

## **Ruhama wins Charity of the Year 2024 in recognition of their work tackling Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation** **(<https://www.activelink.ie/node/112010>)**



Ruhama is thrilled to be announced the winner of the Charity of the Year 2024 at the Charity Institute of Ireland Charity Excellence Awards in October.

Ruhama is a national NGO supporting women impacted by prostitution and human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The team works towards transforming the lives of women impacted by sexual exploitation and sexual violence and providing hope for a brighter future. Ruhama's services provide a holistic approach that centres the needs of each individual to heal from the trauma they have experienced and works collaboratively with them to achieve their life goals.

Supports offered include Outreach, Casework, Trauma Therapy/Counselling, Education and Development Programme, Bridge to Work Programme, Seeking Safety Programme and a Survivor Voice programme including Peer Support. With a base in Dublin, Ruhama has hubs in the Midlands, Limerick Mid-West and Cork/Kerry region.

In 2023, Ruhama engaged with 646 individuals (226 new) an increase of 30% from the previous year. The majority of individuals engaged with the service were women from 51 nationalities.

Ruhama provides training to frontline services on human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Ruhama also advocates and campaigns for better social, political and legal measures to address the systems and conditions that lead to and perpetuate the prostitution and sex trafficking of women and girls.

New programmes in Ruhama such as Seeking Safety and the Peer Support programme are reaching more women in vulnerable circumstances and developing a community of peer support. Our outreach team outreach and inreach hard-to-reach cohorts.

Prostitution and human trafficking are exploitative, inherently violent and demeaning to women and recovery from the trauma of sexual exploitation and sexual violence is lifelong. All of the women that come to Ruhama for support have been exploited and some may have experienced addiction, homelessness, domestic violence and adverse childhood events including sexual abuse.

In 2023 research was launched in partnership with the Sexual Exploitation Research and Policy Institute (SERP), titled 'Pathways to Exit': A study of Women's Journeys Out of Prostitution and the Response to Their Complex Needs'. The research consulted with 62 Ruhama service users, and analysed the varied barriers experienced by those who exited or are seeking to exit prostitution. The research highlighted the complex needs across the areas of housing, welfare, education, migration, health, financial and justice, concluding with several recommendations, Ruhama is working to progress their implementation.

Ruhama warmly welcomed the opening of Rosa's Place, the first specialised accommodation unit for female victims of human trafficking in late 2023. Rosa's Place is run by DePaul Ireland, Ruhama provides wrap around supports to residents of the unit.

Ruhama welcomed developments in National policy, the Third Action Plan on Combatting and Preventing Human Trafficking 2023-2027, which aims to establish a new National Referral Mechanism, which will make it easier for victims to come forward, be identified and access supports.

Ruhama is proud to be a Charity Partner of the GAA 2024 and looks forward to the launch of a national awareness project in partnership with the GAA and the Men's Development Network late November 2024.

Ruhama believes that all women deserve a life free from violence and sexual exploitation and is working to progress the prevention of sexual exploitation and human trafficking and increase supports for the protection of victim/survivors.



**Ruhama Team**

**Region**

Nationwide

**Date Entered/Updated**

7th Nov, 2024

**Expiry Date**

7th Jan, 2025

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