



ABORTION
SUPPORT
NETWORK

Annual Report 2016

"Being in this situation there's no help. People keep closing doors in my face. My options are to terminate this pregnancy or to give birth to a baby who will have no life at all. This is such a bad situation and you've just made it easier."





Anna attempted to get a termination under the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act. She had previously tried to kill herself but failed. She was denied an abortion anyway.
not her real name.

Vision

A world where women have the information and means to access safe, legal abortions wherever they live.

As a result, she needed travel to England to obtain an abortion. She had no passport but did have photo ID.

Mission

To provide information, financial assistance and accommodation to women who may be forced to travel to England to access a safe, legal abortion.

Anna already had children. They were in care and she was desperate to get them back. Your support funded her flights and procedure.

Values

- We believe that all women have the right to safe and legal abortions.
- We believe in providing practical support to enable women to exercise this right.
- We are compassionate and respectful of women and their decisions.

Anna received very little in benefits and spent most of her money on the bus fare to visit her children whenever she could. Your support allowed her to continue to focus on the children she already had and meant she didn't have to sacrifice her limited time with her existing children to fund her abortion.





Director's letter

Dear Supporter,

It's been another impressive year here at ASN Towers. In addition to paying our director, we were able to crowdfund to pay for a part time fundraising manager to start in 2017 to augment our 60 person plus team of volunteers. The number of people contacting us for help continues to grow, and we can proudly say we have not had to turn a client away due to lack of funds on our part since 2012.

What makes our growth and ability to help possible? YOU DO. Whether you've given your time or given your money, helped spread the word or put on an event, you have helped ASN help more clients.

ASN is a small but mighty charity and we can only exist as long as there are people like you who believe, as we do, that "I can't afford an abortion" shouldn't be the reason someone becomes a parent. As we face the future, we are glad you have our back. Thank you so, so much for your support.

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



Mara Clarke
Founder and Director

Briony was a young woman from a rural Irish community. The details of her horrific circumstances risk making her identifiable in that community: it's enough to say that they included coercive pressure to continue the pregnancy and someone preventing her from accessing her own money.*

For various reasons, flying was impossible. Briony's poor mental health, among other factors, meant that it was inadvisable for her to travel alone. She was stuck.

Contacting her secretly was essential to keep her safe. Working carefully and quietly, we found someone who could travel with her. Your support paid for the procedure, the bus and the ferry trip for Briony and the volunteer, as well as the cost of hotel accommodation and food for the 51 hours she was away from home. Your generosity has changed her life. She was able to go home with a new hope, and in a better frame of mind, no longer being forced to carry a pregnancy she didn't want.

**Not her real name.*

About ASN

We're called Abortion Support Network because we are a network that supports abortion. ASN connects people without resources to you, the people who reach out your hands or dig into your wallets to help.

Every penny raised or donated and every action of support means we can help people urgently seeking an abortion.



How **ASN** works

Your support lets us provide advice and practical assistance to hundreds of clients each year. Because of you, we are able to give them the information and financial help they need to access abortions.

This is how we work.

1

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



2

ASN returns contact.



3

ASN assess their need and provides practical, non-judgemental information.



4

The client arranges their procedure and transport.



5

If accommodation is needed, ASN arranges a volunteer host.



6

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





Who we've helped 2009-2016

Cassie moved to Ireland with hopes of a better life. A few years later, she left her abusive partner, found herself homeless, and her children were taken into care. When she called us, she was pregnant as a result of rape. She was struggling and seemed to have mental health issues. Some days she would politely request help – on others she shouted at our helpline volunteers and exhibited paranoia.*

She needed a visa to travel and had fewer resources and even less funding to draw on. At times she refused to take steps to help herself, refusing to contact the visa office or other organisations, claiming that everyone was out to get her. She was worried about being tracked down and used several different names.

Our volunteers worked with her over several weeks. They explained that while we could help with funding her procedure, she would need to take steps to get herself to England. In the end, Cassie fought past her challenges and got a visa. Your support paid for her visa and her procedure. A volunteer took her from the clinic to the airport after her procedure and ensured she had a good meal and we provided contact details for services in Ireland to reach out to for support upon her return.





If we have money, we try and help the people who contact us as much as we can. We give information to minimise travel and other costs for clients, so our funds can stretch to help the largest number of people possible. We don't ask how people got pregnant or why they want abortions. Our only criteria is financial need. Some people volunteer information about their circumstances, which makes up the data below.

Of the women you helped in 2016:

14 were pregnant from rape

"I am pregnant from a rape that happened and I cannot go through with this pregnancy. I would be so grateful if anyone cared enough to get in touch with me."

22 needed a visa to travel

59 were dealing with mental health issues

"I contemplated suicide to get away from this, as I really just couldn't go on with my life if I have to remain pregnant."

7 were suicidal

17 had medical issues

14 were dealing with foetal abnormalities

"My family is super Catholic and not supportive of my choice even though my baby has severe defects and will have no kind of life if any. I've never felt so alone in my life."

38 were migrants, refugees or Travellers

6 were homeless

"I am pretty sure my ex-partner will kill me if he knows I am pregnant."

32 were dealing with domestic violence

7





How we've helped in 2016

801 clients heard from

Our helpline volunteers heard from 801 clients in 2016.

40 nights of accommodation

You opened your homes to 30 women, helping them feel safe and secure while travelling for their abortion.

192 women funded

In 2016, you helped more women than ever before with 192 direct grants.

Denise is a young Traveller woman. Your support helped a friend of hers, Emma* a few years ago. Emma told Denise about ASN and recommended she call us. She was able to book an appointment with a clinic but had to fly with a more expensive airline as she didn't have a passport. Your support paid for flights for her and a supportive friend and also funded the majority of the cost of her procedure.*

**Names have been changed*

£58,631 in grants

Your support paid clinics and hospitals for abortion procedures and bought flights, ferry tickets and rooms in B&Bs for women in need. Our average grant was £307.

£11,000+ in clinic discounts

Clinics in the UK provided additional discounts on top of their already reduced fees for women from Ireland and NI.

Someone we couldn't help

Sometimes, no matter what we do, there are clients we can't help. This doesn't happen often but when it does it takes its toll.

Ellie didn't realise she was pregnant until she was in her second trimester as she had been sterilised several years previously. As she has medical issues, she needed to be treated in a hospital, not a clinic. Despite our team searching, we could not find a hospital in England willing to perform a private abortion at her gestation (over 19 weeks) for a pregnancy without a diagnosis of fatal foetal anomaly. Due to her medical issues, she was unable to access the abortion that any women in England, Scotland or Wales would have been given free on the NHS. Because she lived in Northern Ireland, Ellie was forced to continue an unwanted pregnancy and gave birth via an emergency caesarean section.*

**Name has been changed*



Clients we heard from

In 2017, ASN heard from 801 women, couples and families seeking a mix of information,

financial support and accommodation. Here are some of their words. As you read these, know that your support enabled us to say "Yes, we can help" to the person on the other end of the line.

"I can't eat, can't sleep, can't move on or find myself until I know this problem is sorted out."

"I need to make sure we arrange a time for you to ring me as I have to disguise my situation. I can't trust anybody."

"I went to my doctor to ask about a termination and he said too bad, I was having a baby."

"He started blocking my calls as soon as I told him I was pregnant"

"Right now I only have 8 euro in my bank account and really I have nowhere else to turn."

"I have so many reasons to do this."

"I went to a pro-life agency and they told me if I took the abortion pill it could damage my DNA and any children I had in the future would be disabled."





"I'm heartbroken, but it's the right thing for my kids, the right thing for me."

"I need an abortion as I am trying to leave an abusive partner and a child would tie me to him forever."

"I contemplated suicide to get away from this, as I can't go on with my life if I have to remain pregnant."

"I am pretty sure my ex-partner would kill me if he knows I am pregnant."

"My family is super Catholic and not supportive of my choice even though my baby has severe defects and will have no kind of life if any. I've never felt so alone in my life".

"We've borrowed all the money we could".

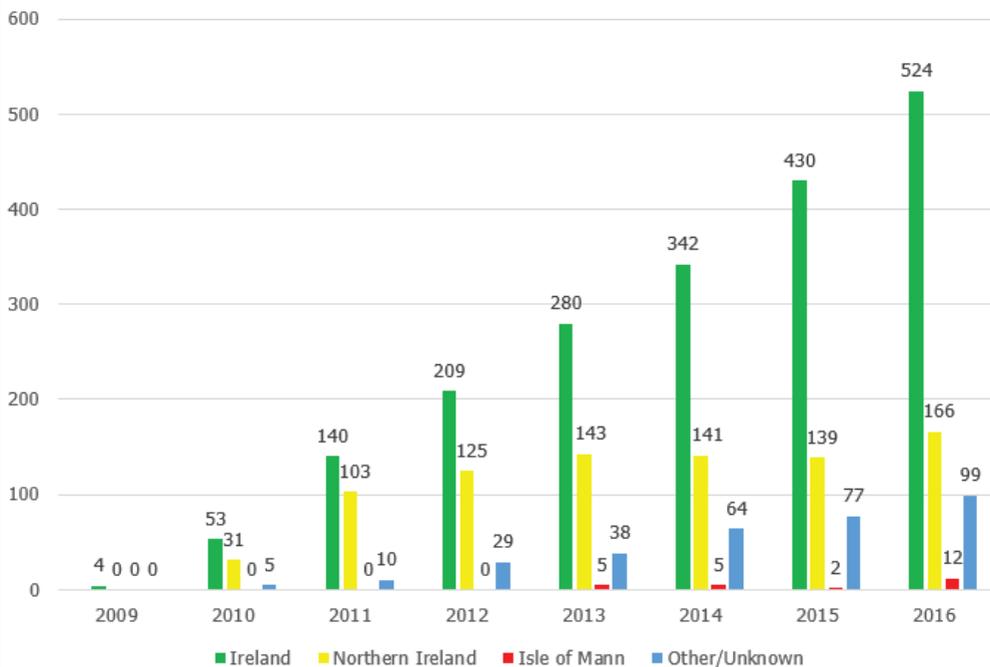
"I feel like I am walking through a nightmare. I used to be against abortion but this experience has made me realise that I can't judge someone else's decision".

Our work

2009-2016

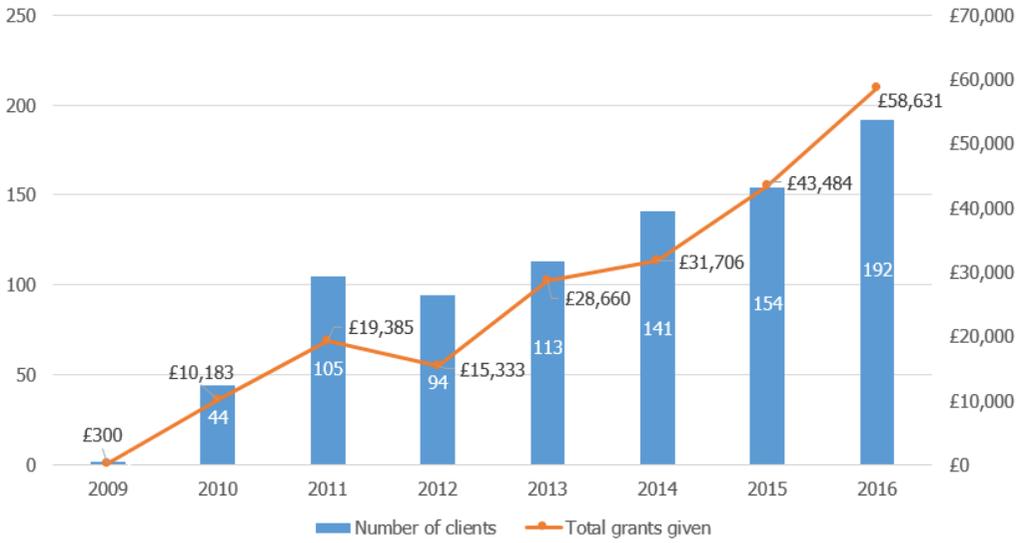
In December 2009 ASN hosted and funded our first client. As word spread, we heard from more and more women who needed financial support to travel for an abortion. In 2016 we heard from our 2,375th person, funded our 653rd client and hosted our 117th client. Until the draconian anti-abortion laws in Ireland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man change, we'll continue to answer phone calls, emails and texts from desperate people. With your support, we'll continue to liaise with abortion clinics, find accommodation and provide grants.

Where clients contacted us from

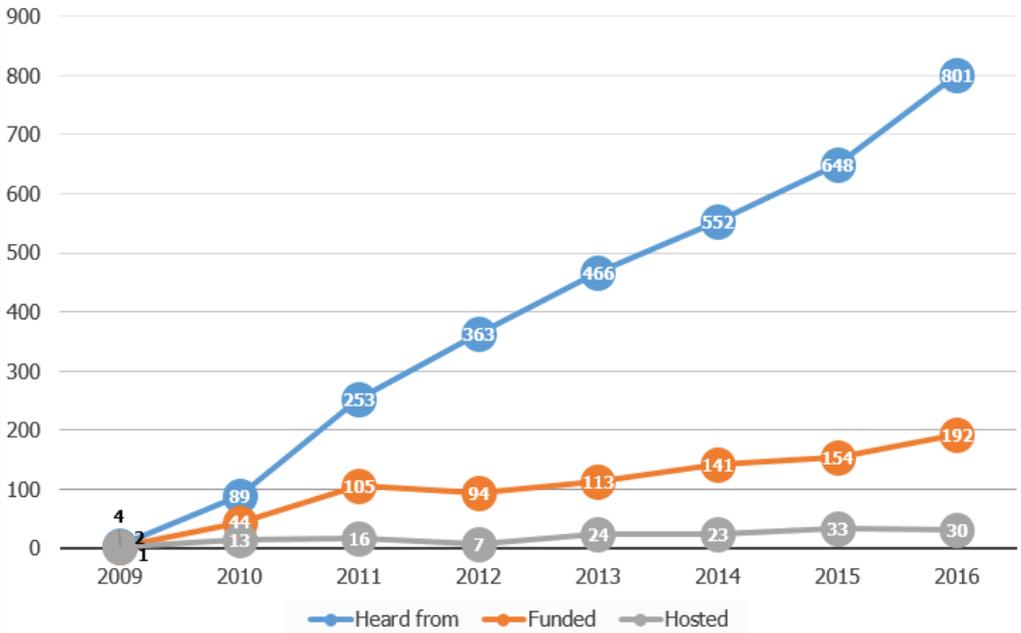




How much we funded



How many clients we helped





How **you** have helped

Your support keeps our phone lines, email and website running so we can give clients the information they need to arrange an abortion themselves and fund their travel and procedures if they can't.

In 2016, your donations funded more women than ever before, and some of the grants were bigger too. Thanks to you, there are fewer mums selling their kids' Christmas gifts or skipping paying the rent and fewer kids going hungry or cold so their parents can pay to access services that are free on the NHS to those in England, Scotland and Wales.

Fiona already has four children, all of whom are in care. She has been working hard to create a stable home life and was due to have one of her children returned to her when she found out she was pregnant. However, her social worker appealed the decision to return her child saying that she wouldn't be able to cope as she was pregnant. She believes her ex would kill her if he knew she was considering abortion and was planning to continue the pregnancy, but not if it would cost her access to her existing children. As she lives in rural Ireland, she needed to take a bus to Dublin as well as pay for flights, leaving her with just €50 to fund a £610 abortion. You paid the difference and helped Fiona get her children home.*





• **£63,031 from regular monthly donations**

Or an average of £5,253 per month. Thanks to the 600 or so people who donate each month.



• **£50,278 from one-off donations**

We received 6,000 individual donations ranging from £1 to £2,000.



• **£10,800 in sponsorship**

Abortion care providers sponsor our website. Their logos appeared on our site throughout 2016.

giftaid it

• **£8,821 in Gift Aid**

The Gift Aid scheme lets us claim back the tax you've already paid, increasing the value of your donation by 25%. Visit www.asn.org.uk/gift-aid to learn more.



• **£8,730 from community fundraising events**

Your comedy nights, marathons and other fabulous events covered 28 average grants.



• **£7,428 in crowdfunding income**

203 of you supported our campaign to help pay a fundraiser via the crowdfunder which ended in January 2017



• **£300 in donated professional services**

One clever bod kindly donated their IT and database skills, to an estimated value of £300.



Statement of Financial Accounts

Please find below Abortion Support Network's Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2016. If you have any questions about our accounts, please contact our treasurer via email at treasurer@asn.org.uk.

Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure account) for the year ended 31 December 2016

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total year to 31 December 2016 | Total year to 31 December 2015 |
|--|--------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| <i>Income</i> | | | | |
| Individual donations | 113,609 | - | 113,609 | 86,460 |
| Gift aid | 8,821 | - | 8,821 | 8,677 |
| Fundraising events and crowdfunding | 8,730 | 7,428 | 16,158 | 10,657 |
| Grants | - | - | - | 3,198 |
| Website sponsorship fees | 10,800 | - | 10,800 | 7,200 |
| Travel subsidies | - | - | - | 1,011 |
| Total income | 141,960 | 7,428 | 149,388 | 117,203 |
| <i>Expenditure</i> | | | | |
| Grants to clients | 58,631 | - | 58,631 | 43,484 |
| Cost of generating funds | 4,834 | - | 4,834 | 2,823 |
| Operational expenditure | 12,294 | - | 12,294 | 6,249 |
| Consultancy and staff payments | 34,391 | - | 34,391 | 29,525 |
| Total expenditure | 110,150 | - | 110,150 | 82,081 |
| Net income/(expenditure) and net movement of funds for the year | 31,810 | 7,428 | 39,238 | 35,122 |
| Fund balance brought forward | 71,058 | - | 71,058 | 35,936 |
| Fund balance carried forward | 102,868 | 7,428 | 110,296 | 71,058 |

1st May 2017



"I wouldn't be alive today if you hadn't helped me".
**"I couldn't have done this without your charity.
It's amazing that girls who may be in the same position
as myself are able to get help from you and not be judged for
their choices."**

"I am so grateful. Everyone I spoke from your team was so non-judgemental."

"I didn't know what to do and when I came across your website it felt like a miracle that there's even a possibility that you could help me out."

"Everything is fine because of you!!!
You were like an angel in my life!!
You will always been in my prayers!!"

**"Our country is stuck in the 1950's
and you are a lifeline."**

"I can't thank you enough u really saved me thank you thank you thank you."

"Thank you so much for your help – you're making a very difficult situation a little easier & I really appreciate it."

"I am so so so grateful for all off your help! I have no credit to ring u and thank you over the phone but you have being so much help to me thank you so so much!"

"You're a terrific service, when we win the lottery you're getting half of it!"

**"Youse are the only people we've reached out to for
help who have called us back."**

"I am so happy you spoke to me. You don't understand what difference you're making to people."



How **YOU** can help

Donate

As an abortion fund, our ability to help clients is governed by our bank balance. Our regular donors are what keep us going but we also gratefully accept one-off or occasional donations. Visit www.asn.org.uk/donate for more information.

Register for Gift Aid

If you are a UK tax payer and an ASN donor, registering for Gift Aid gets ASN an extra 25p for every £1 you donate – at no extra cost to you. Go to www.asn.org.uk/gift-aid to find out more.

Give us your time

Go for a sponsored run, host a movie night, hold a bake sale – there are lots of ways to fundraise for ASN. Email community@asn.org.uk for ideas and support. Or if you'd like to become more involved with ASN, you'll find our current list of available volunteer roles at www.asn.org.uk/volunteer.

Keep in touch

Sign up for our newsletter, like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter. You can find all our handles at www.asn.org.uk.

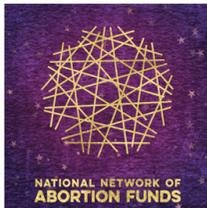
Leave a legacy

By leaving a gift to Abortion Support Network in your Will, you can help us to be there for women struggling to access safe, legal abortions long into the future. Email our founder at mara@asn.org.uk for further information.



We couldn't do it without you!

ASN does not, and cannot, work in isolation. Here's a shout out to some of the many organisations who have supported ASN, fought for abortion rights or helped people access safe abortion.



Thanks also to the wonderful Sarah Ferrari for designing the logo that we launched in January 2016. Sarah's work can be found at www.sarahferrari.com or on Twitter and Instagram @sarahferrari



"I think every woman in the world should be able to make this choice. Without your help, I don't know what I would've done".

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