



Respond
Inform
Support
Empower

Unite
Pray

16 Days RISE UP 2024

25th November, *International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women* - 10th December, *International Human Rights Day*

The 16 Days of Activism is a 16 day campaign that particularly acts to raise international awareness of violence against women and girls. It *highlights the disproportionate effect of violence against women across the world* e.g. in Ireland 1 in every 2 femicide victims is killed by a current or former male partner (55% of cases). [Heading \(womensaid.ie\)](http://womensaid.ie)

The focus of the 16 Days in 2024 lies in encouraging and enabling branches and parishes to take on board the RISE UP BRONZE CHALLENGE. Every small step we take makes a difference to someone in our community.



The **RISE UP** Against Domestic Abuse Campaign contains a range of accessible resources which enable us to play our part in combating domestic abuse through awareness raising, providing resources, and support for those affected by domestic abuse, as well as fostering a culture of empathy and empowerment within our churches and communities.

Our churches play a vital role in every community. We are the grassroots, on the ground, in every neighbourhood. Responding compassionately and appropriately is a key element on this journey.

We invite you to engage with the RISE UP Challenge and seek to combat domestic abuse in our communities. We believe that together, we can make a difference in the lives of those affected by domestic abuse and create a brighter, more secure future for everyone.

What does the **RISE UP** Challenge involve?

The central tenet of the Mothers' Union RISE UP Campaign is the Bronze, Silver, Gold Award Scheme for Branches and /or Parishes across

Britain and Ireland. This is a simple, straight forward and achievable process.

Each year we have until early Spring to register our interest, complete our actions and apply for the relevant award. Awards arrive in time for Pentecost.



A range of **RISE UP Resources** are available for viewing and download at www.mothersunion.org/RISEUP

[Domestic Abuse Campaigning Resources 2024 | Mothers' Union \(mothersunion.org\)](http://www.mothersunion.org)

Register your interest, complete your actions and apply for your award at <https://tinyurl.com/Riseupassess>



Ireland Specific Resources:

- ❖ **RISE UP Bookmark**
- ❖ **RISE UP Posters and Stickers** for noticeboards and wet areas.

- ❖ Restored '**A Guide For Churches To Address Domestic Abuse**', Irish edition updated 2024
- ❖ **Changing The Story Leaflet** detailing our MU programmes:
- ❖ **Equipping The Church To Take Action To end Domestic Abuse** – a 5 part programme exploring how, as a church, we can stand against domestic abuse through:

<i>Working on prevention</i>	<i>Raising awareness</i>	<i>Enabling safe spaces</i>
<i>Providing support</i>	<i>Establishing partnerships</i>	

Next programme: 14th January to 11th February 2025; 11am – 12.30pm

Contact muchangingthestory@gmail.com

Safe Place Training: Look out for Safe Place and Safe Church training dates with ONUS in 2025



The MU Changing The Story Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Group is an online programme run over 12 sessions based on the vision of Kintsugi Hope – to *discover treasures in life's scars.*

Starting Date: Monday 10th February 2025 - Programme includes an in person weekend in Newcastle, Co. Down – 4-6 April 2025

The MU '**Souls of Our Shoes Exhibition**' consists of 50 pairs of shoes from women, men and children who have walked away from abuse, each with a comment speaking on their behalf. A display board and a box of resources accompany this exhibition. Contact: muchangingthestory@gmail.com





Changing The Story – Equipping The Church To Take Action and End Domestic Abuse

All MU members are volunteers. Since 2014 this project has been funded through generous grants and voluntary contributions. If you would like to contribute to the continuing work and outreach of the *Mothers' Union 'Changing The Story' Project*, it would be much appreciated: <http://www.gofundme.com/f/mothersunionchangingthestory>



Reports & Strategies published recently in Northern Ireland:

NI Programme for Government – A public consultation on 'OurPlan' runs from 9th September until 4th November 2024.

[Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most' | Northern Ireland Executive Members invited to respond on an individual basis.](#)

NI "When you know what they are capable of": Paramilitary-related Gendered Coercive Control. <https://foylefamilyjusticecentre.org/when-you-know-what-they-are-capable-of-paramilitary-related-gendered-coercive-control/>

NI Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy

[Ending Violence Against Women and Girls | The Executive Office \(executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

NI Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy

[Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy launched | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Highlighting Domestic Abuse and Gender Based Violence - Useful Facts:

Ireland:

- Since 2020, 24 women in NI and 34 women in RoI have died violently – that is 58 women across the island of Ireland (8 October 2024).
- Northern Ireland has the highest rate of domestic abuse in the UK, with the PSNI answering a call in relation to domestic abuse every 16 minutes.
- Elder Abuse - 1 in 5 over 65 had witnessed or experienced abuse. (Hourglass NI)
- Since records began in RoI in 1996, 267 women have died and 20 children have died alongside their mothers
- A study undertaken with the 18-25 year olds revealed that 1 in 5 young women and 1 in 11 young men had experience abuse in a relationship. (Women's Aid 2020)
- 30% of domestic abuse starts during pregnancy.

The International Context:

- ❖ 1 in 3 women worldwide experience physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner (UN Women, 2021)
- ❖ Fewer than 40% of the women who experience violence seek help of any sort (UN Women, 2015)
- ❖ 42% of women who experience intimate partner violence report an injury as a consequence of this violence (WHO, 2013)
- ❖ Living in an abusive environment has a long term effect on children.

Faith based research in Ireland:

- ❖ 1 in 3 Christian women have experienced sexual assault or harassment. 1 in 4 men
- ❖ 1 in 11 women have experienced sexual harassment or assault in a church context – 1 in 50 men
- ❖ Over 75% of Christians have never heard church teachings about domestic violence, gender based violence or sexual abuse (Vox / YWCA Report 2018)

Faith based research in UK:

Turn The Tide Main Findings – 2023 Report [Restored \(restored-uk.org\)](https://restored-uk.org)

1. The more domestic abuse is brought into the open, acknowledged and talked about, the more effectively it is responded to by the faith community.
2. The necessity of partnership work between faith, statutory and other agencies eg. Safe Place / Safe Church, Domestic Abuse Services, Restored etc.

Survivors suggested supportive actions the Church could take – these included:

- ❖ Protecting and supporting those affected *survivors*
- ❖ Working with or referring to other *domestic abuse* specialised services
- ❖ Talking about and raising awareness of *Domestic abuse*
- ❖ Training about *domestic abuse* and equipping people to respond effectively
- ❖ Preaching and teaching on domestic abuse, mental health and other related topics

‘Domestic abuse is all the more devastating because so often it is invisible, except to the person who suffers and to the person who does violence to that person. The light goes out on life itself through the stripping out of personality, dignity and humanity itself.

Domestic abuse is not an accident; it is a deliberate act of cruelty.’

Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin & Glendalough

What we do matters – let us continue to love not just with words but in actions and in truth. 1 John 3:18

RISE UP PRAYER

***‘Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.’***

Martin Luther King Jnr



God of justice, peace, and compassion – Heavenly Father – creator and sustainer of all, we thank you that you gave yourself, your Son, to give every person the opportunity to turn from darkness to the light of your presence and love.

We know that all who endure cruelty and abuse are precious in your sight, that no tear falls without your knowledge and care, and we ask that they would all know your presence, strength, comfort, and wisdom – even in their fear, confusion, and pain.

We commit ourselves, all who have experience of abuse, all whose loved ones have experience of abuse and all of us who enjoy safety and peace in our relationships – to **RISE UP** against domestic abuse in all its forms.

We pray for your compassion as we seek to **RESPOND**, for your wisdom as we become better **INFORMED**, for your gentleness as we try to **SUPPORT**, for your strength as we hope to **EMPOWER**, and the mark of your Holy Spirit that **UNITES** us to work, and to **PRAY**, unceasingly until situations change and freedom, life and love is restored to all.

In your dear and powerful name, we cry out to you together. **Amen.**

**‘How terrible must it be to be afraid when you hear a key in the door.
How demoralising must it be to live your life in the home you have created against the dark background of control and belittlement.**

A civilised and compassionate society should do everything in its power to root out domestic abuse. And every Christian should help where they can.’

Most Revd John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh

“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10

Let’s encourage one another, **RISE UP**, speak out and shine our light, as we play our part in **‘CHANGING THE STORY’** around domestic abuse in our communities.



www.mothersunion.org

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