

TEACH TEARMAINN HOUSING ASSOCIATION COMPANY LIMITED

ANNUAL REPORT 2016



HELPLINE 045 527584

Origin and History of Teach Tearmainn

Teach Tearmainn Housing Association Company Limited was established in 1999 at the behest of the then Eastern Health Board whose development plan recognised the need for services within the Co. Kildare/West Wicklow area. Teach Tearmainn is the lead specialist agency in Co Kildare offering a free confidential service and a range of supports to all women and their children whose lives have been affected by domestic violence.

Teach Tearmainn operates under a Service Level Agreement with Tusla, the Child & Family Agency, our core funder and is a company limited by guarantee, with charitable status, governed by a local Board of Directors who provide oversight of all aspects of the organisation.

Our Mission

The mission of Teach Tearmainn is to provide safer options and supports to women and their children who have/are experiencing domestic violence/abuse within their intimate relationships and work toward ending this violence within our local communities.

Teach Tearmainn accomplish this by:

- Providing safety and support to women and children who experience violence and abuse within their intimate relationships
- Working for and with women and children to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met
- Continually challenging attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate domestic violence as a form of violence against women.

Ethos and Beliefs of Teach Tearmainn

The philosophy behind Teach Tearmainn's model of service is based on the Empowerment model of services or interventions with staff and women. The empowerment model provides an environment in which the individual is responsible for her actions by supporting her right to make decisions about herself and how she lives her life.

Historically domestic violence service providers and the community have responded to domestic violence by coaching women on how to leave and how they should respond to the abusive relationship. Over time we have learned from survivors that what they need most is support, encouragement and the resources to achieve their goals, not someone telling them what to do (much like their abusers).

Our work with women is based on the following beliefs:

- With support, women can survive their experience of domestic violence and make positive changes in their lives
- With support, children can survive domestic violence and move positively into adulthood
- In the majority of cases, the most effective method of safeguarding children is to protect their mothers.
- Domestic violence is a violation of the human rights principle that we are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

The core aims of Teach Tearmainn are:

- ❖ To offer support and information to any woman who asks for it whether or not she wishes to leave the abusive relationship
- ❖ To encourage women to take control of their lives whether this involves returning home or beginning an independent life
- ❖ To provide temporary refuge for women and their children experiencing physical, emotional, financial or sexual abuse in their homes
- ❖ To meet the needs of children and young people affected by domestic violence.

Legal Structure

Teach Tearmainn Housing Association is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital with charitable status.

Teach Tearmainn has a constitution that outlines the rules the Company abides by. This includes details about who can become a member of the Association, how the Management Committee is elected, office bearers of the Management Committee, Annual General Meeting requirements, legal requirements, etc.

In addition to the reporting requirements of our funding body, Tusla, the Child and Family Agency Teach Tearmainn provides the Department of Revenue with an Annual Statement that includes a copy of financial reports.

Management/Staffing Structure

The business of the service is managed by a voluntary Board of Directors. Directors in 2016 included:

Ms. Anne Daly

Ms. Sandra McDonagh (Resigned 2016)

Ms Patricia Tyrrell

Ms. Julia McNamara

Ms. Noeleen Eustace (Resigned 2016)

Ms. Lynn Brady

A total of 4 staff were employed by Teach Tearmainn in 2016. While overall responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the service lies with the Manager, Teach Tearmainn operates within a collective structure. This means that all staff provide general support, child support, outreach and administration and are responsible for managing the service.

The support of Nurney Kildangan CEP Limited was invaluable to Teach Tearmainn during 2016 with the provision of 3 CE workers providing us with a total of 60 hours per week support across administration and housekeeping duties. The Co. Kildare Leader Partnership was also accommodating of our work throughout 2016 under the TUS scheme providing us with general maintenance/gardening support.

Service Delivery 2016

Throughout the year the organisation responded effectively to a high, and ever increasing, demand for services. During 2016 a total of 195 women were supported at a critical point in their lives by the staff of Teach Tearmainn.

Crisis Care Accommodation Service

2016 saw the opening of the remaining two apartments in February and March, with our Refuge service now fully operational. Refuge was provided to a total of 24 women with 38 children with the average length of stay having increased substantially from 2015 (10 nights) to 40 nights, indicating the difficulties women face in accessing suitable accommodation following their stay in Refuge.

Services provided to the residents ranged from emotional and practical support to advocating with other agencies on their behalf. A total of 770 case management sessions were undertaken with the residents of Refuge together with 100 supervised childcare sessions in 2016.

Following their stay at Refuge a total of 8 women returned to the residence from which they had fled, a number with Court Orders and 6 families moving to independent living in a new location. Four families were referred to the Local Authorities Homeless service as their safety needs reduced with an additional 4 families negotiating shelter with family and friends having been granted Housing assistance while looking for suitable housing. During 2016 it was necessary for two families to relocate to another Refuge service for safety reasons.

Aftercare Service

Following their stay in Refuge a number of women (16) availed of our aftercare service with a total of 282 case management sessions provided.

Despite the opening of the remaining apartments the ever increasing demand for refuge continued throughout 2016 with 134 requests for crisis care accommodation not being met by Teach Tearmainn.

Information & Support Service

A total of 1209 calls to our Helpline were received from 155 individual women throughout the County of Kildare and beyond in 2016, with a total of 308 case management sessions taking place. A further 725 telephone supports were provided to family and/or friends seeking both information and practical help for themselves or their family as well as professionals supporting families living with domestic abuse.

Each client within our services is offered a number of opportunities both directly and indirectly to relay their experience of their time with us and each suggestion/comment is then acted upon, if appropriate. An exit interview is held, where possible, with each woman who avails of our Refuge service and her views on the service, good and bad, is sought. As it was in 2015 no complaints in relation to our service were received throughout 2016.

Linking with the Community

As domestic violence exists within our communities we in Teach Tearmainn believe that we must be visible in the community. Teach Tearmainn continued establishing stronger links with our local community throughout 2016 with our annual Halloween and Christmas parties receiving wide spread local support.

A number of presentations were made to local groups on the work of Teach Tearmainn and the wider issue of domestic violence, including our continued participation in the local AGM of the Comhairle Na Oig group.

During 2016 a total of 150 operational Gardai throughout Co. Kildare attended workshops on the issue and complexity of responding to Domestic Violence with a further 15 new Garda recruits visiting our Refuge to gain a better understanding of our work and how we can assist them in responding effectively to Domestic Violence. It has been agreed that Teach Tearmainn will continue to provide these workshops for all future Gardai recruits located to Co Kildare.

A workshop on the issue of Healthy Relationships was also provided to the Youth Training and Development Centre in Newbridge, attended by over 40 teenagers and young people. Teach Tearmainn in conjunction with the Kildare Children & Young People's Services Committee hosted a countywide discussion on working with children, young people and families in Co. Kildare affected by domestic violence.

We continued strengthening our relationship with third level institutes throughout 2016 by providing student placements of 3 month duration to students studying Social Care degrees,

providing each student with a more in-depth knowledge of the issue and complexity of responding effectively to women and their children experiencing domestic violence.

Opportunities to learn of the work of Teach Tearmainn and the services provided were availed of by a number of organisations throughout 2016, with training provided to Social Workers within the Disability sector.

Support for the work carried out by Teach Tearmainn is also evident through the number of donations received from local groups and organisations, the Court Services, local businesses and schools throughout the County. A number of private donations were also gratefully received.

Planning for the future

With our Refuge service now fully operational Teach Tearmainn will, throughout 2017, engage in the development of a 3-year strategic plan providing a blueprint for the future development for our services.

There remain significant challenges ahead as the funding climate continues to change. Teach Tearmainn are determined to meet those challenges to ensure the organisation remains sustainable and that services continue to be provided to meet the needs of women and their children at a critical point in the lives while ensuring they receive a high standard of support. Our vision to end domestic violence remains central to our beliefs and work. Teach Tearmainn will continue to do what we do best, to provide lifesaving and life enhancing support to the women of Kildare who seek our support.