



## **Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre**

### **Press Statement**

***February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014***

### **Pavee Point: “Few choices for Traveller and Roma women fleeing domestic and sexual violence.”**

Pavee Point will attend a meeting with the Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality Wednesday February 26<sup>th</sup> to discuss the shortcomings of Irish legislation in protecting vulnerable Roma and Traveller women from domestic and sexual violence.

Tessa Collins, Community Development Worker in Pavee Point Violence against Women Programme stated that “Domestic and sexual violence affect all communities regardless of ethnic or social background. However, Traveller and Roma women have great difficulties in seeking help and protection”.

Travellers and Roma experience persistent discrimination and racism. On one hand, this makes Traveller and Roma women vulnerable to abuse, including prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation. On the other, this creates significant barriers to accessing and engaging in services and protections.

Laura Pohjolainen, Co-ordinator of the Violence against Women Programme in Pavee Point, stated; “The current policy and legislation leaves little choice for Traveller and Roma women to leave violent relationships or situations. The alternative often means that a woman has to face poverty, social isolation and even homelessness”.

“We hope that our engagement with the Committee can result in substantial steps towards progressing national policy and legislation in order to improve the protection of vulnerable Roma and Traveller women and girls”. This includes amending the Habitual Residence Condition, developing an adequate National Traveller Roma Integration Strategy and signing and ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

**ENDs**

For further information, please contact:

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