



There is approximately 1 domestic crime reported every hour of every day in Northern Ireland.

women's aid

Federation Northern Ireland

Domestic violence is a crime

The number of domestic violence incidents responded to by the Police Service Northern Ireland has risen to 20,959¹ in 2004-2005 — an increase of 23% on the previous year.

Crime statistics in context

Women's Aid believe that the rise in incidents being dealt with by the police is not an increase in the level of domestic violence. Rather, it is a combination of factors including the PSNI's more proactive approach in recognising domestic abuse as a crime and taking the abuse very seriously. Also, domestic violence is now on the agenda for society in general and women in particular. More women in abusive relationships are aware that Women's Aid is on hand to give support.

PSNI's statistics² show that there are three times as many domestic related crimes as drug offences; nearly twice as many domestic related crimes as there were car thefts and more domestic crimes than domestic burglaries. Most shockingly, six women were murdered last year.

The prevalence of domestic violence

Despite the fact that PSNI figures indicate that domestic violence is a very prevalent crime, Women's Aid believes that it does not show the true extent of the abuse happening in Northern Ireland. Women's Aid believes that there are thousands more women who are living with abuse and have not yet contacted anyone for support. During a government advertising campaign the number of calls to the Helpline increased by 34%³. Of these callers, 40% were women calling for the first time⁴. Such a huge response from such a brief campaign prompts the question: how many more have yet to call?

Women's Aid's goal

Women's Aid provides training to the PSNI on domestic violence and related issues. Given that domestic violence is such a prevalent crime, quality training is essential to a well informed police service which can respond effectively to women experiencing abuse.

Every PSNI recruit receives training from Women's Aid and we are currently involved in training Community Beat officers. Women's Aid believes that the first response to a woman experiencing domestic violence is crucial. If that response is supportive and positive that woman will be more secure in seeking further help.

1. *Statistical Report 2004-2005*, Police Service for Northern Ireland.

2. *Statistical Report 2004-2005*, Police Service for Northern Ireland.

3. *Helpline statistics*, Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland

4. *Helpline statistics*, Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland