



931 children and young people stayed in Women's Aid refuges in Northern Ireland last year.

They came with their mums because their homes are not safe places.

Working with children

Women's Aid recognises that children and young people are often the forgotten victims of domestic violence. Research indicates that 11,000¹ children in Northern Ireland are in the same or next room when physical violence occurs.

Women's Aid recognises the importance of supporting children and young people. Refuges and resource centres, operated by autonomous Women's Aid groups in Northern Ireland, provide access to fully equipped play rooms, dedicated child support staff and therapeutic work to encourage the child or young person to speak out about their feelings and wishes.

Women's Aid Federation provides training and support to ensure that child protection issues are central to the development of the work of Women's Aid.

Women's Aid Federation ensures that the needs of children affected by domestic violence are well represented in the children services planning processes of Health and Social Services Boards. Most board areas now have groups focussing on children and young people affected by domestic violence. Women's Aid's representation on these groups is prominent and effective.

Through consultation with local Women's Aid groups we assure that children's issues are high on every agenda and government strategy. We will continue to lobby for the children and young people of Northern Ireland who are affected by domestic violence.

Source material

1. *Children in Northern Ireland - domestic violence and professional awareness*, Office of the first Minister and Deputy First Minister, 2002

women's aid

Federation Northern Ireland