

Resources for abused women in the Faroe Islands

The only Woman Shelter in Faroe Islands is located in the capital Tórshavn. Battered women, on request for an interview, either meet at the Shelter in private or make personal calls to seek out advice and guidance inquiry at the Shelter.

By asking women in the province, if it would be easier, if a Shelter was located at their home province, the answer was no. The women would rather stay at the Shelter in Tórshavn, far from their home province, because of the anonymity. They can stay at the Shelter together with their children for a limited period of time - a couple of Months, or until they have got a private resident for their future home.

At the Woman Shelter we are three employees. One of the employee is taken care of the children.

In addition thirty five women work in shift as volunteers at night, in weekends and on holidays.

One evening in a week the women can consult psychologist, legal adviser or a social worker. These consultants work also as volunteers.

It is difficult to substantiate how many women are exposed to abuse, due to undefined common reasons of assault, and in addition due to lack of official statistical information in the Faroe Islands, in this field. However, at the Woman Shelter we register in public.

For their records the Police authority register women assaults in general as a private domestic violence conflicts.

The National Hospital keep records of woman assaults, however the figures are submitted to professional secrecy, and are not disclosed in public.

We do not have any dedicated faroese legislation preventing nor protecting women against abuse in particular.

Taken in force are in general several international human right conventions.

Faroe Islands are committed to the human right convention for women, men and children.

No public research on woman abuse is taken place in the Faroe Islands.

Woman abuse in Faroe Islands is mostly known behind closed doors in private at home. This agitate the fact that woman assaults is a private matter without any kind of intervention.

The consequences of woman abuse comprehensive. The duration in which the abused persons are affected is sometimes short, however, in other cases it is lasting for the rest of their life.

The numbers of committed rapes are unknown because most of the rapes are not reported.

A raped woman – the victim - who is seeking help at the hospital injury is not examined, unless she has reported the incident to the police firstly. This prevents that she later will change her meaning, and wants to report. At that time all proves are gone.

In the Faroe Islands we have a need of a procedure to attend to, in case of committed rapes – like a team of experts in that field. The director at the National Hospital has expressed in public, that he will investigat the procedure at hospitals in other countrys.

We do not have a incestcenter. A incest centre with expert knowledge would help supporting women exposed to incest.

The streaptease business has few years ago been introduced in the Faroe Islands. Once or twice a year stripper from Denmark perform erotic dancing locally in the capital Torshavn.

To prevent, that the streaptease business is developing prostitution and trafficking, we have expressed our concern of the problem in public.

The parliament “Føroya Løgting” has debated the issue, and agreed that streaptease is illegal. But since the police authority is danish - dansih legislation is valid in Faroe Islands.

A citizen has to report to the police when streaptease danzing is announce, then the police can intervene and stop the streaptease danzing – but nothing been done.

More and more we see women with ethnical background apply for help at the Woman Shelter.

Commonly these women are married to faroese men. Some of these men have personal problems and are originated from isolated families.

At the Woman Shelter we encourage women to join a network together with other foreign women. These women have in common no relatives in Faroe Islands, other than their own children.

Assault against handicap women is something, we do not hear about at all.

Many women are members of various religious communities. These women have difficulties revealing their silence and to talk with someone else about the abuse subject. The women are frightened to be excluded from the religious community.

The family relations in most faroese family structure are tight and faithful. By paying attention and respect the family take care, and most often support the distressed family member.

Violent men are seen from all social levels.

It is very rare that a man approach the Shelter. One man told once, that he was afraid of getting to close to the Shelter building, because of the suspected conclusion by others passing by.

The residential circumstance make it difficult for the woman to choose, how she want to live on her own, since hiring out flats is based on private property rent. This way it is very difficult for the abused woman to give up, and split the partnership with her partner, because it is so diffeicult for her to acquire any place to live. In addition the hire out can solely decide the rental pricing, which most often is at such a level, which requires two wages.

In order to satisfy the human needs of assaulted women in Faroe Islands, it must be a priority to engage skilled professionals working as a team, helping women who have been affected and exposed to physical, psychological, sexual and financial abuse.