

## Ruhama launch our 2017 Annual Report



In June 2018, we launched our 2017 Annual Report detailing the tailored, wide-ranging support we provided to **304 women, transgender people and men**. Our service users originated from 39 different countries and included **109 victims of sex trafficking**. The vast majority of those seeking support were women, reflecting the **highly gendered nature** of the sex trade. 2017 saw a high **demand for our services**, with over **3000 face-to-face meetings** undertaken and more than **23,000 telephone contacts** made for and on behalf of those we support.

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## Calling on government to implement new law

We urgently called on the government to **properly implement the Criminal Sexual Offences Act (2017)** as currently not enough is being done to tackle Ireland's violent sex trade. Our CEO Sarah Benson said "We are deeply disappointed no convictions against sex buyers have been secured under this legislation to date. We need **swift and decisive action** from An Garda Síochána to effectively target sex buyers and prostitution organisers using this important legislation that they now have at their disposal. The Government must also raise **public awareness** that it is now a crime to purchase sex in Ireland."

**Prostituted women are calling #TimesUp on those who exploit them, now it's time for the State to do the same.**

DONATE HERE 

GET SUPPORT 

VOLUNTEER 

Read the  
full 2017  
Report here

**In 2017 alone, Ruhama supported 109 victims of sex trafficking**

KEY STATISTICS FROM  
OUR 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

304

Total number of those supported by Ruhama in 2017

244

Women who received intensive casework support

109 →

Victims of sex trafficking supported by Ruhama

62

Women in street prostitution who received outreach support

50

Women who benefited from our Housing & Welfare service

81

Women who received Education & Development support



# A Recovery From Addiction

## *Janet's story*

**Ruhama offered support to Janet\* on our outreach van and by way of a full care plan, counselling and classes. This is her story.**

I'm Janet\* from Dublin, now 23. I come from a great family, but I never did well at school and didn't have much confidence in myself. I did the typical teenage thing and 'got in with the wrong crowd'. They were into drugs and I got into them too, very quickly. After a year, the friends were gone, but the drugs were still with me - they filled up that empty feeling I had. But I always needed more and so I ended up on the streets to try and get the money for what I needed.

I was in a bad way by 2016 - on a mixture of heroin, tablets and alcohol. The year passed in a blur. I was on the streets a good bit, and I got on Ruhama's van on lots of nights when I was out. At first, I just wanted the coffee, but then I got to know the van better and felt more relaxed to stay and chat, even when I was out of it! I got on great with them - we had a laugh!

My drug use spiralled and I was desperate for money. I started getting in trouble with the police. Sometimes my folks would kick me out. I was homeless and staying in different hostels, which I never felt safe or relaxed in. This was a bad time and I remember talking a lot about it to the women on Ruhama's van, especially about my greatest fear - of my parents finding out I was in prostitution. I thought that they would throw me out for good and never speak to me again if they found out.

Over time, I started to trust the workers I met on the van. They gave me information about services that could help - like drug support. I'd take the odd leaflet sometimes or they would Google a number for me and write it down. I never took that stuff seriously at first because I don't think I was ready to make a change. I always said 'no' when they offered me support. In my head, I felt I'd need to detox before I could even think about that.

Eventually I decided enough was enough - I couldn't face another punter, no matter how off my head I was. Using information the van gave me, I contacted places for support. I had tried and failed in the past but this time was different and I managed to detox. Next, my after-care programme support worker arranged for me to go into Ruhama.

It was a weird at first - this was my first time in their offices and my first time to see them in daylight! Since then, I've done loads there - casework, where I could make my own care plan with my caseworker, counselling and some classes. I know it's still early days for me, but I think my confidence is growing and I've had no relapses at all. I'm finally making real plans for my future and best of all - sorting out my relationship with my mam and dad - that is so important to me.



# Ruhama were delighted to present our work at the Social Work & Development Conference 2018

We were honoured to present our unique model of work at the **Social Work & Social Development Conference 2018** in July. Our input took a special focus on **empowering women to manage and overcome mental health challenges** as a consequence of trauma and sexual exploitation. We support a number of women each year who experience panic attacks, PTSD, sleeplessness, anxiety and suicidal ideation. **Social workers** are a very **important audience**, as they may be involved with some of these women and their families.

We know from experience that **positive interventions**, in full collaboration with women themselves and with specialist NGOs supporting them, support empowerment and **deliver better outcomes** for women and their children. We provide a **'wrap around' service** at Ruhama that includes practical and emotional support, trauma healing programmes, counselling and empowerment programmes offered free to those women who need them.

## Attending launch of the 2018 Dormant Accounts Action Plan

Our **Services Manager Sheila Crowley** was delighted to attend the launch of the **Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2018**, which will provide **€40 million in funding to support disadvantaged groups** across the country. Sheila spoke at the event, highlighting our work, and how Dormant Accounts funding administered via the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (Department of Justice and Equality) has hugely benefited women using our services at Ruhama.



Photo Credit: Dept of Rural and Community Development  
Pictured: Sheila Crowley, Deirdre Mortell (Social Innovation Fund Ireland), Zoe Hughes (Care Alliance Ireland), Minister Sean Kyne, John Treacy (Sport Ireland)

## Ruhama present at Monaghan sex trafficking conference

Big thanks to **Monaghan Women's Network** and **Dochas for Women** who recently invited Ruhama to speak at a conference on sex trafficking and prostitution. Our **Policy & Communications Manager, Ruth Breslin**, spoke about the **new legislation** criminalising sex buyers in Ireland and the need to **raise awareness** of it across the island. She was joined on the panel by Linda Latham of the HSE Women's Health Service and representatives of An Garda Síochána and the PSNI.





# Taylor Swift donates 50 concert tickets to Ruhama

A **HUGE thank you** to **Taylor Swift** and **MCD** for donating 50 tickets to the women we support for her shows at Croke Park in June. Taylor wanted to provide tickets to 'women who couldn't otherwise make it' and needless to say, the women we support were incredibly excited.

**Everyone who attended the show had a fantastic time - we can't thank you enough.**

## Join the Ruhama Team : We're Hiring For 2 Roles

1. **Accounts Administrator** (Maternity Cover, 21 hours p/w): Person would be responsible for the efficient running of Ruhama's accounts and payroll for 14 staff.
2. **Housing and Development Officer** (21 hours p/w): Person would help provide and develop services to women seeking help with housing and welfare.



Find out more and apply here: [goo.gl/VmPFkE](https://goo.gl/VmPFkE)

## Calling for VOLUNTEERS: Apply before 20th August

**Interested in helping deliver support to women affected by prostitution?**

**We're seeking volunteers for:**

Our **Outreach Van**: Our van delivers practical and emotional support to women in street prostitution in Dublin. This could be anything from a cup of tea, to a chat, to providing women with sexual health supplies.

Our **Counselling Service**: Our counsellors provide support to women dealing with trauma, equipping them with the confidence for a more positive future. Supervision support is provided.

Our **Education and Language Support**: We're seeking volunteers to offer English, Literary, Maths and IT support to women to develop their skills and boost self-esteem.

Volunteering at Ruhama is incredibly rewarding. We offer **flexible hours** based on your availability and a **robust training** to add to your skillset and CV.

Questions? Talk to our **Volunteer Manager Neasa** on [volunteer@ruhama.ie](mailto:volunteer@ruhama.ie) or **01 836 0292**.

**Apply before 20th August 2018:** <https://goo.gl/ffao4t>



# Fundraising Updates

## Dublin Soroptimists celebrate their 80th Anniversary

Big congratulations and thanks to **Soroptimist International Dublin** who celebrated their 80th Anniversary recently. The organisation has been fighting to improve women's lives in Ireland since 1938. We were honoured to attend and to be a beneficiary of this event alongside other frontline organisations including **Women's Aid, Safe Ireland** and **Pieta House**.



Sarah Benson pictured at 80th anniversary event with Soroptimist members and other beneficiaries.

## VHI Mini Marathon 2018: BIG Well Done to all participants



BIG well done to all those who ran the **2018 VHI Women's Mini Marathon** in aid of Ruhama – we're truly grateful and touched by your passion and motivation. All money raised will go towards our support services helping women affected by prostitution.

Also: This year, two of the women we support ran the marathon too. For confidentiality reasons, they cannot be identified, but we want to give a special mention and nod to them for their courage, strength and perseverance. **We're exceptionally proud of you both.**

## Donating of essentials to our Outreach Van

A big thanks to **Lisa McConnell** and the **Prosper Fingal Event Planning Class** who very kindly assembled and donated bags full of toiletries and necessities for the women we support on our Outreach Van.

## Women's Equality Bray Event: Screening 'Andrea' Video

Thank you to the **Women's Equality Group** and organiser **Elly Fairbairn** in Bray who screened our 'What Irish Sex Buyers Are Really Thinking' video at a recent event on gender equality.

