

**Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre
Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan**



**Annual Report
2012**

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Introduction

There are adults everywhere who have experienced some form of sexual violence either as a child or adult. The unacceptability of sexual violence and the devastating effects of such traumatic experiences have long been recognised by the Rape Crisis Movement resulting in Rape Crisis Centres being set up to address both the needs of survivors of sexual violence and the causes of sexual violence in our society. The Rape Crisis Movement has its roots in feminism and believes that sexual violence is a result of the power imbalance and role differences between men, women and children within our society.

The Centre was originally established in 1996 as a local response to sexual violence within the region. Our geographical remit is essentially the regions of Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan. Previous to its establishment the nearest Rape Crisis Centre was the Mayo Rape Crisis Centre, Castlebar Co. Mayo. The Centre is a member of the Rape Crisis Network Ireland.

How we work

The Centre provides a safe, confidential space for survivors of child sexual abuse, rape and sexual assault where adults and young people can explore and access help with the legacy of issues resulting from their traumatic experiences. The centre provides a non-directive service where survivors are treated with respect and empowered through out their counselling process, this process is underpinned by the belief that everyone has the inner capacity and resources to move towards change and well being. We believe that no matter what the circumstances sexual violence is never the survivor's fault, the perpetrator is always solely responsible for their actions. This ethos is reflected in our following vision statement:

Key Principles

Sexual violence in all its forms is an abuse of human rights and should never be accepted.

To provide a model of good practice in our centre and for our clients.

To ensure clients volunteer and staff are treated with respect and dignity.

To underpin our work with the following values: empowerment, equality, inclusiveness and mutual support.

To take a proactive approach in the area of sexual violence; providing education on the dynamics behind sexual violence, the effects upon survivors and society's reactions.

Mission Statement

Our purpose is to create a safe place for those who have experienced sexual violence recently or in the past

We provide when required:

- Counselling and emergency advocacy,
- Awareness and training to support other agencies who are working with survivors

We are also committed to challenging the tolerance and very existence of sexual violence

What we do

The response of the Centre to the issues of sexual violence is to provide the following services:

- Crisis counselling
- Ongoing face to face counselling
- Outreach counselling
- Free phone helpline
- Support, advocacy and information for survivors, in particular around legal issues
- Relationship counselling
- Survivors support group
- Counselling, support and information for supporters of survivors
- Hospital, court, GP, garda accompaniment
- Education, training and awareness-raising
- Lobbying and influencing policy on relevant issues through the Rape Crisis Network Ireland
- Networking, experience and information sharing with other relevant voluntary and statutory organisations.

Who we are

Members of the Centre are as follows:

Gilla Cornelius
Elaine Hanson
Tina Horton
Joan Mullan
Mary Roche
Kate Duke
Ursula Devaney
Margaret Thermes
Rosaleen Kilgannon
Cynthia Adubango
Suzanne Connolly
Mary Manandhar

Helen Murphy
Maire Garvey
Parvez Butt

Directors

The following members were appointed and retained as Directors at the Annual General Meeting on March 21st 2012

Joan Mullan (Chair)
Mary Roche (Secretary)
Kate Duke
Ursula Devaney
Cynthia Adubango
Caitriona Cavanagh

Mary Manandhar resigned from the Board.

Subsequently Caitriona Cavanagh resigned from the Board and Parvez Butt and Maire Garvey were elected onto the Board.

Volunteers

Joan Mullan
Mary Roche
Kate Duke
Ursula Devaney
Margaret Thermes
Rosaleen Kilgannon
Cynthia Adubango
Suzanne Connolly
Helen Murphy

Staff

Counsellor: Gilla Cornelius
Administrator/Counsellor: Elaine Hanson
Co-ordinator/Counsellor: Tina Horton
Outreach counsellor: Rosaleen Kilgannon

Development to date

The Centre has developed substantially during the last 15 years both as an organisation and in terms of the services it offers. Initially funding was secured from both, the Programme for Peace and Reconciliation and the Health Service Executive.

The Centre has established itself as both a limited company and registered charity and obtained rented premises in central Sligo. The centre was officially opened by Ms Mary Wallace, T.D in 1999.

Further developments have been established in terms of staff and volunteer personnel within the centre. Throughout this period we have secured paid employment in relation to certain roles within the centre while still maintaining invaluable voluntary input.

All members have undergone the extensive Rape Crisis Network Ireland Training and many have gone on to do further counselling training. The Centre is committed to providing further training to its members in order to provide a competent, professional service. Counsellors are accredited with such bodies as the Rape Crisis Network Ireland, The Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. The Centre is a member of the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy.

We have developed a four year Strategic Plan for 2012 –2016 and are committed to continuously reviewing and refining our service provision and operation.

Development within the year 2012

Outreach Counselling

In 2012 we continued our provision of Face to Face Outreach Counselling Service in Carrick-on-Shannon, County Leitrim. Originally a 6 month pilot project we succeeded in securing some funding from the Leitrim Development Company and continued through 2012. The service provides all the counselling and support services offered at our main centre in Sligo. This new service is provided by fully trained Rape Crisis Counsellor, Rosaleen Kilgannon who has been counselling in the rape crisis centre in Sligo since 2004. Currently we are continuing to fund the project through fundraising and the Leitrim development Company but we hope to secure dedicated funding to continue and develop the project. This represents a significant step towards providing counselling and support services throughout our catchment area of Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan.

Volunteer Activity

At least 1,333 voluntary hours were provided in 2012. Volunteer involvement ranges from provision of face to face therapy, helpline cover, directorship, fundraising, awareness raising, training and education. We welcomed one new counselling volunteer, Helen Murphy in April. In 2012 18% of face to face clients were seen by volunteers. In January 2012 we continued with our Fundraising Volunteer Group for further information on this group's substantial achievements please see the fundraising section of this report.

Interagency Work

Rape Crisis Network, Ireland

The Rape Crisis Network continues to act as a source of support, information, training and development to member rape crisis centres and is a medium through which we as a rape crisis centre can influence policy and lobby for change on a national level. We attended a RCNI conference on changes to the RCNI structure and impact on RCCs, the launch of the RCNI National Statistics and the RCNI AGM.

Child and Family Committee

We have attended the local HSE Child and Family Committee meeting of local statutory and non- statutory bodies working towards providing services children, families and vulnerable sectors within our community. We are represented on the Steering Group within the Child and Family Committee.

Internships/Research Projects

Design Competition and Feasibility Study Re Moving Premises

In 2012 we identified a potential, suitable premises for relocation. A number of issues arose namely the associated costs around change of use and planning applications. We approached the Architecture Department of the Institute of Technology Sligo, in particular, lecturers Peter Scanlon and Meliossa O' Brian. Peter and Meliossa came up with a Design Competition for their final year students which would meet our needs around a potential design for the new building and clarifying potential planning issues.

The overall aim of the competition was to utilise and synthesize the students existing knowledge and skills garnered from across the programme to engage in a live project. They prepared a feasibility study and design proposals for the fitout/upgrade and adaptive re-use of an existing dwelling in Sligo town, which included the preparation of feasibility proposals for its change of use from a domestic dwelling to a commercial entity and all associated design, policy, social and technical implications of this new use and new activity.

We found the whole experience excellent and very useful. The students very well informed, professional and enthusiastic. They were able to advise us with competence and also listened attentively to our own areas of expertise.

The standard of the work the students presented to us on the 16th November was outstanding. Their presentations showed how they had listened to our needs and used their skills and creativity in producing, not only very innovative design solutions, but they also got us to think about the potential of a building in an entirely new way! The feasibility studies they produced were of extremely high quality and will be invaluable to us in our upcoming pre- planning meeting with the Borough Council.

We were also extremely impressed by the fact that the staff organised it so that the whole project was completed within 6 weeks of us first contacting the department.

Education and Awareness Raising

During 2012 we provided education/awareness raising inputs:

Listening Skills Training to Asylum Seekers and Refugees – 9 participants

In 2012 we continued to receive VEC funding for 56 hours listening skills programme to women and men seeking asylum or having received refugee status. We commenced the programme with the women on the 9th March and ended on the 12th of October 2012. The training took place on Friday mornings from 9.15-12.15. The group consisted of 9 members 6 women and for the first time 3 men. All 9 received their Listening Skills Certificate in October 2012. This completed a 3 year programme of delivering this training with 10 people graduating the first year and 9 in the second.

The training programme started off with a general overview of different forms of sexual violence, discussing experiences from different cultures, human rights issues and feminist views. At an early stage the focus was on listening skills, training following the Rogerian model, personal experiential work and practice in listening skills.

Later on in the training the focus moved to more details around rape and child sexual abuse, always with our focus on a global picture to integrate what was happening in the home countries of the participants for example abuse of witch children and child prostitution. Following this, when members felt more safe and connected, we looked at difficult feelings and emotions like anger, shame, grief, fear, depression, happiness and love. At this stage the group was very open and trusting. There was huge personal and professional learning in the sessions, which ended in the group becoming very connected. The personal development and personal connections seem to be most important outcome to the members, the trust in the group, friendships, the practice of mutual respect and acceptance, the non judgemental listening, the concept of diversity and equality and honesty to look at issues.

Turn Off the Red Light Campaign 2012

Our main awareness raising campaign for 2012 was the National Turn off the Red Light Campaign in conjunction with the Domestic Violence Advocacy Service. We performed a number of successful events that helped raise awareness of the issue of human trafficking and prostitution and of the campaign.

Following a campaign of intensive lobbying lead by ourselves and DVAS in August, Sligo County Council passed a motion in support of the change in current Irish legislation regarding prostitution. The motion was proposed by Cllr Hubert Keaney who was very cooperative and supportive from the beginning. A few days later, Sligo City Council passed a motion proposed by Cllr Veronica Cawley.

A concerted media campaign was undertaken. There was also a photo shoot with the TORL billboard – the billboard was placed in various towns throughout Ireland to promote the campaign. Four councillors – Veronica Cawley (Independent), Marcella McGarry (Labour), Hubert Keaney (Fine Gael) and Sean

McManus (Sinn Fein) expressed their support by taking a picture in front of the billboard. Sylvia Farkasovska, Elaine Hanson and Niamh Wilson from DVAS also participated. The picture together with the press release was published in local media. There were numerous press releases published in Sligo Champion, Sligo Weekender and Leitrim Observer during the year.

We contributed to submissions to the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality. We asked every individual to set forward their individual submission, and there was also a joint submission on behalf of the centre.

In November, in conjunction with DVAS, we organised a public briefing in the Model and Niland Gallery, Sligo which turned out to be a huge success. There was a movie, The Price of Sex by Mimi Chakarova shown which followed by a discussion and Q & A session with Diane Kelly from Immigrant Council of Ireland and Paul Maguire from RTE. Speakers gave a brief introduction – Diane Kelly talked about the issue of human trafficking in general, and Paul discussed the issue of prostitution in Ireland and in Sligo in particular. The briefing was heavily attended and majority of the people present signed the petition and decided to join and support campaign in whatever capacity they were able to.

Other Awareness Raising:

Throughout 2012 the following media inputs occurred;

- Newspaper adverts : Sligo Champion, Sligo Weekender, Sligo Post, Leitrim Observer, North West Extra
- Radio adverts on Ocean FM
- Community Diary on Ocean FM
- Website
- Face book page
- Newspaper articles submitted:
 - Outreach Services in Carrick
 - Turn of the Red Light Campaign x 4 press releases
 - April Fundraising Day
 - Flag Day in Leitrim
 - Architect Student Project
 - Impact of Christmas on Survivors
- Radio Interviews:
 - Turn off the Red Light Campaign

We provided talks on our service to 3 student groups the Institute of Technology, Sligo: Marketing Students, Social Studies Students and Architecture Students

We provided a stall at the Student Health Fair at the Institute of Technology Sligo

RCNI Phone line Training – 2 participants

We provided training on the Sex and the Law section in the Real U Foroige Training Pack. This training was delivered to over 30 youth workers from Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim.

We provided a stall and input to Easkey Secondary School, Co. Sligo as part of their initiative to teach young people about support services available to them.

We provided a stall and input at the Ocean Sands Hotel, Enniscrone, Co. Sligo as part of a local initiative to raise awareness of support services available to the community.

We provided a training input to Leitrim Womens' Centre on Counselling and Cultural Diversity

Training and Conferences

Extensive further training was sourced and undertaken by both staff and volunteers during 2012. The training and conferences undertaken by different members is as follows:

Training

Governance Training – The Wheel

Train the Trainer- CMD Training

People Management – The wheel

Organisational Change-Professor Ralph Stacey, International author and head of Complexity and Change at the Business School of the University of Hertfordshire.

Issues of Sexual Violence: The Counselling Process- Dublin RCC

Strengthening Families- the alcohol forum

Diploma in Addiction Studies – nui maynooth

Equine Therapy – Horse Sense

Holotropic Breathwork- Jean Farrell

Diploma in Gestalt Therapy- Irish Gestalt Centre

Neuroplasticity of the Brain- Castlebar Therapy Centre

ASSIST Suicide Intervention Training – HSE

Exploring and Owning the Shadow – Galway Psychotherapy and Consulting

Soulwork Workshop- Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Therapy

Stress Reduction Based Mindfulness Training- Frances Larkin

Irish Gestalt Centre Post Practicum – Irish Gestalt Centre

Hakomi Practice Mentoring Day – Hakomi Ireland

Self care and Restoration Mindful Art Therapy – Sligo Arts Psychotherapy Centre

Trauma Therapy Training- Babette Rothschild

The Therapeutic Relationship and Duty to Report Children at Risk - HSE

Transpersonal Psychology Certification – Groff Holotropic

Children First Briefing Session – HSE

Excell Training- RCNI

Withholding Information Briefing – Dept. of Justice

Facebook Training – Sligo County Enterprise Board

Conferences

Rape Crisis Network Ireland AGM

Rape Crisis Network Ireland National Statistics Launch

RCNI Conference on changes to structure and impact on RCCS

The 3rd International Conference on Survivors of Rape - RCNI

Fundraising Events

During 2012 we undertook a number of initiatives with our Fundraising Volunteer Group which has 19 members this group decided to a number of events during 2012 as follows:

- Fundraising Day – This project was a day of awareness raising and fundraising involving a bucket collection, music and street entertainment and a gig at McGarrigles Pub, Sligo in the evening. The day was an enormous success with €2006 being raised. The whole team, especially Irene Mccloughlin, Tina Horton and Ursula Devaney really put in a huge amount of effort and this was rewarded by the atmosphere they created on the day and the money they raised.
- Our annual Flag Day was held in October and this year raised the substantial amount of €2070 many thanks to Elaine Hanson who put a huge amount of effort into the day.
- We continued our Bag Packing in Dunnes, Cranmore Sligo it was a huge success with €1385 raised a special thank you to Cynthis Adubango, Tina Horton and Josette Newman who organised the two days.
- We also received just over €1,500 in donations through our donation boxes in the counselling rooms and private donations.

We would like to thank all the organisations and individuals who kindly contributed to our fundraising efforts in 2012 all their hard work made each event a great success. Finally a big thank you to all who support us through attending our fundraising events, the support of our community is invaluable.

Applications for Funding 2012

Applications for funding were made to the following organisations during the year 2012:

- The HSE North West received €166,985
- Lottery Funds received €500
- VEC received €2,500
- COSC received €3,500
- Womens' Fund for Ireland €500
- Leitrim Development Company €1000
- OLC Ireland Trust Fund 3 applications – unsuccessful

Evaluation 2012

Strategic Plan Evaluation

The Strategic Plan for 2008-2011 consists of 5 goals covering; development and expansion of core services, working with key agencies to promote our understanding of sexual violence, further develop organisational structures and systems, uphold supportive and accountable volunteer and employment policies and gain, maintain and account for core and additional funding. Within 2012 we evaluated the 2008-2011 Plan and looked at what had been achieved, what hadn't, what was still a priority and what was no longer necessary. From this process emerged a new Strategic Plan 2012-2016 to reflect where we are in our development and taking cognisance of new best practice models such as The Governance Code.

Team Evaluation

A formal appraisal system has been implemented for staff and volunteers. Team building also provides an opportunity for evaluation of how we work together. During 2012 the Board continued a process of self appraisal around their role, responsibilities and effectiveness including training around The Governance Code.

Future Development

We have outgrown our current premises we need more counselling rooms and office space to meet the demands for our services.

The Centre intends to engage to a greater degree with the wider community via the implementation of a comprehensive public awareness and training campaign. The main barrier to this initiative continues to be the lack of resources available to the centre and so our Strategic Plan 2012-16 focusses on creative ways we can build on opportunities for awareness raising in partnership with other agencies.

In terms of administrative back up both the Co-ordinator and Administrator positions need to be increased to full-time in line with the demands of the workload.

We hope to further develop our Outreach Counselling Service and to secure consistent core funding as a matter of priority.

Developing our services for young people features in our Strategic Plan we have made a good start with the Addressing the Needs of Young People Report and the Teen Health Initiative Foróige Training. We hope to build on links with other services working with young people and be instrumental in the development of new services for young people in the Sligo/Leitrim region.

The free phone help line is still only open for 1 ½ hours in the morning Monday to Friday it is reasonable to assume that a phone line so limited in its operational

time does not suit many potential clients. Consequently we require further resources to increase volunteer and paid staff cover in order to extend the phone line opening hours.

Fundraising is playing an increasingly important part in our financial picture; further developing a Fundraising Strategy which incorporates all of our catchment area is a priority for the foreseeable future.

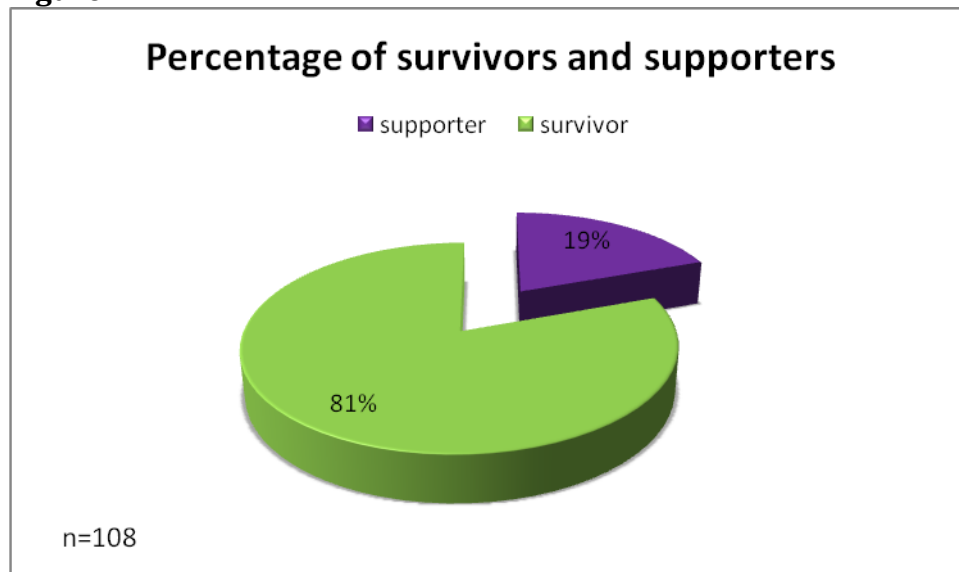
Statistical Information 2012

The information in this report is compiled using the RCNI Database. The RCNI Database equips RCCs to extract data regarding use of their own local service and simultaneously equips RCNI to deliver comparable national data.

1. Face to Face Client Information (survivor and supporter)

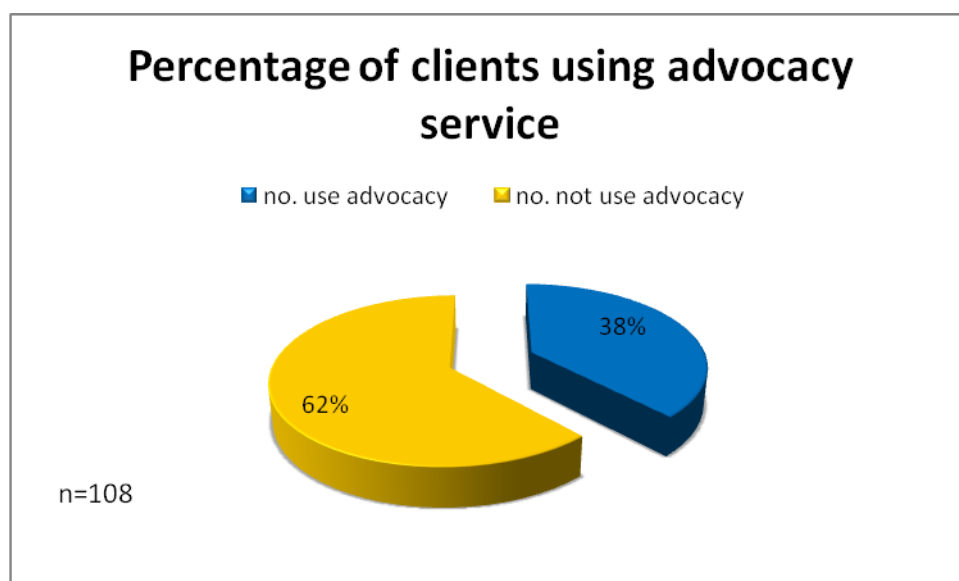
The following figures refer to information about the survivors and supporters who use our face to face counselling and support services.

Figure 1.1



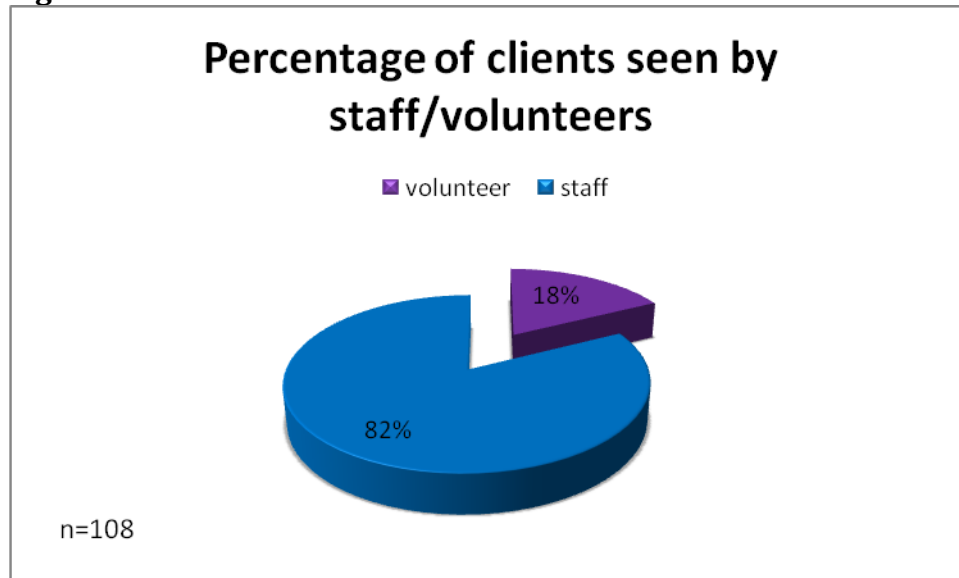
The percentage breakdown of survivors and supporters has remained similar over the past number of years.

Figure 1.2



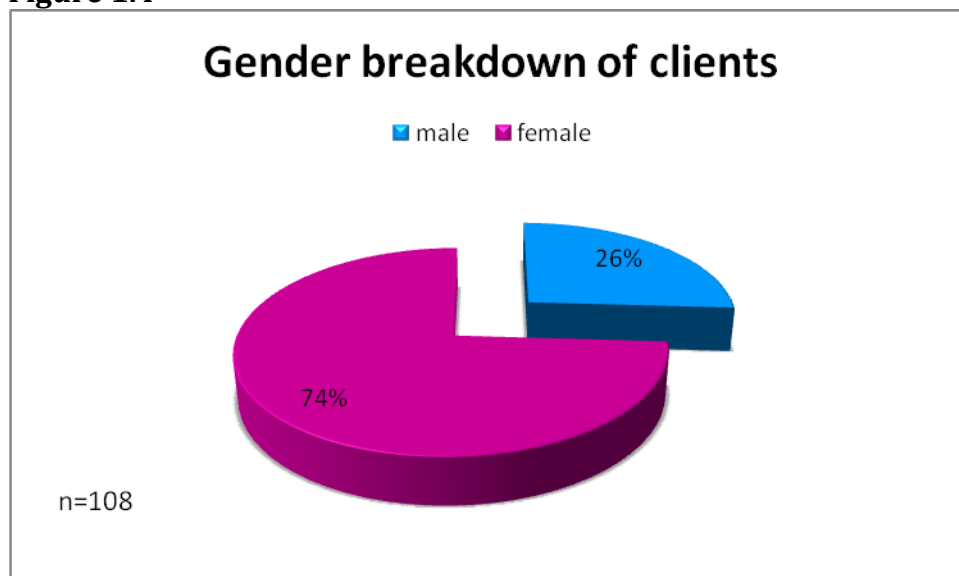
The percentage of clients using the advocacy service has reduced slightly in 2012.

Figure 1.3



The percentage of clients seen by volunteers has reduced by 7% this is due to the Outreach Service in Carrick being run on a paid basis.

Figure 1.4



There has been a 9% increase in the number of men availing of our service in 2012

2. Supporter Information

The following statistics refer to supporters only

Figure 2.1

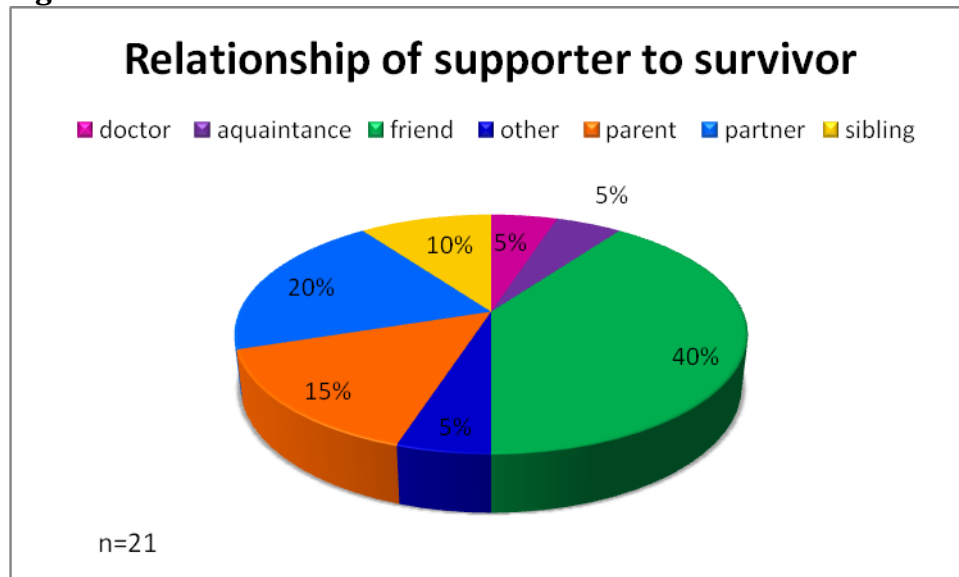
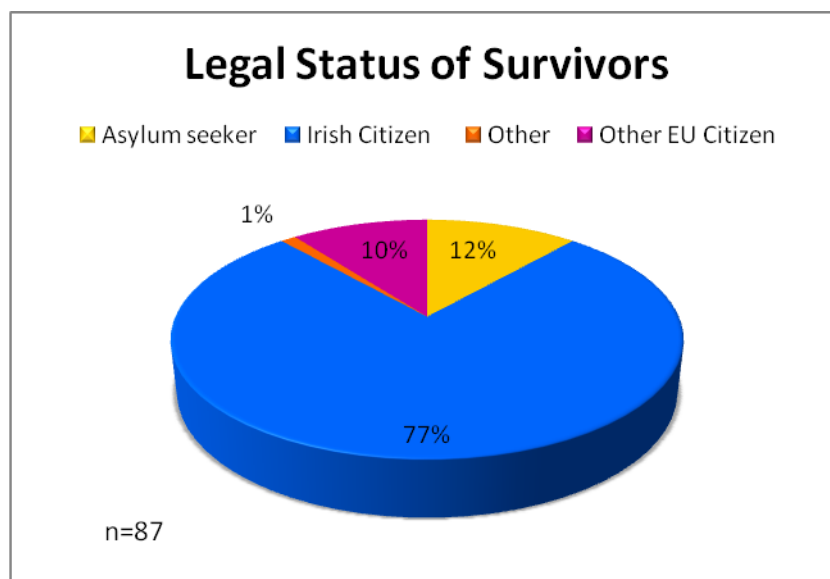


Figure 2.1 shows that the vast majority of supporters are friends followed by partners and parents. This differs from previous years where the majority of supporters were parents.

3. Survivor Information

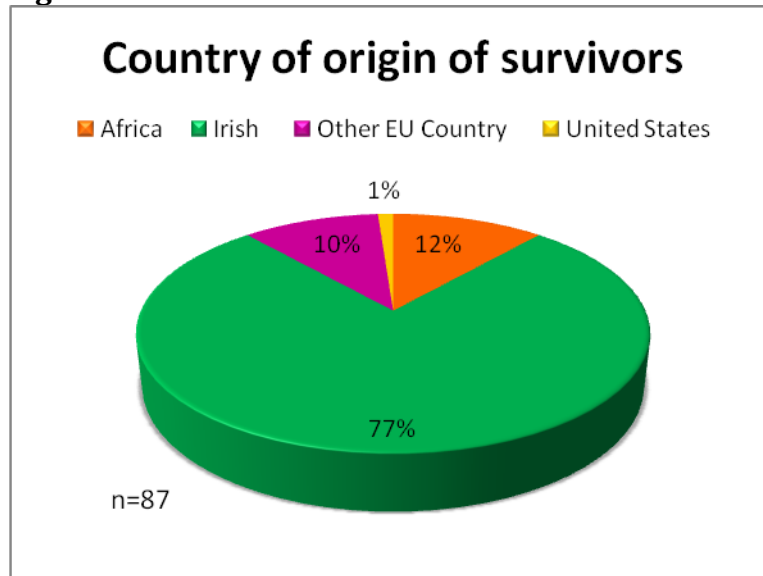
The following figures provide demographic information on the survivors accessing our face to face services

Figure 3.1



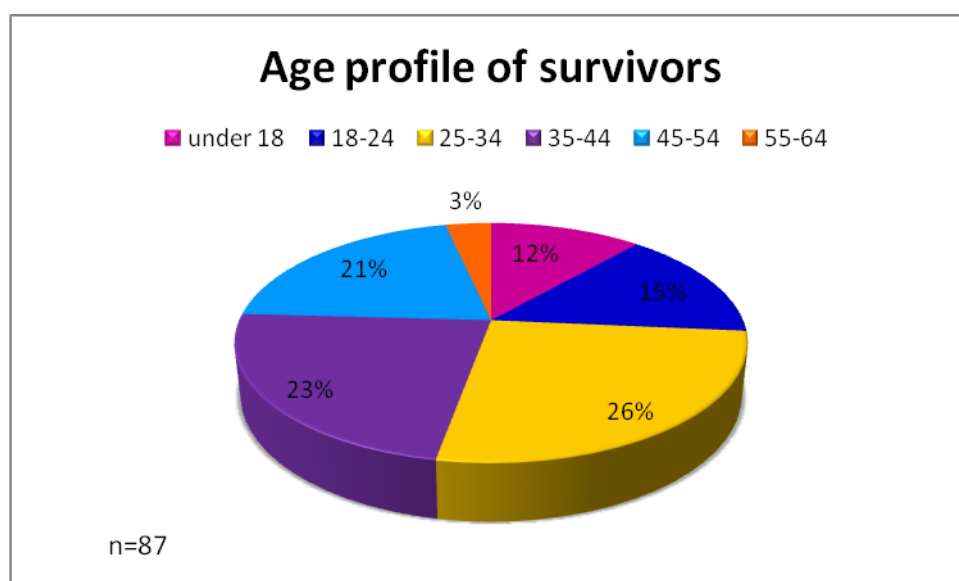
The main difference in 2012 is that the percentage of Asylum Seekers availing of our service has fallen by 10%. This is not surprising given that the number of Asylum seekers coming to Sligo has fallen dramatically.

Figure 3.2



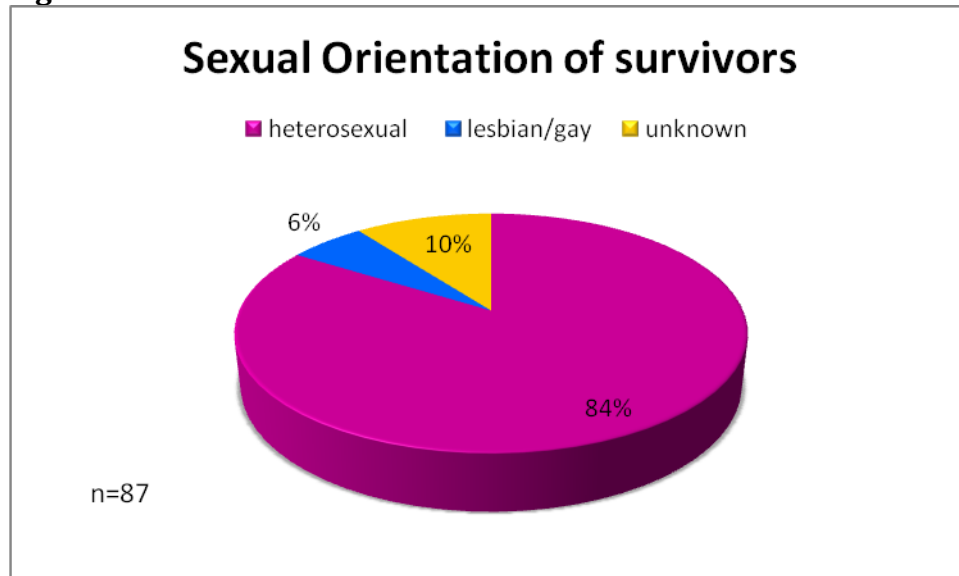
The main difference is the number of clients from African countries has fallen by 9% in 2012 again this is due to the reduction in the number of Asylum Seekers in Sligo

Figure 3.3



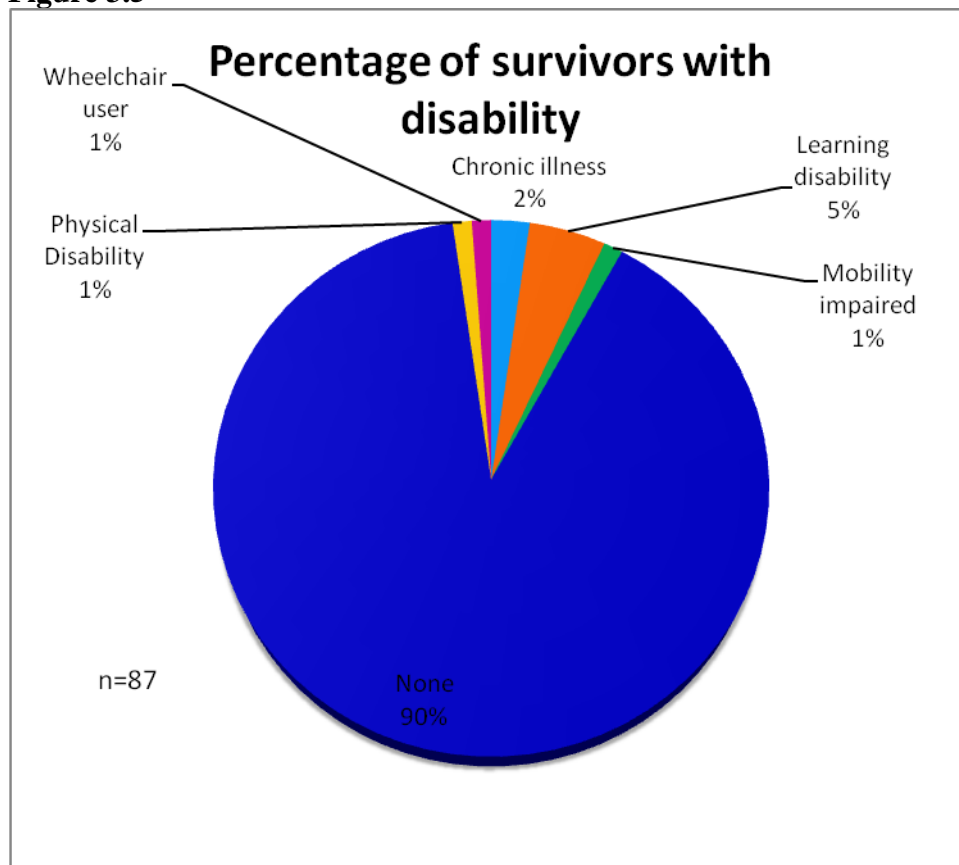
There is an increase in 4% in the number of our survivors who are under 18. The age bracket 25-34 is the most common in 2012.

Figure 3.4



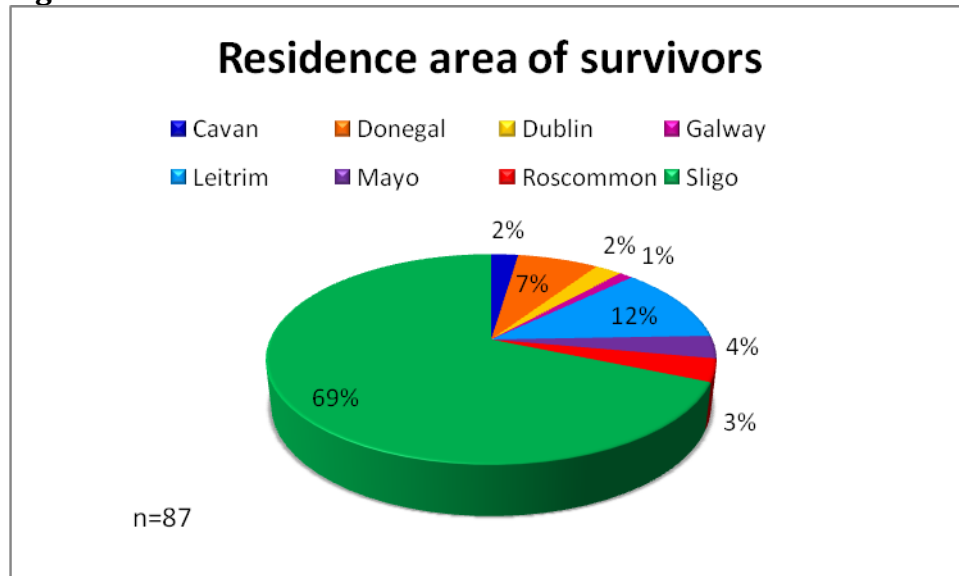
The percentage of lesbian/gay clients stayed the same at 6 % in 2012.

Figure 3.5



The number of survivors with a learning disability increased by 4%

Figure 3.6



The percentage of survivors from Leitrim has increased by 3% to be expected with the Outreach in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Figure 3.7

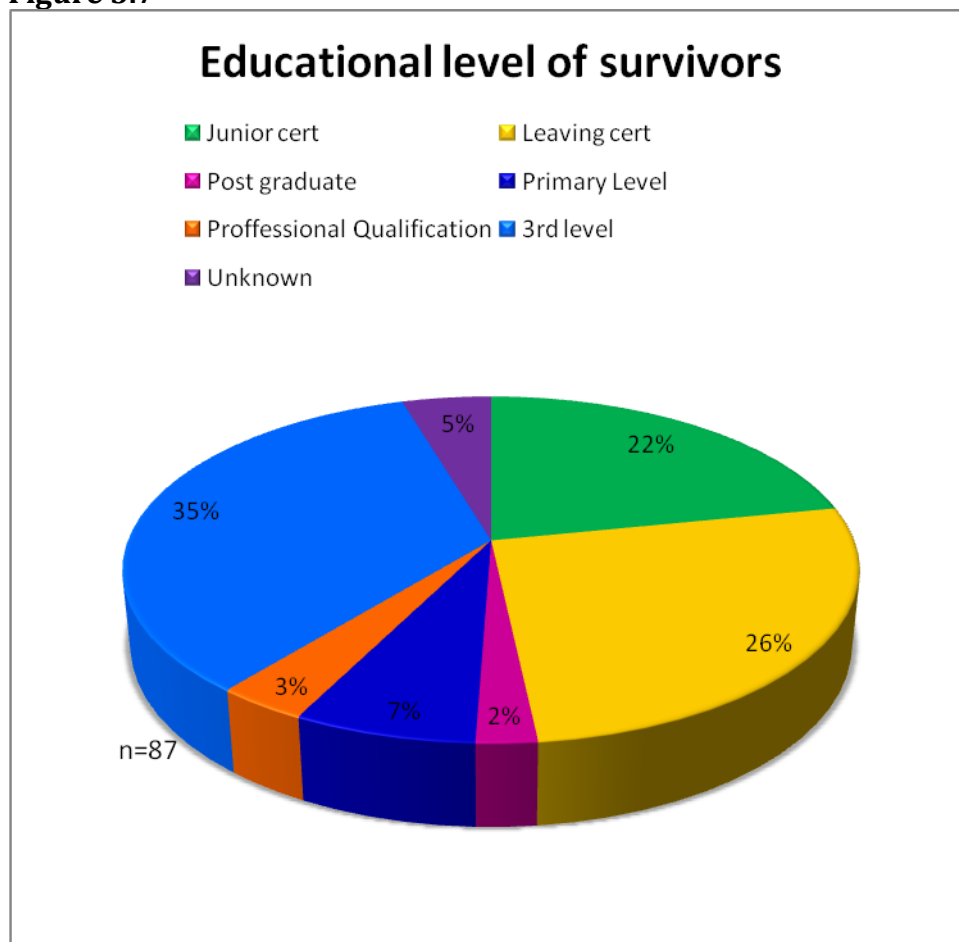
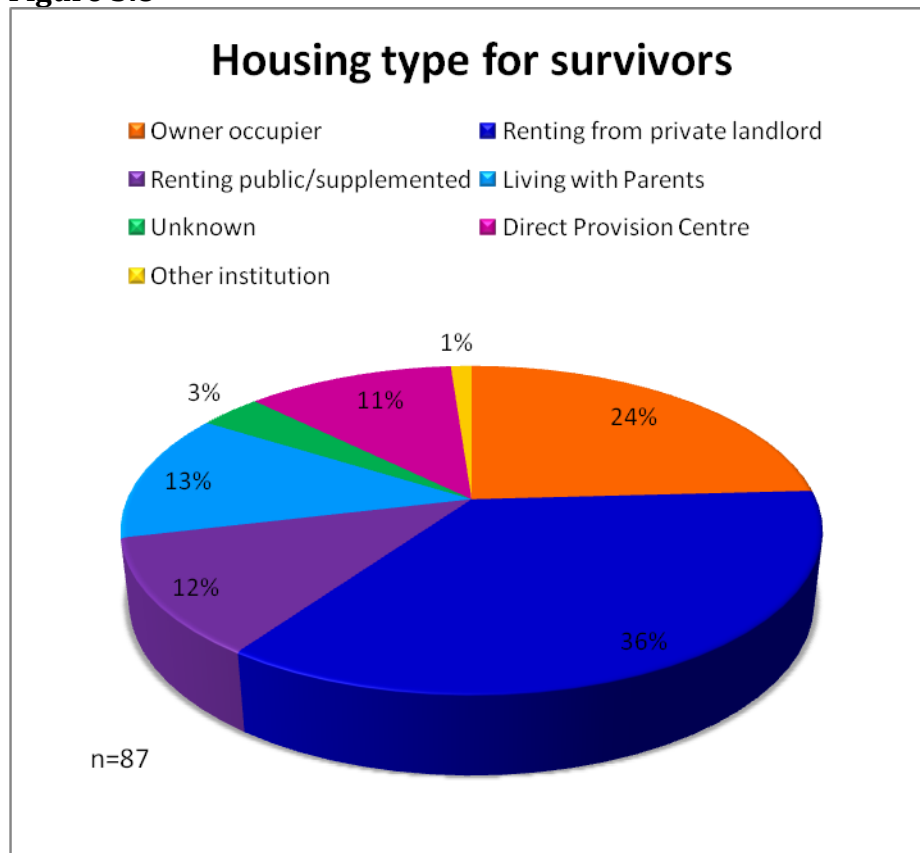
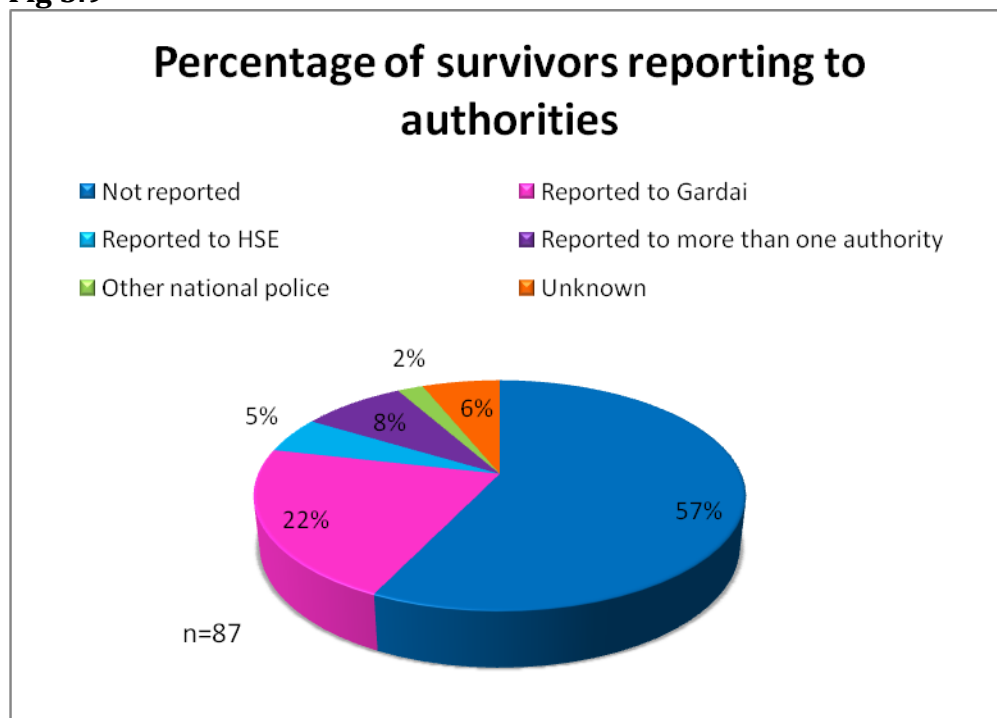


Figure 3.8



Figures 3.7 and 3.8 show that a wide cross section of our community uses our services from all educational and social economic backgrounds

Fig 3.9

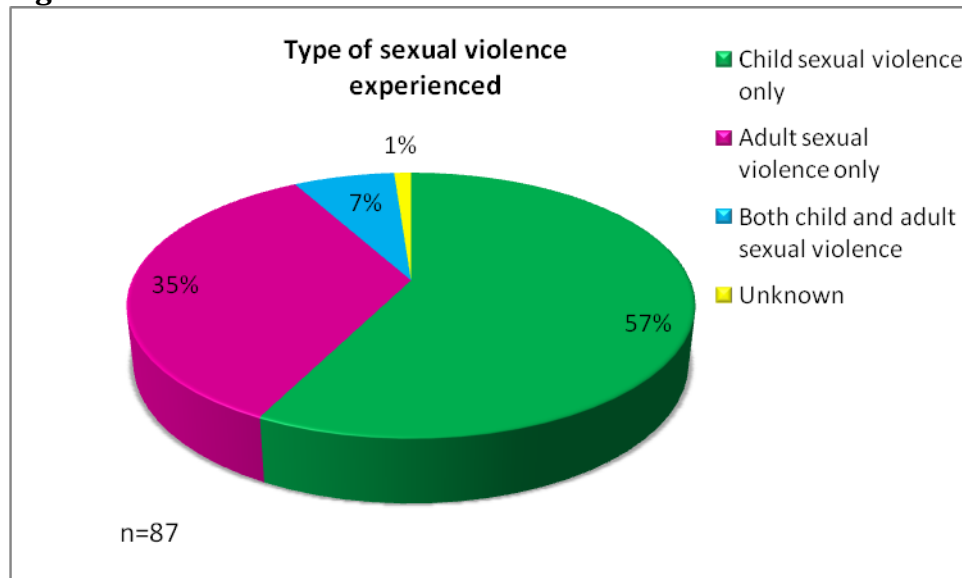


The percentage of unreported crimes of sexual violence fell slightly from 62% to 57% in 2012. Over all the percentage of our clients that report to the Gardai (22%) is higher than that of the general population which has a reporting rate of 10% (Sexual Violence in Ireland, 2002). Evidently the vast majority of sexual crime is not reported or not taken forward to trial and this is a situation rape crisis centres want to see changed by calling for legislative reform that makes the whole legal process an easier, quicker, more supportive and informed experience for complainants of sexual crime

4. Sexual Violence Information

The following figures refer to the type of sexual violence experienced by the survivors availing of our face to face counselling and support services

Figure 4.1



64% of our clients are survivors of child sexual abuse

Figure 4.2

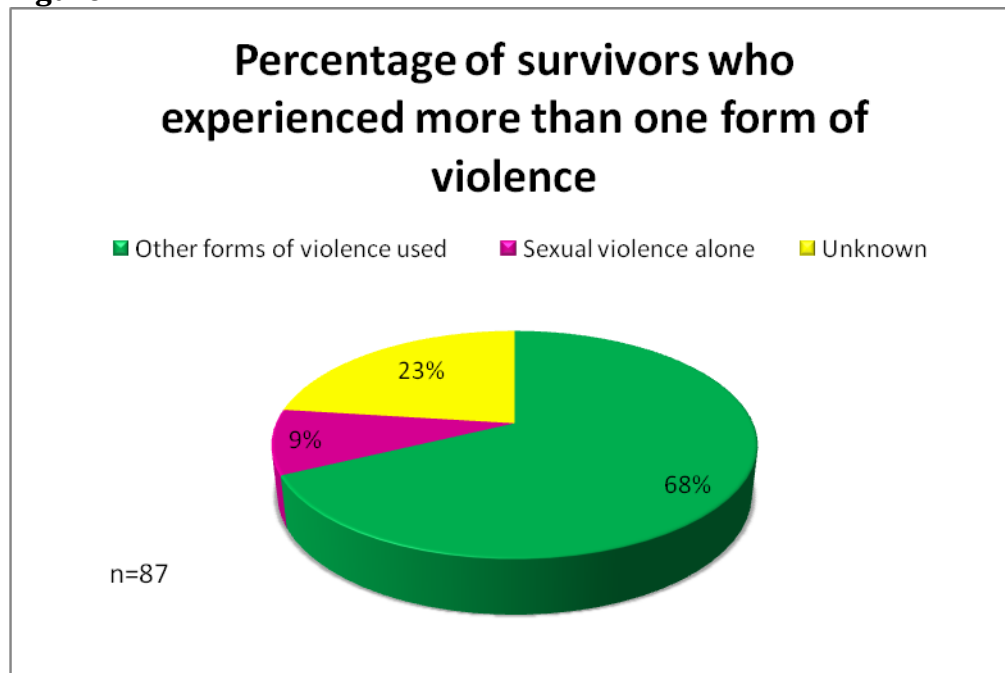
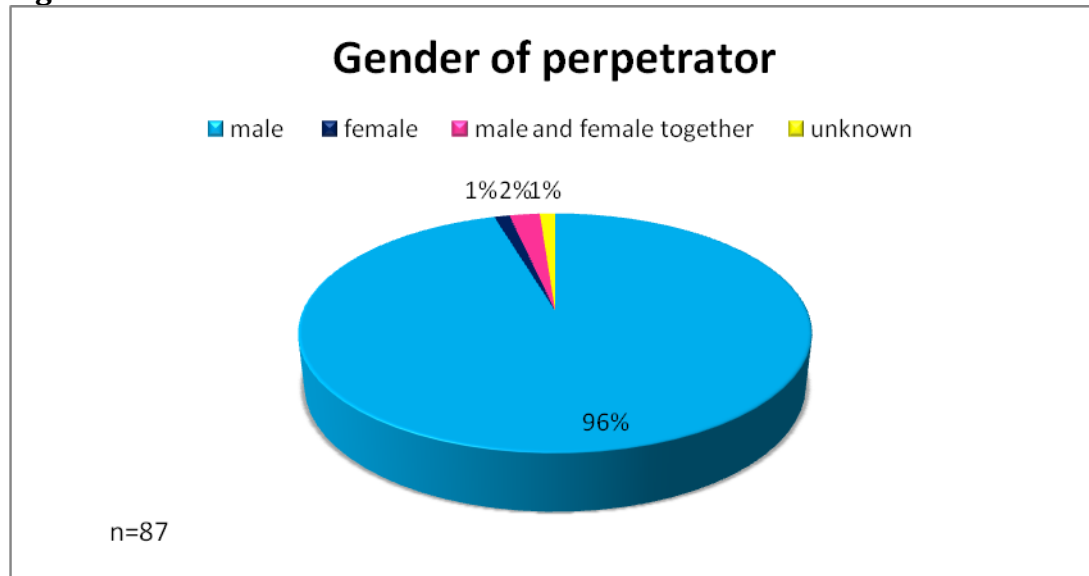
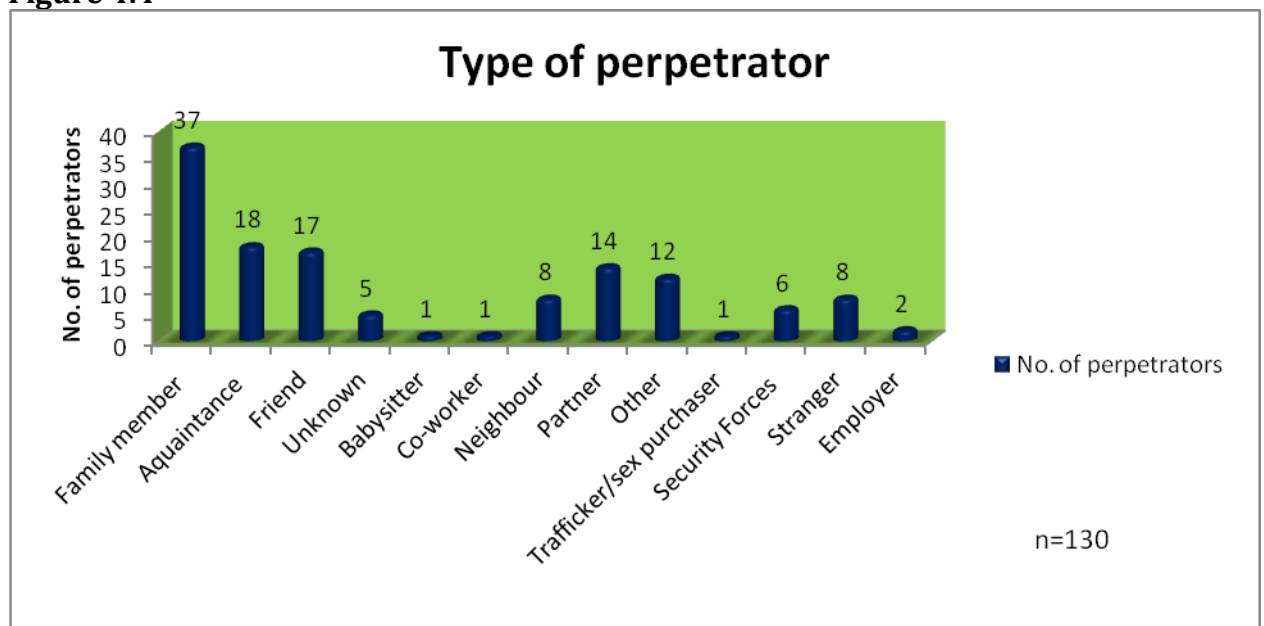


Figure 4.3



The perpetrator gender profile remains the same as previous years

Figure 4.4

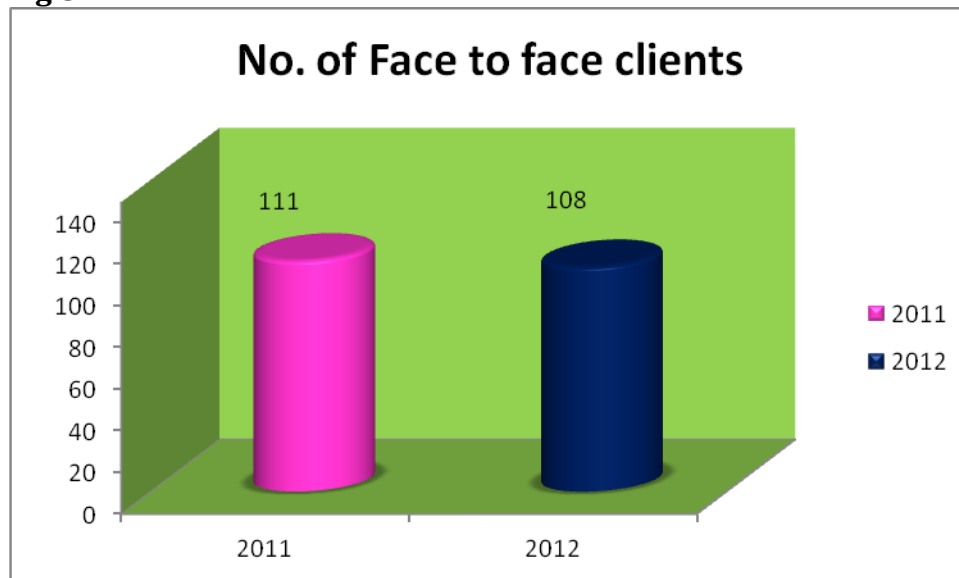


90% of perpetrators were known to our clients this would mirror national and international statistics.

5. Service Information

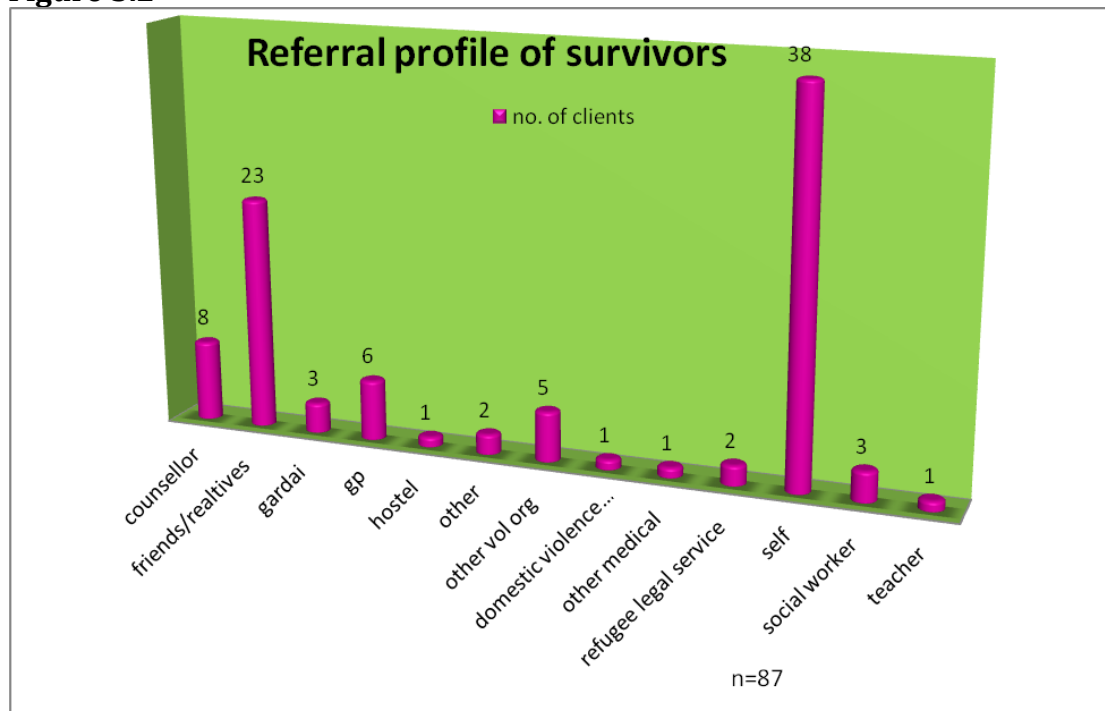
The following figures refer to service statistics relating to how clients come to our face to face service, the types of services clients are using and the uptake of services in comparison with other years

Fig 5.1



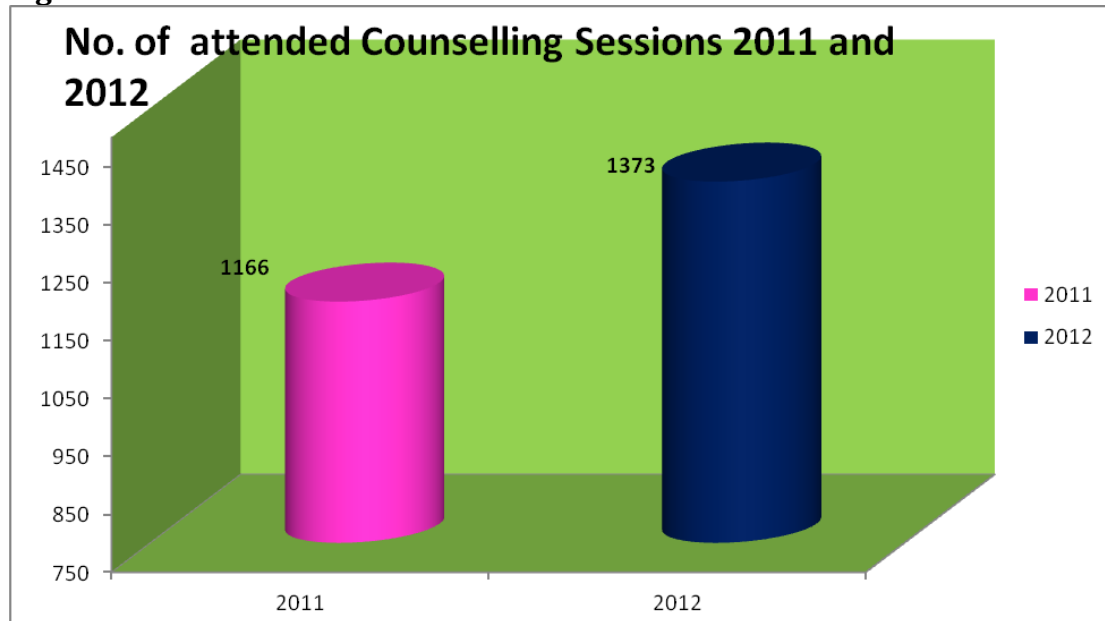
There has been a slight decrease in the number of face to face clients in 2012

Figure 5.2



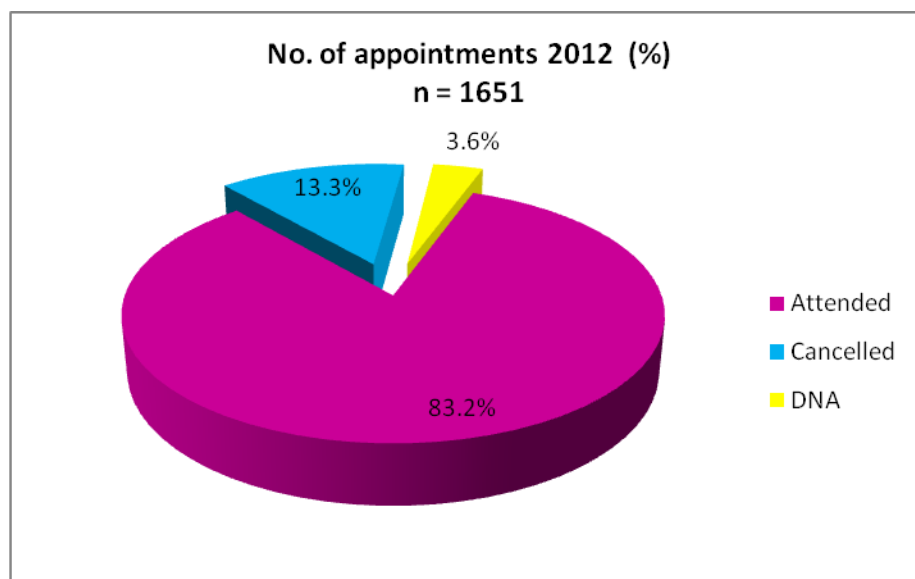
The referral pattern has remained similar over the last number of years with the vast majority of referrals being self and from friends and relatives.

Figure 5.3



There has been a 15% increase in the number of attended appointments in 2012

Figure 5.4



The Percentage of attended appointments remains similar to previous years

Figure 5.5

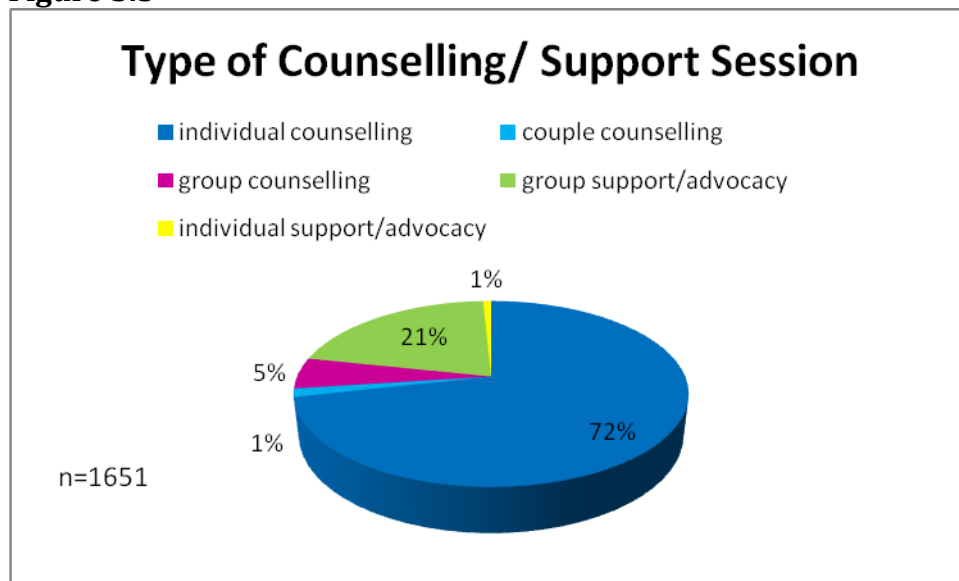
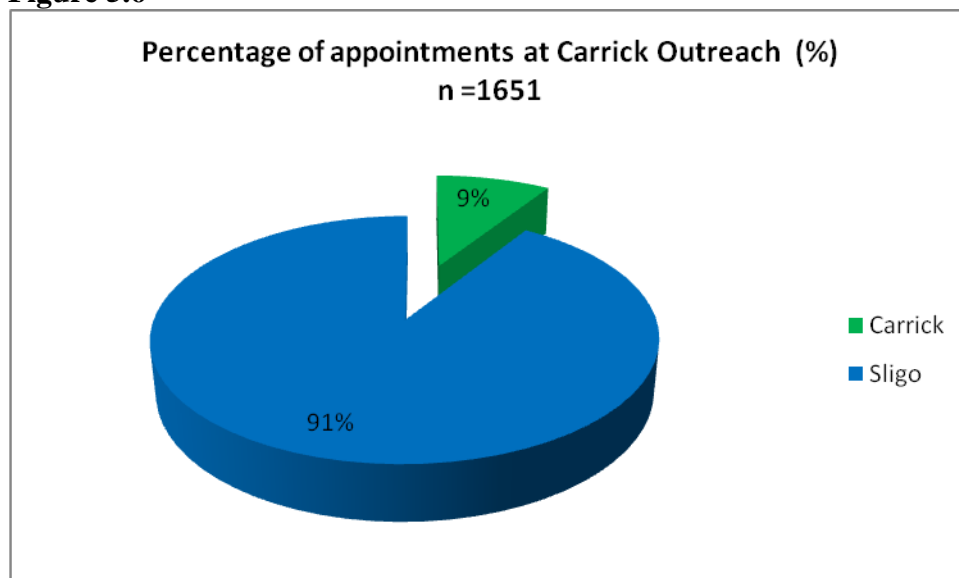


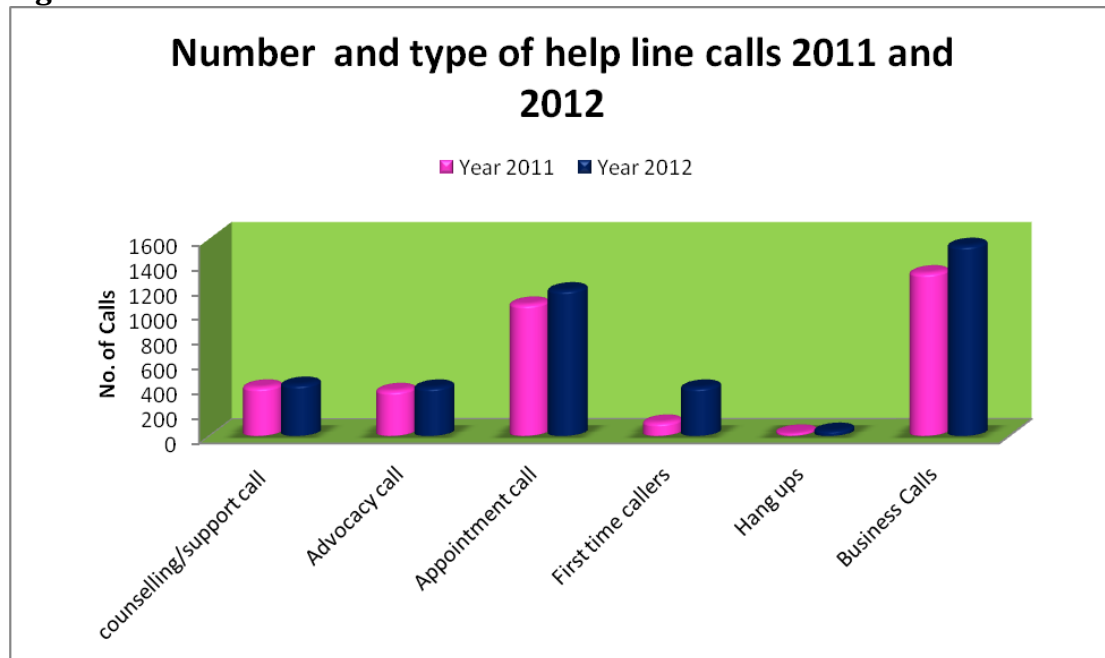
Figure 5.6



6. Free phone Helpline Information

The following figures refer to our free phone helpline counselling service

Fig 6.1



The number of counselling/support calls have increased slightly and the number of appointment and advocacy call has increased. The number of first time callers has increased

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Figure 3.9 Percentage of Survivors Reporting to Authorities

Figure 4.1 Type of Sexual Violence Experienced

Figure 4.2 Percentage of Survivors who Experienced more than one form of Violence

Figure 4.3 Gender of Perpetrator

Figure 4.4 Type of Perpetrator

Figure 5.1 No. of Face to Face Clients

Figure 5.2 Referral Profile of Survivors

Figure 5.3 No. of attended Counselling Sessions

Figure 5.4 Percentage of Attended Appointments

Figure 5.5 Type of Counselling/Support Provided

Figure 5.6 Percentage of total appointments provided by Outreach

Figure 6.1 Number and Type of Help Line Calls 2010 and 2011

