



Services for Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence

Strategic Statement **2026 – 2030**



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Chairperson Introduction

It is an honour to present the Wexford Rape Crisis Strategic Statement 2026 to 2030. As Chairperson of the Board, I am proud of the organisation's continued dedication to supporting survivors of domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence across County Wexford. This strategic statement builds on over three decades of service and reflects our commitment to meeting the growing needs of our community with professionalism, compassion, and innovation.

Our Board remains steadfast in providing robust governance and oversight to ensure WEXRC delivers on its mission while maintaining the highest standards of accountability and transparency. We recognise the challenges ahead but are confident that through strong leadership, dedicated staff, committed volunteers, and invaluable

partnerships, WEXRC will continue to empower survivors and promote a society free from violence.

Together with the WEXRC team and wider community, we look forward to advancing the objectives set out in this strategy and making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.



Sean Mernagh

*Chairperson of the Board
Wexford Rape Crisis*



CEO Introduction

It is with both pride and commitment that I present our Wexford Rape Crisis Strategic Statement 2026 to 2030. For over 30 years, WEXRC has been a trusted source of support, counsel, and hope for individuals affected by domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence across County Wexford. As we look ahead, this strategy sets a clear and determined course for the future of our services and our organisation.

The past years have seen significant growth in demand for our counselling and therapeutic supports, reflecting both greater awareness and sadly, the persistent need for specialised care. This strategy draws deeply on our experiences, the voices of our clients, staff, partners, and the wider community to ensure that our response remains not only professional and trauma-informed but also innovative and inclusive.

Over the next five years, our focus will remain firmly on providing accessible, compassionate, and client-centred services. We will expand and adapt to meet the changing needs of survivors, build stronger partnerships, and

continue to raise awareness across all sectors to help create a society free from domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence. We recognise the challenges ahead-growing demand, the complexity of cases, and securing sustainable resources-but we face these with resilience and a steadfast dedication to the wellbeing and empowerment of those we serve.

On behalf of the entire WEXRC team, I look forward to working collaboratively with our stakeholders, funders, and communities to realise the vision set out in this strategy. Together, we can continue to make Wexford a safer, more supportive place for all survivors.

Thank you for your ongoing support and belief in our work.

Clare Williams

*Chief Executive Officer
Wexford Rape Crisis*



2 Introduction

This is Wexford Rape Crisis Strategic Statement (2026-2030). It is our third Strategic Statement¹ setting out the priorities for our ongoing work providing a counselling and support service for people² affected by domestic, sexual, or gender-based violence in Co. Wexford.

Wexford Rape Crisis (WEXRC) has been providing a professional, trauma-informed client centred counselling and support service in Wexford for over 30 years. The organisation was established in 1995, as Wexford Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Support Service to provide a counselling service, in County Wexford, for survivors of sexual violence and their families. In 2019, we rebranded as Wexford Rape Crisis (WEXRC) and formally expanded our remit to provide counselling support to anyone, age 12 years and upwards, affected by domestic, sexual or gender-based violence (DSGBV). Our head office is in Wexford town with outreach services in Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross to cover the wider County.

The purpose of this Strategic Statement is to set out our priorities for the next five years. We will prepare an annual implementation plan to advance our work, including objectives, specific actions and indicators under our four strategic priorities.

We will monitor our progress and commit to conducting a review at the end of 2028 to check that we are on track in achieving our stated objectives.

3 Vision

Our vision is a society free from domestic, sexual and gender-based violence³.

4 Mission

Our mission is to provide trauma informed, client centred counselling and therapeutic support for anyone (aged 12 years and upwards) who has been affected by domestic, sexual or gender-based violence.

5 Values

At WEXRC we provide a professional, client centred counselling and therapeutic support service. Our work is trauma informed and evidence based and is underpinned by the following values:

Empathy – Kindness – Care – Compassion
Inclusion - Respect – Acceptance
Empowerment - Positive Regard - Community

¹ Our first Strategic Plan 2017-2021 followed by Strategic Statement 2022-2024.

² (12 years and upward)

³ This vision aligns with the vision of Cuan - the national Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency

WEXRC invested time and thought in preparing this Strategic Statement. We conducted a purposeful review and reflection of the work completed under our previous strategy and consultation with relevant stakeholders. This was achieved through a confidential survey of the Board, management and staff of WEXRC followed by a series of independently facilitated workshops. The purpose was to review progress, reflect on the highlights of our work, capture the learning and to name the challenges that we anticipate for the future. The analysis enabled us to determine our strategic priorities and the future focus of our work.

The internal process was followed by consultations with relevant external stakeholders including representatives from Cuan, Tusla, An Garda Siochana, Wexford Women's Refuge. The consultations were conducted by an independent researcher, who held confidential conversations to hear people's views and experiences of WEXRC. The intention was to understand the perspective of partner organisations and to facilitate their confidential contribution to the preparation of this Strategic Statement. It was important for us to listen, know what matters and how we can shape and plan our work into the future to ensure maximum value and impact.



This section sets out the highlights of the work of WEXRC. These highlights arise from the analysis of feedback from all stakeholders and are presented under 4 themes:

1. **Performance**
2. **People**
3. **Partnerships**
4. **Policies, Processes & Procedures**

1. Performance

The feedback from stakeholders draws attention to the performance of WEXRC in continuing to provide a confidential, client-centred counselling service to people affected by DSGBV. The analysis points to the following highlights of our performance as an organisation:

- Positive feedback from clients benefitting from counselling and support
- Reduced client waiting list for counselling
- Restructuring and expansion of WEXRC in response to the significant growth in demand for the service including the provision of adolescent counselling in Gorey as a second base within County Wexford
- Supporting the Consent Education Project under the 'Prevention' pillar of the Zero Tolerance: the Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, reaching many schools, teachers and pupils in the quest for zero tolerance for DSGBV.
- Invited to be involved in the media campaign 'You are not alone' delivered by Cuan: The Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency
- Further development of the framework for adolescent counselling and presentation of the work to the wider Rape Crisis Community, Dublin 2023
- Redesign and upgrade of WEXRC website
- Good governance and sound financial management
- WEXRC - runner up Charity Impact Awards, Winner of Prestige Award and selected as the winner of ROI Prestige Awards 2025-2026 – Victim Support NPO of the year
- Successful fundraising events including Black Tie Ball, Midsummer lunch, Flag days, Fashion show, Rosslare Golf Club fundraiser, mosaic in Ferrybank for survivors.

2. People

The review and consultations to inform this Strategic Statement draw attention to our people and appreciation for the contribution of the Board, management, staff and volunteers. The analysis points to the following highlights of our people and the way we work as an organisation:

- Committed Board, a progressive chairperson and CEO who persistently strive for service improvement for clients
- Dedicated and professional counselling team
- Clinical Support Workers operating an expanded clinical support model to facilitate the flow of the work and provide support to clients

- Dedicated Finance Officer and the installation of SAGE accounting package to streamline accounts and budgets
- Full time dedicated administrator to support the work of the whole team
- Team of front-line volunteers who are a vital component of our organisational structure.

3. Partnerships

The consultations, to inform this Strategic Statement, confirm the value and growing importance of our partnerships and collaborative way of working. The analysis highlights the power of partnership with the following organisations working collaboratively to respond to client needs in a way that is coherent and community based.

- An Garda Siochana (AGS)
- Child and Family Agency: Tusla
- Cuan: The Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency
- Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)
- Wexford Women's Refuge
- Forum of Rape Crisis Centres

4. Policies, Processes and Procedures

The review and consultations draws attention to WEXRC policies, procedures and processes that ground our work in robust structures and systems. The highlights include:

- Development and work on all policies including, updated employment contracts, Employee Handbook and Risk Register
- Governance and Audit Committee, maintaining standards and ensuring compliance
- Implementation of an updated referral process
- Implementation of the Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (CORE)⁴ system to enable WEXRC to track and record clinical outcomes for clients
- Development of the Clinical Team Leader role
- Continuous professional development (CPD) for all staff including Compassion-focused therapy and polyvagal theory, Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprocessing (EMDR), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), Psychosexual training, court accompaniment, first aid, manual handling, visual display assessments, fire safety, data protection, court accompaniment work-shop with Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
- Introduction of the Garda Clinic on site at WEXRC
- Service Level Agreement with Victim Support for court accompaniment
- Welfare of all staff including 4 self-care days per annum, clinical supervision, and increased annual leave.

⁴ CORE is a web-based Client Management System incorporating Outcome Measurement. It is designed to efficiently map the client journey from referral to case closure, recording and managing clinical outcomes of counseling and psychotherapy.

This section describes the context for our work including policy, societal, cultural, and technological. We take account of this context in our strategic planning and its relevance to the lives of our clients and the work of WEXRC.

In terms of **policy**, we acknowledge:

- **Greater focus on women's health and wellbeing** in recent years, e.g., The Government's 'Ireland's Women's Health Action Plan', and 'Her Heart Matters'
- **The establishment of Cuan: The Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency** under the Department of Justice and charged with implementing Zero Tolerance (2022-2026) – the Third National Strategy designed to eradicate domestic, sexual and gender-based violence
- **Greater political awareness** of and commitment to addressing domestic, sexual and gender-based violence
- **Policy and legal change** around coercive control and domestic abuse law
- **Funding volatility** and need for stronger data, monitoring and measuring progress
- **Judicial system** - challenges with the process of reporting and the judicial system to ensure it becomes survivor/victim centred.

In terms of **society and culturally** we acknowledge:

- **Greater awareness** of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and willingness to call out unacceptable behaviour has been promoted by the work of Cuan and social media campaigns
- **Greater efforts** are being made, driven by policy, to educate health care professionals of the need to ask about DSGBV, potentially leading to a cohort seeking support who otherwise would have felt unable to do so
- **Greater awareness** of the supports available to people who have been affected by DSGBV, through advertising campaigns, news reports, documentaries on the topic and social media
- **Increasing demand for WEXRC services** arising from increased incidents of coercion by partner(s) and rising numbers of assaults as evidenced in an increase in referrals from South County Wicklow, Gorey and New Ross.

In terms of **technology**, we acknowledge:

- **Increased use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)** to create abusive posts on social media, often of a sexual nature, causing immense upset and harm
- **Increased** in tech-facilitated abuse, e.g., image-based abuse, online grooming and sexual image circulation amongst children and adolescents
- **Increase in heightened sexual imagery** on social media platforms, pornography sites.
- **Increased use of IT devices** - more children and young people have access to mobile phones and electronic devices

The analysis, to inform this Strategic Statement, indicates that there will be an increase in demand for WEXRC services over the next five years and this presents particular challenges in terms of space and staffing. The following are the main challenges that we are preparing for in our ongoing work.

Space

Service

Security

Space Challenges

- Responding to the need for additional space to provide counselling services to adults and adolescents, e.g., in Gorey and New Ross
- Finding and funding suitable additional premises in response to growing need
- Ensuring outreach bases are well connected with our head office in Wexford Town

Service Challenges

- Continuing our prompt response to clients/service users through effective waiting list management for counselling services
- Responding to increase in demand for counselling services and particularly adolescent services, across the county
- Expanding the provision of counselling services, e.g., in Enniscorthy and New Ross
- Creating flexibility of counselling provision, e.g., evening appointments and weekends
- Responding effectively to the evolving complexity of client needs and supporting our staff, in this regard, through ongoing CPD
- Continuing to ensure full compliance with administration and reporting required by our funders, Cuan, Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) and auditors
- Ensuring financial stability and sustainability through continued funding and fundraising.

Security Challenges

- Ensuring protection of data and information and guarding against cyber-crime and data breaches.



Informed by the review and consultations WEXRC is setting four strategic priorities for our work for the next four years as we plan and prepare to respond to the ongoing and increasing demand for our services.

Strategic Priority 1: Service Delivery and Support

Strategic Priority 2: Awareness Raising and Communication

Strategic Priority 3: Partnership and Collaboration

Strategic Priority 4: Organisation and Governance

These high-level priorities take account of the context and the challenges. They will strategically guide our work as we continue to innovate and strengthen the provision of professional counselling and support to people who have been affected by domestic, sexual or gender-based violence.

We will prepare an annual implementation plan for our work under each priority. This will be in line with available funding/resources and with accompanying performance indicators to track our progress.

We will know that we are making progress in our work, under these strategic priorities, through a system of ongoing audit, monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Priority 1: Service Delivery and Support

Our first priority is to continue to offer the professional client centred counselling service that we have been providing for over 30 years. We will continue to innovate and respond to client needs. Our main objectives under this priority will include:

- **Provide** client centred, trauma informed professional counselling for our clients underpinned by our core values
- **Maintain** reasonable waiting times by ensuring capacity (staff, sessional counsellors, trained volunteers)
- **Determine** optimal ways to expand our services, countywide, in response to growing demand, e.g. through additional premises, creative use of space and flexible opening times
- **Strengthen** our provision for specific cohorts including migrant, refugee, Traveller, LGBTQ+ and disabled survivors.

Strategic Priority 2: Awareness Raising and Communication

Our second priority is to continue to communicate and raise awareness of WEXRC and the counselling services and support that we provide to people affected by domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. Our main objectives under this priority will include:

- **Strengthen** public awareness of WEXRC and ensure that survivors are informed on legal rights and new legislation (coercive control, domestic violence, tech-abuse offences)
- **Ensure** WEXRC services are accessible to all who need them, paying particular attention to new communities, minority groups, members of the travelling community, and disabled people.
- **Position** Wexford Rape Crisis as a local voice of experience and expertise matters relating to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence
- **Communicate** with our funders and partner organisations to ensure we are working together in optimal ways to meet client needs.

Strategic Priority 3: Partnership and Collaboration

Our third priority is to build on the working relationships and partnerships that we have co-created with organisations in Wexford. The intention is to maximise opportunities to work well together to support people affected by domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. Our main objectives under this priority will include:

- **Align** our work with relevant policy, including Zero Tolerance, to maximise opportunities for collaboration
- **Network and nurture** our working relationships and relevant protocols with organisations, such as Wexford Women's Refuge, the Gardaí, Tusla and health services to ensure timely referrals, coordinated and community-based care for clients
- **Build** working relationships and partnership arrangements with relevant organisations to advance our work in service to clients
- **Contribute** evidence and survivor-informed perspectives to inform national DSGBV strategies and policy development

Strategic Priority 4: Organisation and Governance

Our fourth priority is to continue to attend to good governance and organisational development. This is to ensure that WEXRC remains efficient and effective in-service provision and a good place to work. Our main objectives under this priority will include:

- **Continue** to provide Continuous Professional Development (CPD), training and resources for staff development, welfare and wellbeing
- **Continue** to cultivate a good working environment through excellent and user-friendly systems, structures, policies, working conditions, staff welfare and remuneration
- **Monitor** the progress of our work, reviewing, evaluating and making necessary adjustments to ensure continued quality of WEXRC service
- **Maintain** financial stability, through adequate funding and resources, to meet our objectives, develop our services, respond to evolving needs and ensure organisational sustainability
- **Ensure** good governance through a strong and diverse Board with relevant experience and skillsets and representative of the community.

Wexford Rape Crisis collaborates with the following agencies:

- An Garda Siochana (AGS)
- Child and Family Agency: Tusla
- Cuan: The Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency
- Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)
- Wexford Women's Refuge
- Forum of Rape Crisis Centres
- CYPSC (Children and Young People's Services Committee)
- TIG (Traveler Interagency Group)
- Domestic Abuse Task Group
- SETU (South- East Technological University)
- VSAC (Victims Support at Court)
- LCSP (Local Community Safety Partnership)
- PCSA (Policing and Community Safety Authority)
- FRC (Family Resource Centres)
- MABS (Money and Budgeting Service)
- CII (Members of Charities Institute of Ireland)
- CRA (the Charities Regulatory Authority)
- The Women's Collective
- SI (the Soroptimists International)
- HSE Adult Mental Health Services
- The Wheel

Acknowledgements and Gratitude

Wexford Rape Crisis (WEXRC) extends sincere thanks to all who contributed to the development of this Strategic Statement 2026-2030. We deeply appreciate the commitment and expertise of our Board members, staff, volunteers, and clinical team, whose dedication underpins all aspects of our work.

We are grateful to our partner organisations including Cuan, Tusla, An Garda Síochána, Wexford Women's Refuge, the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU), and the wider Rape Crisis network. Their collaboration and support enhance the quality and reach of our services.

Wexford Rape Crisis (WEXRC) wishes to express its deepest gratitude to our core funders, primarily **Cuan**, the domestic, sexual and gender-based violence agency of the Department of Justice and **Tusla**, The Child and Family Agency, for their continued support in enabling our vital counselling and support services.



We are also profoundly thankful to private benefactors for their support which enables us to pilot and develop new essential initiatives. These initiatives have been approved by our core funders and acknowledged as best practice within our sector.

WEXRC would also like to acknowledge the commitment of our local community, fundraisers and donors whose time and generosity directly reduced our waiting lists and provided crucial additional counselling hours.

WEXRC would also like to acknowledge Wexford Rape Crisis fundraising committee who organised an annual midsummer lunch in 2025 and 2026 raising significant funds to provide additional counselling hours to survivors.

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