



# Annual Report 2013

*"I didn't even know abortion was still illegal in this country - I was naive enough to think things had changed. It's so wonderful to know, during this difficult time, that there are people like you who are working to help. Thank you so much."*

# ASN Annual

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## About ASN

Founded in 2009, Abortion Support Network provides financial assistance, accommodation and confidential, non-judgemental information to women forced to travel from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to access a safe and legal abortion. ASN is the only organisation currently offering these women what they need most: money.

Women travelling abroad for an abortion do so legally, but must pay the costs themselves. In addition to the cost of the procedure, women have to pay for plane or ferry tickets, as well as the additional costs of childcare, accommodation, travel documents and more. For women living in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, an abortion costs between £400-2,000. For those living in England, Scotland and Wales, it's free on the NHS.

# Report 2013

## Welcome

Every year Abortion Support Network continues to grow: we hear from more women, more donors come forward to support us, more people volunteer their time in different ways, and we grow as an organisation. **One of our major successes this year is that we've not once had to turn a woman down due to lack of funds.** In 2013, thanks to our fabulous supporters (that's you!), our fund never ran dry. Whether you've given £5 or £500, hosted a person, or hosted a fundraising event, all kinds of support are valuable. We also thank everyone who helped spread the word; those who wrote a blog, retweeted @AbortionSupport or mentioned in conversation that abortion is not available to women in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, you helped broaden the discussion. Since October 2009, your support has allowed us to help more than 1,000 women, couples and families, and we hope you are as proud of this achievement as we are.

Here's to another year of helping women, together.



Mara Clarke  
Director

**Our Mission:** To provide information, financial assistance and accommodation to women forced to travel to England to access a safe, legal abortion

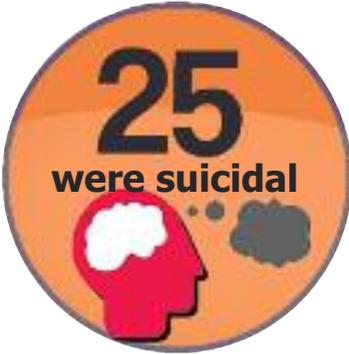
**Our Vision:** A world where women have access to safe, free, legal abortions wherever they live

### **Our Values:**

- We are compassionate and respectful of women and their decisions
- We believe in providing practical support that improves women's lives
- ASN is pro-choice but non-political

# The women we reached, 2009-2013

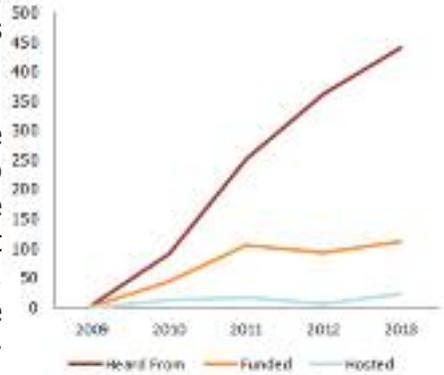
Between ASN's launch in October 2009 and the end of 2013, ASN heard from 1,148 people seeking information and support. We value the privacy of the people who contact us. We recognise the difficulties many of them face, and respect their wish to remain anonymous. ASN does not ask women how they became pregnant or why they want an abortion. Our only criteria for ASN funding is a woman's financial need and our ability to meet that need. As a result, we don't have complete information about our callers. What we do know is that at least:



# How ASN works

ASN is an abortion fund, supported primarily by donations from individuals and run almost entirely by volunteers. We are a small charity trying to grow to meet a large scale problem: the thousands of women in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland who need abortions and the restrictive laws that leave them with limited options.

ASN launched in October 2009 with the sole focus of providing financial assistance to women seeking abortions. We also provide practical information on arranging the least expensive abortion and travel and, if needed, accommodation in volunteer homes. While many organisations campaign for much-needed legislative reforms, ASN is the only group providing women with money towards the £400-£2000 it costs to travel and pay privately for an abortion.



## What women have sold in order to afford an abortion



**Their children's Christmas presents**



**Mobile phones**



**Fed the family beans on toast for three weeks**

**The car**



# Who we helped in 2013

Between 1 January and 31 December 2013, ASN heard from 466 people. Our callers came from all walks of life and faced a variety of obstacles. Each was facing a crisis pregnancy that they couldn't continue. Most of the women we spoke to were desperate, knowing their options were extremely limited due to the restrictive abortion laws in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. At ASN, we don't ask about circumstances beyond financial need, so the information we have is based on what people have volunteered. We do know that of those who contacted us, at least:



were dealing with mental health issues



were already mothers



said the father "wants nothing to do with it"



were facing domestic violence

# How we helped in 2013

**8,000**  
minutes on the  
phone

Our volunteers spent over 133 hours on the phone and answered hundreds of texts and emails, providing non-judgemental information and assessing financial need.

**34**  
nights of  
accommodation

ASN volunteers provided 34 nights of accommodation for 24 women and six companions. We are always seeking volunteer hosts near clinics in Manchester, Liverpool and South and West London.

**118**  
women funded

We gave funds to 118 women to help pay for treatment, travel and accommodation.

**21**  
clinics

We worked with 21 clinics and hospitals in England to ensure that the women who contacted us received appropriate, affordable care.

**£28,660**  
spent helping  
women

We spent £28,660 on direct grants to women or to clinics. Some of our grants are as small as £20, meaning that even a small donation can drastically change a woman's life.

**£3,400**  
grants

Although we applied for over £25,000 in grants, only two of our applications were successful. In 2013, ASN received and spent a one-off anonymous grant of £1,000. The second, from the [Feminist Review Trust](#), is earmarked for 2014 staffing costs. We also continued to receive a £200 unrestricted donation each month from one of the clinics we work with.

# Why ASN is needed

It is virtually impossible to access a legal abortion in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. However, that doesn't stop women from facing crisis pregnancies and needing abortions.

Unlike women in England, Scotland and Wales, where abortion is free on the NHS, women in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland must travel and pay for their abortions in almost every circumstance. Each year, thousands of women travel to England to access a safe and legal abortion.

For many women, travelling for an abortion is the first time they've left their home country. Many face extremely difficult circumstances and need to overcome significant obstacles. For some women, raising the necessary funds, finding childcare, purchasing a passport and finding someone with a credit card to help book flights is almost insurmountable.

ASN is the only organisation providing financial help to these women, helping them afford a safe, legal abortion. While the [Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act 2013](#) (passed in the Republic of Ireland) is a positive step towards helping women with life threatening pregnancies, it permits abortion in such narrow circumstances that very few women are able to access the procedure.

## Obstacles women overcome



£400-2,000: typical cost of an abortion for a woman in Ireland. Not qualifying for a credit card, loan or overdraft.



Getting time off work. Finding childcare. Needing to keep the abortion a secret.



Leaving home for the first time. Having no passport or photo ID or needing a visa to travel.



Travel issues: cancelled flights, wind storms, floods, closest airport being six hours away.

# ASN step by step

ASN is an abortion fund and the only organisation providing financial support to women living in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. While many organisations campaign for much needed law reform, ASN focuses on providing information and financial support to women who cannot wait for the law to change – they need abortions now.

A woman contacts ASN by phone, email or text message.



ASN contacts her.



ASN assesses her need and provides confidential, non-judgemental information.



The woman arranges her procedure and transport.



If accommodation is needed, ASN arranges a volunteer host.



If a grant is awarded, ASN pays the clinic directly, reducing the amount she pays.

***"I'm calling you in complete and utter desperation."***

*"I feel so much better for having spoken to you. I'm so glad you rang me back"*

***"I have £300 to my name and am in no position to bring up a child."***

*"It's so wonderful to know, during this difficult time, that there are people like you who are working to help."*

*"I've been to the clinic and everything was done. You gave me and my children another chance. A big thank you!"*

*"We've been rationing food for the kids, had the electricity turned off, we borrowed money for the flights and that money will need to be paid back too."*

# Your donations

Between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2013, ASN received £33,798 in donations. Private individuals provide our main source of income and we appreciate every one of you, whether you give £200 once, or £2 every month.

*"I feel like you over there in the UK are there for women like me when Ireland has turned its back."*

ASN is truly a network, comprised of people who give their time and money to support strangers in need. You make it possible for us to say "Yes" to the women and families who come to us for help.

## £4,303 from fundraising events

Fundraising events in England, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and beyond raised £4,303 for ASN. Big ups to some of our star fundraisers, including [Dublin Nights for Choice](#) and the fab five who ran the [Flora Mini Marathon](#).

## £11,447 from one-off donations

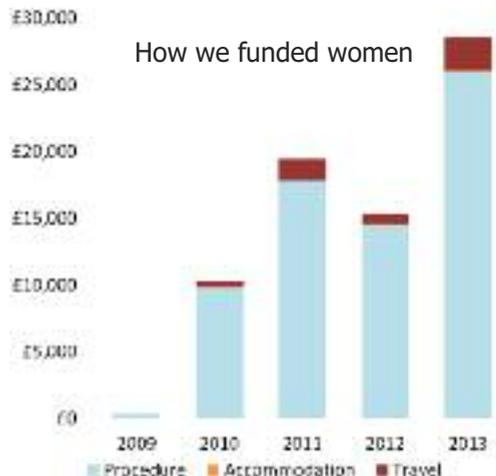
In the 2013 financial year, we received over 200 single donations, ranging from £2 to £1,000. Every little helps!

## £18,048 in regular monthly donations

Which equates to an average of £1,504 per month. Thanks to the 137 wonderful people helped us exceed our goal of £1,500! This steady income allows us to plan ahead and know how many women we can support each month.

## More than £8,000 in clinic discounts

The professional and compassionate clinics we work with decreased procedure fees by more than £8,000 for ASN clients. This is in addition to the reduced fees offered to women forced to travel to access a safe and legal abortion.



# How we spent them

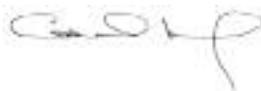
Between 1 Jan and 31 Dec 2013, 74% of all donations were spent on clinic fees, travel and accommodation. In previous years, operating costs were covered by one regular donor. In order to better serve our clients and support ASN's long-term sustainability, this year we began using a small proportion of donations from individuals for fundraising, operations and staffing costs.

## Statement of Financial Activities

Period from 1 October 2012 to 31 December 2013

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Capital funds	Total 15 months to 31 December 2013	Total 12 months to 30 September 2012
	€	€	€	€	€
<b>Incoming resources</b>					
Individual donations	38,433	-	-	38,433	15,779
Fundraising income	4,993	-	-	4,993	219
Grants	4,000	-	-	4,000	2,400
Travel subsidy and leaflet campaigns	-	1,621	-	1,621	920
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>47,426</b>	<b>1,621</b>		<b>49,047</b>	<b>19,318</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Grants to clients	32,969	-	-	32,969	16,099
Cost of generating funds	664	-	-	664	36
Operational expenditure	4,646	1,621	-	6,267	3,997
Consultancy payments	3,825	-	-	3,825	-
<b>Total resources used</b>	<b>42,104</b>	<b>1,621</b>		<b>43,725</b>	<b>20,132</b>
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources</b>	<b>5,322</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>5,322</b>	<b>(814)</b>
Fund balance brought forward	1,560	-	-	1,560	2,374
Fund balance carried forward	6,882	-	-	6,882	1,560

Approved by the trustees on 06/05/14 and signed on their behalf by



Please note: Unless otherwise indicated the figures in this report refer to the 2013 calendar year. ASN changed its reporting date from 30 September to 31 December during the period to better align itself with external reporting requirements. The figures in the Statement of Financial Activities covers the 15 month period from the last accounting date to 31 December 2013 (in accordance with standard accounting practice), whilst other figures refer to the calendar year for ease of comparison to prior 12 month periods.

# Our goals for 2014

ASN is almost entirely run, managed and staffed by volunteers. We welcome input from our supporters, so if you can help us to meet our goals, we would love to hear from you. Email us today at [volunteer@abortionsupport.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@abortionsupport.org.uk)

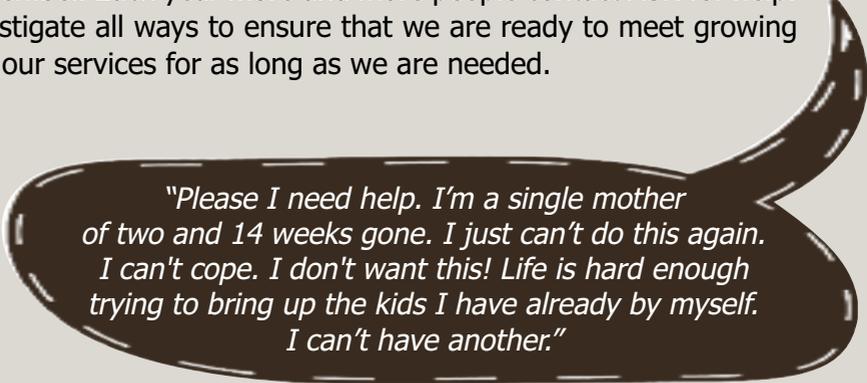
**1** Continue to provide better services to women, including follow-up with past clients to obtain feedback. We aim to provide a compassionate, non-judgemental and effective service to everyone who contacts us.

**2** Proactively outreach to organisations that work with women in the most marginalised circumstances. We are aware that many of the women who need our services have never heard of ASN, and we are actively looking for more and different ways to spread the word.

**3** Increase our fundraising activities, including a target of £2,000 per month in regular income and applying to more trusts and foundations. As an abortion fund, our ability to help is governed by the funds we have available. Increasing our income is critical as we strive to meet growing demand.

**4** Implement better monitoring and tracking of our work. We want to ensure that our funding criteria, fundraising methods, and data collection capabilities improve and grow along with us.

**5** Support ASN's growth and long-term sustainability by securing funding for a staff member. Each year more and more people contact ASN for help. We will investigate all ways to ensure that we are ready to meet growing demand for our services for as long as we are needed.



*"Please I need help. I'm a single mother of two and 14 weeks gone. I just can't do this again. I can't cope. I don't want this! Life is hard enough trying to bring up the kids I have already by myself. I can't have another."*

# Five ways to help ASN

## 1. Donate

As an abortion fund, our ability to help women is governed by our bank balance. All donations – no matter the amount – help ASN to support women forced to travel to access a safe, legal abortion. Visit [www.abortionsupport.org.uk/donate](http://www.abortionsupport.org.uk/donate) for donation information.

## 2. Register for Gift Aid

Gift Aid is the UK government scheme that allows charities to reclaim tax paid by tax-paying UK donors. If all UK tax-paying ASN donors registered for Gift Aid, we would be able to reclaim 25p for every £1 they donate. [www.abortionsupport.org.uk/gift-aid](http://www.abortionsupport.org.uk/gift-aid)

## 3. Volunteer

Go for a run, host a movie night, loan out your spare room for a night . . . as a charity run almost entirely by volunteers, ASN is often seeking skilled, compassionate people to help us out. Volunteer roles include fundraisers, hosts, and trustees. Whatever you are interested in doing, email us at [volunteer@abortionsupport.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@abortionsupport.org.uk)

## 4. Keep in touch

Abortion Support Network is a community, and we want you to stay in touch. Our email newsletters will keep you up-to-date with what ASN is doing and the people we are helping, together. Read the latest issue or subscribe at [www.abortionsupport.org.uk/news](http://www.abortionsupport.org.uk/news)

## 5. Spread the word

Follow ASN on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), visit our website at [www.abortionsupport.org.uk](http://www.abortionsupport.org.uk) or send an email to a friend and help us spread the word, both to women who might need our services and to people who might be supportive of our work!

If you keep one page of the report, make it this one! Stick this on your fridge, send it to a friend or pin it up at work.

# Thanks, from the women you helped

**Your donations are vitally important to the lives of women facing crisis pregnancies.** Please encourage your family, friends and colleagues to make a contribution – however small.

*"Thank you so much again. Really I could not have gone to the UK until much later without your help. I will never forget this help."*

*"I never understood before how being able to have an abortion could be empowering, but now I do".*

*"This isn't something I want to do. It's something I have to do"*

*"That's amazing. Thank you all so much. What a fantastic resource for Irish women going through something like this. When I'm in a better financial situation I will definitely make a donation."*

*"Just to say thank you for everything! You gave me and my children another chance."*

*"God bless you all. What you are doing will eventually save my daughter's life."*

*"This not a decision I am taking lightly, I am making the right decision for my beautiful, healthy, happy child. We have no money, we barely have enough to eat."*

*"I was date raped last month but never told anyone as I blamed myself for what happened. I would rather die than go through with this pregnancy."*

# A big thank you from ASN

We don't – and can't – work in isolation. Abortion Support Network would like to recognise the pro-choice work of the following organisations:



We would also like to thank each and every person who has supported ASN this year. Whether you donated £2 or £200, shared a link on Facebook or Twitter, opened your home to women in need, stood by the phone or organised an event. All your hard work allows us to help desperate women every day. **Thank you.**

***"I will be a one woman crusader after this, this country is in the dark ages about abortion"***



**Your decision - our support**

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