

Awareness and Education

One area of our work that has been badly hit by the loss of funding from COSC is our KAS (Knowledge, Awareness and Safety) Programme. This programme is an education programme operating in secondary schools. This programme is the Centre's second largest service, after client counselling. The primary aim of the programme is to raise students' awareness of rape, sexual violence and sexual harassment using interactive workshops and personal development exercises. The KAS Programme is designed to give young people knowledge allowing them to understand and determine their own personal beliefs, attitudes and responsibilities in society. The programme is delivered to transition year students in two two hour sessions by specially trained and experienced facilitators.

During the academic year 2013/14 the KAS Programme was delivered to approximately 2,000 students in 30 schools in Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Kildare, Laois, Wicklow and Wexford.

Schools in the Carlow and South Leinster area continued to be targeted. Despite lack of funding in schools we continue to receive requests for the programme. As a result negotiations took place and reductions were given in order to bring awareness and knowledge to young people. Again, this year a number of schools have opted for the 2 hour Information Talk rather than full KAS Programme and we have again seen an increase in the number of students in groups - in one school the Programme was delivered to a group of 40 students and in another case the 2 hour Information Talk was delivered to almost 100 students by our facilitator. While schools are aware that student knowledge and awareness is increased while working in smaller groups as this allows for discussions and group interaction to take place they have been forced into a compromise due to the lack of resources. All schools were extremely impressed with the content and delivery of the KAS Programme and have promised to try and avail of it for their students in the coming academic year.

As an organisation that recognises prevention and intervention as vital, we are in the difficult position to try and accommodate the demand for this programme with our very limited resources. We would welcome any help we would receive in order to help us continue what we see as a vital role of the Centre in the community.

We feel that it is vital that this programme is maintained, rolled out and developed further thus resulting in its incorporation into the National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence in the future.

In the event of any funds being available to the end of 2014 we would gratefully appreciate any consideration for same.