

Information about DVAS

Domestic Violence Advocacy Service is a non- governmental organisation working for the rights of all women and children affected by domestic violence in Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan. From the establishment of DVAS in 2003 to the present day, our vision has remained constant. DVAS works for a society where women and children are supported to live free from all forms of violence and abuse. Our contribution towards the attainment of that vision is to:

- Provide support to women who experience domestic abuse and other forms of gender based violence through a range of free, confidential and accessible front-line services that focus on maximizing women and children's safety,
- Raise awareness of the issue of violence against women
- Influence relevant institutions in Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan to ensure that women and their children have access to their human rights, safety, accountability and justice.

As a feminist and human rights organisation, our services are client led and all of our work is underpinned by values of equality, justice and mutual respect.

Services provided by DVAS

DVAS provide emotional support, information provision, risk assessment and safety planning and advocacy on a one to one basis to women at risk. This can be accessed by women through our helpline, at one to one support sessions in DVAS bases in Sligo and Carrick on Shannon, or on outreach visits in a safe and confidential locality close to where the woman lives. DVAS provide a Court Accompaniment service and short term crisis accommodation in the DVAS Safe House service. Group support programmes for survivors of domestic abuse are delivered twice a year and DVAS also provide a space for weekly drop in support group lead by women who have experienced domestic abuse and who are now DVAS volunteers

Governance

DVAS is a company limited by guarantee and is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors. The day to day running of the service is the responsibility of the Director of Services. DVAS have a sister company, Curlew Housing Association [CHA]. CHA exists to draw down capital funding for DVAS' accommodation provision. The Director of Services is responsible for the day to day running of both companies. The DVAS/Curlew Board meets once a month and take reports on and makes decisions in

relation to service provision, employment issues and financial management. They receive a monthly Director of Services report prior to the meeting. DVAS currently has a Board of nine members.

A review of DVAS's governance structures is almost complete. The organisation is close to being in full compliance with the voluntary code of governance as promoted by The Wheel, Boardmatch and other national organisations leading the voluntary sector in good governance practice. DVAS and Curlew are registered with the Charities Regulator.

Personnel

DVAS have 7 staff members and 5 volunteers who work on our helpline. DVAS is currently training a team of 8 new volunteers to work on the helpline. Tusla funds 5 WTE position in DVAS. The staff member positions are as follows:

- Manager – Full time.
- Administrator – 21 hours a week
- Accommodation support worker – 30 hours a week
- Support and advocacy workers (2 x 35 hours a week, 1x 24 hours a week, 1 x 20 hours a week)

Finance

DVAS receives the bulk of its funding from Tusla, the Children and Family Agency and signs a service level agreement with them each year. Performance indicators are returned to Tusla on a monthly basis and an annual review is held. DVAS receives capital funding for the lease of apartments of the Safe House service from Sligo County Council and the Department of the Environment and Housing and receives a grant from the Crime Victims Office for the delivery of the court accompaniment service. Applications to other grant making bodies are made as the opportunity arises.

Membership/Alliances

DVAS is a member of Safe Ireland, the national network for women's domestic violence services. The organisation is also a member of the Irish Council for Social Housing, the National Women's Council of Ireland and The Wheel. DVAS works collaboratively with a network of children's and family services in Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan. The organisation seeks to promote positive working relationships and collaborative working with key state agencies including the Gardaí, Tusla Children and Family Social work teams, the Courts Service, Sligo and Leitrim County Council and the Department of Social Protection.