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Strategic Plan

April 2007 - March 2012



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Introduction

This plan aims to prioritise WSN's use of its resources during the period April 2007 – March 2012 in order to ensure that it best meets the needs of its members, funders, and other stakeholders, and to ensure its sustainability for the future. The plan is informed by a consultation process carried out in 2006.

This plan was 'finalised' in May 2007 and will be distributed to all key stakeholders. It will be important that a degree of flexibility is enabled, so that emerging needs can influence our planning and delivery.

A formal review of the plan will take place annually, with a revised version distributed each year by the end of March.

Background

The Women's Support Network was established in 1989 as an umbrella organisation for community-based women's centres, women's projects and women's infrastructure groups in Northern Ireland.

Financial support until March 2009 has been provided by the Voluntary and Community Unit of the Department for Social Development.

There is considerable potential for further development of the network beyond that date, and there is a recognised need to provide evidence of demand, and evidence of success, in order to build a strong case for future funding and support.

VISION










Our vision is 'a society where women's experiences are fully recognised and valued and where women enjoy full and equal participation in all spheres of life'.

MISSION

Our mission is 'to support the development of women's organisations, enable collective action and positively impact on policy and decision-making processes'.

VALUES

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE CORE VALUES OF WSN:

VALUEWHICH MEANS THAT
 We are member focused	We regularly consult and listen to our members, we base our planning on the needs identified by members, and we clearly articulate those needs to all key stakeholders.
 We value an evidence-based approach	We seek, collect, and disseminate information which provides evidence of the need for our work.
 We value feminism	Women's equality is our central focus, and we lobby for action towards this.
 We value diversity	We seek to find and represent the commonalities we share, while affirming, valuing and giving voice to our differences as organisations and individuals.
 We value a Community Development ethos	We regularly inform and learn from our members and we support their participation. Our strategic view is motivated and influenced by communication with organisations and individuals working operationally in this area.
 We support collaboration and consensus	We are keen to interface with any stakeholders that can help us to achieve our objectives on behalf of our members and we seek to reach consensual agreement.
 We value a pro-active approach	We undertake positive, collective, affirmative action.
 We strive for a holistic approach	We seek to identify all barriers to progress in this area, and to have those barriers removed.
 We support excellence	We are committed to continuous improvement, and to achieving the Investors in People standard.

1 Membership Support

Aims	Objectives	Actions	Time Scale
1.1	Providing access to information needed by our members, through a comprehensive library of relevant research material	Continued development of a library of information which is useful to members	2007-2008 and annually
1.2	Signposting member groups to other relevant agencies.	Continued development of advice sources to which members can be signposted.	2007-2008 and annually
1.3	Promote networking opportunities among members, and with other relevant groups	Facilitate shared learning by holding WSN events and providing information to members on other events which contribute to capacity development of member groups	Ongoing
1.4	Provide outreach to existing members and recruit new members and assess groups needs	Map and outreach to the community based women's sector in Greater Belfast and build evidence of the needs of women's groups	2007-2008 2008-2009

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2 Challenge and Influence

Aims	Objectives	Actions	Time Scale
2.1	As a representative organisation act as a conduit between members and the government and statutory sectors	Build knowledge of new government and statutory systems following RPA and restoration of devolved government and supply information to members	2007-2008 2008-2009
2.2	To continue to lobby and campaign on key issues on behalf of our member groups	Lobby for sustainable funding for the community-based women's sector and continue to monitor relevant research and information on women's issues for example under-representation in leadership roles, health issues, inequalities and discriminations for example barriers to education	2007-2012
2.3	To continue to promote and advocate for Gender Equality	Review the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy particularly Departmental Action Plans	2007-2008 and ongoing
2.4	Research childcare, advice and education and training provision in the community based women's sector.	Develop and distribute questionnaires on childcare and education and training provision to members. Produce a report on findings. Monitor and review the implementation of the Advice Strategy and inform members	2007-2008 and ongoing

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3 Raise Profile and Provide a Voice

Aims	Objectives	Actions	Time Scale
3.1	Promoting the work of the community-based women's sector	Produce reports for example education and childcare provision in the community bases women's sector in the Greater Belfast Area. Produce WSN quarterly newsletter Produce web information and e-briefings to members on a regular basis	2007-2008 and ongoing
3.2	Providing a voice for our members on key issues	Respond to policy consultations and contribute to the formulation of policies that have a major impact on the lives of women in Northern Ireland.	2007 - 2012
3.3	Developing members' capacity to influence government on key issues	Provide access to events both internally and externally to members which raise their knowledge and experience of the workings of local government and statutory agencies	2007 - 2012
3.4	Represent the views of the Community Based women's sector on relevant forums and committees	Example membership of the Joint Government/Voluntary and Community Sector Forum. Attend seminars and conferences.	2007-2008 Reviewed annually

4 Organisational Development

Aims	Objectives	Actions	Time Scale
4.1	Ensuring sustainability for the long term	Ensure we demonstrate value for money through effective recording and reporting of progress to members and other stakeholders. Explore other funding streams.	Reviewed annually
4.2	Learning, developing and improving the quality of our services	Assess the effectiveness of our governance and management arrangements and work towards lip (Investors in People award). Continually review policies and procedures.	2007-2008 and annually
4.3	Raise the profile of WSN by developing an effective Communications Strategy.	Develop and implement an effective Communication Strategy	2007-2008 and annually