

WSN recognised as Investors in People

We are proud to announce we have been awarded the prestigious Investors in People (IiP) title. This mark of excellence illustrates our superior commitment to our employee's at WSN.

The Investors in People assessor commented that 'The strong and innovative management style displayed in the organisation is effective in engaging staff in the mission and purpose of the organisation. Open communication and transparent management processes and systems are evidently working well within the organisation'.

Patricia Haren, WSN Director said 'This is a proud moment in the history of WSN and we would encourage all our members and associates to consider IIP accreditation for their organisation, as a recognised benchmark in Human Resource management. Our success would not have been possible without the continued support and dedication from all our WSN staff and board. Thank you for all your hard work and commitment.'

The Investors in People Standard is a straightforward, proven organisational tool for improving the way organisations get results through their people. It is ideal for voluntary and community organisations because through it you will be able to help all



Minister for Employment and Learning, Sir Reg Empey, presents the Investor in People award to Patricia Haren (centre) and Mae McQuillan from Women's Support Network.

your people, paid staff, volunteers and trustees alike, to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve your aims. There are three ways to approach Investors in People:

1. Work towards the Standard on an individual basis
2. Work towards the Standard on an individual basis but enlist the support of a Registered IiP Advisor who will provide consultancy and support
3. Work towards the Standard through the Group Contract approach.

The Investors in People Unit can provide further details on the above. They also offer free briefing presentations or can arrange a group briefing if there is sufficient interest. Please contact Ciara Newell on 028 90 441 799 or e-mail ciara.newell@delni.gov.uk.

Alternatively WSN would be happy to host an IiP information event for members—if interested, please contact Siobhán or Kirsty at WSN.

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Launch of Women's Community Education Prospectus.

For more information see page 2

Women's Support Network are holding our **Annual General Meeting**

Date Thursday 13th December
Venue Floor 1 Conference Room, 109 - 113 Royal Avenue, Belfast
Time 11.00 - 12.30 (Lunch will be provided)



Speaker **Denise Hayward, Volunteer Development Agency**

If you would like to attend, please contact us on 9023 6923 to book your place

Women's Support Network
 Downtown Women's Building
 2nd Floor
 109-113 Royal Avenue
 Belfast
 BT1 1FF
 Phone: 028 9023 6923
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Email
info@womenssupportnetwork.org
Website
www.womenssupportnetwork.org

Women's Centre's Regional Partnership

WSN Update

The latest WCRP network meeting was held in Shankill Women's Centre on 18th of September. This meeting provided an opportunity for all of the groups to share information on their recent work and developments. At this meeting the first community based Women's Training prospectus was launched. This prospectus details the range of courses, education programmes and learning opportunities that are available through the 18 organisations profiled in the document. This is the first time that the women's organisations have jointly published a prospectus and we would hope that in future years this will grow and develop to include other women's community education providers.



If you would like a free copy of the Prospectus please contact Dolores at WRCR (9023 1212) or contact Siobhán/Kirsty at Women's Support Network—Tel 9023 6923 or email at either outreach@womenssupportnetwork.org or info@womenssupportnetwork.org.

The next WCRP network meeting is scheduled for November 27th at Magherafelt Women's Centre.

Women's Centres Education Report update

The delivery of education and training programmes in the Women's Centres across Northern Ireland form a significant aspect of their overall work and the centres play a significant role in the Women's Community Based Education provision across Northern Ireland.

WSN, on behalf of WCRP have been actively working with the 13 women's centres and FWIN to highlight the role and importance of Women's Community Based Education. This has culminated in the preparation of a Women's Centres Community Based Education report, highlighting the 13 women's centres through powerful case studies and compelling statistics. It is envisaged that this report will be helpful in raising the profile of the centres and the important role the centres play in encouraging women in disadvantaged areas to return to education.

On October 9th, 2007, WSN hosted a consultation with the 14 organisations to gather feedback and comments. At this time, we are at the final editing stages of the report.

WSN 'on board' at Belfast Metropolitan College

Patricia Haren, Director of Women's Support Network has been appointed governor to Belfast Metropolitan College effective 1 August 2007 until August 2011.

Employment and Learning Minister, Sir Reg Empey said "This is a very important set of appointments. The governing bodies will agree the college strategy to meet the skills needs of the local economy and it is critically important that they are peopled with the highest calibre of governor. I have every confidence with these appointments, that this is the case".

According to DETI, only 32% of public appointments in Northern Ireland are held by women, clearly illustrating the lack of representation of Women on public boards.

WSN will continue to encourage women to become members of Boards and will provide information on Board vacancies to members when info is available to us.

The Joint Government Voluntary and Community Sector Forum

The Joint Government Voluntary and Community Sector Forum aims to facilitate open discussion of key issues which impact on and shape the relationship between the voluntary & community sector and government departments & agencies in Northern Ireland. It also provides a mechanism whereby the sector can contribute to early thinking in the development of public policies which affect it.

From the women's sector, Patricia Haren, Director of Women's Support Network is a panel member to the Joint Government Voluntary and Community Sector Forum with Siobhan Doherty (NI Rural Women's Network) acting as the alternate member.

For further information on the Joint Forum contact—Lisa McElherron, Joint Forum Secretariat, NICVA (9087 7777)

WSN Outreach

Siobhann McKeating, Outreach and Development Officer at WSN will be working part time (job share) from Monday 1st October 2007 – 31st March, 2008, a period of 6 months, after which she will return to working full time. Siobhann's working days will be ½ day Wednesday pm and all day Thursday and Friday.

Kirsty McManus will take up the other half of the job share post for Outreach and Development at WSN for this 6 month period. Therefore please note that if you want to contact outreach at WSN please e-mail both outreach@womenssupportnetwork.org for Siobhann and finance@womenssupportnetwork.org for Kirsty.



WSN Member spotlight on...

WSN Policy Update

Falls Women's Centre

Falls Women's Centre / Ionad Mhna na bhfal recognise that poverty, gender discrimination, lack of information, sectarianism, racism, violence and domestic responsibilities combine to create complex barriers that prevent people from exercising their full rights and responsibilities as citizens. We believe that those affected by these barriers are themselves best placed to determine their problems and devise solutions to them. By supporting skills and talents, and by providing the necessary recourses to enable them to influence decision making at all levels, we will support people to play a meaningful role in all social, cultural, political and economic development.

The Centre offers high-quality childcare, after-schools provision and summer and winter programmes. We provide women specific advice and advocacy, long-term support and counselling. The Falls Women's Centre continues to work locally and regionally on issues which affect the lives of women.

Current Projects

Falls Women's Centre Women's Volunteer Project

This project includes; 25 year History Project, Anti-poverty Training, Silver Surfers Introduction to Computers and Young Mothers Support Group - to name but a few - Anyone interested in further information or in joining the Project should contact Elaine or Margaret.

Young Peoples Millennium Volunteers Project

This project includes; The Intergenerational Computer Project, Internet Bebo Training and Young Peoples Drop in. Again, this is only a sample of the variety of opportunities. Anyone interested in joining the Project please contact Janine.

Counselling Project

The Falls Women's Centre is registered with CPCAB to deliver the Level 4 Diploma in Counselling. Study support, childcare provision and carers support available to participants. Anyone interested please contact Lisa.

Training & Employment

This includes Equal Skills, ECDL, Community Development, Conflict Resolution and Personal Development. Free childcare available. For further information please contact Maureen.

Falls Women's Centre
256-258 Falls Road
Belfast
BT12 6AL

Telephone 028 90 327672
Email cathy@fallswomenscentre.org

It has been a busy time for the WSN policy section. In August and September responses were made to two major policy consultations namely:

- *'Section 75 – Keeping it Effective' Reviewing the Effectiveness of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 - August 2007.*
- *'Implementing EU Equality Obligations in Northern Ireland: The Gender, Goods and Services Directive'. Office of the First and Deputy First Minister - September 2007.*

Other key areas of WSN policy work during this period have included participating on the Social and Economic Rights working group of the Bill of Rights Forum. To date this working group has addressed human rights issues around health, the environment, housing, education, employment and income adequacy. WSN will ensure that members are kept up to date on how all of the above work is progressing. Further information on the Bill of Rights Forum can be found at: www.billofrightsforum.org

Policing Board

WSN, along with others in the Women's Sector, are participating in the 'Policing Board Women's Reference Group'. This group hopes to promote mutual understanding between the PSNI and the Women's Sector with the aim of achieving a safer and more equitable community for all. This group is in the process of agreeing terms of reference and setting action plans. WSN will keep you informed of the progress.

Advice Strategy

In September the Department for Social Development launched the Strategy for the Delivery of Voluntary Advice Services to the Community – 'Opening Doors'. Last year WSN responded to the initial consultation on voluntary advice provision, urging DSD to acknowledge the importance of the women's specialist advice provision. We are currently working with women's sector advice providers and Adviceni to ensure a profile for Women's specialist advice provision is maintained within the strategy.

The Policy co-ordinator is currently producing the third 'Policy Update' which will shortly be disseminated to all WSN members. The theme of this update is the Comprehensive Spending Review.

For further information please don't hesitate to contact Lynn by telephone on 028 9023 6923 or by email policy@womenssupportnetwork.org

Events & News

NI European Social Fund opens

Applications are being sought for European Social Funding under Priority 1 of the new Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2007-13. There will be £45.5million of funding available under the first call of the NI European Social Fund.



The Minister for Employment and Learning Sir Reg Empey has announced that applications are open to projects to help people into sustainable employment and improve the employability of those disadvantaged in the labour market.

Under ESF successful projects will receive grants of 65% of the total project costs, the remaining 35% match funding will have to be independently secured by the successful organisations.

This will be the first of two calls made by the Department for applications under the new Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme.

Applications will be invited from any legally formed relevant public, private, voluntary or community sector organisations.

Application forms and information are available in either paper or electronic format and will be available at www.eugrants.org from **11 October 2007**.

Those without internet access should contact the Department for Employment and Learning, European Unit, Tel: 028 9025 7677 for printed versions of the documents.

The closing date for applications Friday 23 November 2007 at noon.

VOLUNTEER
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

'It's all about Time', the Volunteer Development Agency's report into volunteering in N. Ireland was launched by Social Development Minister Margaret Ritchie on Thursday 13 September in Belfast.

'It's all about Time' follows on from research conducted in 1995 and 2001 and reveals an estimated 282,000 formal volunteers (voluntary work carried out with, or under the auspices of, an organisation) and 470,000 informal volunteers (voluntary work carried out outside organisations, often at neighbourhood level, but outside the immediate family) across N. Ireland. Formal volunteers donate an average of 13.4 hours each month and their volunteering activity equates to an economic value of £504 million per annum (based on the N. Ireland average hourly wage). Informal volunteers donate an average of 9 hours each month, contributing £433 million to the economy.

The research discovered that **61% of formal volunteers are women** and that 77% of organisations questioned said they could not operate without the support of volunteers.

The full report can be accessed at VDA's website – www.volunteering-ni.org

Millennium Volunteers programme

The Volunteer Development Agency has announced funding for the Millennium Volunteers programme to develop youth volunteering in Northern Ireland from 2008 to 2011.

Applications will be considered from voluntary, community, statutory and non-profit organisations that are seeking to:

- Increase the number of young volunteers and volunteering opportunities for young people
- Increase the diversity of volunteers
- Develop dynamic and creative approaches to the involvement of young people
- Enhance the quality of volunteering practice including enhancing the learning and skills of individual volunteers
- Benefit the local community through volunteering

The closing date for applications is 14 November 2007.

To download an application pack visit www.volunteering-ni.org, call 028 9023 6100 or email: mvgrants@volunteering-ni.org for more information.