

July to October
2024

The Sanctuary project: Evaluation Report



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Carrie-Anne, Lindsey, Maria, Megan, Plum, Riley, and Sheelagh from Women in Empowerment & Recovery (WiRE) co-produced the art work with artists Nicola Belfour, Elaine Beard and Sharon Bailey from The Barn at Easington; and Padma Rao and Roohia Syed-Ahmed from Sangini. The Moon Circle was facilitated by Jasmine Ryan from REFORM Women's CIC. Credit goes to Rachel Deakin for the photographs of the exhibition launch included in this report.

Sanctuary was funded by East Durham AAP "Big Arts" programme (£5,000), and No More Nowt (£1,500). The total project budget was £7969. The 37% shortfall was made up an in-kind contribution from The Barn at Easington (£2,844) and East Durham Artists Network (£125 from the sale of a painting by Victoria Tanner). In-kind resources were also provided by The National Trust (entry to Crook Hall & Gardens),

Dr Sue Robson evaluated the project. She has almost 40 years feminist community development experience, and a strong track-record in evaluation and research. Sue founded Tina's Haven, a catalyst for developing holistic and emancipatory support for mothers severed from trauma-based addiction, in remembrance of her daughter.



Figure 1: Sanctuary project visit to Durham Cathedral, 31.7.2024

1. Introduction

This is an evaluation of the Sanctuary Project which took place between July and October 2024. Sanctuary celebrated the restorative and healing power of The Arts for women in recovery from addiction, violence, and trauma; by first exploring ideas of what a place of sanctuary means to women in addiction recovery through well-being and immersive nature experiences, words, and writing. Then creatively expressing these ideas individually and collectively through the mediums of silk painting, Warli⁵ and Arabic calligraphy.

The project took place at ANE Health & Housing (ANE), The Barn at Easington, Durham Cathedral and Crook Hall Gardens and The Arts Cafe (Peterlee).

A key anticipated outcome of the project was to collectively create a sanctuary at ANE for women to grow and support each other. The intention being that Art works made by the women would adorn the sanctuary to create a legacy at ANE to support women in recovery. The following outcomes were anticipated for the women in recovery:

- New skills in collaborative working, silk painting and wellbeing techniques.
- Personal growth , resilience, and empowerment for women on addiction recovery journey.
- Better relationships and support between women taking part.
- Improved physical and mental health and general well-being.
- Development of trusting relationships between the women.
- Increased potential for meaningful employment.
- Higher recovery outcomes as a result of the project.
- Families being reunited with birth mothers giving rise to stronger community cohesion.
- Dissemination of the practice and the learning so that the model will benefit women in recovery in the North East and beyond.

The ambition was to create a “replicable model” to support women who are vulnerable and living with trauma, using arts and nature-based activities, which can be shared across arts and health sectors.

2. Key findings

Sanctuary set out to celebrate the restorative and healing power of The Arts for women in recovery from addiction, violence, and trauma; by first exploring ideas of **what a place of sanctuary means to women in addiction recovery** through well-being and immersive nature experiences, words, and writing.

What is unambiguously clear from the findings of this evaluation is that during the course of the project the conception of Sanctuary shifted from a physical place, such as Durham Cathedral or Crook Hall Gardens, to something within the women themselves and within their connections to their surroundings and other strong powerful women. For example:

- The space of your heart.
- Something I can aim to be...A person of Sanctuary.
- The entrance door to Sanctuary is inside You.
- Connection with spiritual surroundings and other strong, powerful and loving women.

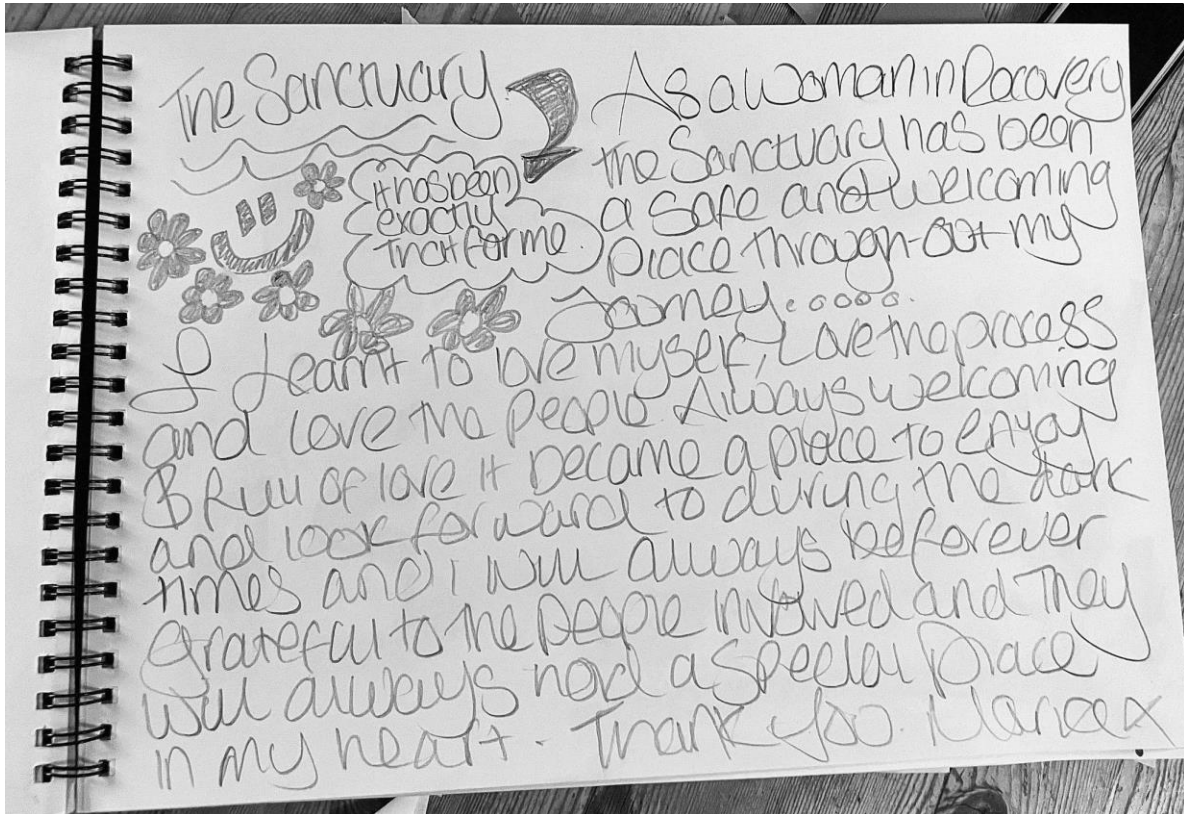


Figure 2: Testimony about Sanctuary: “a safe and welcoming place thought my journey.”

An ambition on Sanctuary was to create a replicable model to support women who are vulnerable and living with trauma, using arts and nature-based activities, which can be shared across arts and health sectors. It is clear from the narratives and testimonies from the women in recovery throughout this evaluation, and the art work they produced; that this project had a profound impact upon them; with marked improvements in their mental well-being and supporting their recovery from addiction.

It is also evident from the evaluation of the exhibition that Sanctuary is a powerful catalyst for those in mainstream commissioning and delivery to think differently about services and motivating them towards “breaking out of systems” and “prioritising the creative, compassionate parts” of their work. If this is realised, then Sanctuary will have been groundbreaking.

This evaluation provides evidence that almost all of the anticipated outcomes of Sanctuary were met during the timescale of the project. Table 3 lists the outcomes against sources of evidence from the evaluation findings.

Table 1: Indicating evidence towards meeting the anticipated outcomes of the Sanctuary project

| Anticipated outcome | Evidence |
|---|---|
| New skills in collaborative working, silk painting and wellbeing techniques. | In the exhibited art work and reflective narratives of the women in recovery. |
| Personal growth , resilience, and empowerment for women on addiction recovery journey. | In the WEWBS self-assessment and reflective narratives and testimonies of the women in recovery. |
| Better relationships and support between women taking part. | Throughout the women’s narratives and testimonies, especially the moon-circle. |
| Improved physical and mental health and general well-being. | The WEWBS self-assessment and reflective narratives and testimonies. |
| Development of trusting relationships between the women. | Throughout the women’s reflective narratives and testimonies. |
| Increased potential for meaningful employment. | Improved confidence and art work skills, Improved mental well-being. |
| Higher recovery outcomes as a result of the project. | Clear that the arts and nature-based activities have enhanced recovery. |
| Families being reunited with birth mothers giving rise to stronger community cohesion. | Evaluative testimonies from children of women in recovery expressing pride in their mum’s art work. |
| Dissemination of the practice and the learning so that the model will benefit women in recovery in the North East and beyond. | High level of participation of statutory and voluntary agencies in the exhibition, reflections suggesting a powerful impact upon thinking and priorities. |

A key anticipated outcome of the project was to collectively create a sanctuary at ANE for women in recovery to grow and support each other. Whether a lasting legacy of sanctuary for women in recovery at ANE will be achieved remains to be seen. At the time of writing the exhibition is displayed at The Arts Café at Peterlee; and there are suggestions in this evaluation that it would be impactful in challenging the shame around addiction if it was to tour wider. Ultimately, this decision lies with the women artists in recovery, alongside the female artists who co-produced the art.

An unexpected outcome of the project was the coming together of artists from The Barn at Easington and Sangini and the cross-cultural sharing, exploration and expressions of themes of Sanctuary using different art forms. As a reflexive and proactive response to the eruption of racist riots in the North East; this not only created some interesting art-work; it sowed the seeds for The Barn at Easington and WiRE to build unity and solidarity with women from different communities. For Sangini came the realisation that they “can bring a much greater benefit to the women by bringing them together and provide varied cultural experiences.”

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 This evaluation clearly evidences the efficacy of restorative and healing power of The Arts for women in recovery from addiction, violence, and trauma. However, in transferring the model to other settings, it needs to be recognised that the artists and nature-based practitioners involved in delivering and evaluating Sanctuary, are highly qualified and experienced in their respective fields; and have an established track record of working with women in recovery.

Expanding, growing and developing this work, needs to be rooted in reflexive critical practice, starting from the knowledge base established from Sanctuary and the learning from its predecessor projects.

- 3.2 Sanctuary was an ambitious project that exceeded all expectations in relation to the financial resources available for the project. Undoubtedly, this involved working over and above the time allocated to the project. The outcomes of these huge efforts are potentially ground-breaking; both in terms of the profound impact upon the women in recovery, and agencies being powered and motivated to think more creatively about how they deliver services. However, it needs to be acknowledged that:

Sustaining such high-quality and effective Arts and nature-based practice with women in recovery from trauma-based addiction requires adequate and realistic funding and resourcing.

- 3.3 The original intention of Sanctuary was that Art works made by the women would adorn the women-only suite at ANE to create a legacy to support women in recovery. However, in the light of evidence that the exhibition can be a powerful catalyst for mainstream agencies to think differently, more creatively and compassionately about services design; and impactful in challenging the shame surrounding women in addiction:

Consideration should now be given to the most impactful use of the Sanctuary Art work, and resources made available towards touring the exhibition in other locations in County Durham and wider North East.

- 3.4 The racist riots provided the impetus for the cross-cultural sharing, exploration and expressions of themes of Sanctuary using different art forms in collaboration with the Black and minoritised women led organisation, Sangini. This is groundbreaking given that Black women's perspectives are traditionally omitted from North east arts and cultural projects.⁶

Given that the seeds have been sown for collaboration between The Barn at Easington, WiRE and Sangini to build unity and solidarity; this should be extended into existing and future nature-based and Arts projects to develop meaningful inclusion and representation of Black and minoritised female perspectives.

3.5 This evaluation evidences the combined artistic and nature-based practices tested in Sanctuary provide a basis for creating a transferable model to support women who are vulnerable and living with trauma, using arts and nature-based activities, which could potentially be shared across Arts and health sectors. The success of Sanctuary and its predecessor projects has relied upon the provision of safe single-sex spaces that have involved significant struggle to create and protect.⁷

Sanctuary for women recovering from trauma-based addiction requires the sacrosanctity of female only spaces that are protected by the Single Sex Exemption (SSE, paragraph 27 of Schedule 3 of the Equality Act). This applies to the practice model on the basis that “the limited provision is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”.⁸ All artists, practitioners and collaborators working on future arts and nature-based projects should appreciate and understand this.⁹

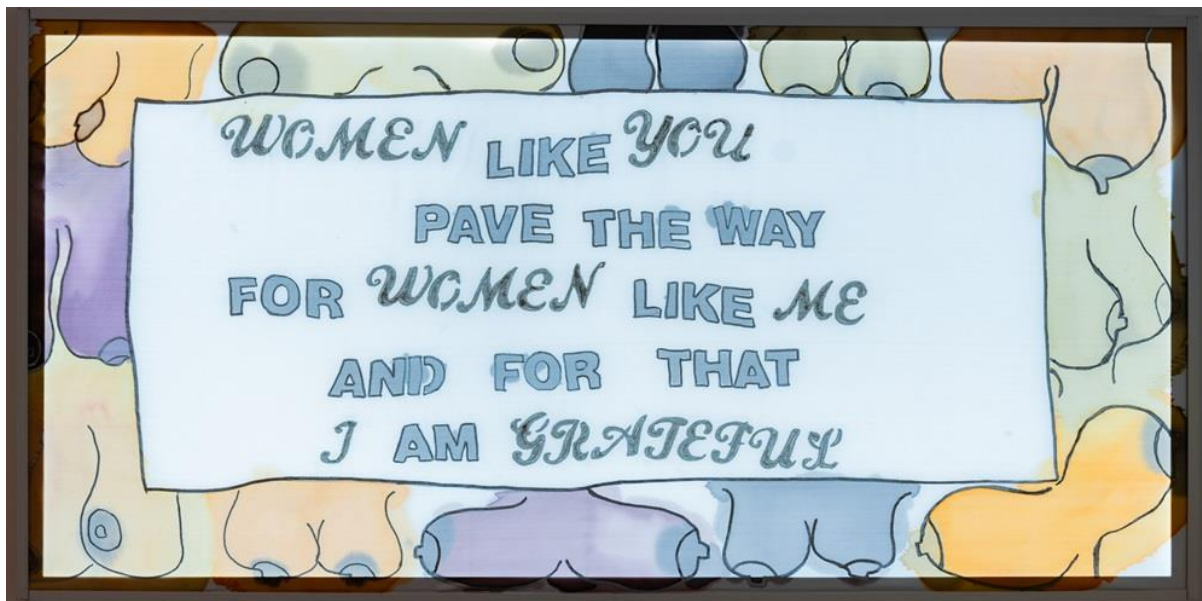


Figure 3: Illuminated silk-painting, Sanctuary exhibition (October 2024)

4. Background to Sanctuary

This project is shaped and development by women in recovery from trauma-based addiction. Our previous work revealed that traumatic events since childhood had led women to addiction, and to being severed from their own children. Without exception, the women's journeys had involved intimate partner violence. Research shows that these women have faced: domestic violence, cultural stigma, family breakdown; and are marginalized by services and a system that lacks the capacity and flexibility to respond to their needs holistically.

Recovery is known to bring a heightened awareness as feelings return, both painful and pleasurable. This, combined with the reflective process they undertake through their 12-steps recovery, brings about an intensity of experience which through Sanctuary, it was hoped they would be able to share with each other, and as part of their stories.¹⁰

Through evaluation of our pilot work, Field of Hope and Tina's Haven, it emerged that structured regular contact to nature and creativity has a powerful effect on their journey of recovery. This is evidenced in "In Love and Anger", an externally peer reviewed report of an action research-based study of the pioneering Tina's Haven pilot project, delivered in East Durham during 2022 and 2023.¹¹ Females are known to feel vulnerable and unsafe in mix-sex recovery and treatment settings.¹² They need access to safe and forgiving spaces to begin personal development and healing so they can move forward and build positive, healthy, and fulfilling lives.



Figure 4: Image from Crook Hall & Gardens visit 31.7.2024

5. Participation in the project

The key beneficiary of the Sanctuary project was n=7 women in addictions recovery at A-NE (see appendix 1). A further n=23 women from various grassroots recovery/ women's organisations participated in Sanctuary events and networking activities (see appendix 2):

1. Free Women's Community
2. Recovering Women's Justice
3. Recovery Connections
4. REFORM Women's CIC
5. Rural Women's Recovery Network
6. Sangini
7. Women in Empowerment & Recovery

There was n=29 participants at the launch of the Sanctuary exhibition on 14.10.2024 (see appendix 3).

Table 1 shows the number of participants across all of the Sanctuary arts sessions, activities and events.

Table 2: Schedule and activities involved in the Sanctuary project and the numbers participating

| Session/ activity number | Date/ time | Theme | Numbers participating |
|--------------------------------|------------|--|--------------------------|
| One | 31.7.2024 | Visit to Durham Cathedral and Crook Hall & Gardens (National Trust), to take inspiration and explore the concept of Sanctuary. | 7 |
| Two | 7.8.2024 | 1 st Art session at ANE | 6 |
| Three | 14.8.2024 | 2 nd Art session at ANE | 6 |
| Four | 18.8.2024 | Full Moon Circle at The Barn at Easington. | 19 |
| Five | 21.8.2024 | 3 rd Art session at ANE | 6 |
| Six | 28.8.2024 | 4 th Art session at ANE | 5 |
| Seven | 4.9.2024 | 5 th Art session at ANE | 5 |
| Eight | 26.9.2024 | 6 th Art session Sangini (Warli) | 9 |
| Nine | 14.10.2024 | Launch of Sanctuary Exhibition, 5 - 7pm The Arts Café, Yoden Road, Peterlee, SR8 5DP | 29 (see appendix 2) |
| Ten | 17.10.2024 | 7 th Art session Sangini (Islamic Calligraphy) | 8 |

6. Methods and data collection

Quantitative and qualitative evaluation data was collected from the following sources:

- Baseline and end of project anonymised self-assessment based upon The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales - WEMWBS¹³
- End of sessions reflection sheets in the first and last artistic sessions (31.7.2024 & 4.9.2024), the second of the artistic sessions with Sangini (17.10.24), the Full Moon Circle network event on (18.8.2024) and the exhibition launch on 14.10.2024.

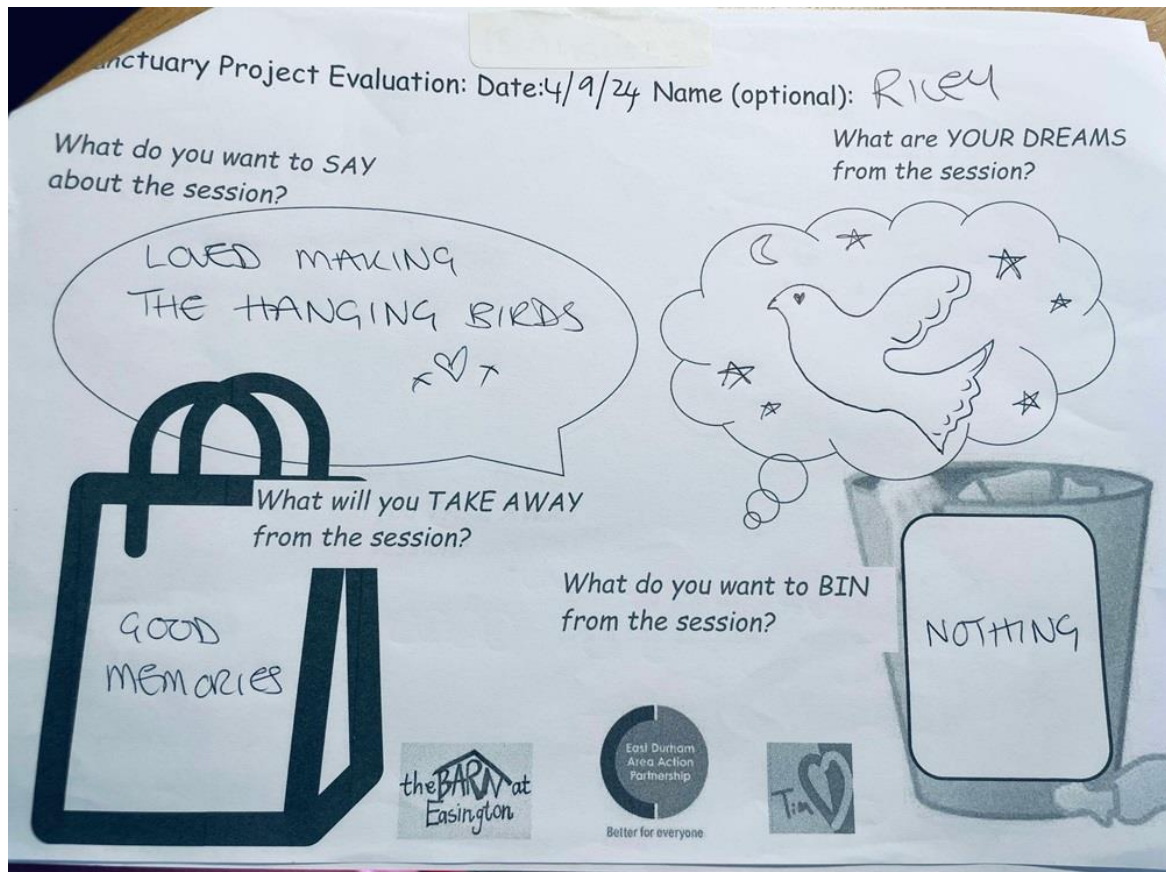


Figure 5: Weekly end of session reflection sheet

- Fieldwork evaluator collected qualitative testimonies about the impact of the Sanctuary project upon the women at the last session on 4.9.2024.
- An end of project reflective online exercise with artists from The Barn at Easington and Sangini.
- A collective journal for comments from participants of the exhibition launch on 14.10.2024.

7. Findings

7.1 Quantitative assessment of improvements in women's mental well-being

Table 2 shows marked improvement between all of the baseline and end of project scores from the self-assessment based upon The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales (WEMWS), from all n=7 (100%) of the key Sanctuary project beneficiaries.

- 1 = None of the time
- 2 = Rarely
- 3 = Some of the time
- 4 = Often
- 5 = All of the time

The most marked improvements from the start to the end of the Sanctuary project are in the following categories:

- Feeling cheerful
- Having energy to spare
- Being able to make up my own mind about things
- Feeling relaxed
- Interested in new things
- Feeling good about myself
- Feeling loved

However, there are improvements across all categories of WEMWS, and at the start of the project where the scores were between “rarely” and “some of the time”; by the end of the project, all scores were “often”, and in the case of “feeling cheerful” and “trying new things”, moving towards “all of the time.”

Table 3: Showing marked improvements from the baseline to the end of project in WEMWS

| Mental Well-being Statement | Baseline | End of project | Difference |
|--|----------|----------------|------------|
| I've been feeling cheerful | 2.6 | 4.6 | 2 |
| I've had energy to spare | 2.1 | 3.9 | 1.8 |
| I've been able to make up my own mind about things | 2.4 | 4.1 | 1.7 |
| I've been feeling relaxed | 2.7 | 4.3 | 1.6 |
| I've been interested in new things | 3.0 | 4.6 | 1.6 |
| I've been feeling good about myself | 2.6 | 4.1 | 1.5 |
| I've been feeling loved | 2.6 | 4.1 | 1.5 |
| I've been feeling optimistic about the future | 2.9 | 4.3 | 1.4 |
| I've been feeling confident | 2.7 | 4.0 | 1.3 |
| I've been feeling useful | 2.9 | 4.1 | 1.2 |
| I've been feeling interested in other people | 2.9 | 4.1 | 1.2 |
| I've been dealing with problems well | 2.9 | 4.1 | 1.2 |
| I've been feeling close to other people | 2.9 | 4.1 | 1.2 |
| I've been thinking clearly | 3.0 | 4.1 | 1.1 |

7.1 Findings from start and end of session reflection sheets

In a sample of n=2 out of n=6 artistic sessions (Durham visit and 1 ANE session), the women were asked to complete a reflection sheet to record what they wanted “to say” about the session, what they would “take away,” what their “dreams” were, and what they wanted “to bin.”

The combined responses to “What do you want to SAY about the session?” illustrate that **the women loved and enjoyed them.**

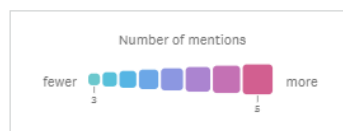


Figure 6: Word cloud illustrating combined narrative responses to "What do you want to Say about the art sessions?"

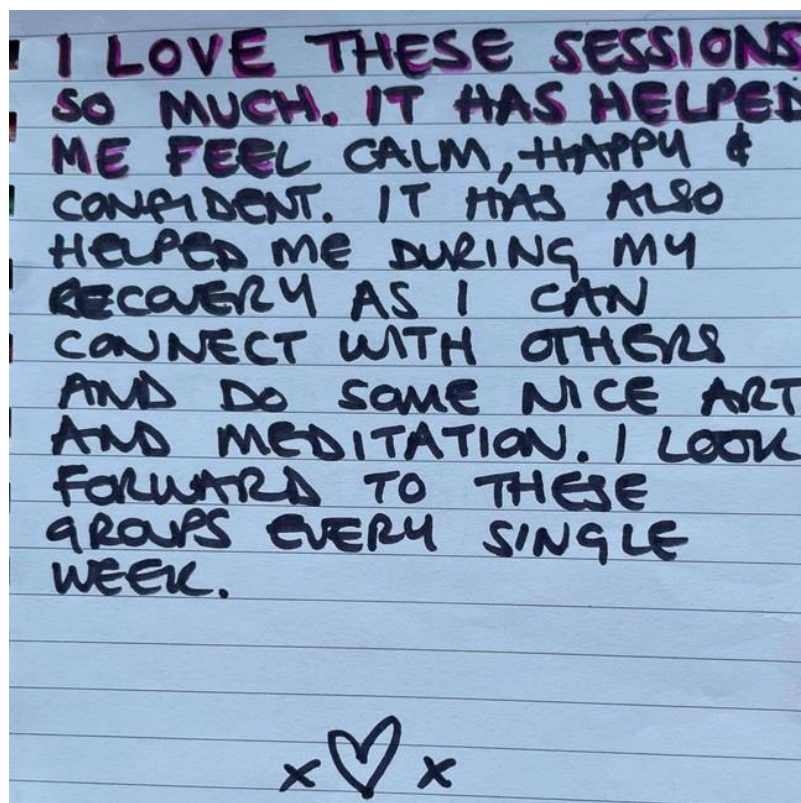


Figure 7: Participant reflection (1) – ANE art session no 5 (4.9.2024)

The participant narrative in Figure 4 reflects that connecting with other women and doing has led to calmness, happiness and confidence, has helped recovery from addiction.

The following narrative comments on what participants want to say about the session, also reflect, deriving, enjoyment, happiness and peace from the Sanctuary project.

- Fabulous connection with other women.
- Fucking awesome.
- I just fucking love it.
- It was funny, enjoyable, productive, lovely.
- Loved being in Durham, really enjoyed today.
- Loved making the hanging birds x <3 x
- Lovely session enjoyed the trip. Peaceful day.
- Peaceful, safe & happy.
- Really enjoyed going to see the cathedral.

The combined responses to “What will you TAKE AWAY from the session show that **the women derived peace and love from the art sessions.**

peace love

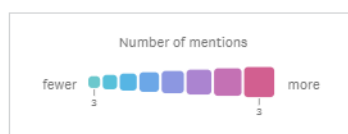


Figure 8: Word cloud illustrating combined narrative responses to “What will you TAKE AWAY from the art sessions?”

The following selection of narrative responses exemplify that the peace, calm, love, friendship, laughter, joy, happiness and confidence that the women took away from the project. From the narrative in figure 6, it is evident that empowerment was derived from this.

- Amazing memories and lots of photos. Good memories x 2
- Be with myself.
- Confidence <3
- Friendliness and calm.
- Happiness, laughter, joy. Peace, calmness, love.
- Lots of ideas of art, peace and love <3

the project has been
one of joy + happiness
which I have
thoroughly enjoyed
and have been
excited to attend
each session.

I leave feeling relaxed
and empowered
with kindness and
confidence.

Manana.

Figure 9: Participant reflection (2) – ANE art session no 5 (4.9.2024)

The combined narrative responses to “What are your DREAMS from the session (see figure 7) illustrate that the women **dreamed of peace and to learn more.**

learn
peace

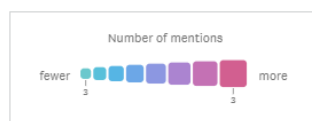


Figure 10: Word cloud illustrating combined narrative responses to “What are YOUR DREAMS from the art sessions?”

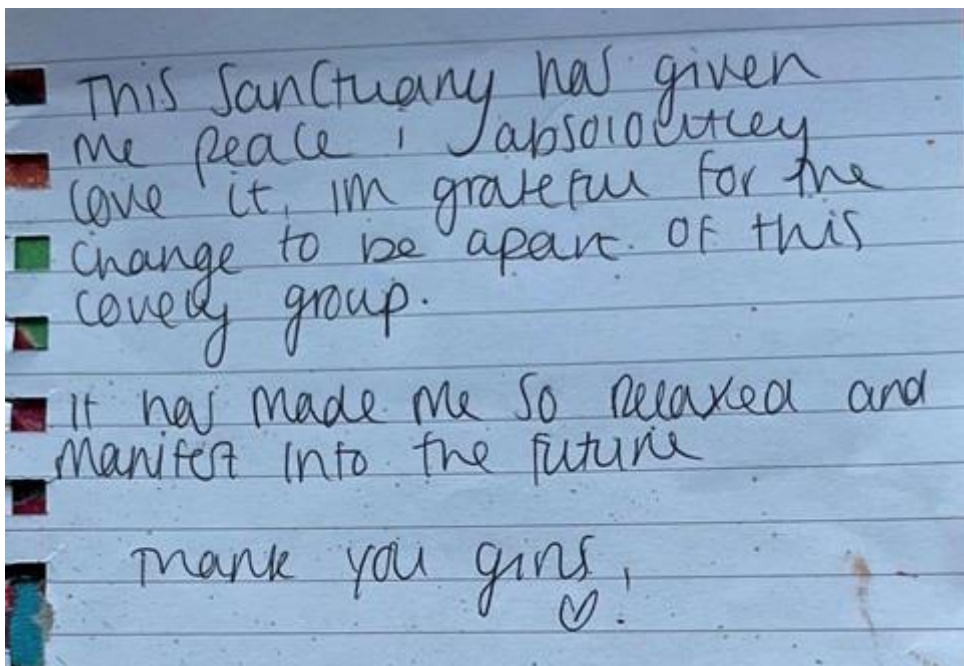


Figure 11: Participant reflection (2) – ANE art session no 5 (4.9.2024)

The following selection of narrative responses and the narrative in figure 8 reflect that women dream of having peace in their lives, ongoing connections with other women and more arts and cultural activities.

- Future & connection. To continue having quality time with quality ladies.
- More time to be arty. To be more art inspired.
- Peace and open up. To pray more and to be more at peace.
- To explore Durham more and learn more about the history. To visit more historic sites.
- To see my work up and displayed.



Figure 12: Art work in progress in the women's suite ANE

The combined narrative responses to “What would you BIN from the art sessions show that there is nothing that the participants would want to change.

Nothing

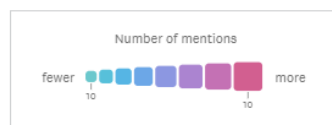


Figure 13: Word cloud of combined narrative responses to “What would you like to BIN from the art sessions?”

7.2 Findings from Full Moon Circle Networking event (18.8.2024)

As part of the Sanctuary project, n=21 women from grassroots women's recovery organisations participated in a full moon circle and forest bathing event at The Barn at Easington on 18.8.2024. n=6 from ANE/ WiRE, n=6 from REFORM Women's CIC, n=4 from Recovering Justice Women's Group, n=2 from Recovery Connections and n=1 from the Rural Women's Recovery Network.

n=13 (62%) of participants completed and reflective evaluation form.

The combined narrative responses to "What do you want to SAY about the full moon circle?" illustrate that **the women found the session beautiful, the felt amazing and felt**

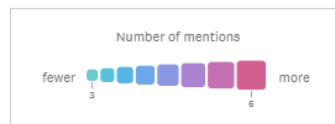


Figure 14: Word cloud illustrating combined narrative responses to "What do you want to Say about the full moon circle?"



Figure 15: Full moon circle facilitated by Jasmin Ryan (REFORM CIC)

The following narrative comments on what participants want to say about the full moon circle, also reflects that women connecting with love and unity in safe natural surroundings brought the women their own peace and sanctuary and was beneficial to their mental health.

- The session was amazing, everyone was welcoming, funny and friendly.
- Simply amazing, wonderful, peaceful, I feel brand new.
- Loving, caring, united session. A feeling of unity and peace. Grateful to be part of the session. Thank you sooo much. Lots of Love x
- Loved it, feel very grounded and full of love & light. Thank you for today.
- I fully enjoyed today's session, it made me feel connected and to have a purpose.
- Feel humbled by the honest and sharing stories. So brave.
- Beautiful, compassionate, fun and creative host Nicola. **Sanctuary in the space of your heart.**
- Amazing connection with amazing women. No judgement, just acceptance & love.
- Absolutely amazing. So, so needed, my mental health is much better going than coming in.

The combined narrative responses to “What will you TAKE AWAY show immense clarity in the women deriving connection, love and peace from the full moon circle

connection
love Peace

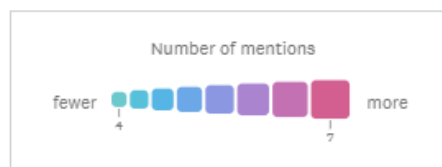


Figure 16: Word cloud illustrating combined narrative responses to “What will you TAKE AWAY from the full moon circle?”

The following selection of narrative responses exemplify that the women took away peace, calm, love, friendship, connection, hope and sanctuary from the full moon session. Significantly one woman said she took away how to bring herself peace.

- Connection, peace. To take stock of my surroundings. gratitude, Love.
- How to bring myself peace.
- Peace, love, friendship, connection.
- Peace, serenity, calm, hope. sanctuary. .
- Refreshed feeling.
- Reminder of the beauty of nature, presence, and connection.
- The pretty views I see at the Barn.

The combined narrative responses to “What are your DREAMS from the full moon circle (see figure 7) illustrate that the women dreamed keeping the connection with each other.

keep Connection

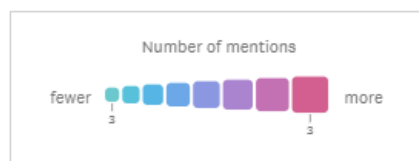


Figure 17: Word cloud illustrating combined narrative responses to “What are YOUR DREAMS from the full moon circle?”

The following selection of narrative responses from the full moon circle evidence that the women dream of keeping the friendship and connections made, and also to maintain what they have gained and learned from the session towards their personal development and recovery; feeling “repowered”, embracing their inner poet, and “releasing old ideals and behaviours.

- Acceptance, freedom, love, laughter.
- Connection & inner peace from the solidarity of likeminded women.
- That my affirmations come to fruition and we keep contact with each other.
- I dream that I will take forward this Sanctuary into myself and tap into my inner sanctuary. To come again <3
- I have made new friends that I hope to meet up with in the future.
- Keep some of that repowered feeling. New connection.
- My love for open spaces, I will embrace the poet inside me.
- To live in a place or visit more places like this.
- To release old ideals and behaviours.
- To remember what I have learned and keep it going.



Figure 18: Forest Bathing with Nicola Balfour 14.8.2024

The combined narrative responses to “What would you BIN from the session reflect that there is nothing that the women would want to change about the full moon circle, but there are some negative feelings and energy that they would like to leave behind:

- All my negative energy.
- Anger (2), arguments, better reactions.
- Past trauma.
- Chronic procrastination.



Figure 19: Clay pots made in forest bathing session (18.8.2024)

7.3 Findings from Art sessions with Sangini

In the midst of the project, racist riots and unrest erupted in nearby Sunderland and Hartlepool. It was deemed that the concept of Sanctuary could not be properly conceived in the absence of Black and minority women's perspectives, who were being disproportionately affected by the riots. The Barn at Easington approached Sangini; an organisation that exists to; improve the quality of women's lives, through artistic, educational, cultural and activities to deliver two additional art sessions.

Two sessions took place with artist from Sangini at the Art Café at Peterlee. On 26.9.2024 and 17.10.2024. At the second workshop, the exhibition was on display. The first workshop was Warli (artist Padma Rao) and the second Arabic Calligraphy (Roohia Syed-Ahmed). There was a mix of women participating from Sangini and WiRE, n=8 in the first session and n=9 in the second.

Warli painting speaks directly to the circumstances of village life and the local environment. As part of the simple pictorial 'language', circles represent the sun and moon, while triangles and squares represent mountains, trees and humans.¹⁴

The following is the evaluative feedback from n=4 (80%) of the participants from WiRE in the Arabic calligraphy session.

What do you want to SAY about the session?

- Excellent, enjoyed it, meeting new faces.
- Fun, fantastic.
- Really enjoyed learning something new.
- Great, enjoyed very much enjoyed meeting new faces, and learned Arabic calligraphy.

What are your DREAMS from the session?

- To be able to write clear calligraphy letters.
- To learn more.
- Continue learning.
- To be able to write more calligraphy letters.
- More sessions (x2)

What will you TAKE away from the session?

- Bookmark and have more sessions.
- Fun times.
- New skill and art.
- Make a book mark.

What do you want to BIN from the session?

Nothing (x3)



Figure 20: Participants from WiRE and Sangini in Warli art session (26.9.2024)



Figure 21: Warli Art, facilitated by Padma Rao (Sangini), 27.9.2024

7.4 Findings Exhibition Launch event (14.10.2024)

There was n=29 participants at the launch of the Sanctuary exhibition from various organisations (see appendix 3). A reflective evaluation sheet was completed by n=17 (59%).



Figure 22: The artists, film-maker and evaluator at the exhibition launch

The combined narrative responses to “What do you want to SAY” about the exhibition reflect that it was a powerful and beautiful event, also the love and support in the room; and the women themselves.

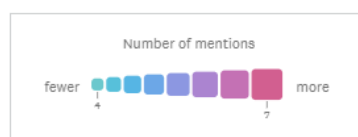


Figure 23: Word cloud illustrating combined narrative responses to "What do you want to Say" about the exhibition?



Figure 24: Showing love & support between the women artists in recovery at the Exhibition.

The following selection of narrative comments on what participants wanted to say, evidence an overwhelming appreciation of the exhibition, the artistic talents of the women and what they have achieved.

- A beautiful exhibition, made with, and radiating love.
- A lot of power in the love and support the women have received from the project.
- Beautiful, powerful and moving event, showcasing talent and love of women, for women. So much talent on display, so much light.
- Incredibly beautiful and powerful illustration of women can achieve with love and encouragement.
- Incredibly powerful to hear the impact the project had in supporting connection and friendship.
- Inspirational. Inspiring. Touching. Very impressive! It has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience.
- Love! Inspiring, wonderful women, Beautiful, huge support.
- Lovely exhibition. very powerful and meaningful support, and love is all you need.
- Wonderful, so proud of the women. Wow! The artwork, the stories, the ladies involved. I loved every minute.



Figure 25: Tree, birds and illuminated silk paintings

The combined narrative responses to “What will you TAKE AWAY exemplify that two things stand out, “power” and “hope.”

Power Hope

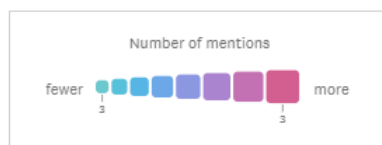


Figure 26: Word cloud illustrating combined narrative responses to “What will you TAKE AWAY from the exhibition?”



Figure 27: Son of the women artists in recovery, reading about sanctuary.

The following selection of narrative responses to what will you take away from the session, evidence that participants would like to see the work continue and expand, including tours of the exhibition elsewhere to help break down the shame of addiction.

- Go on tour. To go on tour around County Durham. That if you can grow bigger, tour to help to break down the shame of addiction.
- How women are amazing when empowered and supporting each other to rise.
- More projects like this! More of this work to happen, reaching the wider community.
- Stepping into the picture of The Barn for serenity.
- That so many wonderful women have an opportunity to find their sanctuary together.
- That the great work continues! (2)
- The people can move forwards to fulfil themselves.
- Thinking of ways, we can incorporate art in research and sharing findings.
- To hold the women's thoughts in my mind moving forwards.
- To see more activities like this available to women.

The combined narrative responses to “What are your DREAMS” from the exhibition, highlight a central focus upon the women.

women

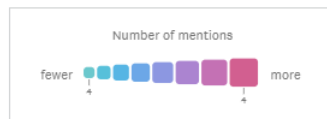


Figure 28: Word cloud illustrating combined narrative responses to “What are YOUR DREAMS from the exhibition

The following selection of narrative responses from launch participants dreams highlight pride in the women’s achievements, and powerful inspiration from the exhibition of their art work. Notable, are the narratives from agencies deriving “power to think differently about services” and prioritising the “creative. Compassionate” elements of their work.

- Everyone is talented.
- Hope, inspiration, smiles, love! Hope <3 <3 <3 <3 Life after addiction, life after loss.
- Inspiration.
- Importance of creative arts and how it can facilitate and empower women.
- The hope that the work will continue. More of this MUST happen.
- Motivation to break out of the system in my work and prioritise the creative, compassionate parts of it.
- Power to think differently about services.
- Power, strength, growth.
- Pride (2), friends, family.
- **Proud of Plum, Megan, Mum and Riley.**
- The power of nature and spaces to support healing.
- Women rule!

The combined narrative responses to “What would you BIN from the exhibition reflect that there is nothing, other than the pretzels!

- Nothing (all brilliant!)
- Nothing. It was amazing!



Figure 29: Participants at launch of Sanctuary exhibition (14.10.2024)

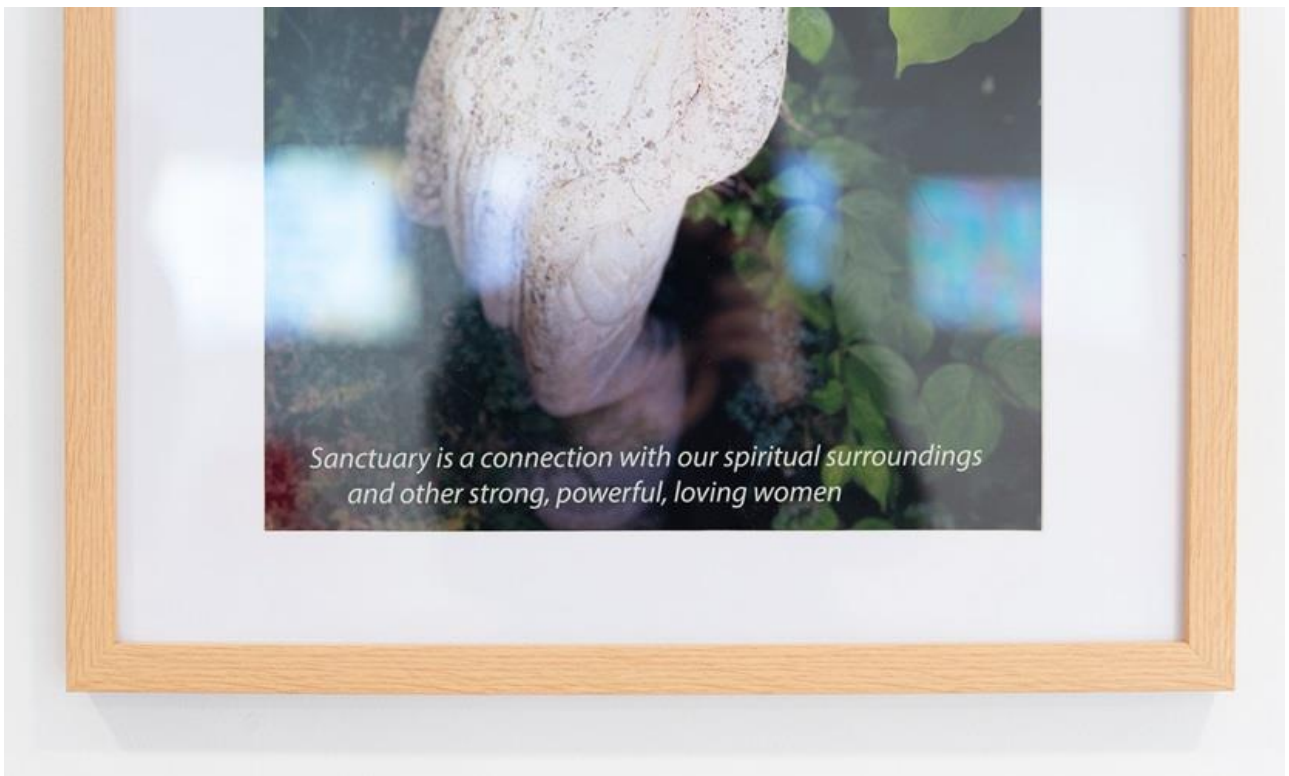


Figure 30: A conception of “Sanctuary” as “connection with spiritual surroundings and other strong, powerful and loving women.”

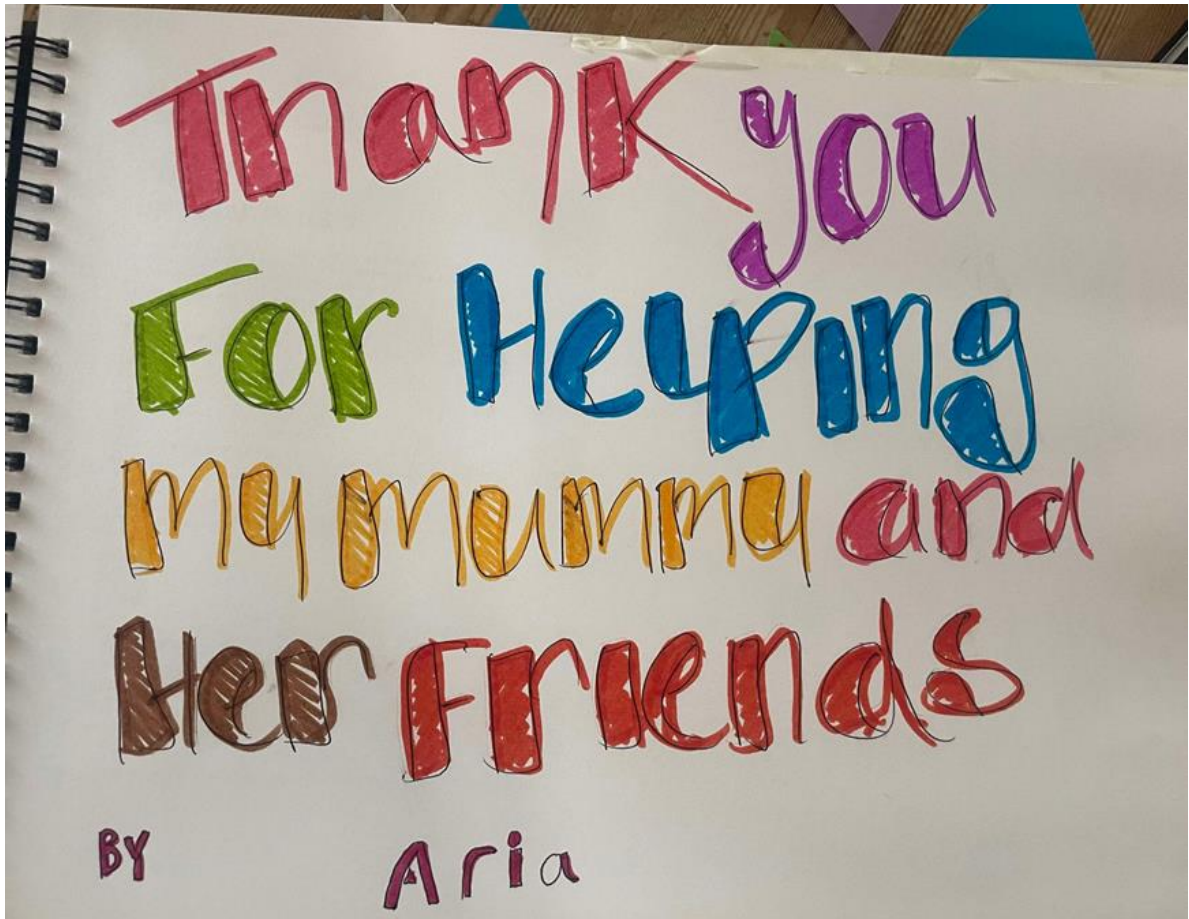


Figure 32: Journal entry at the exhibition for daughter of one of the artists in recovery



Figure 31: One of the Sanctuary birds at the exhibition

7.5 Findings from online reflection with artist/ practitioners

The qualitative narratives in this section are from an online reflection exercise sent out to n=5 artists involved in the Sanctuary project.

n=3 artists responded, n=2 from The Barn at Easington and n=1 from Sangini.

Please say a little about how you experienced the Sanctuary project

I loved the Sanctuary Project. Our day out to Durham, allowed us to combine a visit to Durham Cathedral, place of Sanctuary for over a thousand years, with a picnic lunch in the beautiful gardens of Crook Hall; for me Sanctuary in Creation. Driving back to the Centre at the end of an amazing day we discussed where we had felt most "at Home" and why. When we next met, we would seek to re-capture these feelings recording them through words and images. These would then inform our personal responses to the notion of Sanctuary, through the medium of Silk Painting.

The project has been a journey into a deeper relationship with my own and the women's creativity. It has developed slowly, and it became aware that we needed to just focus on the silk painting. I am so proud of what the women have accomplished.

My experience of the sanctuary project was one of an artist/ facilitator and the lead Coordinator for Sangini. It has been an amazing project to be involved in as it encouraged Sangini members to explore the notion of sanctuary and what it meant for them. Through the project, the women from both organisations came together and shared Cross-cultural expressions. As an artist I delivered a Workshop in Warli Art -Folk art from India. Using this cultural narrative and techniques Members expressed their ideas and explored themes around Sanctuary, Creating some really interesting work.

Did you learn anything new from the Sanctuary project?

When I began the project, I thought of Sanctuary as a place ... **I ended it understanding that Sanctuary is something I can aim to be ... A person of Sanctuary.** This personal revelation came as a result of witnessing the way in which the Women provide Sanctuary for each other. Their hearts door is always ajar offering a Welcome; a safe, accepting warm space for each other where they can experience Home.

No but I was reminded of the importance of giving time for ideas and new skills for the women. I thought it was so important to start the project with a visit to Durham and Crook gardens as it gave us a common experience to talk about. I was also reminded how deeply internal the act of painting is and how it can be both relaxing and challenging at the same time.

I learnt that we need to engage on a longer and deeper level to truly explore and understand the meaning of Sanctuary as it manifests in our contemporary times.

Is there anything you would change/ do differently if you did a project like this again?

Yes, if at all possible, I would ensure that I could commit to attend each session. I have a feeling of sadness and personal loss that this was not the case this time. But for those who did the results are a Triumph, **communicating the Truth that the entrance door to Sanctuary is inside You.**

I would make more time for more creative sessions, 5 was too little!

No.

Moving forwards, what developments would you like to see coming from the Sanctuary project?

A regular Celebration of the collective Sanctuary that we share, both at the Barn and at the Centre.

I would like to see the women taking part in more creative projects and making their work a part of an arts council project to show case their creativity and ideas.

The project has truly helped the organisations to come together as we realised that we can bring a much greater benefit to the women by bringing them together and provide varied cultural experiences. Moving forward, it would be nice to develop collaborative projects involving women from different communities and exploring themes that affect them all.



Figure 33: Tina's Haven bird of Sanctuary: Exhibition launch, 14.10.2024

Appendix 1: Number of main project beneficiaries and dates attended

| Name | Dates attended | | | | | | | | | | TOTAL |
|----------------|----------------|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 31/7 | 7/8 | 14/8 | 18/8 | 21/8 | 28/8 | 4/9 | 26/9 | 14/10 | 17/10 | |
| 1) Megan | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | 7 |
| 2) Riley | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 8 |
| 3) Lindsey | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | 4 |
| 4) Carrie-Anne | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | 7 |
| 5) Plum | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 10 |
| 6) Maria | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 4 |
| 7) Sheelagh | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 7 |

Appendix 2: Number of additional participants in Sanctuary events and sessions

| Name | Dates attended | | | | | | | | | | TOTAL | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|---|
| | 31/7 | 7/8 | 14/8 | 18/8 | 21/8 | 28/8 | 4/9 | 26/9 | 14/10 | 17/10 | | |
| 1. Ali (WiRE) | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| 2. Maria (FREE) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | 1 |
| 3. Sarah (FREE) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | 1 |
| 4. Jennifer (ANE) | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | 1 |
| 5. Lauren (ANE) | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | 1 |
| 6. Asma (Sangini) | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | 2 |
| 7. Salima (Sangini) | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | 2 |
| 8. Rehela (Sangini) | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | 2 |
| 9. Agnieszka 10. (Sangini) | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | 1 |
| 11. Amy (REFORM) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | 1 |

| Name | Dates attended | | | | | | | | | | TOTAL |
|---|----------------|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 31/7 | 7/8 | 14/8 | 18/8 | 21/8 | 28/8 | 4/9 | 26/9 | 14/10 | 17/10 | |
| 12. Charlotte (REFORM) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | 1 |
| 13. Kirsty (REFORM) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | 1 |
| 14. Haley (REFORM) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | 1 |
| 15. Shelly (Recovery Connections) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | 1 |
| 16. Janine (Recovering Connections) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | 1 |
| 17. Donna (Recovering Justice) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | 1 |
| 18. Laura (Recovering Justice) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | 1 |
| 19. Sabrina (REFORM) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | 1 |
| 20. Katherine (Recovering Justice) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | 1 |

| Name | Dates attended | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 31/7 | 7/8 | 14/8 | 18/8 | 21/8 | 28/8 | 4/9 | 26/9 | 14/10 | 17/10 | TOTAL |
| 21. Kelly (Recovering Justice) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | 1 |
| 22. Jasmine (REFORM) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | 1 |
| 23. Tracie (Rural Women's Recovery) | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | 1 |

Appendix 3: Participation Sanctuary Exhibition:
14.10.2024, 5-7 pm The Arts Café, Peterlee.

| Name | 2 nd Name | Organisation |
|---------------|----------------------|---|
| 1. Carrie-Ann | | Women in Empowerment Recovery |
| 2. Dr Claire | Smiles | Newcastle University |
| 3. Eric | Wilton | National Trust |
| 4. Graham | Hall | Durham Police and Crime Commissioner |
| 5. Harriet | Mee | Artist in residence with Women's REFORM CIC |
| 6. Helen | Wardropper | Sunderland BIC |
| 7. Jennifer | Wright | |
| 8. Julie | Wearmouth | Sunderland City Council, Public Health |
| 9. Katy | Gustard | Tina's Haven |
| 10. Kaye | Stephenson | Durham County Council |
| 11. Laura | Seebohm | WWIN |
| 12. Maria | | Women in Empowerment & Recovery |
| 13. Meg | | Women in Empowerment & Recovery |
| 14. Nicola | Balfour | The Barn at Easington |
| 15. Paula | Snowdon | Coalfield Regeneration Trust |
| 16. Plum | | Women in Empowerment Recovery |
| 17. Sarah | Norman | Sunderland City Council, Public Health |
| 18. Sharon | Bailey | Women in Empowerment Recovery |
| 19. Sheelagh | | Women in Empowerment Recovery |

| Name | 2 nd Name | Organisation |
|------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 20. Sue | Robson | Tina's Haven |
| 21. Sarah | | FREE Women's Community |
| 22. Jon | Codd | The Barn at Easington |
| 23. Ellie | Hare | The Barn at Easington |
| 24. Rachel | Deacon | NMN |
| 25. Jess | Hunt | NMN |
| 26. Vonnie | Hardman | NMN |
| 27. Riley | | ANE |
| 28. Megan | | ANE |
| 29. David | Miller | The Barn at Easington |

Apologies

1. Alison Maitland - WiRE
2. Angela Sandwith - EDAN
3. Anna Millington - MWUD
4. Catrina McHugh MBE – Open Clasp
5. Clair Docherty – National Lottery
6. Cullagh Warnock – WWIN chair
7. Dr Lisa Morriss - Principal Investigator Keeping Mothers in Mind
8. Gemma Gowland- women's workshop
9. Heather Currey
10. Jasmine Ryan – Women's REFORM
11. Jean Spence - EDAN
12. Jeni Langley
13. Jo Armstrong – represent women
14. Lindsay Prince-Ashcroft
15. Natalie Collins – OML
16. Nikki Crowley – National Trust
17. Penni Blyth
18. Professor Dorothy Newbury-Birch, Teesside University
19. Ruth Jackson
20. Sarah Learmonth – OML chair
21. Sue Pierce, CEO, Rape Crisis Tyneside, and Northumberland
22. Tiffany Roberts – Free women's community
23. Vivienne Hayes MBE, OBE

Notes and references

- ¹ The Barn at Easington <https://www.thebarnateasington.co.uk/projects-1>
- ² ANE Health and Housing (Addictions North East) - <https://www.addictionsnortheast.com/services/support-for-women-children-and-families/>
- ³ About Sangini <https://www.sangini.co.uk/about>
- ⁴ REFORM Women's CIC- <https://www.reformorg.co.uk/>
- ⁵ About Warli art - <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/NgVhrm46EdNXKA>
- ⁶ Heritage lottery application. The BAM Sistaood project, Rosie Lewis, Angelou Centre, March 2013.
- ⁷ As endnote 7.
- ⁸ Equality Act 2010, Part 7: Separate and single services. Separate services for the sexes: paragraph 26: 729. This paragraph contains exceptions to the general prohibition of sex discrimination which allow the provision of separate services for men and women.
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/notes/division/3/16/20/7>
- ⁹ As endnote 7: p16.
- ¹⁰ The 12-Steps to addiction recovery <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/about-aa/what-is-aa/12-steps/>
- ¹¹ "In Love & Anger", evaluation of the Tina's Haven pilot project (Dr Sue Robson, 2024) <https://www.wrc.org.uk/blog/tinas-haven-a-catalyst-for-emancipatory-practice-for-birthmothers-severed-from-their-children>
- ¹² As endnote 7.
- ¹³ Warwick and Edinburgh mental well-being scales
<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs>
- ¹⁴ About Warli art <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/NgVhrm46EdNXKA>