

# 2025-29

## Strategic Plan



Women's Aid





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**Sarah Benson**  
CEO  
March 2025

## Preface by Women's Aid CEO

Women's Aid is a national, feminist organisation working to prevent and address the impact of domestic violence and abuse. We do this by advocating, influencing, training, and campaigning for effective responses to reduce the scale and impacts of domestic abuse on women and children in Ireland, and by providing high quality, specialised, integrated, support services.

Women's Aid is an organisation which has been listening, believing, supporting, and empowering women subjected to domestic abuse for over 50 years. We have supported generations of women and their children since our foundation in 1974. We are privileged to have empowered women to share their experiences, to witness their incredible resilience and power as ingenious survivors. For over half a century we have proven our own resilience and worked hard to help bring domestic violence and abuse to the top of the agenda of Irish society. We have continually pushed and stood for women's rights and equality

and challenged the historic culture of shame and stigma associated with domestic abuse and hold perpetrators accountable. We have supported victims-survivors to speak out, to be believed and empowered and to have the voice they deserve. We proudly continue to be a leading voice in this area and vow to see our vision of an equal Ireland with zero tolerance of domestic abuse and all other forms of violence against women become a reality.

Our new Strategic Plan 2025-29 has been developed in a challenging global and national environment. Yet there are also many encouraging opportunities. In this document, Women's Aid sets out our vision, purpose, strategic priorities and values that will inform and guide our strategic direction for the next five years. This strategy builds on our previous one (2022-2024) and explicitly draws from and builds upon the groundbreaking model of work Women's Aid produced over 20 years ago in 'Vision Action Change'<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Vision, Action, Change: Feminist Principles and Practice for Working on Violence against Women, Women's Aid, 2002, available at [https://www.womensaid.ie/app/uploads/2023/07/vision\\_action\\_change.pdf](https://www.womensaid.ie/app/uploads/2023/07/vision_action_change.pdf)



Violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive forms of human rights violations in the world. It is present in every country, cutting across national, cultural, economic, social and political boundaries. It takes many forms, and its causes are not individualised, but are in a complex interweaving of political, cultural and social factors that both stem from and lead to unequal power relations between men and women.

Within the private sphere of the home and intimate relationships, men's violence is focused on control and domination, denying women sexual autonomy, reproductive choice and economic independence. Within the public sphere, the sexual violation of women through pornography, prostitution, sexual harassment, rape and sexual assault denies women the freedom to exercise their full human rights. Male violence prevents all women from fully participating in and benefiting social, economic, cultural and political life.

Being a feminist organisation means that Women's Aid recognises the links between all forms of oppression, abuse of and violence against women

and the interconnection between forms of discrimination which women experience due to poverty, disability, immigration status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and educational disadvantage. We acknowledge that while all women share similar experiences of discrimination, harassment, sexism, inequality and oppression based on their sex and gender, not all women are equally or similarly disadvantaged nor have equal access to resources, power and privilege. Our feminism incorporates analysis and action that considers how other forms of systemic oppression and discrimination can intersect with and impact on women's experiences of sex, gender, sexuality, and their experiences of inequality, discrimination, harassment, violence and abuse.

In Ireland, one in three women will be subjected to psychological, physical and/or sexual abuse by a partner or ex-partner. Domestic abuse is not just something that happens behind closed doors. It infiltrates every level of society – our communities, our schools and colleges, our workplaces. No one should ever feel afraid of, or less than, the person

they are with. Every day women are being hurt and abused by the person who is supposed to love them. The person closest to them. Being subjected to coercive control can feel like a plant that has been denied all food, water and light, which is trapped in cracking soil unable to flourish or grow. The impact of intimate partner abuse cannot, and should not, be minimised or excused. It can have a devastating effect on women's emotional and physical well-being and in the most extreme cases, it can be fatal.

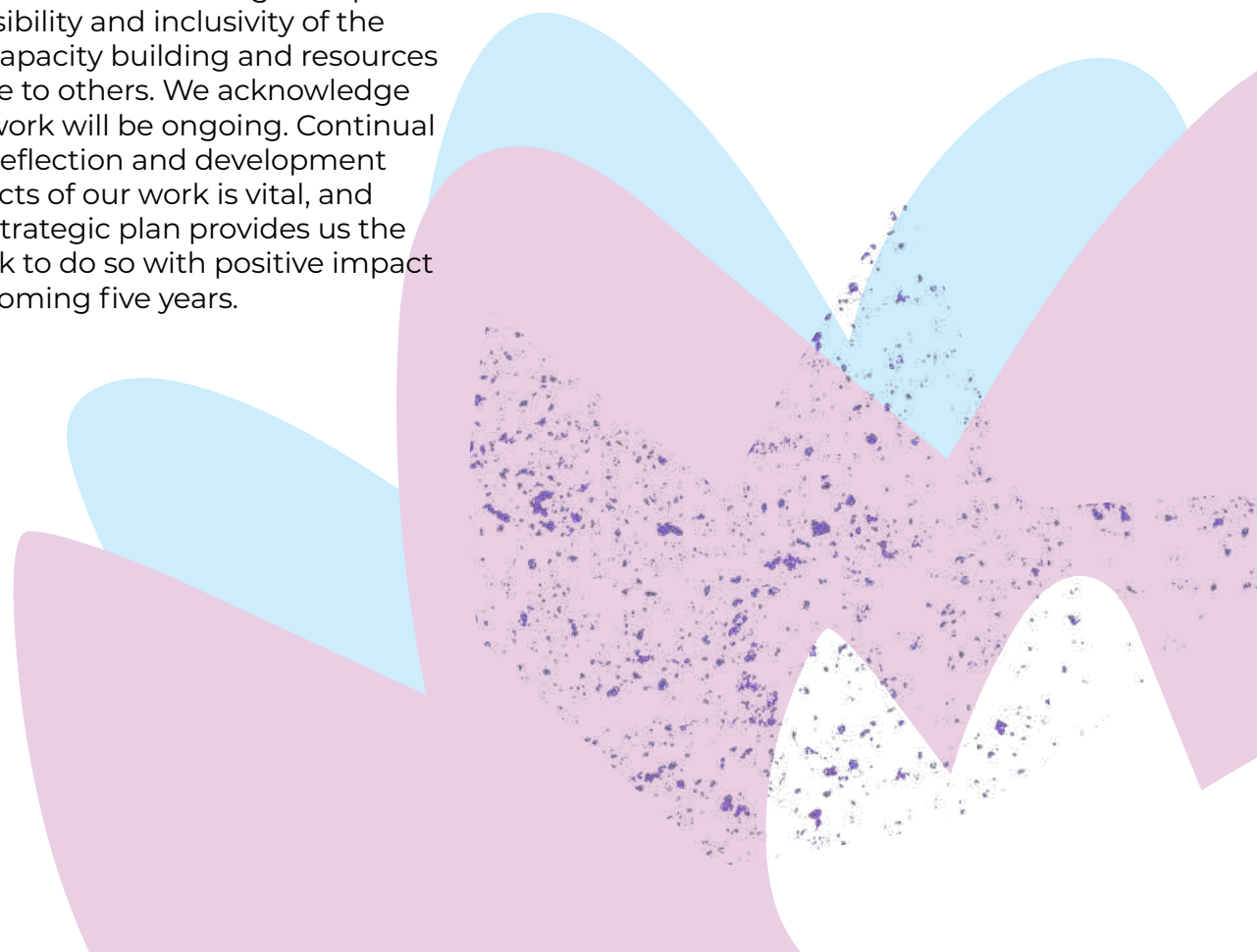
However, women manage to navigate coercion, control, trauma, grief, and pain to nonetheless achieve extraordinary things. That is worth reflecting on. Imagine what women could achieve in all walks of life if there was no male violence. If there was true equality in pay, political representation, in distribution of care responsibilities.

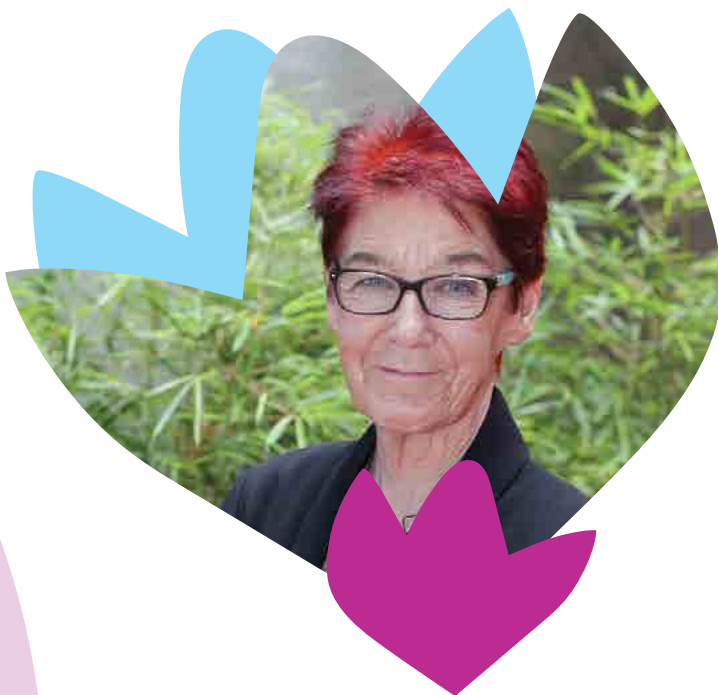
Women's Aid has always been committed to the development of good practice in our work with women subjected to domestic abuse. We believe that documenting and recording women's experiences and gathering evidence

and data from many sources is critical to our knowledge and understanding of the issue. We will continue to learn from survivors by always listening to their needs and developing responses that reflect the diversity of their experiences. We value opportunities to work collaboratively and cooperatively with peer organisations, survivors and others to identify and transform systems of power and privilege that oppress and marginalise.

To be effective, our work to address violence against women must challenge all forms of discrimination that women experience. While our work remains focused on preventing and responding to violence experienced by women and their children, we support the work of others whose primary focus is addressing other forms of oppression, and we work collaboratively to address all violence against women. This includes working with men as allies to promote healthy and respectful relationships, to foster a positive masculinity for boys, and to challenge and prevent gender-based violence.

We will strive to embed inclusivity, diversity and accessibility across all our work. This means ensuring that Women's Aid is a diverse and inclusive workplace as well as working to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of the training, capacity building and resources we provide to others. We acknowledge that this work will be ongoing. Continual learning, reflection and development in all aspects of our work is vital, and this new strategic plan provides us the framework to do so with positive impact over the coming five years.





**Ailbhe Smyth**  
Chairperson  
March 2025

## Chairperson Introduction

In this document, the Women's Aid Board of Trustees sets out its Strategic Plan for the five-year period 2025-29. I am delighted to present this plan to you. This Plan provides a robust framework for Women's Aid to continue working towards its vision. The contents of the plan reflect the concerns and interests of key stakeholders. The process employed a wide and extensive consultation, with the employees and volunteers who support our activity every day, peer organisations in our sector, our funders, statutory authorities, donors and - most importantly of all - the women who have used our services.

Taking this input and reflecting also on all aspects of our operating environment, we engaged in a deep reflection with many intense discussions, to arrive at this clear and strong articulation of our commitment to continue to develop and grow to maximise our positive impact. The plan also builds on the heritage, reputation and core principles of Women's Aid. It sets out our vision and purpose and describes the values that guide Women's Aid as we deliver on our strategy.

A detailed plan has been developed for operational use, and this full Strategic Plan is published on our website. The plan is underpinned by our feminist founding principles and frames our strategy around one central strategic priority which is: **Creating Social Equality with two core supporting priorities: Building and Nurturing Effective Partnerships, and Continually Strengthening Capability & Expertise.** Organised across each of these three strategic priorities, are a set of integrated goals. Focusing our collective efforts on delivering these goals will, in the view of the Board, provide the best opportunity to progress towards the long-term vision of Women's Aid, over the next five years.

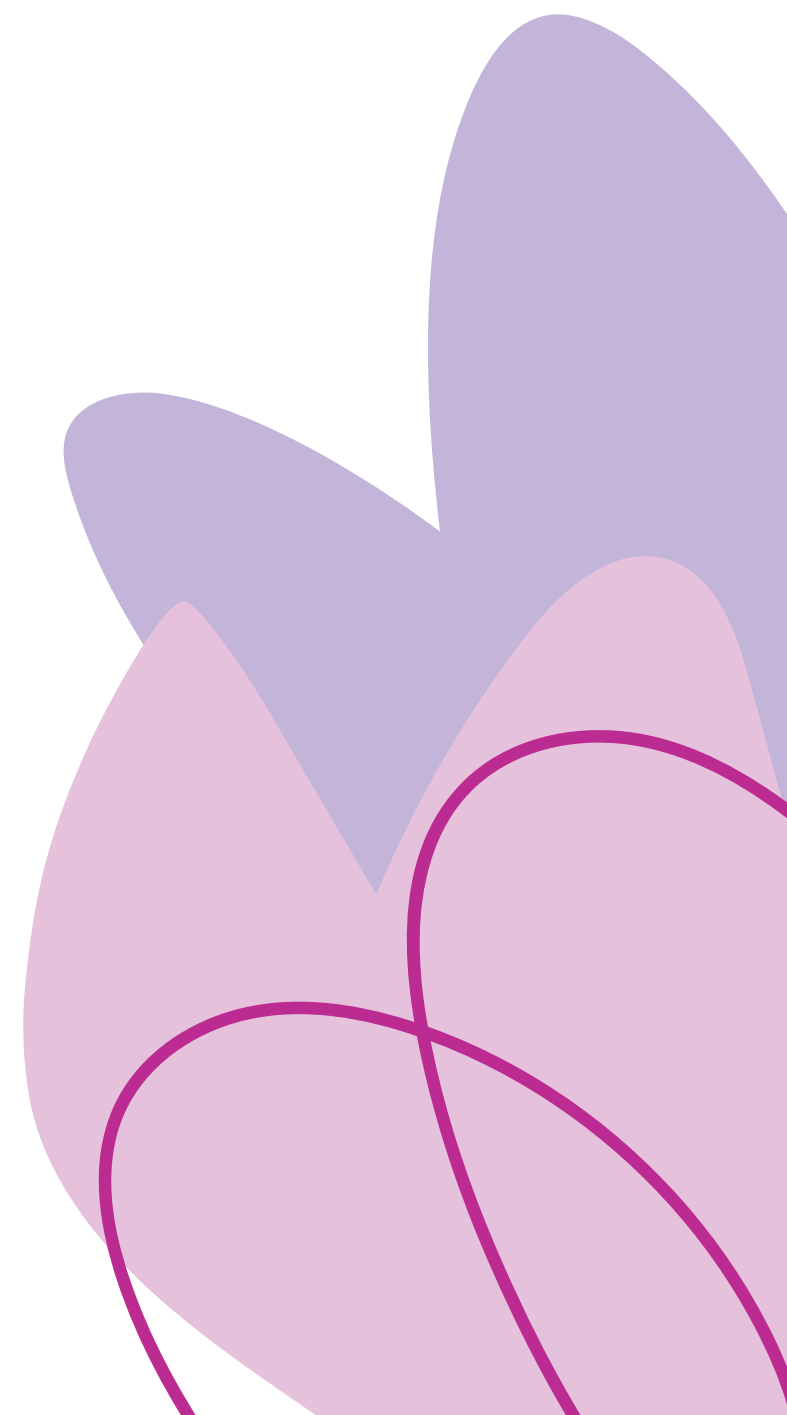
Our first priority, **Creating Social Equality**, is at the heart of what we do. It is enabled by the activities identified under the other two priorities. Capturing the outcomes and impact of work is important and one of our key goals. A key measure has been defined for each objective in the plan. Continually monitoring our success in achieving these measures will help us sustain the momentum required to deliver our ambitious plan. During the strategic

planning process, we have also taken the opportunity to further define the organisational values of Women's Aid, as an evolution of our founding principles. These are the ideals and behaviours that reflect our culture, both internally and externally, and which guide and sustain the organisation in every aspect of its work.

We know we cannot achieve success alone and must be a part of a cooperative community alongside our colleagues in civil society and community organisations, and with statutory partners and survivors. During this strategic period, we will work steadily with our partners, survivors, funders and peers across the sector, collaborating where our interests are aligned and working to bring about the fundamental positive social change that is expressed in our vision.

Over the length of this strategic period Women's Aid will work to set the agenda for social equality and positive change. Reflecting our values, the Board also recognises the importance of supporting our employees and volunteers to flourish personally and professionally, in return for their commitment to the organisation. The Strategic Plan sets clear objectives for the ongoing development of organisational systems and structures.

The satisfaction and engagement at work of our team is one of the most important qualities that we have as an organisation. We are always mindful of the effort of employees and volunteers and wish to take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to them for their passion and drive as we embark on the delivery of this important plan together. My final words are for the women and children in Ireland, whose experience of abuse in the past, present and future are the reason Women's Aid exists. We commit ourselves to listening to, believing, and supporting your empowerment, and to playing our part to create a more equal world that is a safer and better place for you, and us all.





## Our Vision

Women's Aid vision is an equal Ireland, with zero tolerance of domestic abuse and all other forms of violence against women.

## Our Purpose

Women's Aid is a national feminist organisation working to prevent and address the impact of domestic violence and abuse including coercive control since 1974.

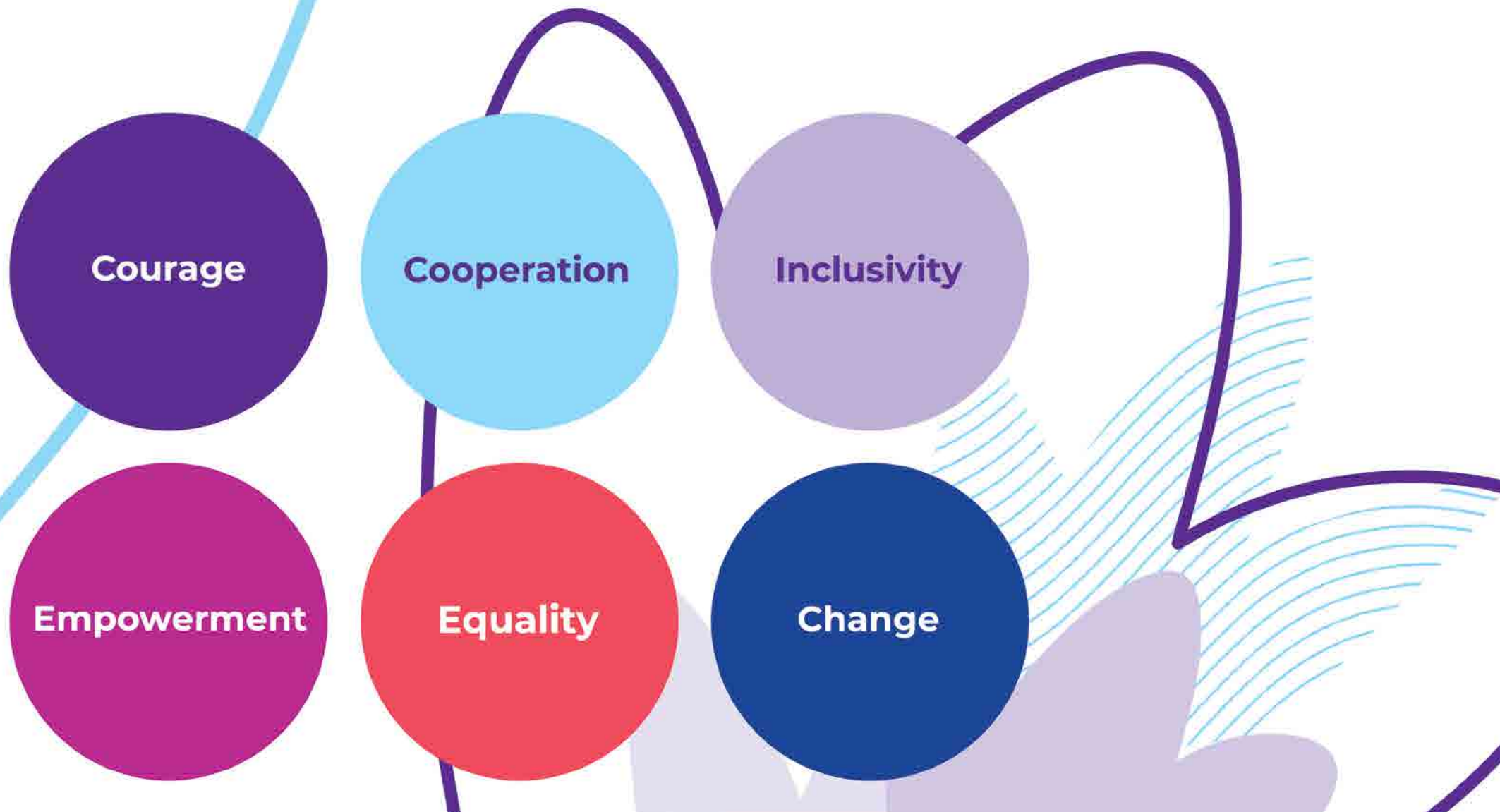
## We do this by

Advocating, influencing, training and campaigning for effective responses to prevent and reduce the scale and impacts of domestic violence and abuse on women and children in Ireland

*and*

Providing high quality, specialised, integrated support services.

## Women's Aid Values

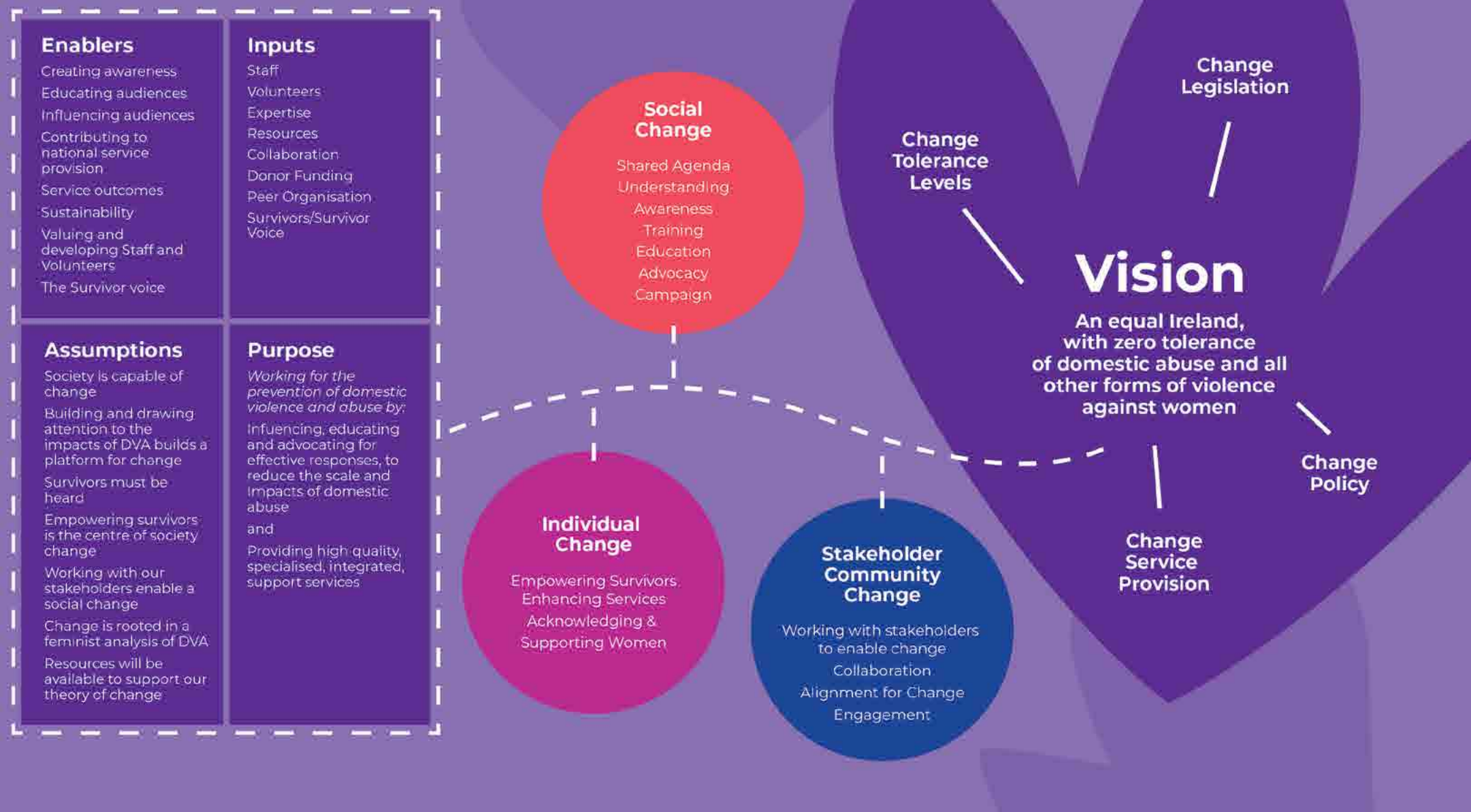


To achieve our purpose and vision of zero tolerance of domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women Women's Aid:

- Acts with **courage** to boldly challenge patriarchal systems, structures, and attitudes in all aspect of our work.
- Works in **co-operation** to share knowledge, skills, and expertise to achieve shared goals and improve responses to domestic violence and abuse.
- Strives to embed **inclusivity**, diversity, and accessibility across all our work.
- Supports the **empowerment** of women to exercise agency on their own behalf as a right, whatever their circumstances.
- Believes that achieving **equality** in status, rights and opportunities for all women is essential to address the causes and consequences of domestic violence and abuse.
- Works to achieve positive **change** for everyone through a combination of individual, community-based and social action.



# Women's Aid Theory of Change





# Women's Aid Work

Women's Aid is a national, feminist organisation working to prevent and address the impact of domestic violence and abuse since 1974. We have five clear areas of focus, based in our Theory of Change, which creates the structure for us to end violence against women in Ireland.

## 1. Promoting healthy relationships

Violence against women is not inevitable. All forms of violence against women are preventable. By preventing abuse and focusing on supporting people to understand and live healthy relationships for everybody, we can build a different world.

## 2. Strategic research

Everything we do is underpinned by fundamental, evidence-based research. Through strategic research and quality data collection we quantify and measure our impact. Research impact is real change in the real world.

## 3. Frontline services

Women's Aid was set up in 1974 to provide a response for women and children who faced devastating abuse with no support and no laws to protect them. We continue to develop and evolve our life-preserving frontline services to meet the growing needs of women and children across Ireland, including: the National Domestic Violence Helpline, High Risk Support Project, and a range of specialist Dublin based outreach and court support services

## 4. Specialist training and policy support

Knowing how to respond appropriately can make a significant difference to reducing the isolation and risks to women and children living with the dangers of domestic abuse. Through specialist training we aim to inform people who may contribute to enhancing the safety of women. We offer training nationally to stakeholders from key sectors including Health, Legal and Law Enforcement, Employment, Children and Young People and Community and Voluntary.

## 5. Whole community activation

Creating long-lasting change for women and children who face violence means to create fundamental change across society and how we, the people of Ireland, think about domestic violence and abuse. We contribute to this through a combination of public awareness activities, campaigns and advocacy work to influence and improve national policy and legislation.



# Context

Over the period of Women's Aid's previous strategy (2022-2024), extensive progress in responding to domestic, sexual and gender-based-violence (DSCBV) has been made in Ireland. This progress includes:

1. Important legislative changes, such as the creation of new offences to criminalise image based sexual abuse,<sup>2</sup> non-fatal strangulation or suffocation and stalking<sup>3</sup> and paid Domestic Violence leave<sup>4</sup> have been enacted.
2. The ambitious Third National Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Strategy is being implemented, including the setting up of CUAN, the statutory Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency. Work has begun to reform the family

law system and revise SPHE and RSE school curricula to include reference to gender equality, consent and healthy relationships.

3. There have been welcome increased resources for vital specialist domestic violence services, though these are coming from a baseline of historic neglect and are still not sufficient.

However, domestic violence and abuse of women and children continues to exist:

- **275 women have died violently between 1996 and present day**, 87% of women (where the case has been resolved) were killed by a man known to them, and 20 children died during incidents where women have died violently.<sup>5</sup>

- **35% of women in Ireland, more than one in three**, have experienced **psychological, physical and/or sexual abuse** from an intimate partner.<sup>6</sup>
- **One in four (25%) women** in Ireland experienced **sexual violence** as an adult with a partner.<sup>7</sup>
- Over the three years of our previous strategy (2022-2024) Women's Aid frontline services responded to **91,677 contacts** and heard **105,581 disclosures of abuse of women and children subjected to domestic violence**. This figure represents only the tip of the iceberg of what is happening to women and children in Ireland at the hands of an abuser.<sup>8</sup>
- **An Garda Síochána** responded to over **178,500 domestic abuse incidents between 2022-2024**, which translates to an average of 1,144 incidents every week.<sup>9</sup>

2 S2 and S3, Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020.

3 S21, S22 and S23 Criminal Justice Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023.

4 S7, Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023.

5 Women's Aid Femicide Watch April 2025.

6 EU Gender-based Violence Survey, Fundamental Rights Agency, 2024.

7 CSO Sexual Violence Survey, 2023

8 Women's Aid Annual Impact Reports, 2022-2024.

9 See 65,000 reported domestic violence incidents in 2024, Irish Examiner, 27th January 2025, <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-41561812.html> (accessed 27.04.25).

**Challenges continue to exist in responding to domestic violence and abuse:**

1. Specialist services **are still overstretched and underfunded**, and therefore unable to meet ever increasing demand, especially for more marginalised and minoritised women.
2. The **housing crisis and dearth of appropriate specialist accommodation provision** for survivors of abuse limits options for a safe home in the medium and long term.
3. The **Family Law and Criminal law systems do not work efficiently for survivors of domestic violence and abuse** creating lengthy, protracted, and traumatising delays for women and unsafe outcomes.
4. **Young women** report very high level of intimate partner and other forms of gender-based violence, which sadly does not seem to be decreasing.
5. There is a continuing **increase in online/technology facilitated gender-based violence**. This includes the **harm of online pornography** on efforts for gender equality, on the development of healthy sexuality and relationships, and on levels of coercion and violence. In the face of increasing understanding and evidence of the negative impact on young people's behaviour and experiences, there continues to be little meaningful accountability for online hosting/facilitating platforms and perpetrators.



# Our Strategic Priorities 2025-29

## Strategic Priorities

After extensive consultation, our strategic priorities remain based on a strong dedication to the women we serve and an unwavering focus on bringing about the social changes in Ireland that will deliver our vision. During the period 2025-29, we have framed our plan around 3 strategic priorities:





## Strategic Priority 1

### Creating Social Equality

Delivering a coordinated, inclusive and coherent programme of work comprising:

- direct services, training, advocacy, and educating through awareness-raising work that is focused on prevention, support and driving positive social change.

1. Developing and delivering Women's Aid specialist frontline services.
2. Applying an intersectional lens to all aspects of our work.
3. Educating through raising public awareness of all forms, causes and consequences of domestic violence and abuse.
4. Building on Women's Aid advocacy, research, expertise and reputation to inform key decision-makers and to contribute to the national dialogue on action to prevent and combat domestic violence and abuse.
5. Developing and enhancing the range of training solutions aimed at strengthening responses of frontline professionals and other key stakeholders to domestic violence and abuse.

## Strategic Priority 2

### Building and Nurturing Effective Partnerships

To continue developing and strengthening cross sector partnerships and strategic relationships; enabling Women's Aid to cooperate and effectively contribute to political, social and other forums responding to violence against women in

1. Working with authorities, agencies and community and voluntary organisations, as a trusted partner, to inform the national and international agenda on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence and influence positive change in ways that prioritise the interests of all women.
2. Continuing to develop partnerships to increase awareness, understanding and to combat the harms of pornography.
3. Establishing clear structures and systems to better harness and activate the wisdom and insights of those with lived experience of domestic violence and abuse.

## Strategic Priority 3

### Continually Strengthening Capability and Expertise

Support the work of the organisation by ensuring that the information, resources, systems and structures required are in place.

1. Strengthening our economic resilience and capacity.
2. Ensuring the organisation has the capacity to meet its business and operational compliance requirements.
3. Ensuring our work is continually data driven and supported.
4. Aligning our people, our values and our culture.
5. Building and supporting volunteer engagement.
6. Ensuring excellence in compliance and governance.
7. Aligning Women's Aid with Environmental, Sustainability and Governance principles.

# Strategic Priority 1

## Creating Social Equality

### Over-arching Goal:

Delivering a coordinated, inclusive and coherent programme of work comprising:  
- direct services, training, advocacy, and educating through awareness-raising work that is focused on prevention, support and driving positive social change.

### Objective 1:

Developing and delivering Women's Aid specialist frontline services.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>1.1.1</b> Continue to deliver a model of best practice that builds on the Women's Aid approach to service delivery, grounded in our feminist analysis, our vision, purpose and values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— A recognised quality system or framework, building on our previous model "Vision, Action, Change"<sup>10</sup>.</li> <li>— Evidence-based indicators to define and measure service excellence for each service.</li> <li>— Feedback from service users about the quality and impact of our services.</li> </ul>
<b>1.1.2</b> Continually deliver, strengthen and evolve our existing service range to maintain consistently high standards of excellence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— The commission from Tusla to deliver the 24hr National Freephone Helpline is retained.</li> <li>— Services are effective in empowering women to address the impacts of domestic violence and abuse.</li> <li>— Funding is secured to scope the potential for rollout of the Maternity Outreach.</li> <li>— The High-Risk Support Project is available nationally in collaboration with key partners.</li> </ul>
<b>1.1.3</b> Continually explore options for innovation in Women's Aid service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Innovative approaches to Women's Aid service delivery are funded and piloted.</li> <li>— Partnerships developed to explore ways to deploy new technologies to support service delivery.</li> <li>— Statutory funding to continue resourcing the Women's Aid (external) Emergency fund is secured.</li> </ul>

10 Vision, Action, Change: Feminist Principles and Practice for Working on Violence against Women, Women's Aid, 2002, available at [https://www.womensaid.ie/app/uploads/2023/07/vision\\_action\\_change.pdf](https://www.womensaid.ie/app/uploads/2023/07/vision_action_change.pdf)

## Objective 2:

Applying an intersectional lens to all aspects of our external work.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>1.2.1</b> Ensure that the needs, experiences and rights of all women are reflected in our support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Referral pathways to and from other groups with specialised expertise are in place to offer effective and comprehensive support to women who may experience more barriers when subjected to domestic violence and abuse.</li></ul>
<b>1.2.2</b> Ensure that the needs, experiences and rights of all women are reflected in our training services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— All training reflects the intersectional dynamics of domestic violence and abuse.</li></ul>
<b>1.2.3</b> Ensure that the needs, experiences and rights of all women are reflected in our strategic communications and advocacy work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Materials that are inviting and informative to women in all their diversity.</li><li>— Increased uptake of services by all women.</li><li>— Numbers of research, campaigns and advocacy activities with partners that give visibility to the needs and rights of diverse communities of women and girls subjected to domestic violence and abuse.</li></ul>

### Objective 3:

Educating through raising public awareness of all forms, causes and consequences of domestic violence and abuse.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>1.3.1</b> Develop and deliver integrated public relations initiatives to ensure that the issue of domestic violence and abuse remain on the national public agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— An annual strategic communications strategy to increase the profile of Women's Aid, its frontline support services, training, awareness and advocacy work and enhance public understanding of domestic violence and abuse via a range of campaigns and events.</li><li>— Level of media engagement.</li><li>— Awareness materials that will ensure that all women, including minoritised women and those not subject to physical abuse, subjected to abuse can recognise their experience – and the availability of services to support them.</li></ul>
<b>1.3.2</b> Expand prevention initiatives, focusing on awareness and preventative components.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— The Too Into You Project Strategic Plan 2025-29 is delivered in synch with the broader organisational strategy objectives.</li><li>— Customised initiatives targeting are developed for:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Women subjected to domestic violence and abuse</li><li>— Minoritised groups</li><li>— Family friends and supporters of victims/survivors of domestic violence and abuse</li><li>— The wider community</li><li>— Men and boys</li></ul></li></ul>



**Objective 3 continued:**

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>1.3.3</b> Seek opportunities to collaborate with relevant partners to develop and deliver effective targeted awareness initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Number of innovative awareness campaigns with key corporate partners.</li><li>— Numbers of public awareness campaigns by the Government through the CUAN Campaign Advisory Group contributed to.</li></ul>
<b>1.3.4</b> Continue to be a key source of statistics and information on gender-based violence in Ireland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Annual Impact Report</li><li>— Women's Aid Femicide Watch.</li><li>— Monitor implementation of key legislation e.g. coercive control, stalking, Intimate Image Abuse.</li><li>— Key national, European and Global research and statistics is gathered and applied to domestic and international awareness and advocacy work as appropriate.</li></ul>

#### Objective 4:

Building on Women's Aid's advocacy, research, expertise and reputation to inform key decision-makers and to contribute to the national dialogue on action to prevent and combat domestic violence and abuse.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>1.4.1</b> Develop a 5-year advocacy <sup>11</sup> programme identifying specific advocacy priorities, including primary and secondary prevention; promotion of support services and ensuring a public focus on perpetrator accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Five-year advocacy programme in place and operational.</li><li>— Key achievable advocacy objectives informed by domestic and international research and best practice examples.</li><li>— Strategic joint advocacy campaigns with peer organisations and other agencies.</li><li>— Measure the impact of advocacy work on change to legislation and public policy.</li><li>— An action plan to achieve best possible impact from Women's Aid commissioned, published research and other relevant research in co-operation with key external stakeholders.</li><li>— Representation in key forums (statutory and others) which will support delivery of advocacy objectives.</li><li>— Annual review of outcomes of advocacy efforts.</li></ul>
<b>1.4.2</b> Develop a long term 10-year research strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— A long-term research strategy is in place with an annual research plan.</li><li>— Numbers of strategic research resourced and commissioned.</li><li>— Ability to measure policy change and impact of research findings.</li></ul>
<b>1.4.3</b> Continue to use our organisational model, including services, training, strategic communications and fundraising to inform our advocacy, policy and research priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Systematically share and exchange qualitative and quantitative data between Women's Aid Departments/ Teams.</li></ul>

<sup>11</sup> Our evidence-based and solution-focused advocacy strategy centres the voices of victims and survivors of abuse, ensuring their experiences inform change. We share this expertise by contributing to policy and service development through presentations, submissions and representation on various consultative forums and with Statutory and non-Statutory bodies.

### Objective 5:

Developing and enhancing the range of training solutions aimed at strengthening responses of frontline professionals and other key stakeholders to domestic violence and abuse.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>1.5.1</b> Develop and deliver a 5-year business plan (2025-29) aimed at the Training & Development Department becoming a self-sustaining social enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Training business plan developed.</li><li>— Income generation targets achieved.</li><li>— Feedback from participants in training.</li><li>— All relevant training accredited by end of 2025.</li><li>— Impact of the training work of the organisation is measured.</li></ul>
<b>1.5.2</b> Expand Women's Aid support project for employers developing a workplace domestic violence and abuse policy, including training and implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Numbers of employers availing of the Women's Aid support project for employers.</li><li>— A review of the implementation and impact of the Domestic Violence at work legislation, in line with Government obligations is conducted (2-year review).</li></ul>

## Strategic Priority 2

### Building and Nurturing Effective Partnerships

#### Over-arching Goal:

To continue developing and strengthening cross sector partnerships and strategic relationships; enabling Women's Aid to cooperate and effectively contribute to political, social and other forums responding to violence against women in all its forms.

#### Objective 1:

Working with authorities, agencies and community and voluntary organisations, as a trusted partner, to inform the national and international agenda on Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence to influence positive change in ways that prioritise the interests of all women.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>2.1.1</b> Continue actively developing positive working relationships across the community and voluntary sector (organisations targeting DSGBV, children's rights, migrant support, disability advocacy and others as identified).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Employees are active in participation in networking events in the community and voluntary sector.</li> <li>— All representation, learning required, potential organisational actions and decisions are recorded and reported internally for consideration/action.</li> <li>— Opportunities to work with peer organisations and agencies.</li> </ul>
<b>2.1.2</b> Develop strategic partnerships with relevant organisations to engage with men and boys to influence male leadership in combating and preventing domestic violence and abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Campaigns developed and delivered to engage with men and boys to raise awareness of DSGBV.</li> <li>— Collaboration with Core and other partners on masculinities behaviour and attitudes in Ireland.</li> </ul>
<b>2.1.3</b> Continue, expand and review, as appropriate, Women's Aid representation in key forums, coalitions and networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Employee representation of Women's Aid in forums, advisory groups and strategic coalitions.</li> <li>— Review membership of strategic networks on an annual basis.</li> </ul>



### Objective 2:

Continuing to develop partnerships to increase awareness, understanding and to combat the harms of pornography.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>2.2.1</b> Build a coalition for action across relevant themes, with sectoral partners and other key stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Actions developed with key stakeholders to target the harms of pornography.</li><li>— An action plan including required resourcing to develop and continue work with partners over the next five years.</li><li>— Resources secured to support this work.</li></ul>

### Objective 3:

Establishing clear structures and systems to better harness and activate the wisdom and insights of those with lived experience of domestic violence and abuse.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>2.3.1</b> Develop a variety of survivor-engagement strategies and initiatives to ensure the inclusion of their voices in creating community awareness and enhancing prevention and support responses to domestic violence and abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Recommendations from the Internal Report on Survivor Engagement and Women's Empowerment as Experts by Lived Experience. are implemented.</li><li>— The survivor empowerment project is reactivated.</li><li>— Quantitative and qualitative mechanisms (e.g. advisory panel, feedback surveys) to provide key feedback from those who use services are developed.</li><li>— Individual survivors/women with lived experience are supported to publicly share their experience and expertise in line with our current guidelines.</li><li>— Women's Aid training includes and amplifies survivor voice, and survivor involvement.</li></ul>
<b>2.3.2</b> Collaborate with women from marginalised and minoritised groups, and organisations who represent them, to amplify their voice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Positive working relationships across the community and voluntary sector with organisations targeting DSGBV to engage with women from marginalised and minoritised groups.</li></ul>

## Strategic Priority 3

### Continually Strengthening Capability and Expertise

#### Over-arching Goal:

Support the work of the organisation by ensuring that the information, resources, systems and structures required are in place.

#### Objective 1:

Strengthening our economic resilience and capacity.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>3.1.1</b> Demonstrate high standards of financial management and accountability to our funders and other stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Business supports and resources required to achieve this strategic action and support growth, and accountability are in place.</li> <li>— Financial procedures are documented and in effective operation.</li> </ul>
<b>3.1.2</b> Advocate for increased, multi annual funding to support services for women experiencing domestic violence and abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Increased, multi annual funding in place.</li> </ul>
<b>3.1.3</b> Diversify our income including from unrestricted and philanthropic sources in order to invest in our services, innovation and core costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— The 2022-2027 Fundraising Strategy is fully implemented.</li> <li>— Increased corporate support and donor supported initiatives.</li> <li>— Expanded individual giving programme.</li> <li>— Alternative streams of funding identified and secured</li> </ul>

### Objective 2:

Ensuring the organisation has the capacity to meet its business and operational compliance requirements.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>3.2.1</b> Continue to review and adapt, as appropriate, the organisational capacity required to support the evolving needs of the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— An Annual Operational Work Plan to support the implementation of this strategy.</li><li>— Support functions underpin the functioning and growth of the organisation.</li></ul>
<b>3.2.2</b> Explore ways to increase our productivity through I.T., systems and processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— IT systems and processes are in place to support the needs of the organisation.</li><li>— Employee training/CPD in key areas of IT capability in place.</li></ul>

### Objective 3:

Ensuring our work is continually data driven and supported.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>3.3.1</b> Data is used effectively and ensures that the organisation is continually enabled to generate accurate, timely data about service delivery, in-service performance, user experience, service outcomes, referrals and service methodologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— All referrals to and from all Women's Aid services are captured and reported accurately.</li><li>— Quantitative and qualitative statistical trends to identify current and emerging need is analysed.</li><li>— National and international research is tracked, gathered and reviewed.</li><li>— Resource requirements are in place to support this action</li></ul>
<b>3.3.2</b> Continue to advocate to any key State Agencies or bodies who gather/should gather data to ensure they do so and that a 'gold standard' of national data on DSGBV is available, per the requirements of the Istanbul Convention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— High quality, national data on DSGBV is available.</li><li>— The CSO national domestic violence prevalence survey is well designed, properly resourced and delivered.</li></ul>
<b>3.3.3</b> Research and implement actions to both harness the benefits and mitigate against the potential harm of Artificial Intelligence (AI).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— An ethical Artificial Intelligence policy is developed and operational.</li></ul>

#### Objective 4:

Aligning our people, our values and our culture.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>3.4.1</b> Attract, develop and retain volunteers and employees who are committed to our vision, purpose and culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Workplace accreditation to demonstrate Women's Aid is a values-led organisation.</li><li>— A diverse and representative cohort of employees and volunteers.</li></ul>
<b>3.4.2</b> Support and monitor employee engagement in line with strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Performance goals in place for all employees and aligned with strategy.</li><li>— Annual employee engagement survey.</li></ul>
<b>3.4.3</b> Strengthen our approach to succession planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— A long-term succession planning framework for key organisational roles in place.</li></ul>
<b>3.4.4</b> Create space for collaboration and learning across all teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Collaborative working across teams, to support information sharing, team cohesion and internal working groups on specific topics.</li></ul>

#### Objective 5:

Building and supporting volunteer engagement.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>3.5.1</b> Continue engaging with our volunteers, supporting them to contribute meaningfully and to derive personal satisfaction from their commitment to the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Annual volunteer engagement survey.</li><li>— Volunteer programme accreditation is maintained.</li></ul>





## Objective 6:

Ensuring excellence in compliance and governance.

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>3.6.1</b> Demonstrate full compliance with all relevant Charity and Company regulations and best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Compliance with our statutory, legislative and funder requirements.</li><li>— Annual returns to the Charities Regulatory Authority.</li><li>— Annual Governance Compliance Report.</li><li>— A clean annual audit.</li></ul>
<b>3.6.2</b> Continually evaluate the effectiveness of our Board and its Committees and ensure that we have the appropriate diversity and balance of skills and experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Board effectiveness review</li><li>— A succession plan for Board membership in line with Skills Matrix and recruitment priorities, including consideration of diversity and inclusion.</li></ul>

### Objective 7:

Aligning Women's Aid with Environmental, Sustainability and Governance principles

Strategic Actions	Key Measure of success
<b>3.7.1</b> Identify and implement opportunities to mitigate the organisation's environmental impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Procurement policies and practices reduce our carbon footprint, ensure supply chain efficiency and source products from ethical suppliers.</li><li>— Sustainable waste management practices implemented.</li><li>— The BER rating on our premises is increased.</li></ul>
<b>3.7.2</b> Strive to ensure systems and structures are in place to reflect that Women's Aid is inclusively available to all women, as service users, collaborators or employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— All Women's Aid events are accessible including provision of ISL.</li><li>— Annual report on Women's Aid social performance metrics to assess our impact on employees, volunteers and those who use our services.</li><li>— Annual demographics survey of employees and volunteers to monitor our diversity as an organisation.</li><li>— Diversity and inclusion training is delivered on an ongoing.</li></ul>
<b>3.7.3</b> Review and adapt as appropriate all policies and procedures to promote transparency and accountability to all stakeholders through the organisation's reporting practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Annual report in line with Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act, 2021.</li></ul>

# Women's Aid Strategic Plan 2025-29 Summary

Our Vision	Our Purpose	Our Values	Our Strategic Priorities
<p>Women's Aid's vision is an equal Ireland with zero tolerance of domestic abuse and all other forms of violence against women.</p>	<p>Women's Aid is a national feminist organisation working to prevent and address the impact of domestic violence and abuse including coercive control, since 1974.</p> <p><b>We do this by:</b></p> <p>Advocating, influencing, training and campaigning for effective responses to prevent and reduce the scale and impacts of domestic violence and abuse on women and children in Ireland</p> <p>and</p> <p>Providing high quality, specialised, integrate support services.</p>	<p>To achieve our purpose and vision of zero tolerance of domestic abuse and all forms of violence against women Women's Aid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Acts with <b>courage</b> to boldly challenge patriarchal systems, structures, and attitudes in all aspect of our work.</li> <li>— Works in <b>co-operation</b> to share knowledge, skills, and expertise to achieve shared goals and improve responses to domestic violence and abuse.</li> <li>— Strives to embed <b>inclusivity</b>, diversity, and accessibility across all our work.</li> <li>— Seeks the <b>empowerment</b> of women to exercise agency on their own behalf as a right, whatever their circumstances</li> <li>— Believes that achieving <b>equality</b> in status, rights and opportunities for all women is essential to address the causes and consequences of domestic violence and abuse.</li> <li>— Works to achieve positive <b>change</b> for everyone through a combination of individual, community-based and social action</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Creating Social Equality</b></p> <p>Delivering a coordinated, inclusive and coherent programme of work comprising: direct services, training, advocacy, and educating through awareness-raising work that is focused on prevention, support and driving positive social change.</p> <p><b>2. Building and Nurturing Effective Partnerships</b></p> <p>To continue developing and strengthening cross sector partnerships and strategic relationships; enabling Women's Aid to cooperate and effectively contribute to political, social and other forums responding to violence against women in all its forms.</p> <p><b>3. Continually Strengthening Capability and Expertise</b></p> <p>Support the work of the organisation by ensuring that the information, resources, systems and structures required are in place.</p>

# Conclusion

Violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive forms of human rights violations in the world and ending domestic violence in Ireland is the ultimate aim of Women's Aid. We will continue to work in partnership with key stakeholders to work towards our vision of an Ireland where there is equality, with zero tolerance of domestic abuse and all other forms of violence against women.

This strategic plan 2025 – 2029 sets out a clear framework to progress our purpose and vision. Behind this is a set of targeted operational actions for our priorities, and sustainability for coming years. This will be overseen by the Strategy Sub-committee and implemented by the Senior Leadership Team, whilst aligning all our employees and volunteers to our strategic goals.

Central to this plan's implementation is the voice of Survivors, ensuring that they inform our work. Their voice must be heard.















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