with explaining the fight, flight, freeze response. It then provided ideas how to measure anxiety and then moved to brainstorming activities that helped with anxiety, for example, planting some seeds, blowing bubbles and engaging the senses.
- The next session looked at the role of thoughts in anxiety and provided information, techniques and tools on how to manage thoughts, like noting thoughts, challenging thoughts or replacing them.
- The last session of Level 2 provided information and tips around anxiety in school, including exam anxiety. It also addressed what bullying is and what to do when someone is being bullied.

• Level 3 - 'Severe Anxiety'

The last session gave a broad overview of anxiety disorder, panic attacks, panic disorder, OCD and Phobias. It was kept 'light' and had guidance at the end on what to do if someone felt they had a disorder. Support information was also available.

The course ran from May to June 2023 and was open to 6 clients. It proved challenging as active clients were reluctant to engage in an additional workshop. If the workshop is to be delivered again, this will need to be factored in. Opening it up to other participants may be beneficial.

The workshop was run by two facilitators, both counsellors in the centre. This was to ensure that one was always available should a participant get distressed at any point. An additional free room was also kept available for anyone that needed a little break. Ground rules, including confidentiality, were discussed at the start of the first session. Participants received a journal to aid them in their journey and useful materials, like print outs, treasure boxes and bubbles were provided along the way which were all received very well. The feedback received after the course was very positive.



Training

Training completed in 2023:

Clinical Training:

- Understanding Borderline Personality Disorder (THINK Psychology)
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills through a Polyvagal Lens (THINK Psychology):
 - 12 Sessions teaching skills from 5 modules: Mindfulness, Distress Tolerance, Emotion Regulation, Interpersonal Effectiveness and Polyvagal Theory (neuroscience). Managing one's life and one's emotions effectively.
- Adolescent Framework Development (Jennifer Foran, Clinical Supervisor).
- Development of Short-term Counselling Model Initial Consultation (THINK Psychology).
- Short-term Model Review of Initial Contact Process and Measurement tools.
- Short-term Model Training needs Analysis.

Health & Safety Training (Wright Training):

- Manual Handling
- First Aid
- Fire Warden
- Visual Display Unit Assessment

I.T. Training:

- SharePoint (Bridge PC Repairs)
- GDPR Training (John Cuddihy)

Environmental:

• Training with VOICE on recycling in the workplace (Voice of Irish Concerned for the Environment)







NEW COUNSELLING MODEL

In September 2023, WEXRC had the opportunity to offer a number of clients a fixed number of counselling sessions (12) between Sept/Oct and Dec 2023. Patricia,(68) was one of these clients and was eager and appreciative of the offer and willingly accepted. She began the 12 weeks of counselling in Sept 2023.

During the initial session, both therapist and client collaborated to fill in a measurement tool called Core. The client was asked what her goals were for the 12 weeks, one of her goals was to grow her support network and build relationships that nurture her.

Patricia had been experiencing domestic violence and coercive control in her relationship with her husband. Patricia's mother was also abusive and controlling. Over many years Patricia had internalised the belief that she wasn't lovable and that she was a bad person. Not only did her husband reestablish that belief for her, he also continued to chip away at her confidence and undermine her authority in front of her daughter, she quickly learned not to question him or challenge any of his behaviours.

Things came to a head recently when her husband was removed from the family home due to an assault against Patricia's daughter and her grandson. Patricia has since struggled with her relationship with her husband and her relationship with her daughter and often feels caught in the middle and unable to express her frustration. Holding boundaries was somewhat of an alien concept to Patricia but as her confidence grew, she began to slowly acknowledge the sadness and loss of never having boundaries.

Patricia is aware that often she will sacrifice her own needs to please others and has found it beneficial to have to a safe space to express those needs. Over the last twelve weeks, counselling has been a slow and gradual process of helping Patricia with confidence building, validating experiences, emotions. Dialectical behavioural therapy (DBT) has been very helpful in assisting Patricia to name and express her emotions, it has also helped her to develop distress tolerance skills. Patricia stated both 'Opposite action' and 'PLEASE' tools have been very helpful too.

Patricia feels she has made a lot of progress over the last twelve weeks and whilst she knows she can't control anybody else she is very glad she can now have autonomy over herself. The recovery from domestic violence and abuse takes time.

During the last session Patricia was asked to fill out the Core –measurement tool again and in doing this she noticed how much things have changed and how her mood has improved. She also noticed how she can begin to imagine a future now without her husband and she is more hopeful in general. Although Patricia is not quite ready to leave the relationship with her husband yet, she feels strong enough to imagine a life without him and in the very near future she can see herself living a very happy life without him.



Education

The Consent Ed Project continued its journey in 2023 with a specific and intensive focus for the first half of the year in completing key deliverables and attainments in line of its EU funding requirements.

The project then moved into a new phase of development and progression funded by the Department of Justice. This next phase of development comprised of designated key areas of work based upon a number of supporting strands. A clear, and specific focus, was on the expansion of the Junior Programme suite of resources with the inclusion of a first and third year component to complement the existing second year toolkit, all aligning with the NCCA SPHE outcomes with a further aim to grow the Senior toolkit in line with the NCCA SPHE outcomes once they become available in 2024.

This area of development possessed an associated set of tasks in supporting and enabling the foundations of this work to begin in 2023 and continue into 2024. The training and upskilling of teachers, educators and youth workers in delivering the Consent Ed toolkits was another main area of work in quarter four of 2024, again continuing into 2024.

The Consent Ed Project is looking forward to 2024 in continuing its dedicated work in sexual violence prevention and awareness.



Official Opening

It was a landmark day in Wexford Town on Friday the 19th of May, 2023 as we officially opened our bright new building in Maudlintown after 25 years in a premises that was no longer fit for purpose. The service grew from 1995 to a point where five counsellors and their Manager were trying to provide a service in a cramped space of just three rooms in Clifford Street.

Our new centre, at the entrance to St. Mary's GAA clubhouse, has been operating since January, 2021 and a belated celebration was held on the afternoon of Friday the 19th of May to thank everyone who helped to make it a reality, with Wexford County Council Cathaoirleach George Lawlor having the honour of cutting the ribbon.

The project was generously supported by Anthony Neville Homes, Done Deal founders Geraldine and Fred Karlsson and members of Wexford County Council who voted to provide the site which was owned by the Local Authority.

During the opening ceremony, a plaque was unveiled in honour of the late Johnny Moylan, an Engineering Consultant who was volunteer Project Manager for the building and who sadly has since passed away.

In her speech, our Manager Clare Williams said Wexford Rape Crisis is indebted to Johnny for all that he contributed to the development of the centre "When Johnny Moylan learned of the plans for the construction of a new centre for Wexford Rape Crisis, he wondered if he might be able to assist in some way. At that point he had retired from his work as an Engineering Consultant and had recovered his energies after cancer surgery. We were delighted when he agreed to act as Project Manager. Throughout the period of construction, he worked happily and effectively with the main contractor, Anthony Neville, the sub-contractors, and the Council architectural services team. The completion of the work and the opening of the building brought him great joy".

Our Chairperson Laura Lawlor said the day wasn't just a celebration of a new building but also a first-class service to those who need it "in challenging and often very dark times in their lives. Our counsellors take people along the journey to healing, and in time, clients leave the service with the resources to resume a happier life".

Wexford County Council CEO Tom Enright was instrumental in bringing together all the elements of the building which was designed by Local Authority Architect Shay Howell, assisted by Architectural Technician Sean Savage. The bright and welcoming interior was designed by Anne Doyle of Page

Ceramics https://pageceramics.ie/

The new centre now provides state-of-the-art adult and adolescent counselling rooms along with administrative support spaces. The centre is also indebted to numerous local artists who donated pieces of art. These are on display on the walls throughout the building and add to the therapeutic feel of the service.

Wexford Rape Crisis is hugely grateful to everyone who helped make the new building a reality.



Funders





















Accounts

Wexford Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Services DAC

Profit and Loss Account Financial year ended 31st December, 2023

	Note	2023 €	2022 €
Income		553,056	570,511
Gross Profit		553,056	570,511
Administrative expenses		(648,515)	(454,902)
(Loss)/Profit		(95,459)	115,609
Other interest receivable and sir Interest payable and similar exp		39 (183)	(740)
(Loss)/profit for the financial ye	ear	(95,603)	114,873

There is a loss of (€95,603) for 2023 (2022 profit €114,873). This loss is covered by restricted funds carried forward from 2022 of €100,368. Restricted funds are funds that came into the organsiation in 2022 to be spent specifically on counselling services in 2023. If the restricted funds at the end of 2022 were considered to be income in 2023 the company would have a profit of €4,765 versus an adjusted profit of €14,505 for 2022.

WEXRC is extremely grateful to all our funders and benefactors who enabled us to provide essential services in 2023. Whilst our overall costs show a profit in 2023, it is vital to highlight that the service core costs are not fully funded by the state/donors/benefactors.

Due to the demand for our services, we have significantly expanded our team, and not all our core roles are funded by the state. Each year WEXRC commences the year with a funding deficit, and has a continuing reliance on fundraising income to ensure core roles (not funded by the state) can continue to provide essential services to those impacted by domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.



An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach Child and Family Agency





Wexford Rape Crisis,
The Rocks,
Maudlintown,
Wexford.

Free Phone: 1800 33 00 33 Office Phone: 053 9122722

Email: support@wexfordrapecrisis.com Opening Hours: 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday



