



Confronting Violence in the home

Aoibhneas Women's Refuge first opened its doors in 1988, well before the Government had prioritised a targeted action programme to deal with the issue of Violence in the Home. Yet individuals and women's groups were trying to respond to women's needs at local level. The determination of a group of voluntary workers to provide a 24-hour refuge and counselling service, to enable women suffering from Violence in the Home to take charge of their lives and plan for their and their children's future in a safe environment, filled a huge gap in service provision on Dublin's northside. Aoibhneas took another substantial leap forward in 1997 when a brand new purpose built refuge was established, with a range of special facilities including self-contained bedroom/kitchen units, to respond more fully to women and children escaping from Violence in the Home.

Aoibhneas' model of work has evolved over nearly 15 years to its current sophisticated range of services provided by professional and dedicated staff. Aoibhneas shares, with refuges elsewhere, a long struggle to provide women who experience violence with adequate and appropriate protected space for recovery.

Aoibhneas also shares with groups, both here in Ireland and elsewhere, the collective and unremitting effort to keep Domestic Violence out there as a public issue. As a result, the widespread existence of Violence in the Home has begun to attract substantial attention from governments across Europe, which are beginning to respond with more focused legislative and policy developments.