



Pictured: Women creating artwork through the Painting with Purpose project

Alana House Women's Community Project

Annual Report 2022-2023



Part of



Parents And Children Together



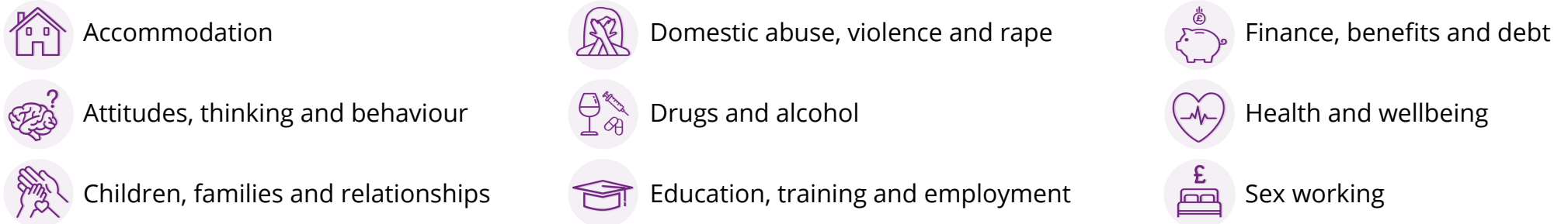
About Alana House

Alana House is a community project run by PACT that uses a holistic and trauma-informed approach to support and empower women facing multiple disadvantages. We offer a confidential, women-only, non-judgemental space and welcome all self-identifying women who feel they need help, support, and advice. Alana House has a centre in Reading, but we also provide outreach services across Berkshire.

Alana House Reading opened in April 2010, adopting the recommendations from the Corston Report, which identified nine pathways of support and the trauma-informed approach needed to support women. Initially established to support women who had committed offences but who had often experienced trauma themselves, Alana House has developed over the years to support all women with multiple or complex needs who are looking for support to help make positive life changes.

The nine pathways

Women are offered information and support in line with the nine pathways to help empower them to make positive life changes, develop new skills and create new opportunities. The nine pathways are:



Our aims

We explore these pathways to bring about positive change by:

- Empowering women to reflect on their lives and make a plan to address their needs, increasing their independence and facilitating their access to mainstream services.
- Addressing the individual barriers to employment, education and training.
- Diverting women from custody by addressing the causes of crime and therefore reducing the impact on the community.
- Providing opportunities to access benefit and welfare advice, NHS sexual health treatment, housing and specialist drug and alcohol advice, in one safe place.



Key achievements

Women supported

In 2022-2023, a total of

291

women received support from Alana House

including 121 women who accessed support via the Community Rehabilitation Service (CRS)

Length of engagement

In 2022-2023,

250

days was the average length of time a woman engaged with Alana House*

*figure does not include CRS service users

Keyword sessions

In 2022-2023, a total of

1143

keyword sessions were attended by women*

*figure does not include CRS service users

Enrich programme

In 2022-2023, a total of

13

women engaged with the Enrich programme

Counselling

In 2022-2023, a total of

154

counselling sessions were attended by 13 women

Donations

In 2022-2023, a total of

61

women received support through donations, food parcels and referrals to foodbanks

Key achievements



Award

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Alana House's team of volunteers were awarded a top royal honour



The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service



The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE. A team of 13 volunteers gave a total of 80 hours per week providing trauma-informed and holistic support through vital roles such as supporting groupwork and workshops, counselling and supporting the service through administrative tasks.

Pictured: Volunteers Fiona and Alex attending the Royal Garden Party on behalf of all volunteers at Alana House.



Award

The Howard League for Penal Reform Award

Alana House's Enrich project, in partnership with Thames Valley Police and Berkshire Healthcare's Liaison and Diversion service, won the 2022 Howard League Community Award in the 'women' category



The Enrich project looks to decriminalise women in custody who are often themselves victims of crime, abuse or trauma. Every woman who has engaged with Enrich has seen improvements or sustained progress in all areas. Based on the nine pathways to reduce offending, as outlined in the 2006 Corston report, the biggest improvements were seen in finances (debt and benefits), accommodation, physical health and a reduction in domestic violence/abuse.

Pictured: Kathryn Warner, Head of Communities, with our partners from Berkshire Healthcare and Thames Valley Police.



Referrals

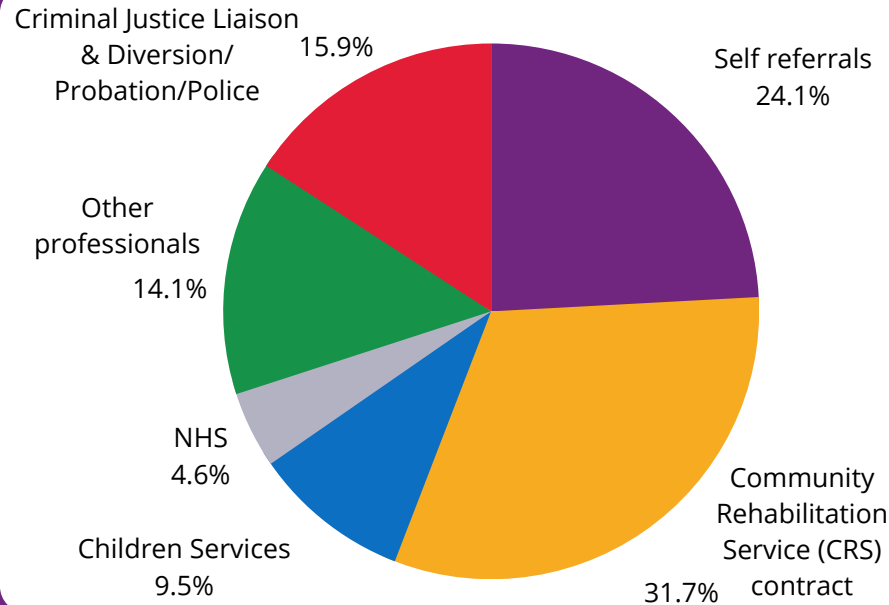
Referrals received

In 2022-2023, a total of

410

referrals were received

This figure includes 130 referrals received via the Community Rehabilitation Service (CRS) contract



Referral sources and locations

The graph shows the top five referral sources in addition to the CRS referrals.

Overall, 75% of referrals came from Reading, while 25% came from a range of locations including Slough, West Berkshire, Wokingham, Bracknell and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

Top six needs of women referred to Alana House

Mental health

74%

Experience with domestic abuse and rape

64%

Children and families

50%

Finance, debt and benefits

34%

Accommodation

31%

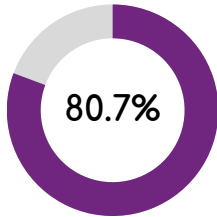
Drugs and alcohol

30%



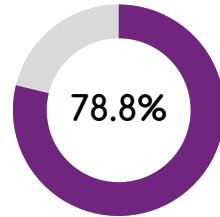
Outcomes and support

Percentage of women that recorded a positive or sustained improvement in each outcome area



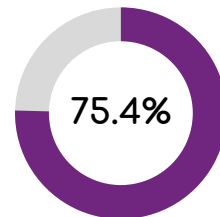
80.7%

Employment, training and education



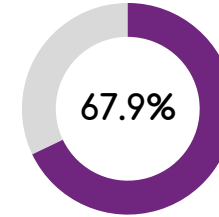
78.8%

Physical health



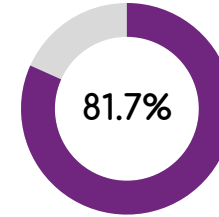
75.4%

Finance, debt and benefits



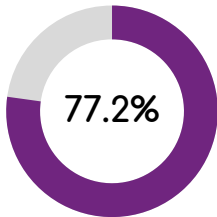
67.9%

Children, families and relationships



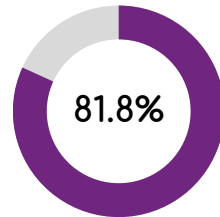
81.7%

Attitude, thinking and behaviour



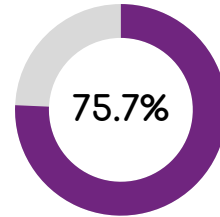
77.2%

Domestic abuse and rape



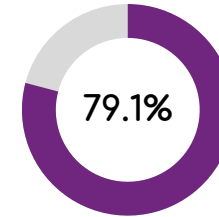
81.8%

Accommodation



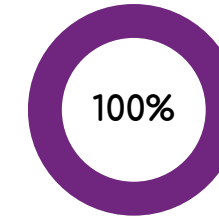
75.7%

Mental health



79.1%

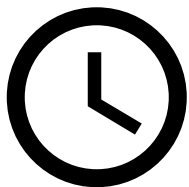
Drugs and alcohol



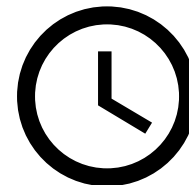
100%

Sex work

Number of hours given to one-to-one and group support in 2022-2023



499 hours
given to group work



1088 hours
given to one-to-one work



Outcomes and support

Group sessions

In 2022-2023, a total of

243

group sessions were delivered

Group attendances

In 2022-2023, a total of

85

women attended groups

Alana House community café

In 2022-2023, a total of

69

café drop-in sessions were held

Group details

A series of different groups were held at Alana House which included:

- Change Grow Live substance misuse support
- Domestic Abuse Recovery Toolkit
- Emotional Intelligence
- Healing Trauma
- Money Matters
- Moving on to Independent Living
- New Directions
- Parenting
- Power to Change
- Sexual Violence Recovery Toolkit
- Baking
- Chai and Chat - Project Salama
- Outing: Trip to Caversham Lakes
- Painting with Purpose
- Reading Rep Theatre Group

One off groups included:

- The Museum of English Rural Life Gardening Taster Group
- Christmas Craft session
- Oracle Project - Hidden Histories
- Odds Farm
- Great Western Railway 'Try a Train'



Outcomes and support

"I really enjoyed the first session, and I was so relieved when I realised that there were so many mums in similar situations, so it was really nice to have that non-judgmental and emotional support network. I learnt a lot from the first session as well and it showed how being negative about yourself affects your parenting which I think is easy to lose sight of in my situation."

- Service user after attending the Parenting Group

"I am really going to miss you. You were my rock. You literally were my guiding ship through a horrid storm."

"I can only be appreciative for all the help you [Alana House and BB4K] are giving us, me and my son. From the time we came under your wings, we feel safer, not left alone. Thanks to you I have power for changes, for everyday battles. Thank you so much."

"Since I have come here and spoken to you about my feelings it feels like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders and I can breathe a little bit easier."

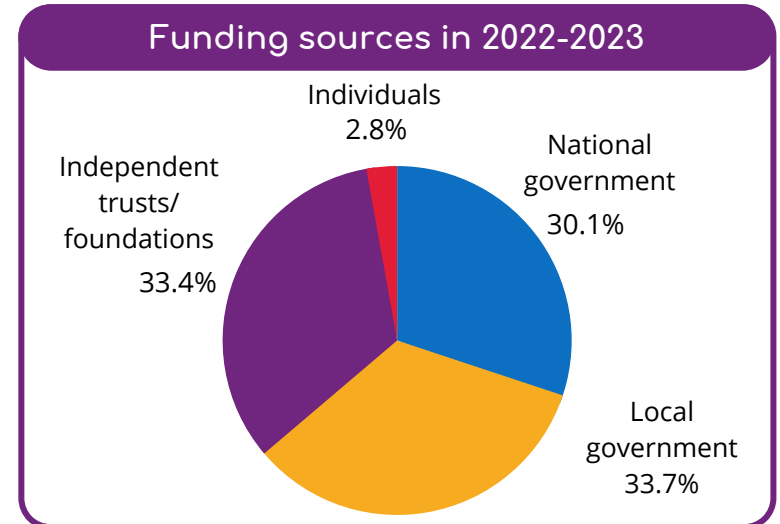
"Adjustment is like wearing a different colour that you're not used to."

- Service user during a Healing Trauma group session



Funding and future plans

- Alana House's services continue to be funded through a mixed model of voluntary income from grant-makers (government grants and private trusts and foundations), corporates and individuals.
- In 2022/2023, Alana House successfully secured several multi-year grants from the Ministry of Justice, Reading Borough Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner to sustain, improve and further develop its existing quality support to women in contact with or at risk of encountering the criminal justice system.
- Alana House has also received grants from private trusts and foundations including Berkshire Community Foundation, Rayne Foundation and Nationwide and has benefitted from individual donations made by generous supporters including those who donated through the Big Give during their Women and Girls Match Fund campaign in 2022.



Key priorities for 2023-2024

Expansion of custody diversion service

New funding from the Ministry of Justice will enable an expansion of our diversion work in police custody suites in Berkshire. Our established service at the custody suite at Loddon will now expand to Maidenhead. Our goal is to have a presence in both custody suites each day to maximise the 'reachable/teachable' moments, promote early intervention, avoid continued involvement with the criminal justice system and support desistance approaches. On average 150 females are entering custody in Berkshire each month. Many women need assistance to deal with the root causes of offending behaviours to break the cycle of offending.

Court – a new service

For the first time, Alana House staff and volunteers will offer support to women who are due to be sentenced in courts in Berkshire. Our aim is to have an input into pre-sentence reports (with permission from clients) to share our assessment of the client's needs and outline how holistic and trauma-informed interventions from Alana House can support desistance from further offending and compliance with sentences passed by the court. This service will ensure that factors such as abuse and trauma are considered when females are sentenced. We aim to support 180 women per year (100 accessing one-to-one support and groupwork and 80 accessing triage and signposting support) though both the court and custody pathway.



Funding and future plans

To meet the growing demands on our service we will expand our volunteer resource and look to create a new role to co-ordinate and train new volunteers.

Pilot project with Royal Berkshire Hospital

Alana House has opened a referral pathway for people in hospital who disclose that they are victims of domestic abuse. The project enables staff at the hospital to refer by phone or online. Where domestic abuse is suspected or disclosed, Alana House can respond and offer specialist support and signposting. Our shared aim is to support victims to a place of safety, reducing the physical and psychological harm victims of abuse experience, and therefore reduce hospital admissions which are linked directly or indirectly to someone suffering abuse within an intimate relationship.

In 2023-2024 we expect to be able to support **138** women through one-to-one support and **80** women through group support only. We expect to receive, triage and assess **220** referrals.



Volunteer with us!

Flexible roles to suit your skills or interests

Do you have time or skills you could share with PACT?
We would love for you to join our team of volunteers!

You could help run groups at Alana House, chat to people who attend our drop-in sessions, support our work in diverting women from custody and much more.

Find out more about our volunteering opportunities today:

www.pactcharity.org/volunteer





✉ Email: alana.house@pactcharity.org

🌐 Website: www.alanahouse.org

📍 Address: 2 Southern Court,
South Street, Reading, RG1 4QS.

📘 🐦 @AlanaHousePACT

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Pictured: Staff and visitors who attended our Community Projects Open Day in March