

PRESS RELEASE

For Release 03.06.2020 at 15.30hrs

Photo Opp 15.00hrs at the fountain in St Patrick's Park, off Bride Street, Dublin 8

Graphic / Concept: *Community Response Team Call*

- ROOF – Safe Haven, Sanctuary, Home, Security, Shelter, Protection
- PEOPLE – Community - Reaching out, Reaching in, Helping hands, Holding space
- OTHER – Symbol of Hope, Wraparound, Virtual Embrace, Comfort



INITIATIVE TO INCREASE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORTS ANNOUNCED

Seven organisations have come together to support people emerging from domestic violence during the Covid-19 pandemic – Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Safe Ireland, Dublin City Volunteer Centre, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Volunteer Centre, Fingal Volunteer Centre, South Dublin County Volunteer Centre and Wicklow Volunteer Centre.

As part of Phase 1 of the partnership and in preparation for increasing demand for supports, we are appealing for several responses. The participating Volunteer Centres are today announcing a list of ways that you can be involved, which include:

- [Donations](#) – purchasing much-needed items and dropping them off in Dublin 8
- Volunteer your [home](#) – volunteer a holiday home or second property as a safe haven
- Write [letters](#) of courage and hope to those emerging from domestic abuse

According to Kelley Bermingham, Community Officer, Saint Patrick's Cathedral "Under Operation Faoisimh, An Garda Síochána have recorded a 25% increase in reports of domestic abuse compared to the same period last year. Already, many refuges are at full capacity. We want to ensure that when people are ready to make the courageous step to leave an abusive situation that we have every resource to hand to support them in their recovery and pathway to a new, safe life."

Lord Mayor Tom Brabazon says of the initiative, "Domestic abuse takes many forms, as we know, so the response must be flexible, creative, and sadly immediate when danger is imminent. Lots of people feel unable to support someone, as they are reluctant to get involved, to interfere, to take sides, to put themselves at risk. CRiTiCaLL shows people how they might be able to respond to the needs of men, women and children in different ways and as Lord Mayor, I fully support this coordinated community response, as do my colleagues."

Mary McDermott & Sharon O'Halloran, Co-CEO's of SAFE Ireland say of the initiative "This is a really welcome initiative and is an amazing example of what is possible when organisations join together to support women and children who are living with domestic abuse and coercive control. If we want to dream about having safe homes, we need safe communities, that are prepared to support survivors and reach out safely to women and children who may not be able to because of the control of their abusers. This response is also fantastic because it is providing support to help a woman

along her journey to safety from the provision of practical resources to police support to safe accommodation in the community.”

Dublin City Volunteer Centre Manager, Edwina Dewart, says “Volunteer Centres, at the heart of local communities, have always sought to connect people who are moved to respond to community needs with relevant groups and causes. Covid-19 has proven how volunteers are prepared to go above and beyond for those who need it most. We are delighted to be a core part of this wonderful, needed initiative, and will work with our partners, now and into the future, on how we all creatively continue to provide practical supports around domestic violence.”

The Very Rev William Morton, Dean of Saint Patrick’s said that “at a time when we are separated from our social network and supports, it is very difficult to contemplate the challenge that this presents for people who live with those who are the source of fear, violence and abuse. At this time, in this crisis, we reach out to extend ourselves to those who are living in such dire circumstances to do what we can, to help, to support and to respond.”

Superintendent Michael McNulty from Kevin Street Station said ‘An Garda Síochána continue to reach out and support the most vulnerable in society, and in particular victims of domestic abuse. Operation Faoiseamh was launched in response to the increase in domestic abuse cases, and it offers additional supports and protections. The response from victims has been overwhelmingly positive. Gardai fully support CRITiCaLL which is a fantastic initiative. I believe such a collaborative approach involving voluntary and state agencies will provide a clear path to safety for victims of domestic abuse.’

Offers of support to assist people in the immediacy will be directed to Kelley Bermingham, Community Officer of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral and Lisa Marmion, Services Development Manager of SAFE Ireland. These practical resources will then be allocated to where they are most needed through partnership with various organisations including An Garda Síochána, The Iveagh Trust and Serve the City, maintaining the dignity and respect for those who receive your gifts. Accommodation will be channelled via Lisa Marmion in SAFE Ireland. We have two other planned phases, details of which will follow when we launch them in 2021.

The list of ways people can help can be viewed here <https://www.i-vol.ie/organisation-details/?orgID=0014G00002TybEOQAZ>

-ENDS-

- For further information contact: Kelley Bermingham, Community Officer, Saint Patrick’s Cathedral
Tel: 086 606 1080 / E: community@stpatrikscathedral.ie
- To get help, visit <https://www.safeireland.ie/> To support CRITiCall see roles on <https://www.i-vol.ie/>

Notes to Editors

About SAFE Ireland

Safe Ireland is the national policy and services hub for 38 frontline domestic violence services throughout the country. We are leading a nationwide movement to end domestic abuse and coercive control – and to make Ireland the safest country in the world for women and children. We want to transform the culture in Ireland so that coercive control and domestic abuse is no longer tolerated in our communities, in our mindsets, in our systems and in our societal structures.

About Saint Patrick’s Cathedral

The Community aspect of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral is part of the Christian mission and serves to support the people within its reach to improve people’s lives and provide support alongside its long history of worship. Annually, a community fund generated by congregation, donations at candle stands, Eucharist collections and special service collections is distributed to support community and voluntary work throughout the country and in areas of the world in crisis. The Cathedral is currently closed to the public due to the Covid-19 pandemic and

teams are working remotely. The enormous task of essential roof restoration re-commenced in phase 1 of the state guidance for re-opening. The Community tagline is L.E.A.D.: Link & Liaise; Enquire and Engage; Address & Act; Dream & Do.

Contact: Kelley Bermingham, Community Officer
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About Volunteer Ireland and the Network of Volunteer Centres

Volunteer Ireland is the national volunteer development organisation and a support body for all local Volunteer Centres and Volunteering Information Services in Ireland. Volunteer Ireland works to increase awareness of, access to and quality in volunteering in Ireland. The 22 Volunteer Centres provide a placement service between individuals and groups who want to undertake voluntary activity and organisations that are seeking to involve volunteers. Volunteer Centres are the local leaders in community engagement, supporting and promoting volunteering. In response to COVID-19 the network has been supporting the mobilization of volunteers in communities across the country and supporting organisations to adapt their volunteer programmes for the current climate. For further information, visit: <http://www.volunteer.ie/>