

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



## Annual Report 2013

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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 throughout 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. All our counselling and support services are also available to survivor's families and friends. 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

Sylvia Farkasovska

Helen Murphy

Maire Garvey

Parvez Butt

Ann Murray

## **Directors**

The following members were appointed and retained as Directors at the Annual General Meeting on April 17th 2013

Joan Mullan (Chair)  
Mary Roche (Secretary)  
Kate Duke  
Ursula Devaney  
Cynthia Adubango  
Parvez Butt  
Sylvia Farkasovska  
Suzanne Connolly  
Maire Garvey

Later in the year Maire Garvey and Ursula Devaney resigned from the Board.

## **Volunteers**

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

## **Staff**

Counselling Coordinator: 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 16 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 2013**

### **Outreach Counselling**

In 2013 we continued our provision of Face to Face Outreach Counselling in Carrick-on-Shannon, County Leitrim. The service provides all the counselling and support services offered at our main centre in Sligo. This service is provided by fully trained Rape Crisis Counsellor, Rosaleen Kilgannon who has been counselling in the rape crisis centre in Sligo since 2004. Originally a 6 month pilot project we succeeded in securing some funding from the Leitrim Development Company and continued through 2013 fundraising the majority of the money needed ourselves. In September 2013 we secured some additional funding from the Child and Family Agency to continue the outreach for 2014. This provided the opportunity to evaluate and re model the Outreach Service to incorporate two newly recruited volunteers in the Carrick area. 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 1500 voluntary hours were provided in 2013. Volunteer involvement ranges from provision of face to face therapy, helpline cover, directorship, fundraising, awareness raising, training and education. In 2013 28% of face to face clients were seen by volunteers this is an increase of 10% from 2012. In January 2013 we continued with our Fundraising Volunteer Group for further information on this group's substantial achievements please see the fundraising section of this report.

### **Website Development**

During 2013 we developed a member's website page with all our collated policies and procedures so each member can access the information they need independently of the office.

## **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 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.

### **Racist Incident Reporting Project**

In 2013 Gilla, on behalf of our centre, took part in establishing a 'Racist Incident Referral and Support Service' for Sligo.

This project was funded by 'Peace and Reconciliation' and led by Deo Ladislav Ndakengerwa together with the Sligo Family Centre as the lead agency.

We were among a number of local service providers who came together to work on procedures and provide training to front line staff to become a first point of contact for reporting racist incidents.

By the end of 2013 racist and sectarian incidents were being recorded, monitored and analysed. Through our work with asylum Seekers we have an important role in ensuring any racist incidents reported by our clients are fed into this project. The project received further funding and will be continued into 2014.

### **Education and Awareness Raising**

During 2013 we provided the following education/awareness raising inputs:

#### **Training New Volunteer Counsellors**

From May to October 2013 we ran 5 weekends (60 hours) RCNI Top -Up training for therapists in our centre. The aim was to recruit new volunteers for Sligo and Carrick as named in our strategic plan.

The programme was funded by Leitrim and Sligo VECs. We used this opportunity to raise funds by charging therapists who wanted training around working with survivors but did not want to volunteer for us.

One man and nine women participated in the training. One participant was a doctor, originally from Libya, who now hopes to set up help for her own people in her home country. Her different perspective was highly appreciated by all of us.

Gilla Cornelius was the main tutor and Margaret Thermes the main co-facilitator. Ursula Devaney came in for one weekend and Cynthia Adubango had a morning presentation on asylum seekers.

The training was a great success and the feedback extremely positive. With this training the centre has gained 5 new counsellors, 2 of them operating from Carrick-

on-Shannon, 3 of them from Sligo. Within these new volunteers there are child and adolescent therapists and art therapists, which will broaden the scope of services our centre can offer.

### Turn off the Red Light Campaign 2013

Our centre continues to support Turn off the Red Light Campaign, a national campaign that aims to change the current Irish legislation on prostitution in order to tackle human trafficking.

In June 2013, the Joint Oireachtas Committee published its report 'Report on the Review of the Legislation on Prostitution in Ireland', which unanimously recommended that a law should be passed criminalising people who pay for sex, along the lines of the Swedish model. The report made a series of other recommendations for legal reform including increasing penalties for trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. In support of the report, we published numerous press releases informing the public about the current developments.

In December 2013, RCSACC and DVAS organized a public talk by Rachel Moran, the author of "Paid For – My Journey through Prostitution" at IT Sligo. Rachel was prostituted between the ages of 15 to 22. She wrote a blog under the pseudonym "FreelrishWomen" from February 2012 until April 2013 and revealed her identity on the Late Late Show in April 12th when her book was published.

Rachel spoke about her experiences of exploitation in prostitution and highlighted the reality of "sex work" for women. Rachel was accompanied by Justine Reilly who with Rachel is one of the founders of SPACE [Survivors of Prostitution –Abuse Calling for Enlightenment].

The event, which was a great success, was directed at the IT students and lecturers and it was also attended by public and local councillors.

### Other Awareness Raising:

Throughout 2013 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:

Editorial on our services

Fundraising Fashion show

TORL articles X 3

April Fundraising Day

Article in Sligo Now

Article on Client's experience  
Wellness Centre Fundraiser

Radio Interviews:

Turn off the Red Light Campaign X 3

### Foroige Training

Ursula, Elaine and Mary pulled off a near Irish tour of Donegal, Limerick, Tullamore and Dublin by supporting Foroige in the delivery of training of trainers in the Sex and the Law modules of the Real U training to over 60 participants. This is a national broad based sex and relationships education programme which we were able to contribute to in design terms and it is aimed at groups of young people in youth centres, HSE residential centres and some schools

### Training and Conferences

Extensive further training was sourced and undertaken by both staff and volunteers during 2013. The training and conferences undertaken by different members is as follows:

#### Training

**Male Intimate Abuse Training** – Don Hennessey

**Holotropic Breathwork** – Jean Farrell

**Spirituality for the Helping Professions**- Boyle Family Life Centre

**Equine Therapy**- Horse Sense

**Trauma Therapy Training**- Babette Rothschild

**Self Injury** –Kreative Interventions

**Train the Trainer**- CMD Training

**Couple Counselling using Gestalt Therapy** – Sligo Gestalt Counselling

**Racist Incident Reporting**- Family Resource Centre

**Working with Gay/ Lesbian Bi-Sexual Clients**- Marina Tuffy

**Diploma in Gestalt Therapy**- Irish Gestalt Centre

**Issues of Sexual Violence: The Counselling Process**- Dublin RCC

**Group Leader Training**

**Strengthening Families** -N.W. Drugs Forum

**Hakomi Practice Mentoring Day** – Hakomi Ireland

**Reflective Practice**- Sligo Arts Psychotherapy Centre

**Solution Focused Brief Therapy Training** – Boyle family Life Centre

**Developments in Psychotherapy** – Ivor Browne

**ION Training Day** – Identification of Need

**Meditation Course**- Sligo Gestalt Counselling

#### Conferences

Rape Crisis Network Ireland AGM

Rape Crisis Network Ireland National Statistics Launch  
Bullying and Cyberbullying – Education Centre Sligo  
Aontas Learners Festival- VEC Leitrim  
Launch of The Journey of Mental Health DVD – Sligo Traveller Support Group  
Launch of Racist Incident Reporting – Sligo Family Resource Centre  
Don't Say a Word – Sligo Traveller Support Group

## Fundraising Events

During 2013 we undertook a number of initiatives with our Fundraising Volunteer Group as follows:

- Our annual Church Gate Collection raised €387 thanks to Maire Garvey for organising the day.
- Stride with Pride Fashion Show – a number of marketing students from Sligo Institute of Technology organised a fashion show for us in the Radisson Hotel. The event was a huge success raising €1328. Many thanks to the organisers, the fashion outlets, the Radisson, the local media and all others who supported the night.
- Sligo Rising- this was part of the V-Day One Billion Rising Campaign to end violence against women and girls. An Talamh a local group of people who have come together to provide workshops organised the event which included flash mob dances and a workshop in the Northside Resource Centre and raised €198 for us.
- Fundraising Day – This project was a day of awareness raising and fundraising involving a bucket collection, cake sale, music and street entertainment. The day was an enormous success with €1500 being raised. The whole team, especially Irene Mcloughlin, 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 €760 many thanks to Mary Roche and Joan Mullan who put in a huge amount of effort into the day.
- We continued our Bag Packing in Dunnes, Cranmore Sligo it was a huge success with €1817 raised a special thank you to Ursula Devaney and Tina Horton who organised the two days.
- For the first time we had a Wellness Day hosted by Sligo Wellness Centre and raised €95. Many thanks to the practitioners at the wellness centre who very generously provided treatments to the public on the day.
- For the first time this year we raised funds through running the RCNI Top Up Training to therapists we raised €2500 doing this well done to Gilla Cornelius and Margaret Thermes as lead facilitators.
- Beltra Market raised €146 for us by having a fundraising day. A big thank you to Karen O' Shea for organising this.
- We also received just over €3440 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 2013 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 2013

Applications for funding were made to the following organisations during the year 2013:

The HSE North West received €164,330  
COSC received €3,500  
Leitrim Development Company received €500  
Child and Family Agency received €7467  
Child and Family Agency received €7050  
Caring Communities Grant – unsuccessful  
OLC Ireland Trust Fund 2 applications – unsuccessful  
Lottery Funds 2 applications – unsuccessful

### Evaluation 2013

#### Team Evaluation

A formal appraisal system has been implemented for staff and volunteers. During 2013 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 Foroige 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.

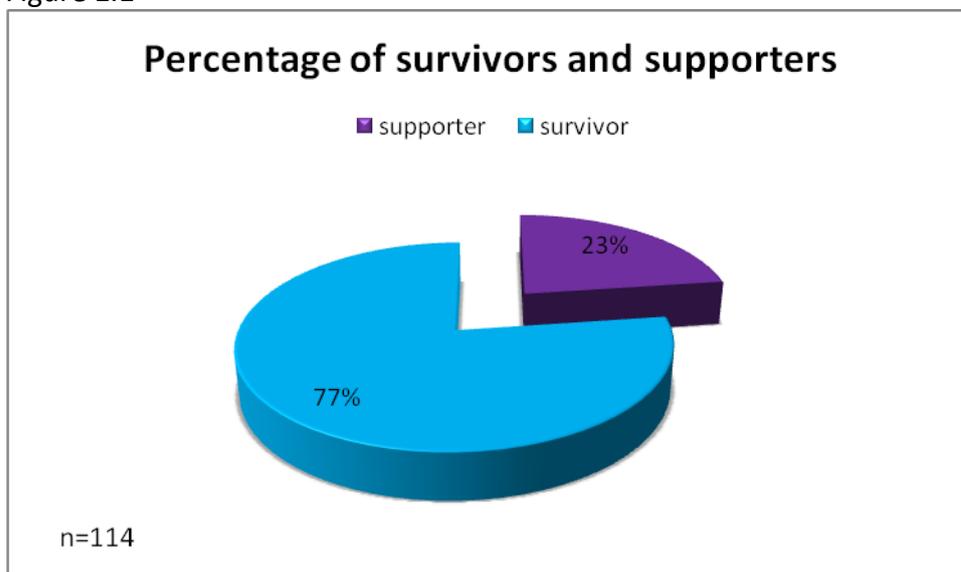
### Statistical Information 2013

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.

#### Face to Face Client Information (survivor and supporter)

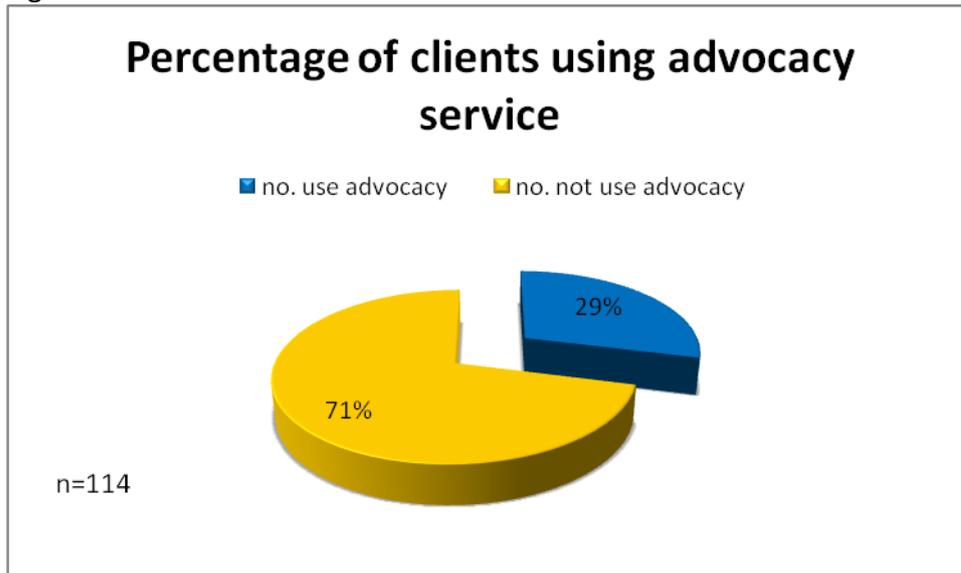
The following figures refer to information about the survivors and supporters who use our face to face counselling and support services.

Figure 1.1



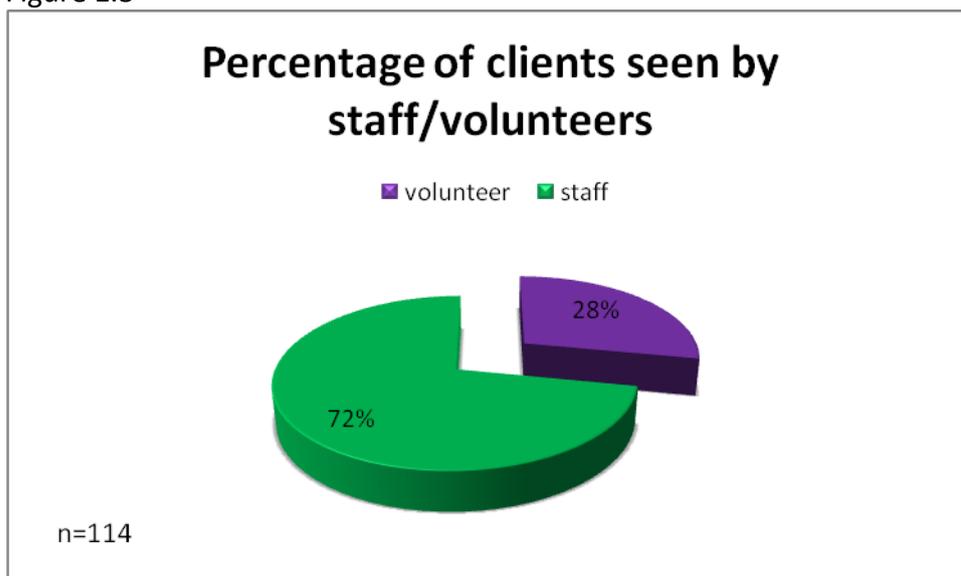
The percentage of supporters has increased from 19% to 23% during 2013.

Figure 1.2



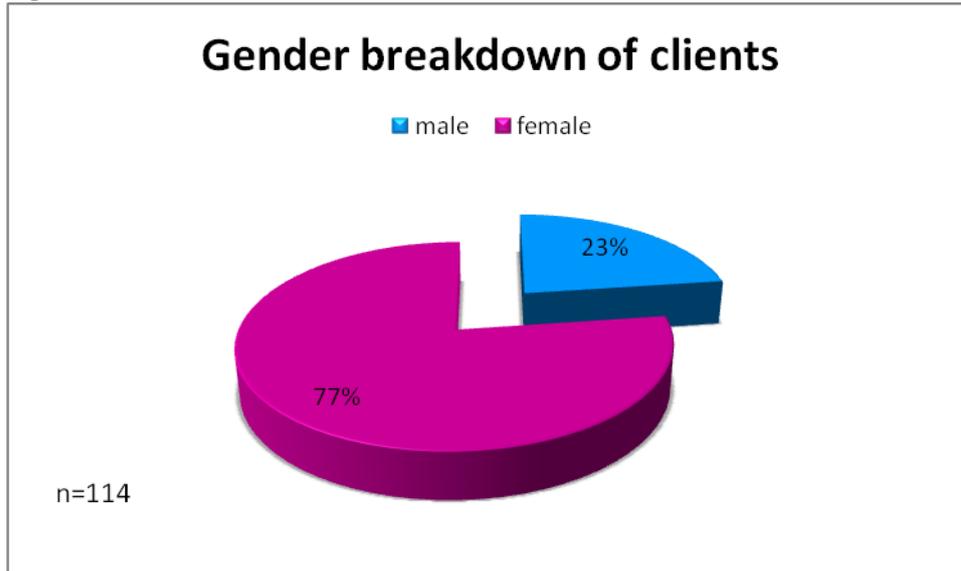
The percentage of clients using the advocacy service has reduced by 9% in 2013

Figure 1.3



The percentage of clients seen by volunteers has increased by 10% in 2013.

Figure 1.4



There has been a 3% decrease in the number of men availing of our service in 2013

### Supporter Information

The following statistics refer to supporters only

Figure 2.1

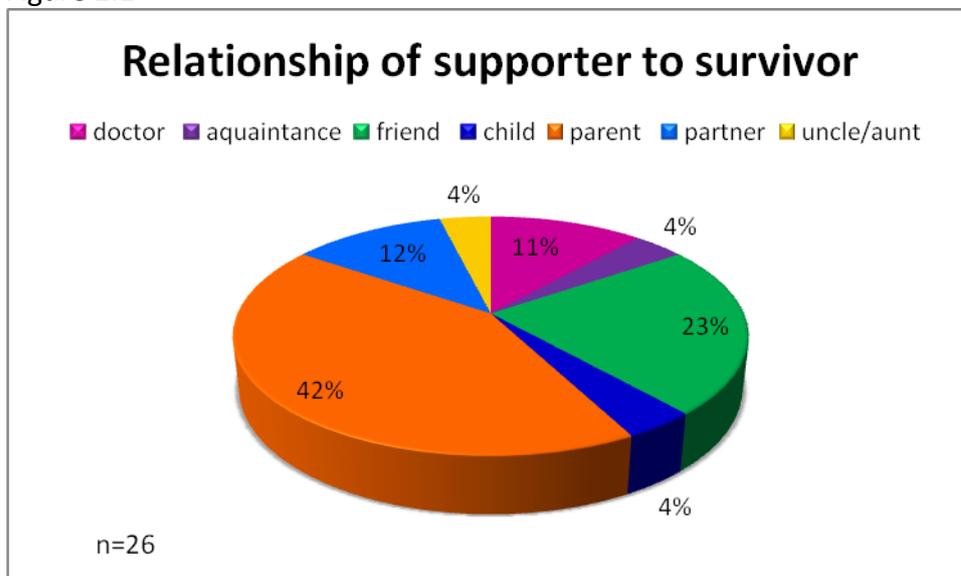
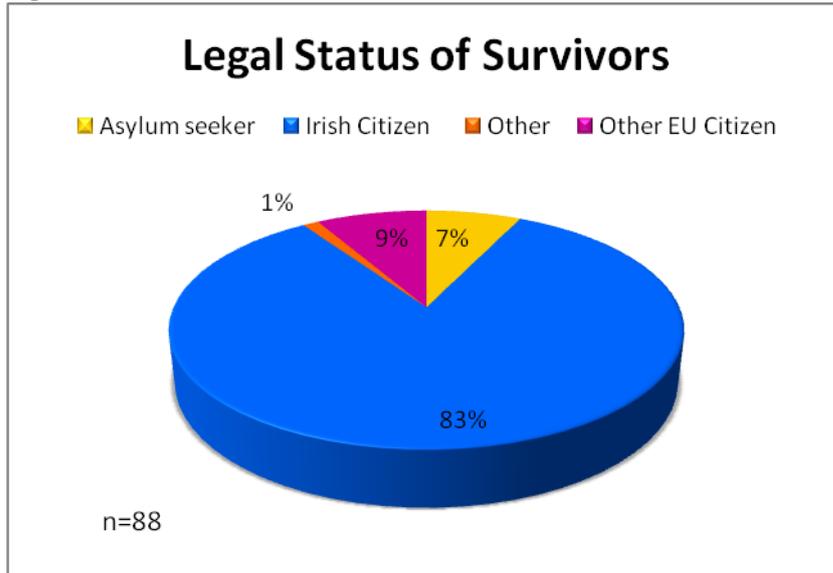


Figure 2.1 shows that the vast majority of supporters are parents of survivors.

### Survivor Information

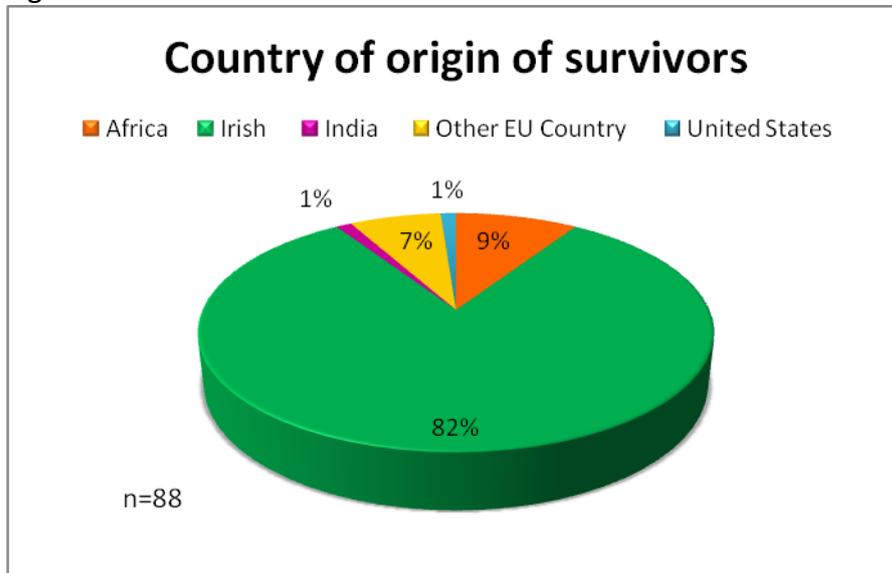
The following figures provide demographic information on the survivors accessing our face to face services

Figure 3.1



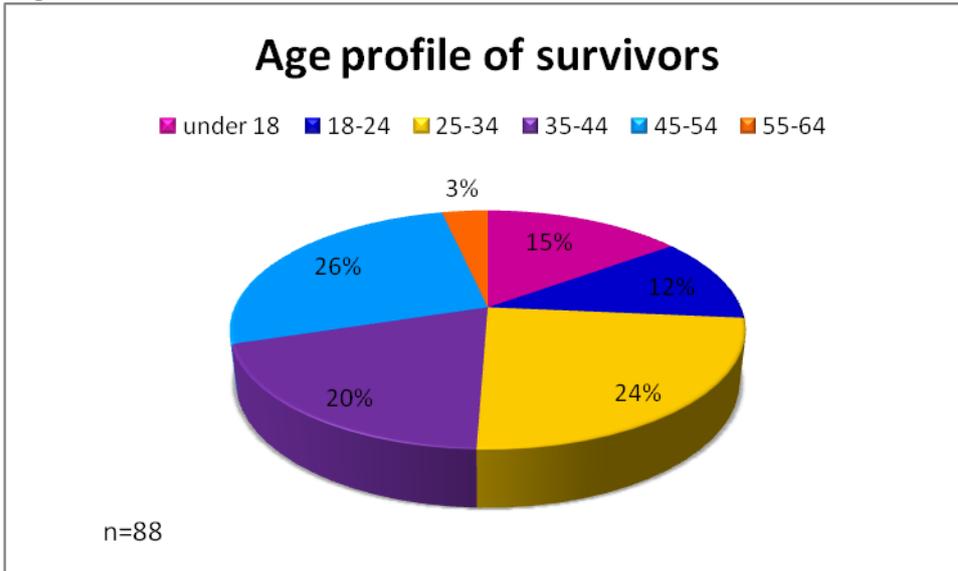
The main difference in 2013 is that the percentage of Asylum Seekers availing of our service continues to fall. This is not surprising given that the services that were in place for Asylum Seekers which used to refer to us have been cut.

Figure 3.2



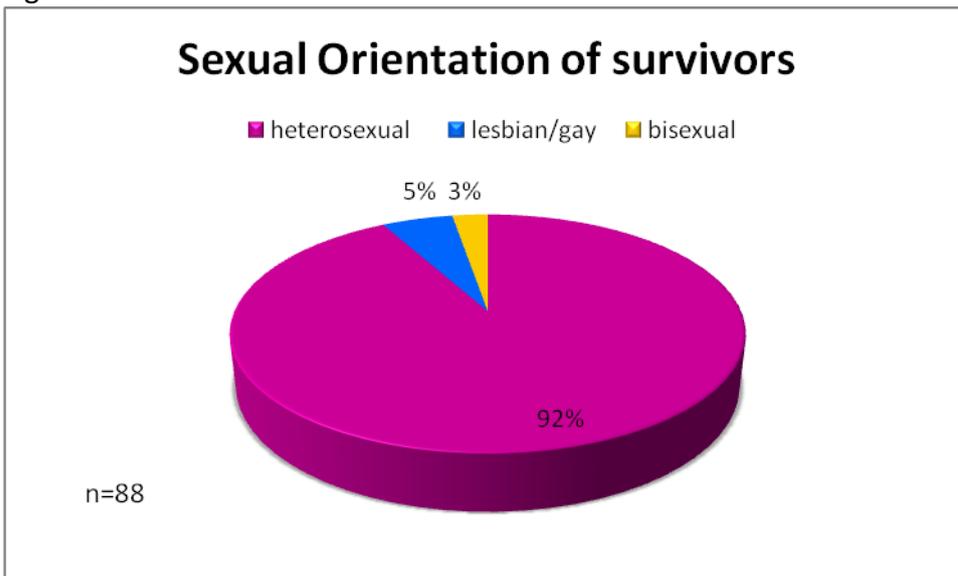
The main difference is the number of clients from African countries has continued to fall in 2013. This is not surprising given that the services that were in place for Asylum Seekers which used to refer to us have been cut.

Figure 3.3



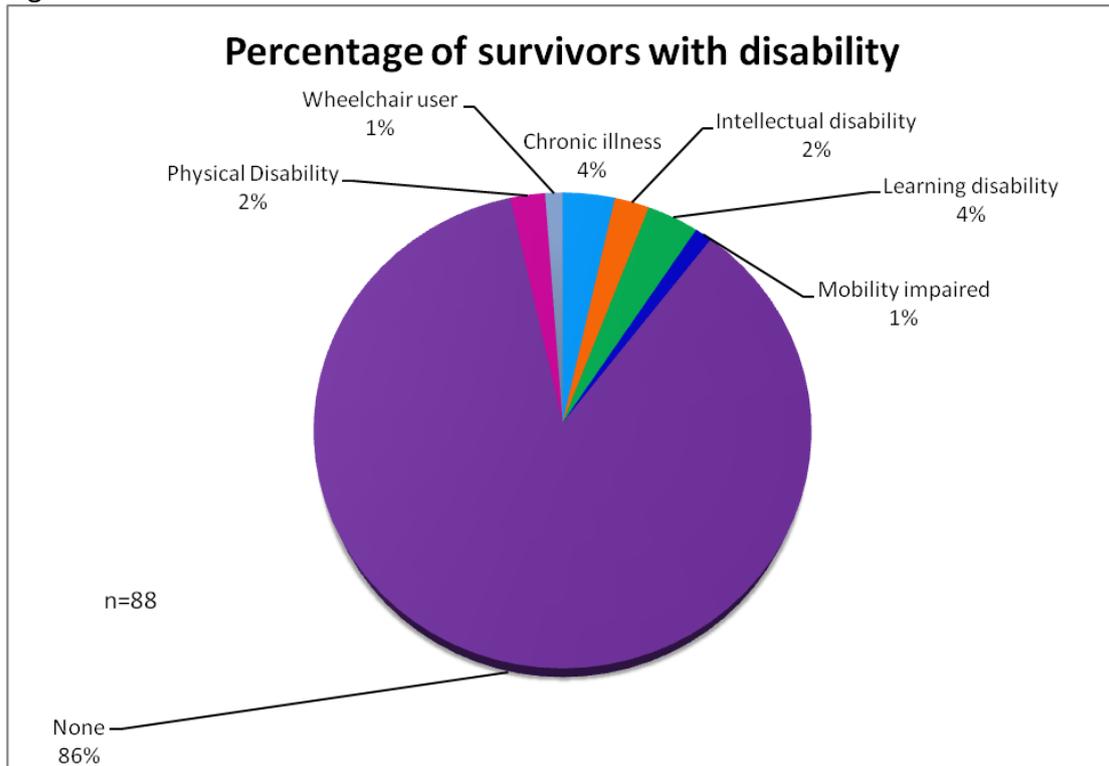
In 2013 the most common age group is 45-54 this is different from 2012 when it was 25-34

Figure 3.4



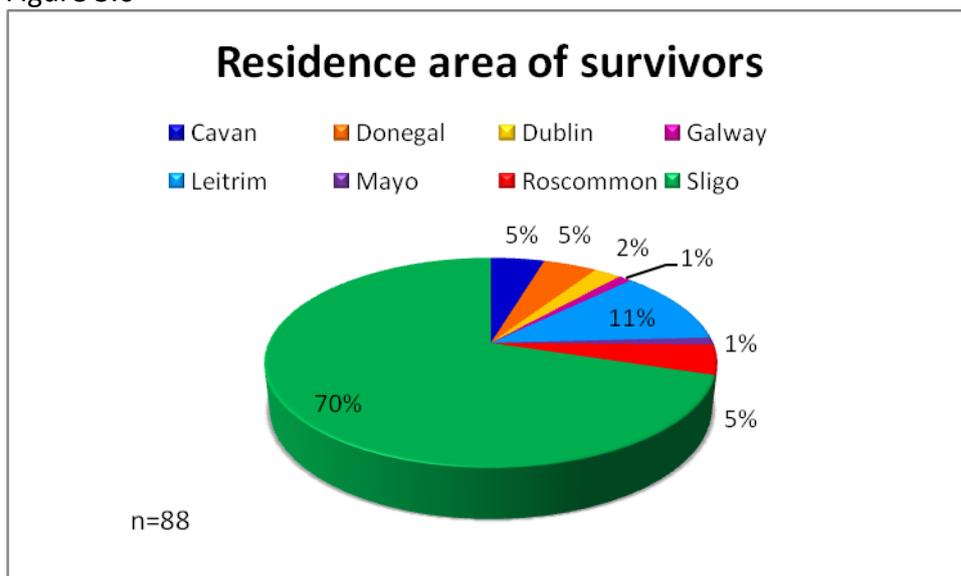
There was no substantial change in figures for 2013

Figure 3.5



There was no substantial change in figures for 2013

Figure 3.6



There was no substantial change in figures for 2013

Figure 3.7

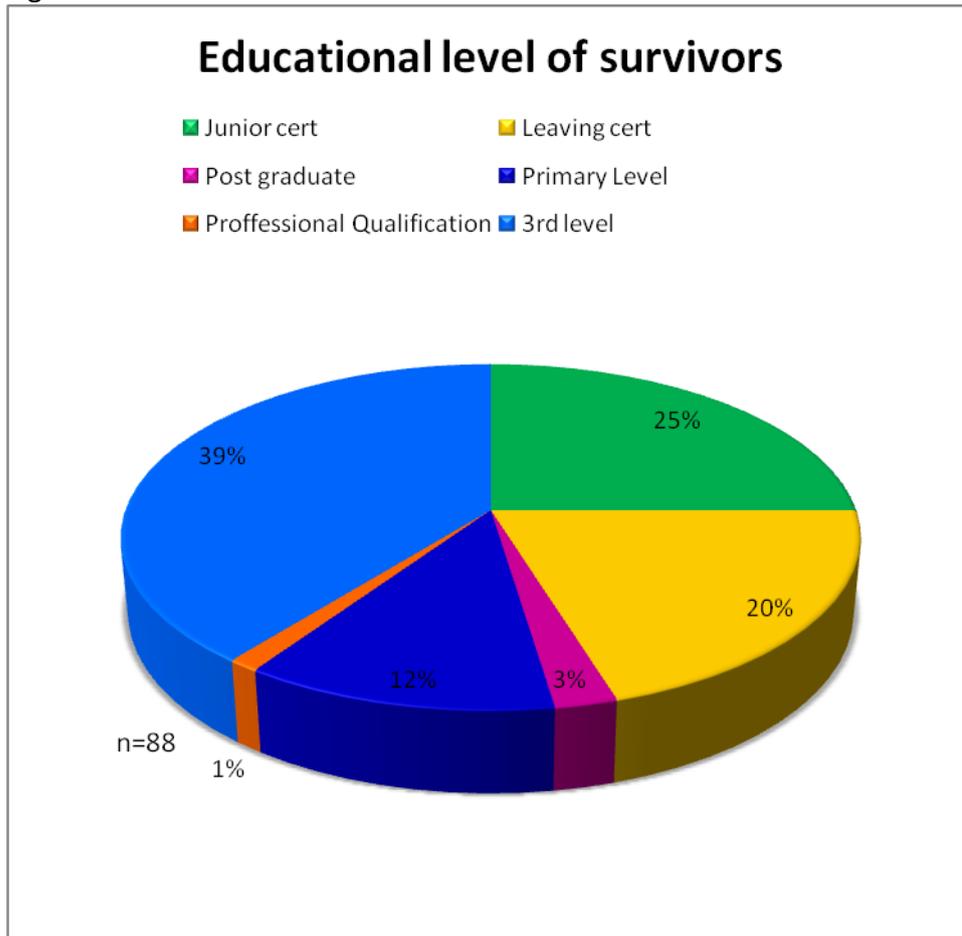
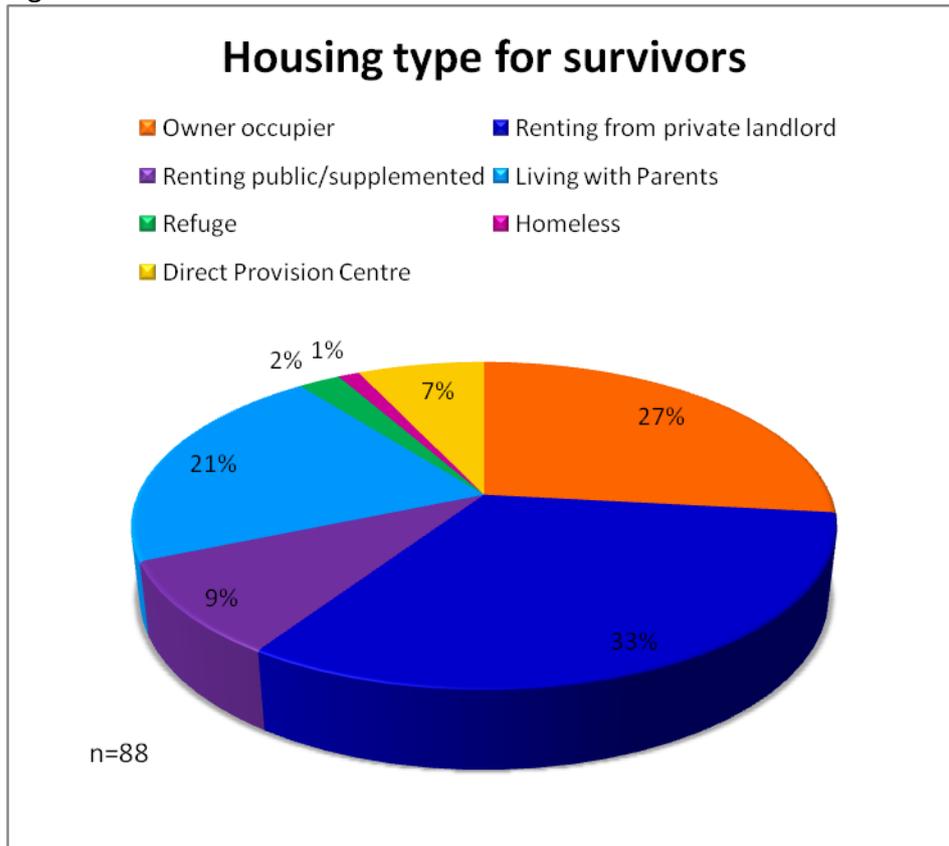
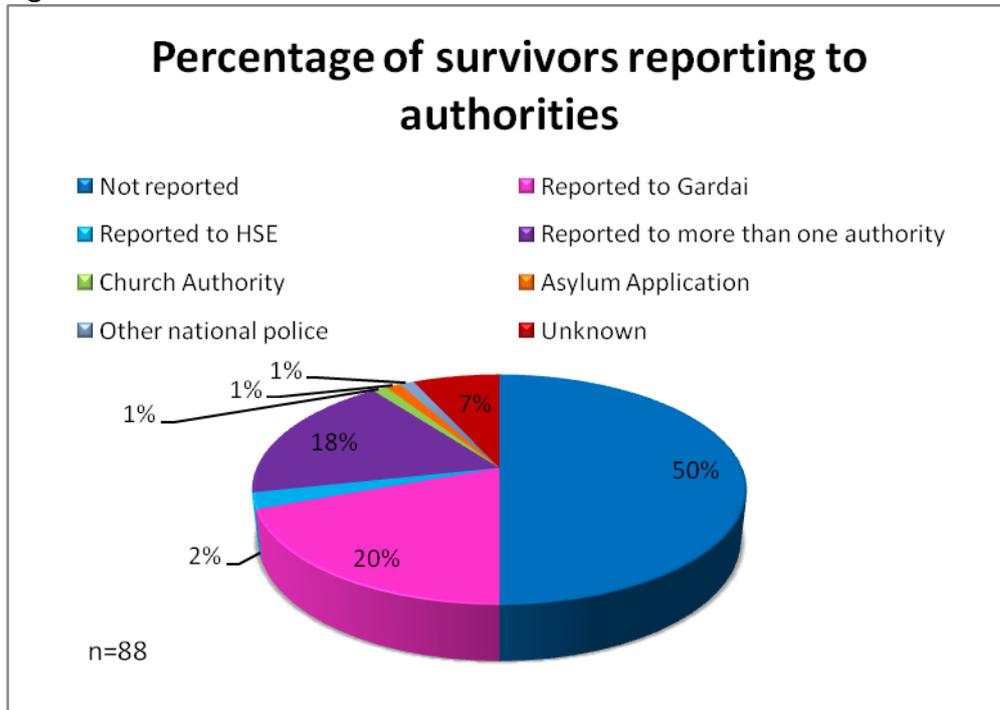


Figure 3.8



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

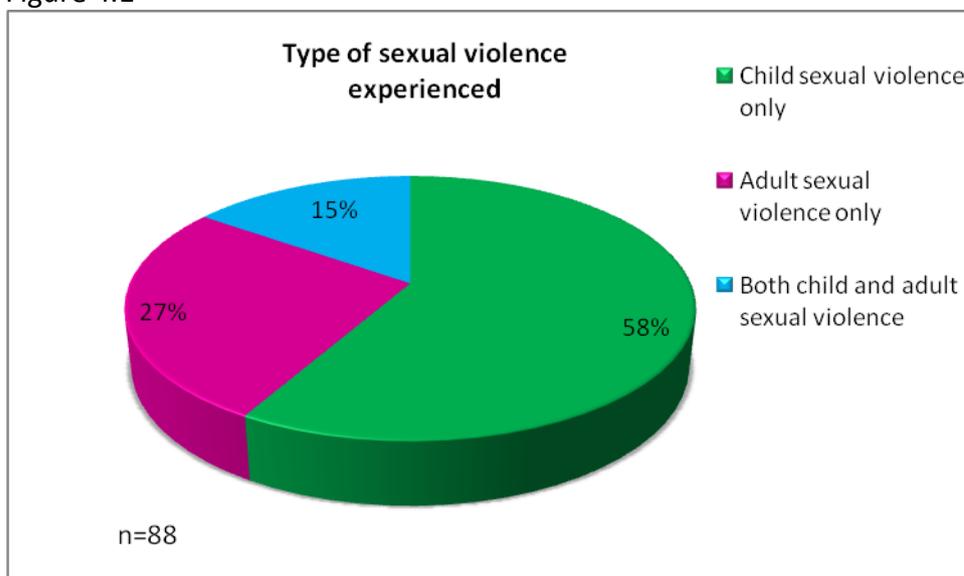


The percentage of unreported crimes of sexual violence fell slightly from 57% to 50% in 2013. Over all the percentage of our clients that report to the Gardai (20%) is higher than that of the general population which has a reporting rate of 10% (Sexual Violence in Ireland, 2002). Evidently the vast majority 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

## Sexual Violence Information

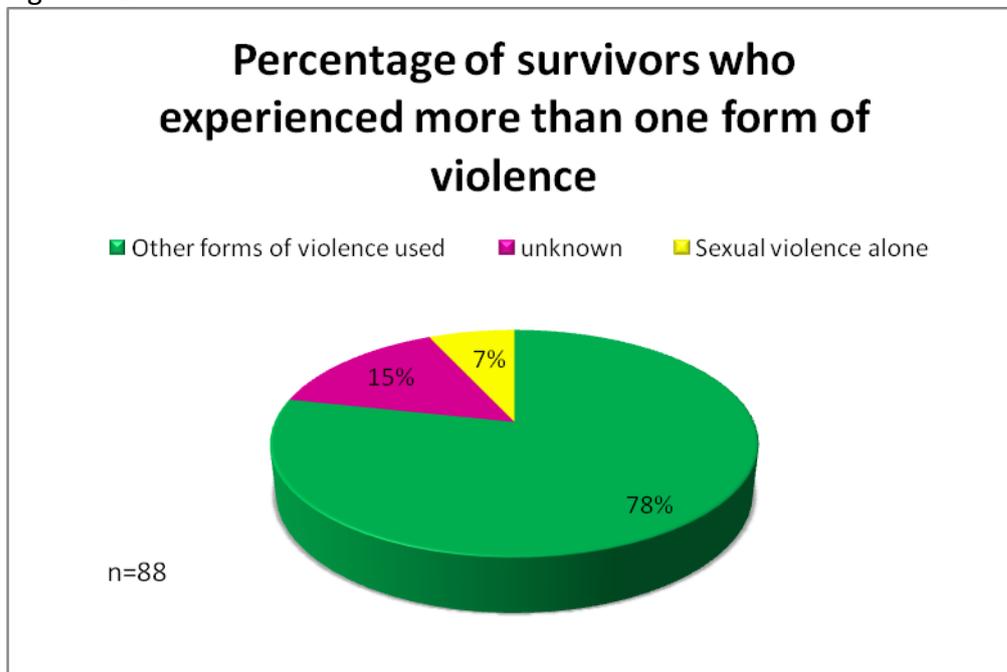
The following figures refer to the type of sexual violence experienced by the survivors availing of our face to face counselling and support services

Figure 4.1



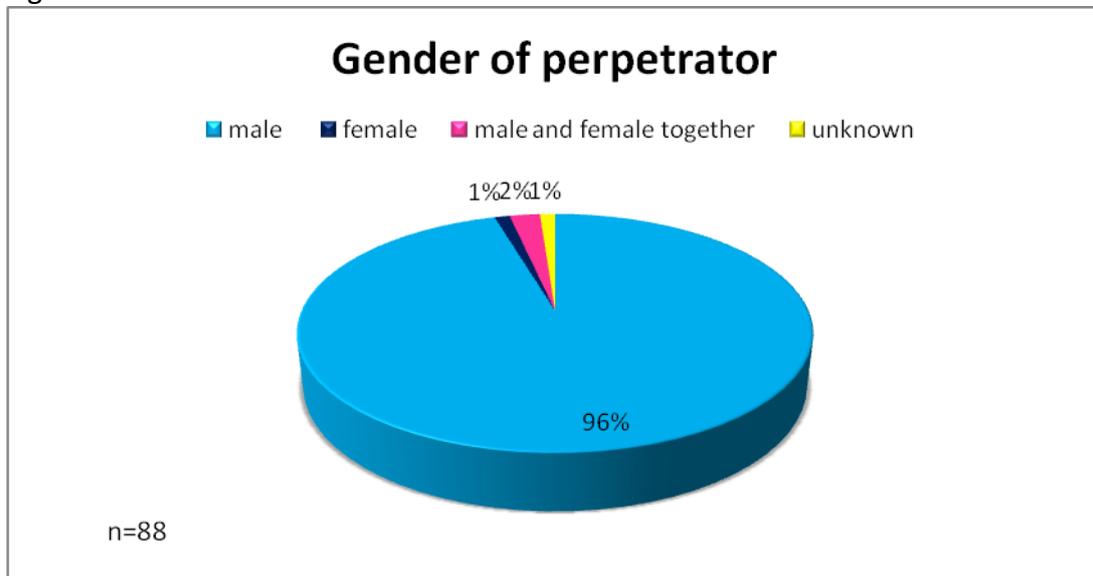
64% of our clients are survivors of child sexual abuse

Figure 4.2



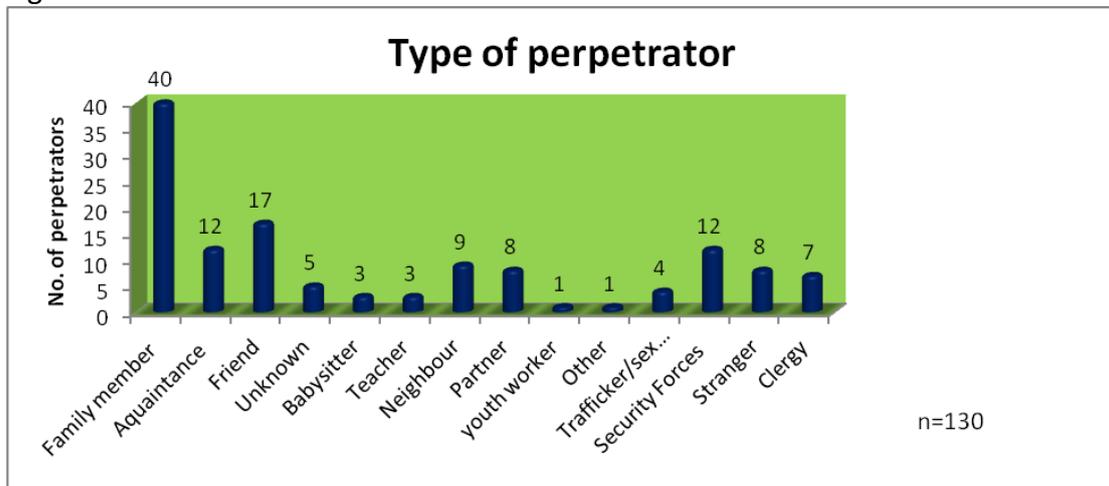
The percentage of survivors experiencing more than one form of violence increased by 10% in 2013

Figure 4.3



The perpetrator gender profile remains the same as previous years

Figure 4.4

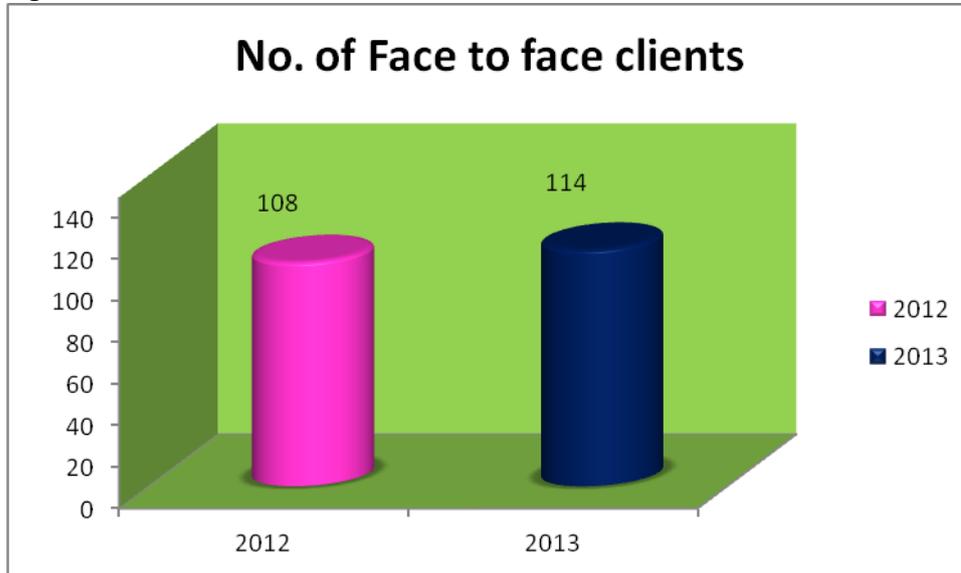


90% of perpetrators were known to our clients this would mirror national and international statistics.

## Service Information

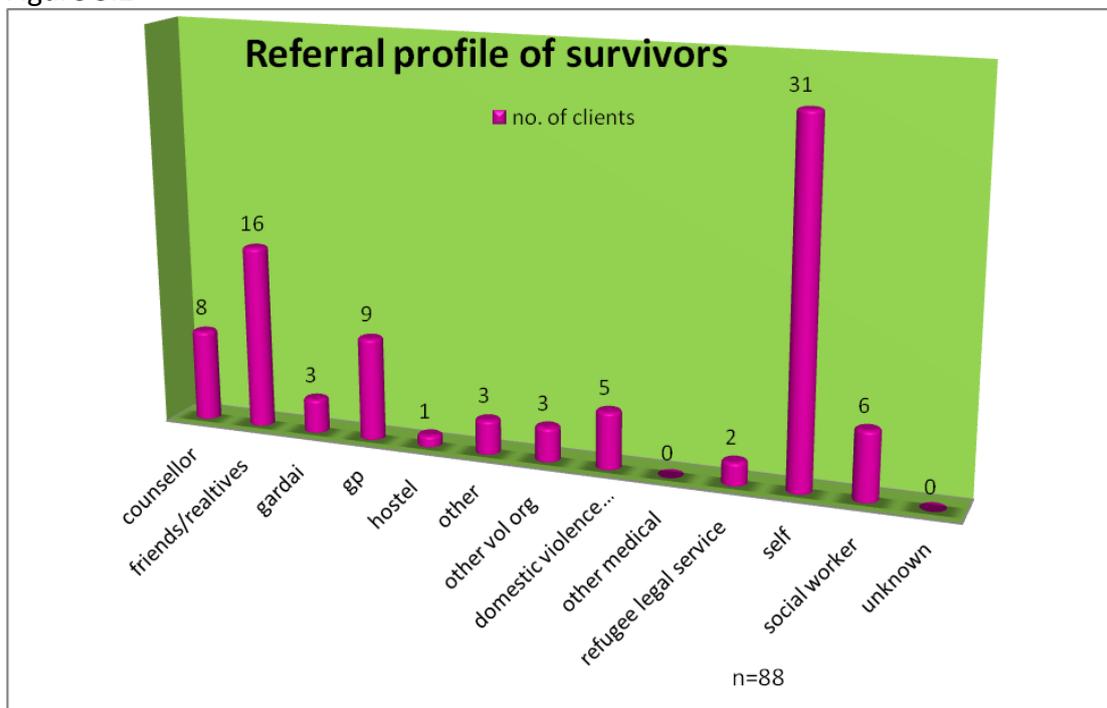
The following figures refer to service statistics relating to how clients come to our face to face service, the types of services clients are using and the uptake of services in comparison with other years

Fig 5.1



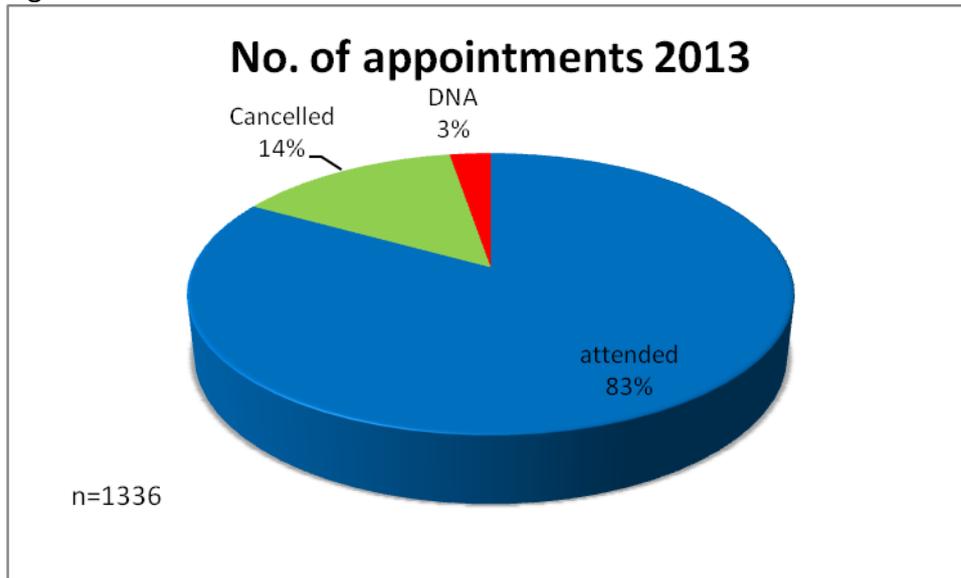
There has been a slight increase in the number of face to face clients in 2012

Figure 5.2



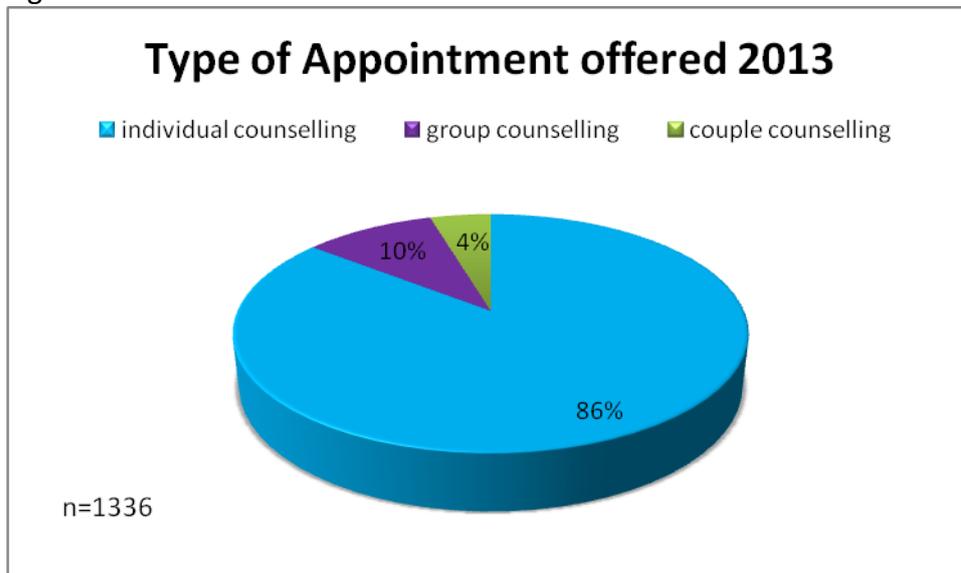
The referral pattern has remained similar over the last number of years with the vast majority of referrals being self and from friends and relatives.

Figure 5.3



The Percentage of attended appointments remains similar to previous years

Figure 5.4



This remains similar to previous years

Figure 5.5

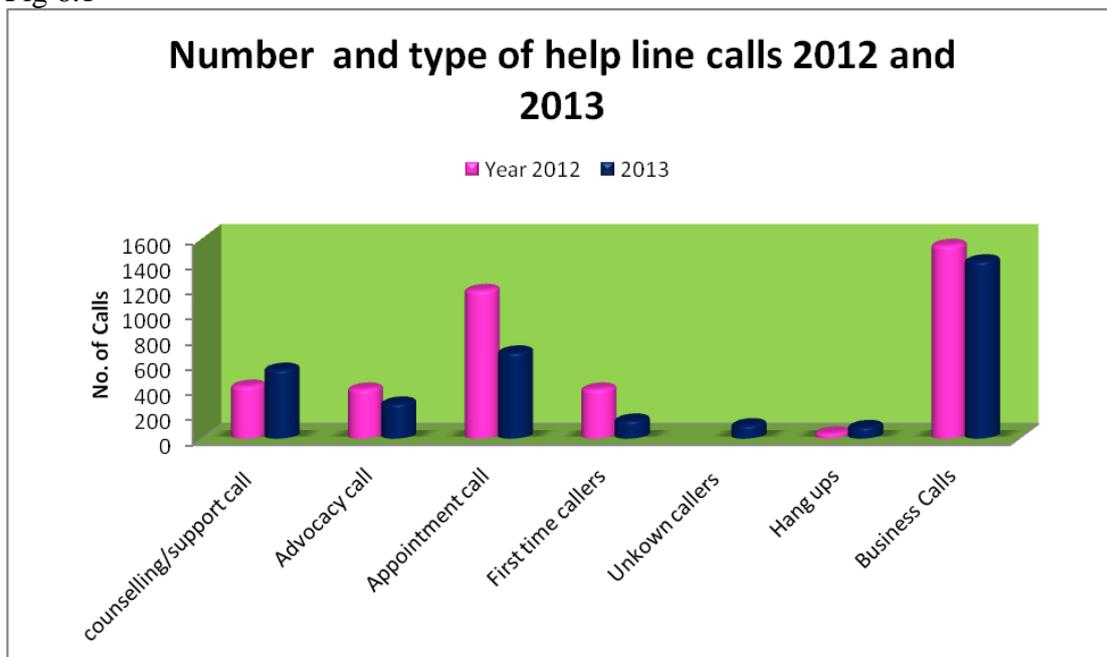


The percentage of appointments in Carrick has reduced by 2% in 2013

### 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 and the number of appointment and advocacy calls have decreased. The way in which appointment texts are recorded has been changed and this would account for the decrease in appointment contacts. The number of first time callers has also decreased.

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