

Art Against Knives Presents



IN OUR HANDS

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Presents



I N O U R H A N D S

[www.artagainstknives.com](http://www.artagainstknives.com)

# ABOUT IN OUR HANDS

IN OUR HANDS was created by a group of young women from Dollis Valley estate in Barnet in 2012. They suggested running a nail bar that would 'put Dollis Valley estate on the map for something positive, not just negative things like stabbings'. 5 years later they've done just that, the In Our Hands programme has gone onto support over 500 young women.

We've learnt so much from these incredible young women, including the multitude of barriers they face in accessing support, be they structural (what's available), geographical (where it's available) or attitudinal (whether they trust it). We've collaborated with them and their communities to design solutions. We now bring specialist support to them - in an environment that is accessible, comfortable and part of everyday community life.

We use creativity and the arts to improve young people's health and wellbeing and enhance their life chances. The nail bars do just that - using creativity as a tool to engage, communicate, problem solve and develop skills. The act of painting young women's nails allows us to build trusted relationships, and through regular conversation we've raised aspirations and empowered them to rethink their views on issues like violence and relationships. The nail bars have become highly effective reporting mechanisms, enabling young women to come forward about major problems they experience, including abuse, and access the support they need - putting them in the lead in safe and trusted environments.

As we look ahead to the next 5 years, we see the nail bars as an opportunity to intervene early and enable young women to learn, lead, thrive and decide across London and beyond.

# THEORY OF CHANGE

## EXAMPLES OF ENABLING FACTORS:

Unsafe in the home, community, school & online

In need of safe, accessible spaces

Battling poverty

Low emotional resilience

Barriers to freedom & expression of identity

## ENGAGEMENT:

Digital outreach

Detached outreach

Referrals from partners

Pop-ups in the community

## APPROACH:

Listen at all times

Creative

Flexible & adaptable

Consistent

Safeguard

Part of community life

Design with young people

1:1 nail appointments

Accredited training programme

Mobile nail bars

Community nail bars

WHAT WE DELIVER:

ULTIMATE GOAL:

Young women able to learn, lead, thrive & decide

OUTCOMES:

Strong personal capabilities

Strong educational capabilities

Strong social capabilities

Independent & not reliant on support services

Sustained in education, employment or training

SPECIALIST SERVICES EMBEDDED IN ACTIVITIES:

Specialist VAWG service

Structured personal development programme

Internal Safeguarding HUB

Employment, education & training service

Mental health support

Accredited skills training

Advocacy support - links to external services



**ENGAGEMENT**

We invest time in building trusted relationships with young women and their communities, and embed ourselves into community life. Our staff team goes where young people are. Currently 85% of the young women we support are self-referred, meaning they choose to walk through the door because they've met one of our team in the community, their friends have encouraged them to come, or they've heard about us online.

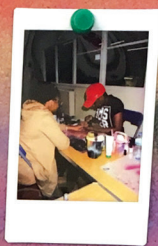
Young women engage with us because we are a functioning nail bar. We've co-created local brands that are well-respected within the communities. Both Dollis Dolls on Dollis Valley Estate and Vales Nails that started on Strawberry Vale Estate, have their own identities, social media platforms and reputation for providing a quality service. We market them and ourselves in a way that is current by co-creating fresh and inspiring content for our media platforms.

We accept referrals from local partners. Our referral process has been designed to ensure that young women engage on their own terms, and remain at the centre and actively involved in the process from start to finish. Our extensive list of referral partners includes the police (specifically the Gangs Unit), the Family Nurse Partnership and Solace Women's Aid North London.





## OUR APPROACH





**CONSISTENCY:** We focus on long-term, transformative impact for young people. Our provision is consistent: our community nail bars are open weekly, 48 weeks of the year. There are no restrictions to the length of time a young woman can work with us.

**CO-PRODUCTION:** We design projects with young people. We deliver activities that are on-trend and they want to be a part of; empowering them to take the lead and make positive choices.

**CREATIVITY:** We are experts in using the arts and creativity to improve health and well-being, especially mental health. Our staff team includes creative professionals who bridge the gap between London's most isolated communities and the creative industries.

**FLEXIBILITY:** We adapt to young people's varied and complex needs. Our diverse team includes highly experienced and qualified practitioners in the fields of youth work, youth violence, domestic abuse and all aspects of VAWG (violence against women and girls).

**LISTENING:** We never stop listening to young people. They lead their own development, supported by staff who coach them to take control, see mistakes as opportunities for growth and encourage commitment.

**PART OF COMMUNITY LIFE:** We embed specialist support into everyday community life, bringing crucial professional support to young people in environments they feel safe and comfortable in.

**SAFEGUARDING:** We have advanced safeguarding procedures and capacity with solid links to local networks. We support young people in recognising and responding to risk, ensuring they keep themselves and others safe.

“I never thought that coming to Dollis Dolls would become a weekly ritual for me, but after a while I stopped coming with the intention of just doing nails,

### *WHAT WE DELIVER*

I came to interact with the new family that I had made. Being around such amazing people taught me to be myself, to open up more, and that home is not just where you lay your head to sleep at night.”

**COMMUNITY NAIL BARS:** Our two nail bars are open weekly in community spaces. They act as functioning nail salons, providing a free service to support young women's wellbeing whilst promoting positive community and intergenerational relationships. Sessions are delivered by highly experienced staff, creative professionals and volunteers.

**ACCREDITED TRAINING PROGRAMME:** 6-month programme, run annually, to support young women aged 17-30 in overcoming barriers to employment opportunities. Participants gain a Level 1 Nail Technician qualification; at the same time we address their challenges such as experience, work-place skills and confidence. Once trained, we employ the technicians on London Living Wage and take the nail bar into the community and corporate environments.

**1:1 NAIL APPOINTMENTS:** A structured 1:1 personal development programme delivered through individual nail appointments by our specialist staff who are all trained nail technicians. Young people have the opportunity to talk to someone about their personal experiences in a private setting - whether at our own nail bars or in spaces that are safe and convenient for them.

**MOBILE NAIL BARS:** We take the nail bars out and about into the community and build relationships with young women in other settings, e.g. Pupil Referral Units, Schools and Children's Centres. We take our specialist team with us to tackle causes for concern e.g. address unhealthy eating habits, promote body confidence or raise awareness of the myths relating to sexual violence.



## *EMBEDDED SERVICES*



**SPECIALIST VAWG SERVICE:** Our in-house YPVA (Young Persons Violence Advisor), provides dedicated support with domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation and other high risks. We encourage early disclosure and reporting by victims and survivors, support participants in creating safety plans and in navigating the care pathway through to MARAC (multi agency risk assessment conference) and external support.

**INTERNAL SAFEGUARDING HUB:** Our risk assessment and management framework is managed by highly experienced designated safeguarding officers, who come together across projects, specialisms and case work to identify, respond to and monitor the risk levels of all participants. We work closely with local partners and systems to meet the support needs of victims, e.g. our YPVA sits on the local authority VAWG Forum.

**EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION + TRAINING SERVICE:** Delivered by highly experienced external partners who provide support with all (practical) elements of the job, further education and training application process. Progression Coaches provide advice about options/routes, and address additional needs/barriers like lack of ID, benefits and housing.

**MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT:** Via weekly mentoring and therapeutic support in and outside weekly sessions. Our staff and volunteers are trained in Mental Health First Aid, and we are about to embark on a 12-month programme to embed clinical professionals in our community nail bars.

**ADVOCACY SUPPORT:** We take a partnership approach and provide a bridge into both local and national support services for the young women we meet in the community. We work proactively with the local police, housing associations, children's centres and sexual health clinics.

**ACCREDITED SKILLS TRAINING:** we deliver our own in-house training programme, young women learn professional nail care, creative nail art and digital media. We also teach transferable skills like customer service, communication and project management.

# LEARN, LEAD, THRIVE + DECIDE

Having participated in the IN OUR HANDS programme young women are able to learn, lead, thrive + decide independently:

- They have positive plans for their future which they know how to work towards.
- They have positive relationships with family, peers and communities.
- They can navigate their lives independently.
- They know how to access support they need and get what they need from it.
- They have greater confidence to engage with the wider world.

## OUR FUTURE

Our plans for the future are three-fold:

1. To sustain the In Our Hands programme and all its elements - fundamental to our approach and success is that we are a consistent, trusted presence in local communities.
2. To set up new nail bars across London. A third nail bar will open on Grahame Park estate in Spring 2018 and we would like to expand to other areas of London where there is great need and little opportunity.
3. To share our successful model and inspire others to take this approach elsewhere.



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