

.PRISON ARTS FOUNDATION

# THE START OF SOMETHING GOOD IN MY LIFE

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF PILOT ART MENTORING PROGRAMME

Dr Shelley Tracey  
November 2018



### *'The Game of Life'*

*"This piece was for my final major project in my Foundation Diploma in Art. The college staff have been unbelievable and helped me a lot, with not only my work but also in life itself. It was my Art teacher in HMP Magilligan who got me into the tech; she attended my interview because I messed up big time and could not get released to attend the interview. It was the final kick up the arse I needed to get me on the straight and narrow. Knowing I had let everyone down, who was helping me really hurt and gave me the final wakeup call I needed.*

*The piece is a self portrait, of me playing death a game of chess. It's based on my life; I believe if I hadn't of went to prison when I did, I would be dead or doing life. That's the way my life was going, the chess pieces are influenced be negative and positive influences throughout my life...I got help with my project from my mentor in the project run by the Prison Arts Foundation. The programme and my mentor have been brilliant and have helped me a lot. It would be great to continue to work with Prison Arts after the programme, which hopefully continues to run, due to the help and support they give to prisoners after their release from prison. The PAF staff have been really helpful and anything I've needed they have been more than happy to help, I would like to thank them for their support."*

Work produced whilst being mentored

# CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2 STRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3 MENTOR MOTIVATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4 CREATIVE RESPONSES BY MENTEES</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5 IMPACT OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6 RESETTLEMENT CASE STUDY</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7 MENTORING CASE STUDY</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>CHAPTER 8 DISCUSSION</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>CHAPTER 9 RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>CHAPTER 11 REFERENCES</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Figure 1 Benefits of the Mentoring Programme</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Table 1 PAF Mentoring Programme Evaluation Methods</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Figure 2 Structure of PAF Mentoring Programme: Summary 1</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Table 2 Mentor Arts Skills</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Table 3 Effective Practice in Mentoring: PAF Mentoring programme</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Figure 3 Structure of PAF Mentoring Programme: Summary 2</b>	<b>102</b>

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CF</b>	Creative Futures mentoring pathway
<b>FS</b>	First Steps mentoring pathway
<b>NI</b>	Northern Ireland
<b>NIACRO</b>	Northern Ireland Association for Care & Resettlement of Offenders
<b>NIPS</b>	Northern Ireland Prison Service
<b>PAF</b>	Prison Arts Foundation
<b>PBNI</b>	Probation Board Northern Ireland

## TERMINOLOGY

This report uses two terms for the artists, writers, musicians and dramatists who provide guidance in the arts: **artist in residence** and **mentor**. The term **artist in residence** refers to practitioners in all arts forms who work with individuals and groups in the three Northern Ireland adult prison establishments: HMP Maghaberry, HMP Magilligan, and Hydebank Wood College. **Mentors** are the arts practitioners who provide one-to-one arts support in the community post-release, and for individuals involved in PAF's Reconnecting with the Community & Inspiring Change programmes. Some of the artists in residence have trained as mentors and are now also taking part in the mentoring programme.

Mentoring programmes use the terms **mentees** or **protégés** to refer to participants. The preferred term for PAF is **mentees**, with its greater connotation of agency.

From time to time, this report includes the term "**mentoring dyad**" commonly used in the literature about mentoring to refer to the participants in a mentoring relationship, the mentor and the mentee.

Many mentees and mentees mentioned the PAF Coordinator, Adele Campbell, in their interviews and in focus group discussions. In the report, she is usually referred to as the **Coordinator**.

**PLEASE NOTE: the postcards created by participants in the evaluation and quotations from their interviews are for PAF's internal use only. They must not be reproduced or used in an educational, training or other setting without permission of the individual author (Dr Shelley Tracey) and the Prison Arts Foundation.**

## FOREWORD

Prison Arts Foundation activities and engagements are aimed at making significant contributions to the management and rehabilitation of offenders both within the prison estate and in the community. In pursuit of this policy we created a mentoring model of intervention. The establishment of this programme involved a rigorous selection process which matched an individual offender with an experienced and trusted adviser. The interactions within this programme in terms of quantity, quality and content are documented within this report. The structure and implementing of the programme is summarised on page 9.

PAF is adamant that the quality and effectiveness of what we do is measured by someone other than ourselves. In pursuit of this approach we were fortunate to secure the services of Dr Shelley Tracey to undertake an independent evaluation of our Mentoring programme. Dr Tracey has a very impressive history of research and publishing across a wide spectrum of literature and arts. Dr Tracey also set up an award winning mentoring scheme and training course in Queens University. Included in her resume is her inquiry into the participation of offenders in other PAF programmes with the result that she was well tuned into the environment in which the Mentoring Programme was operating.

In my opinion the robust findings in Dr Shelley's report is very encouraging and PAF is determined to build on this success.

I want to place on record our thanks to those who made this undertaking possible. We are very grateful to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation who funded both the programme and this impressive evaluation. Our thanks also go to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Our deep appreciation is extended to our staff and mentors who worked so hard to make this venture such a success. A special word of thanks goes to the mentees who put their trust in us as an organisation and their mentors as individuals, their whole hearted engagement and contribution to the programme and evaluation was of paramount importance .

Mr Oliver Brannigan CBE

Chairman

## **AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY**

**Dr Shelley Tracey** is an independent researcher, published poet and creative writing facilitator. She is the Literature and Verbal Arts Coordinator of the Community Arts Partnership, Belfast, and Writer in Residence in a local primary school. She was programme Coordinator of the Essential Skills tutor qualifications programme at Queen's University Belfast from 2002-2010, where she received a Teaching Award for setting up a mentoring scheme and training course for Essential Skills practitioners. Research publications include a chapter on mentoring in the Sage Handbook of Mentoring in Coaching in Education (2012) and other articles and chapters on creativity, poetry, practitioner research and arts-based methods for learning and research. Shelley Tracey is the author of Building Foundations for Change: an inquiry into the impact of participation in Prison Arts Foundation's programmes (Prison Arts Foundation, 2017).

Research assistance during the evaluation project was also provided by **Johnny Crossan** whom the author wishes to thank for his expert eye and ear and his support.

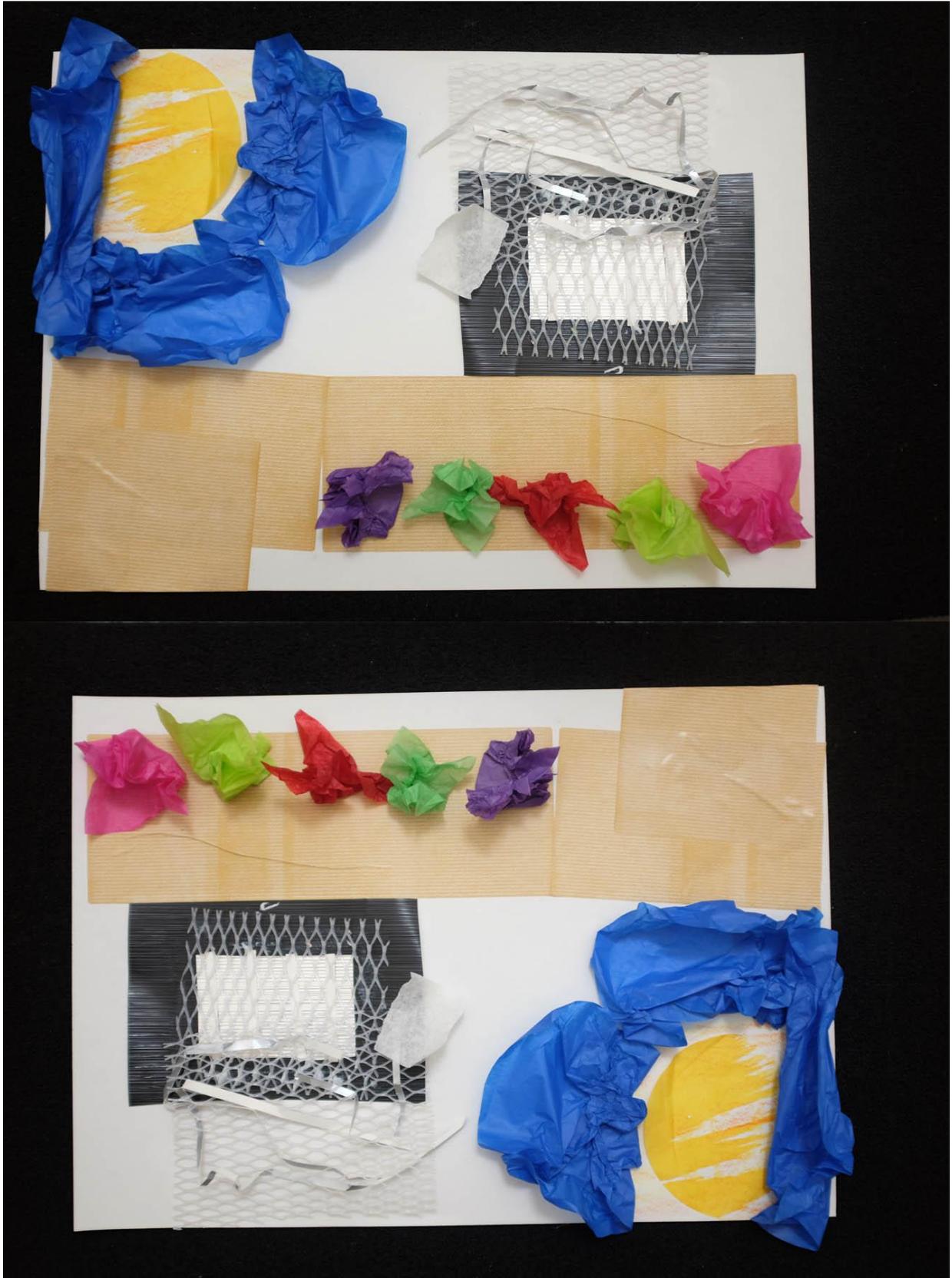
## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Prison Arts Foundation would like to express our gratitude to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for funding the mentoring programme and this evaluation. We also thank the Arts Council of Northern Ireland for their support, and other organisations which have provided ongoing support for our programmes.

On behalf of the author of this report, we would like to offer our sincere thanks go to all the individuals who completed surveys and who took part in focus group discussions and interviews.

Please Note: Mentors and mentees are not referred to by name in order to maintain confidentiality.

The ARTS MENTORING BROCHURE, which showcases the work produced by PAF mentees, accompanies this report.



*'My upside down life'*  
Work produced whilst being mentored

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

The first part of the title, a quotation from a mentee interview, is one of many positive responses by mentees to PAF's arts mentoring programme. This programme supports the transition from custody into the community for individuals with an interest in the arts. PAF's programme is also open to those who have been involved in the criminal justice system, but not necessarily received a custodial sentence.

PAF's two-year pilot programme has engaged with mentees across Northern Ireland, including those in community settings such as hostels, and a mentee on day release. The first mentoring relationship commenced in December 2016. By the end of the programme, 33 mentoring relationships had been completed, 23 of these (70%) successfully.

## EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation explored the structure, implementation and impact of PAF's pilot arts mentoring programme. It incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide an overview of the programme outcomes, as well as insights into participants' perspectives. Evaluation processes included surveys of mentors, mentees and referees; mentor and mentee interviews; focus group discussions; and arts-based methods for expressing responses to the mentoring programme. Case studies of mentoring relationships have been collated into a handbook for mentoring training purposes. A brochure was also produced, showcasing mentee arts works and achievements.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Structure and implementation of the mentoring programme

- The programme is well-structured and well-designed, with a clear pathway for mentee applications and a progression route from the First Steps to the Creative Futures pathway.
- The PAF Coordinator provides ongoing support and guidance to maintain mentoring relationships, and signposting to address issues external to the mentoring.
- The PAF programme's robust support structure and monitoring systems give it flexibility as well as sustainability. This flexibility allows for variations in the duration of mentor session and methods for addressing mentee goals.
- In addition to the one-to-one mentoring relationships, PAF also offers group-based creative writing and art workshops for mentees, enabling them to collaborate with their peers, share ideas and extend their arts networks and interest in the arts.

- Mentees and mentors responded positively to venues in which mentoring sessions take place, particularly the Creative Hub, location for most of the mentoring sessions in Belfast.

### **Factors contributing to mentee satisfaction**

The high rate of mentee satisfaction with the mentoring programme may be attributed to ongoing support from PAF, mentee agency in relation to goal-setting and choice of mentor, and the quality of PAF mentors.

Mentees expressed appreciation of mentors' arts skills and knowledge of arts opportunities in the community, their non-judgemental approach and their effective interpersonal skills. Some also reported that interaction with mentors had reduced isolation and impacted positively on self-belief, depression and anxiety.

Mentoring in the context of criminal justice is complex, and requires a broad range of skills. PAF mentors, selected through a rigorous application process, have expertise and knowledge in the fields of art, creative writing and music and in preparing work for publication, performance or exhibition; communication skills; experience of working in the criminal justice system; business expertise and experience in working with vulnerable groups and individuals with mental health issues.

Mentors rated PAF's mentor training highly, valuing in particular information about mental health issues affecting mentees; guidelines for maintaining privacy, confidentiality and boundaries; and the implications surrounding specific offences.

### **Benefits of PAF's Arts Mentoring Programme**

Given the limited duration of the two-year pilot mentoring programme, it was not possible to determine its long-term impact. However, there are indications that the PAF mentoring programme has already addressed some of its objectives<sup>1</sup> in relation to the following:

#### **For individual offenders:**

- There is qualitative evidence of reduced isolation, continued interest in the arts and improved self-esteem.
- Mentees have gained a sense of achievement through realising their goals for the programme, through participation in exhibitions and through achieving a high success rate in the 2018 Koestler Awards, annual awards for achievement in the arts in the UK.

---

<sup>1</sup> PAF Mentor Handbook, p. 7 (objectives in bold in this summary)

### **For policy:**

- PAF has created an effective mentoring model which has the potential to contribute to the Department for Justice's policy on offender management and rehabilitation.
- The duration of the mentoring programme does not allow for the six-year post sentence period required to determine the official impact of the programme on desistance. However, there is encouraging evidence that mentees are developing attitudes and personal, social and other skills related to secondary desistance. These include a sense of purpose and achievement, reduction in anxiety, raised self-worth, an interest in learning, and evidence of a pro-social orientation, such as willingness to help others with their art.
- Findings from a case study of a mentee who engaged with the programme before and after release indicate that continued engagement with the arts can support resettlement, through the partnership of the NIPS, PBNI and PAF.

### **For communities**

- The mentoring programme successfully included participants in community settings such as hostels, reducing isolation and cultivating a sustained interest in the arts.
- Mentees reported that their families recognised the positive impact of their participation and were proud of their arts achievements.
- Mentees are able to contribute to community activities through participating in and supporting local exhibitions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Sharing good practice in mentoring**

- Findings from case studies and arts-based responses to the mentoring programme should be shared in mentor training and disseminated to a wider audience, including potential mentees and other organisations supporting ex-offenders.
- Findings from the evaluation suggest that the PAF mentoring programme supports mentees to acknowledge their skills and strengths and to develop new, more positive identities. It is proposed that PAF should disseminate this model to other organisations working with ex-offenders and vulnerable young people in the community, such as PBNI, NIACRO and Start360.
- In response to mentee requests, it is suggested that that PAF consider changing the first part of the name of the mentoring programme, '**Prison**' Arts Foundation Arts Mentoring Programme, to one without a criminal justice connotation.

- The findings reveal the enhanced confidence of mentees who have completed the programme, their commitment to the arts and their willingness to support PAF and other mentees. Consideration should be given to piloting the training of peer mentors in order to build on these findings.

### **Extending PAF's arts mentoring programme**

The achievements of the PAF mentoring programme are noteworthy, considering the small size of the organisation, with the Coordinator providing support for all mentoring relationships, as well as administering and managing the programme. It is proposed that PAF be resourced to continue the programme and build on its successes to date.

- The employment of a dedicated mentoring development officer would enable PAF to enhance its community of mentors and mentees, establish partnerships with relevant organisations, and develop and disseminate its innovative approach to arts mentoring, supporting resettlement and desistance.
- With the availability of a bank of trained mentors and potential support from a development officer, PAF would have the capacity to offer more mentoring matches. Enhanced resources for the programme would also enable PAF to train more mentors, involving experienced mentors in the process. A training programme for peer mentors might also be piloted.
- The provision of more regular meetings, workshops and seminars for mentors would afford opportunities for sharing and developing good practice in arts mentoring.
- While mentees responded positively to the venues where the mentoring sessions took place, these are in a separate location from PAF, not accessible outside the mentoring sessions. PAF currently operates from one small office, with no additional meeting rooms or studio spaces. Premises incorporating all these spaces would support the work of the organisation as a whole, the development of the mentoring programme and the cultivation of a community of artists.

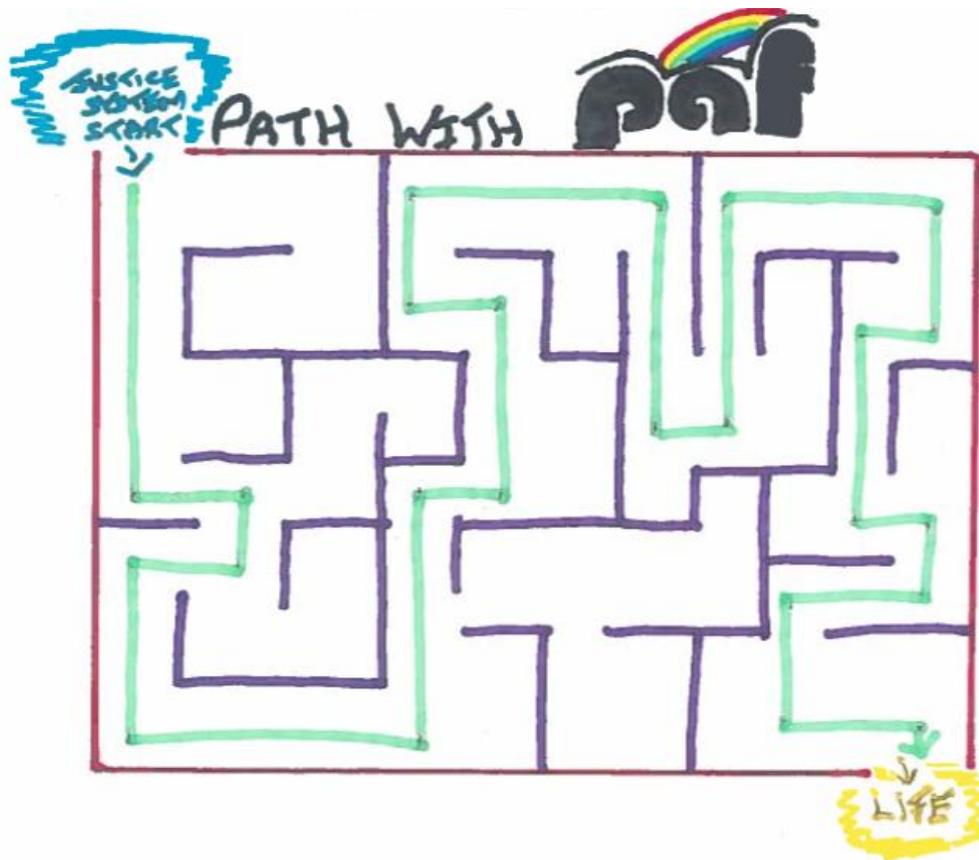
### **CONCLUSION**

Evaluation results indicate that despite its limited time-span, the PAF mentoring programme has been innovative and effective in engaging mentees in the arts, with a range of personal and social benefits for participants, policy and communities. In the words of a mentee:

*“The good work PAF does matters a great deal.”*

It is recommended that this work should continue.

# 1 INTRODUCTION: “THE START OF SOMETHING GOOD IN MY LIFE”



This image is a postcard about the PAF arts mentoring programme, created by a mentee in an arts-based evaluation activity. The word ‘Life’ at the end of the maze conveys the vital importance of the mentoring for the artist.

The following comments by other mentees also indicate the impact of participating in the mentoring programme:

*“I thought this might be the start of something good in my life and it was, aye”*

*“PAF tries and encourages us to develop ourselves as well as our art. They see the talents we have but just never knew about”.*

This evaluation report focuses on the structure, implementation and impact of Prison Arts Foundation’s (PAF’s) two-year pilot arts mentoring programme. It presents the perspectives of the organisation, the mentors and mentees who have participated in it, and others involved in the process.

## 1.1 The Arts Mentoring project

PAF describes its programme in its mentoring handbook as ‘an innovative form of support to address the transition from custody into the community for individuals with an interest in the arts’. PAF’s programme is also open to those who have been involved in the criminal justice system, but not necessarily received a custodial sentence.

According to the Mentor Handbook, PAF’s mentoring scheme ‘seeks to deliver arts input, shaped to the needs of individual offenders, that empowers them to continue with their arts-based activities’.

PAF is a registered charity which seeks to provide access to the arts for those people who have offended in Northern Ireland. Its mission is to inspire creativity and encourage personal and social change through the arts within the criminal justice system. PAF provides visual arts, creative writing, music and drama programmes in all three prison establishments in Northern Ireland: HMP Maghaberry, HMP Magilligan, and Hydebank Wood College

The mentoring programme complements the arts programme in custody after release to support individuals to develop their skills, knowledge and participation in the arts community and in wider society.

The PAF programme consists of two pathways:

**First Steps** is open to anyone who has been involved in the criminal justice system and has an interest in the arts. Mentees receive two to seven mentoring sessions of one to two hours each.

The **Creative Futures** pathway is available to mentees with prior experience of achievement in the arts. They might have an existing body of creative work, or have received Koestler or Listowel awards for artists involved in the criminal justice system. The duration of Creative Futures is 12 months, similar to that of the Koestler Trust programme.

The PAF mentoring programme builds on the structure and methods of the Koestler Trust, the UK’s biggest prison arts charity. The Koestler Trust gives annual awards for achievement in the arts in the UK; participants in PAF’s programmes have been recipients of these awards.

The introduction to PAF’s Mentoring Handbook, distributed to mentors during their initial training, identifies the potential benefits of the programme:

**FIGURE 1 BENEFITS OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME<sup>2</sup>**



Given the limited duration of PAF’s two-year pilot mentoring programme, it was not possible to evaluate its long-term benefits and impact, such as reduced crime and contribution to arts policies. This report identifies aspects of good practice in the PAF arts mentoring programme and recommendations to take forward into a longer-term intervention. The first part of the title, *“The start of something good in my life”*, refers to the potential impact of the mentoring on resettlement.

<sup>2</sup> Prison Arts Foundation, *Mentor Handbook*, p. 7

## 1.2 Mentoring Literature

A review of the literature on mentoring focused on two aspects: principles for effective mentoring in general, and on arts mentoring initiatives in particular.

Mooney, Simmey and Moles identify the comprehensive nature of mentoring and the parameters within which it takes place:

*“We define mentoring as a complex intellectual, social and emotional construct with the capacity for professional support, learning and professional knowledge within the context in which it is practised and within broader societal norms and values”.*<sup>3</sup>

This report explores the methods and strategies whereby PAF addresses these complexities.

A key theme in the general mentoring literature appears to be that of mentee agency: at one end of the spectrum, the mentor exercises their authority and influence on the mentee’s behalf, while at the other end, development-based models focus on cultivating mentee independence. Other concepts in the mentoring literature, in business, education, criminal justice and other contexts, include the importance of the mentoring relationship, trust and goal-setting for mentees’ personal and professional development.<sup>4</sup> Criteria for effective mentoring schemes include:

- The goals of the programme are aligned with those of mentees
- Well-structured programmes with clear entry and exit points
- The importance of well-defined boundaries
- Longer schemes (at least a year) are more effective than shorter ones
- A strong organisational support system
- Support for mentees in setting achievable goals
- Opportunities for reflection
- Structured activities
- Mentee should be in control of the agenda and have some agency

Another factor which needs to be considered is external issues which impact on mentee participation. This is particularly relevant to PAF mentees, with the social, financial, personal and other challenges which they might experience after release. The literature suggests that people with significant personal problems are less likely to benefit from mentoring, as they

---

<sup>3</sup> Mooney Simmey and Moles, 2012, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup> Pfund, 2018; Jenkins, 2013; Finnegan and colleagues, 2010; Meggison, 2005; Clutterbuck, 2004.

may be less able to commit to it. PAF acknowledges this in its eligibility requirements for mentees:

- Have enough practical and social support in the community from family, friends or other services to be able to make use of arts mentoring without being overwhelmed by more pressing needs such as homelessness or drug use.
- Be willing and enthusiastic to participate in the project, and to commit to meeting their Mentor for regular Mentoring sessions (PAF Mentor Handbook)

The latter criterion affirms the suggestion by Finnegan and colleagues (2010) that mentee enthusiasm and willingness to participate is also an essential aspect of the process.

In their exploration of mentoring models for inclusion and employment, the same authors identify peer mentoring programmes as effective for reducing offending and promoting social inclusion.

Mentoring has been foregrounded in the government's strategy for Transforming Rehabilitation in England and Wales.<sup>5</sup> This initiative has been critiqued for its strategies and funding mechanisms.<sup>6</sup> With regard to mentoring in the context of reducing offending, there is a need for more rigorous studies which demonstrate its impact.<sup>7</sup>

The Good Lives Model<sup>8</sup> is a strengths-based framework for rehabilitation and desistance, with a focus on goal-setting and developing individual life plans. The underlying premise of the model is that individuals seek to attain 'primary human goods', or 'life goals', which include agency, relationships, fulfilling work, happiness and opportunities for play. These aims are achieved through behaviours and activities known as 'secondary goods'. In the context of offending, these involve harmful behaviours. The Good Lives Model supports individuals to develop positive methods for obtaining primary goods.

Prescott<sup>9</sup> gives an example of how primary goals might be established, using an example from the arts:

*"[A]ssessment is required to determine which life goal is being sought. For example, creating Aboriginal art might reflect numerous underlying primary goods/ common life goals, including creativity, being good at work, being good at play, peace of mind,*

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/mm.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/transforming-rehabilitation-failed-says-report/management/article/1463968>;

<sup>7</sup> Finnegan, Whitehurst and Deaton, 2010; Tolan et al 2008.

<sup>8</sup> The Good Lives Model; Prescott

<sup>9</sup> Prescott, p. 83

*spirituality, belonging to a group, and community. Only through exploration of what the Aboriginal art means to the client can the underlying primary goods or common life goals be identified.”*

An implication for mentoring programmes which incorporate the arts is the provision of opportunities for individuals to explore the meanings which they ascribe to the arts. This evaluation drew on interviews and creative methods to identify the meaning and value of the arts for mentees involved in the PAF mentoring programme. The results of these processes are included in later chapters.

Underpinning the mentoring programme is PAF's belief in the transformative potential of the arts. This belief draws on the idea that using the arts to explore and express ideas offers possibilities for extending the self, enabling

*“the creator and the viewer to imagine possible ways of being, encourage the individual to move personal boundaries and challenge resistance to change and growth”.*<sup>10</sup>

The literature on the impact of the arts in the criminal justice system focuses mainly on programmes which take place in custody. In his foreword to Creative Scotland's report on effective arts practices in prisons, chief executive Andrew Dixon notes that

*“The arts can reach those who have become totally disaffected by the system and restore their self-belief and determination to succeed ... participating in the arts can inspire, enlighten, motivate and provide hope”.*<sup>11</sup>

Other studies of arts in prison establishments suggest that participation in the arts can lead to 'secondary' desistance, which includes those personal and social qualities which might lead to desistance from crime, such as goal-setting, attitudinal changes, motivation, enhanced capacity for learning, the ability to establish positive social connections, and the desire to contribute to the community.<sup>12</sup> However, an issue with determining the extent of secondary desistance is the difficulty of establishing evidence of this impact, and the questions this raises for appropriate methods for evaluating this.<sup>13</sup>

A recent inquiry into the impact of participation in PAF's arts programmes in custody identified a range of benefits for participants.<sup>14</sup> These were distilled into a model for secondary desistance (Appendix 1). This evaluation reviews this model and examines its

---

<sup>10</sup> Higgs, 2008, p. 552

<sup>11</sup> Creative Scotland (2012) Creating Change: Effective Arts Practices in Prisons, p. 2

<sup>12</sup> McNeill and colleagues, 2010; Tett and colleagues, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Nickeas, 2013; McHugh, 2011; Parkes and Bilbey, 2010; Hughes and colleagues, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Tracey, 2017.

applicability to the mentoring programme. One of the key findings from the PAF research was the wide-ranging contributions which artists in residence were making to the arts experiences and change processes of individuals. The arts mentoring programme builds on this learning. Eight of PAF's qualified mentors had previous experience as artists in residence and participated in the mentoring training. This report includes the responses of the six who are currently active in the mentoring programme.

The evaluation of the Koestler Trust mentoring scheme describes it as

*“an arts-based programme that is precisely aimed at prolonging and enhancing ‘secondary desistance’ through providing ex-prisoners with opportunities to continue engaging with the arts after release.”<sup>15</sup>*

Cheliotis and Jordanoska's evaluation of the first six years of the Koestler Trust's mentoring scheme makes a major contribution to the limited literature on the impact of arts participation for offenders post-release. The evaluation described in this report drew on the Cheliotis evaluation; it was a useful resource because it addresses some of the issues of evidence raised by the literature on evaluating the outcomes of arts-based programmes.

The evaluation of the Koestler Trust mentoring programme employed quantitative as well as qualitative methods, including the use of control groups and a pre-intervention survey to help ascertain the impact of the programme on mentees. These methods provided a broad range of perspectives on the effectiveness of the programme.

The evaluation of the PAF programme also used a range of methods for the purpose of triangulation. The short-term nature of the Northern Ireland-based programme, on a smaller scale than that of the Koestler Trust, meant that it was not possible to use a control group. Measuring mentee attitudes, knowledge and behaviours before the programme began was also not possible, as this evaluation commenced after the start of the programme.

---

<sup>15</sup> Cheliotis and colleagues, 2014, p. 13

However, in order to enhance its validity, this evaluation incorporated a range of processes:

**TABLE 1: PAF MENTORING PROGRAMME: EVALUATION METHODS**

- **Literature review** on mentoring, arts mentoring and desistance
- **Review** of PAF monitoring data, including mentor and mentee applications and mentor feedback after the training programme
- **Document review** of PAF's mentoring handbook and other mentoring materials
- **Interview** with PAF's programme Coordinator
- **Survey** of PAF's qualified mentors
- **Survey** of referees (artists and members of probation organisations who had a referred mentees to the programme)
- **Mentor focus group meeting**
- **Individual interviews** with mentees (9) and mentors (9)
- **Mentee focus group meeting, using creative methods**

The purpose of using multiple evaluation methods was to create a comprehensive representation of the mentoring relationships and participants' views. However, the complex nature of mentoring raises issues for such representation. As Clayton points out, the relationship between mentoring and desistance is indirect.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the processes involved in creativity are provisional, recursive and opaque, rendering their impact difficult to measure. This evaluation therefore used arts-based methods to elicit mentor and mentee views; these methods offer opportunities for participants to express ideas and responses which might be difficult to convey in the traditional interview narrative.<sup>17</sup>

Participant perspectives are also included in this report in the form of excerpts from interviews, surveys and focus group discussions, in order to evoke the detail and textures of the mentoring relationships and mentees' experiences of engagement in the arts.

<sup>16</sup> Clayton, 2009, quoted in Finnegan et al. p. 9

<sup>17</sup> Charlton; Leavy, 2015; Simons and McCormack, 2007

### **1.3 Report Outline**

**Chapter 2** examines the structure and implementation of the mentoring programme, drawing on the results of surveys and data about mentee engagement and participation.

**Chapter 3** focuses on the skills, motivations and perspectives of the mentors involved in the programme.

**Chapter 4** contains mentees' creative responses to their experiences of the mentoring programme.

**Chapter 5** explores the impact of the mentoring on mentees, incorporating mentor perspectives on the benefits of participation in the arts.

**Chapter 6** a resettlement case study presents a close-up view of a mentoring relationship.

**Chapter 7** a case study presents a close-up view of a mentoring relationship.

**Chapter 8** the Discussion, draws together the factors which have contributed towards the success of the mentoring programme.

**Chapter 9** contains the recommendations.

**Chapter 10** concludes the report.

I regret your suffering more than you realize. But Bella is going to survive”—when he said that his voice was fierce, even violent—“and I know that’s what really matters to you.”

He was probably right. It was hard to tell. My head was spinning.

“So I hate to do this now, while you’re already dealing with too much, but, clearly, there is little time. I have to ask you for something—to beg, if I must.”

“I don’t have anything left,” I choked out.

He lifted his hand again, as if to put it on my shoulder, but then let it drop like before and sighed.

“I know how much you have given,” he said quietly. “But this is something you *do* have, and only you. I’m asking this of the true Alpha, Jacob. I’m asking this of Ephraim’s heir.”

I was way past being able to respond.

“I want your permission to deviate from what we agreed to in our treaty with Ephraim. I want you to grant us an exception. I want your permission to save her life. You know I’ll do it anyway, but I don’t want to break faith with you if there is any way to avoid it. We never intended to go back on our word, and we don’t do it lightly now. I want your understanding, Jacob, because you know exactly why we do this. I want the alliance between our families to survive when this is over.”

I tried to swallow. *Sam*, I thought. *It’s Sam you want.*

“No. Sam’s authority is assumed. It belongs to you. You’ll never take it from him, but no one can rightfully agree to what I’m asking except for *you*.”

*It’s not my decision.*

“It is, Jacob, and you know it. Your word on this will condemn us or absolve us. Only you can give this to me.”

*I can’t think. I don’t know.*

*‘Bella’s Story (2017)’*

Exhibited in the Time to Change exhibition,  
Arts and Film NI Mental Health Festival, Belfast June 2017.

Work produced whilst being mentored

## 2 STRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MENTORING PROGRAMME

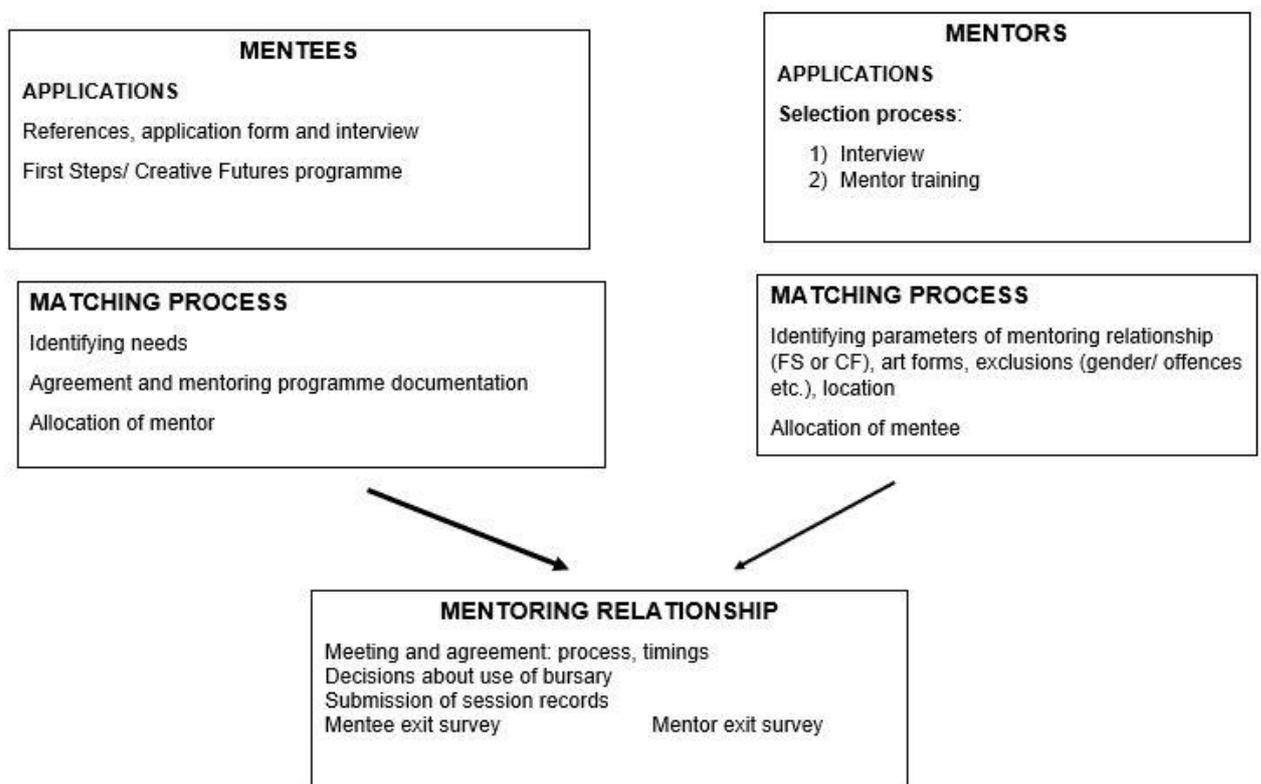
A review of PAF’s mentoring system, documentation, monitoring data and mentor and mentee responses indicates that the mentoring programme is well-structured, effectively scaffolding participation. There are clear, well-documented pathways for both mentors and mentees, with clear guidelines and requirements for participation. Rigorous application process for mentees and mentors encourage retention and successful mentoring experiences.

### 2.1 Structure of the Programme

The diagram below summarises the structure of PAF’s mentoring programme, indicating the processes involved in setting up mentoring matches.

**FIGURE 2:**

#### STRUCTURE OF PRISON ARTS FOUNDATION MENTORING PROGRAMME: SUMMARY



## 2.2 Mentee Applications and Participation

By July 2018, there were a total of 47 applications to PAF's mentoring programme. Those who were not successful in their applications were ineligible (they did not live in Northern Ireland); other applicants were 'on hold' as they were due for release after the end of the pilot, or had been recalled to prison during the screening stage. A total of 33 mentoring relationships took place, with 55% on the First Steps programme and 45% of mentees on Creative Futures. The majority of mentees (64%) participated in visual arts mentoring; 24% engaged in creative writing, and 12% in music.

While 26 out of 33 mentees had previously served a custodial sentence, the remaining 7 mentees were on non-custodial sentences. Seven of those with custodial sentences had been released more than a year previously, and had no contact with PBNI, from whom some of the other prospective mentees had obtained information about PAF's mentoring programme. These seven individuals had maintained contact with PAF of their own volition, and through the informal support of artists in residence, who had shared contacts and opportunities in art, writing, and music.

This suggests that some individuals who participated in PAF's programmes during incarceration perceived sufficient benefit in this experience to seek more involvement in PAF's programmes after release. It also indicates the crucial role played by the support and guidance of artists in residence, who were acting as informal mentors to facilitate the inclusion of ex-offenders in the arts community after release<sup>18</sup> (Tracey, 2017).

It should be noted that two thirds of mentees had come to the mentoring programme with prior experience of participation in PAF's arts programmes while they were incarcerated. While this suggests that these mentees had experienced the in-house programmes as beneficial, there is a need to disseminate information to a wider range of ex-offenders. PAF has begun this process by engaging potential applicants through a hostel-based community arts programme, Reconnecting with the Community. One of the mentees who participated in this programme gives information about this:

*"We were doing a project with Prison Arts 'Reconnecting with the Community.' One of the artists in residence came up to the hostel to work with a few of us, to create a mosaic piece". (Mentee interview)*

The majority of PAF's mentees are over the age of 30 (79%), with a gender balance of 70% male to 30% female. This reflects the greater ratio of males to females in the prison system. However, the majority of mentors are female (21 out of the 27 mentors who completed the

---

<sup>18</sup> Tracey, 2017.

training successfully 78%). The higher proportion of female mentees is probably representative outside the field of business, where there tends to be a higher proportion of male mentors. The literature suggests that there can be issues with some mixed-gender mentoring dyads<sup>19</sup>, resulting in power imbalances and communication difficulties. However, there seems to be little evidence of this in the PAF programme. Evaluation findings suggest that such issues have been averted through the careful delineation of roles and responsibilities in the PAF programme, the comprehensive matching process, and the ability of the mentors to create a safe and empowering atmosphere.

Overall evaluation findings indicate that mentees responded positively to the mentoring experience; the principles and effective practices might be applied to young offenders, in collaboration with support organisations such as NIACRO and Start 360. This is discussed later in the report.

The distribution of mentees across five main regions of Northern Ireland suggests that the mentoring programme was reaching a broad range of individuals. However, there was an issue for a mentor who lived in a different region from mentees, and had to travel relatively large distances to meet them. This impacted on their time and opportunities for other work. This might be addressed by the recruitment of more mentors and mentees across the regions, should the programme continue.

### **2.3 Mentee motivations for applying to the programme**

The application form for the programme gives prospective mentees a list of 14 possible reasons for applying, with the option of selecting as many as are relevant. The four top reasons were:

- *Developing your technique*
- *Selecting goals for yourself*
- *Promoting your work*
- *Building your self-esteem and confidence*

The ability to set and work towards the achievement of goals is a core element of mentoring. Mentee interviews, responses to exit surveys and focus groups reveal a high degree of satisfaction with the support which mentors offered with goal-setting.

The items which received the lowest ratings referred to activities outside the immediate mentoring relationship:

- *To find out more about exhibitions*

---

<sup>19</sup> Allen and colleagues, 2004; Hansford and colleagues, 2004; Tovey., 1998; Clawson and Kram, 1984

- *To build an arts related support network*
- *Finding out about training courses*
- *Exhibiting/ disseminating your work*
- *To apply to further education*

The relative lack of interest in these motivators (> 50% to > 25%) suggests that mentees might initially have lacked confidence in engaging in the arts in the wider community. It should be noted, however, that all ten mentees who took part in the first focus group discussion responded with great interest to the PAF Coordinator's information on the upcoming PAF exhibition at the Crumlin Road Gaol. In the course of this discussion, they shared ideas about framing and presenting their work. Some of the mentoring relationships involved attending exhibitions to extend mentees' frame of reference.

A visual art mentee who had come to the mentoring programme for support with further education used his Creative Futures mentoring to help him with completing the requirements for a Foundation Diploma in Art and Design. His success with his studies led him onto a BTEC HND in Photography.

At the end of the application form for the mentee programme, there was an opportunity to comment on other reasons for applying to the programme. The responses of four mentees indicate that some mentees already had specific goals in mind when they applied to participate on the programme:

*"To help me set up a home recording studio and to instruct me on how to use the equipment properly. Also, to explore the possibility of building a small business of it and supply a stream of income."*

*"I would like to record some music."*

*"In the past three years and three months, I have written seven full length novels and 750,000 words. I wish to get help to publish these and receive advice and feedback."*

*"I am currently receiving help with my poetry. I have been advised to receive mentoring from yourselves to develop my writing. I would also need advice on publishing."*

These comments suggest that a small proportion of prospective mentees were considering developing a career related to their art form.

## 2.4 Mentee application process: referrals

Prospective mentees required the support of a referee for their application to the mentoring programme.

A survey was sent out at the initial stages of the evaluation to the 21 individuals to date who had acted as referees for prospective mentees in their applications for the programme. They included community and prison-based probation officers, an art teacher, a musician in residence and prison resettlement Coordinators. The low response rate (5/24%) limits the relevance of the responses, but they ratify some of the key issues and themes of the findings.

In only one case was the referee unaware of PAF programme prior to making the referrals.

All agreed with the following statements:

- *Participating in the arts is a constructive use of time*
- *The arts mentoring programme is a potential valuable resource for individuals experiencing resettlement.*
- *Participating in the arts is a constructive use of time*
- *The arts encourage self-expression*

Four out of five referees agreed with the statement: I was aware of PAF's work and thought the individual would benefit from the programme

Several statements about the psychological impact of participation in the mentoring programme received a low response rate. It is possible that referees need more information about the processes and outcomes of the findings to respond to these statements.

Only two of the respondents were aware of how the mentee had fared during the programmes in relation to their success achievement and cultivation of self-esteem, although one commented:

*"The mentoring aspect of the PAF programme was really beneficial for my participant."*

Even though referees seemed to have little knowledge of the processes and experiences of the mentoring programme, respondents all agreed in principle that the programme was valuable and should continue. Comments included:

*"Yes, it is a very valuable resource and of significant benefit to PBNI service users"*

*"Yes - of great benefit to those who have an interest in the arts"*

*"Yes, I believe it has great potential but needs to be aware of the vulnerable/challenging client base referred from PBNI."*

One respondent elaborated:

*“This [programme] should continue as in my example, the participant had very few other outlets and as noted this piece of work really helped him consider how his previous actions had impacted on others and assisted him in making sense of his own early life experiences and how that impacted on his own decision making. Again, the role of the mentor really helped him to achieve this and see his potential, despite being an older man.”*

Another respondent made a suggestion about the process of applying for mentoring:

*“The application was [made] whilst working in the community and it had to be posted. It would be helpful given the confidential nature of our work to be able to email it to a protected site”.*

A mentor whose mentee’s mental health was fragile was unsure about how much support the mentee received from other agencies besides PAF:

*“She needed a lot of support. I don’t know how much her probation officer was able to help her with her mental health.”* (Mentor interview)

Findings from the referee survey, albeit limited in number, suggest the need for more communication and partnership between PAF and referral agencies to ensure that the offenders’ needs are met holistically. This relates to one of PAF’s objectives for the mentoring programme: To ensure that the offender’s needs are met holistically by integrating the arts mentoring with other resettlement services

## **2.5 Completion of mentoring relationships**

Out of the total of 33 mentees who participated in the PAF pilot programme, 10 successfully completed their Creative Futures pathway and 13 successfully completed their First Steps pathway.

The successful completion of 70% of the mentoring relationships compares favourably with that of the Koestler Trust, with its large and well-established arts mentoring scheme; the latter programme had 94 mentees over a six-year period.<sup>20</sup>

PAF’s data about the 10 mentoring relationships which were incomplete reveal that five of these occurred for reasons beyond mentor and mentee control, with contact maintained over

---

<sup>20</sup> At the time of the Koestler Trust’s mentoring evaluation (Cheliotis, 2014), 46% of relationships were successfully completed, with an additional 27% active and ongoing.

a period of time between mentor and mentee. The other five relationships ended because the mentee dropped out, did not keep in contact with their mentor or PAF, or did not provide a reason for withdrawing. This relatively low attrition rate, with a population traditionally difficult to engage, suggests that the mentoring programme is achieving its objective of sustaining mentee participation.

Even though another mentoring relationship was incomplete, the mentor suggested that

*“the experience gave the mentee the opportunity to focus on what or how he wanted to take his artwork to the next level, what is possible and what isn’t possible.”*

A total of 26 out of 33 mentees’ most recent offence was a custodial sentence; the remaining 7 mentees were on non-custodial sentences. Seven of those with custodial sentences had been released over a year ago. They had maintained contact with PAF of their own volition, and through the support of artists in residence, who had shared contacts and opportunities in art, wiring, and music. This suggests that some individuals who participated in PAF’s programmes during incarceration perceived sufficient benefit in this experience to seek more involvement in PAF’s programmes after release. It also indicates the crucial role played by the support and guidance of artists in residence, who were acting as informal mentors to facilitate the inclusion of ex-offenders in the arts community after release.<sup>21</sup>

PAF monitoring data reveal a high rate of attendance at mentoring sessions (89%), with a low rate of cancellations. It is likely that PAF’s support for the mentoring relationships and monitoring processes enhance engagement. Mentees reported contact from PAF about attending sessions: reminders, communications about arrangements, and liaison with mentors regarding postponements.

## **2.6 Length of mentoring matches and duration of mentoring sessions**

Initially, there was a notional two hours allocated to each First Steps mentoring session. A writing mentor with two mentees suggests that decisions about the length of mentoring sessions and spacing between the sessions should be based on mentee need.

*“I would see Mentee 1, weekly but I would see Mentee 2 every two weeks because Mentee 1 can get through more in a week. Mentee 2 takes a bit longer because he’s younger basically, it takes him a bit longer to get through stuff ... if you had someone that was producing a lot of work, say a novel or something, every two weeks would be more useful as you’d be reading a lot of materials and reporting back might not be as*

---

<sup>21</sup> Tracey, 2017.

*beneficial weekly. So I think it depends on the individual and what they're working towards."*

PAF was flexible about the length of mentoring matches, the numbers of mentoring sessions and the duration of these sessions. Comments by mentors and mentees corroborate this flexibility:

*"The mentee is going through...she's had a few court appearances and she's aware the programme has to end in December. So yesterday after speaking to PAF I was able to say to her, you know, look we can have some extra time. Because we've gone into this in so much detail and minutiae it would be terrible to rush it now just because it has to be finished. And I think that's the thing about the arts for anybody – that a project goes at its own pace and you have to go with that as well."* (Mentor interview)

*"PAF has clearly put in all the groundwork and they're flexible, you know; there's an idea that if there is a number of no-shows that person is off. But I discussed it with PAF and the mentee was still connected to the programme, even though she was dealing with stuff in her personal life. The PAF Coordinator was always ready to give her another chance and take her at her word when she said she'd be there and stuff. So yeah, there's trust from PAF and if an organisation is trusting they'll receive that back from mentees and mentors – there's a good level of trust established through these relationships."* (Mentor interview)

*"We've gone from a two-hour FS to a four-hour session, which seemed a lot, but we really got a lot out of the 4 hours because it allows for time for things like buying materials, visiting exhibitions and a big chunk of practical work."* (Mentor)

The news that the pilot programme, initially 18 months, had been extended to two years, was greeted with delight by one mentee:

*"Just got great news today, this is a pilot programme and it was supposed to end in December, but PAF have spoken to their funders. The last time I was here Adele told me that it could be March; Adele told me today its June. So, fantastic, it means I don't have to cram everything in now. I can avail of all the hours with my mentor to read my writing and feedback to me."* (Mentee focus group)

## 2.7 Mentee Bursaries

Mentee participation in the programme is supported by a bursary of £150 for FS and £250 for CF. Mentees expressed appreciation for this, with one remarking on the importance of financial support for sustaining arts participation:

*“Anything helps, especially when you’re in this situation [recent release], you’re financially troubled. If people want to keep their art going when they get out and they can’t get access to stuff it could give them a knock to put them off track, but when there is help like that it’s good; it keeps people motivated.” (Mentee interview)*

This was verified by another mentee:

*“Oh yes. If it wasn’t for that I wouldn’t have the paints I have; the bases you mix with your own white paints to make your own paints. It really did help; you see I’m on Jobseeker’s now at the moment. I wouldn’t have able to afford the canvass never mind the paints.” (Mentee interview)*

A visual art mentee was delighted with the bursary, which gave her access to a range of materials:

*“It got me loads of stuff, sketchpads, big sketchpads, small sketchpads, painting tools and everything; it’s all been put to good use, so it has. And my mentor was telling me about charcoal, so I bought some: I will have it for a long time, because when you buy charcoal it can last for years.” (Mentee interview)*

While just over half of mentees used their bursaries for art materials, the others spent the money on equipment and other aspects of the arts. A writing mentee used his bursary to help fund the design the cover of the book which he had written.

*“Yeah, one of my big concerns for my books is cover design, and I did my own research and it’s three for £100 per cover and maybe it’s a bit more if it’s a local designer. So I don’t have £3-400 to spend on a cover and the PAF Coordinator said – you could use your bursary for that. So she explained it and my mentor explained it, and it’s possible that it could be used for it. So that would be fantastic.” (Mentee interview)*

## 2.8 Mentoring matches

Mentees meet PAF's programme Coordinator at the start of the mentoring process to discuss what the programme has to offer, as well as their expectations. Mentee choice in relation to matching contributes towards a sense of autonomy and agency. Mentees expressed general satisfaction with their matches with mentors, reflecting the well-planned and well-structured process of matching mentors and mentees.

Mentees were appreciative of mentors' arts skills and knowledge, their willingness to share their awareness of arts opportunities in the wider community, their non-judgemental approach and their effective interpersonal skills.

A mentee who wanted to experiment with different art forms said that her mentor was

*"ideal because she knows so much about different kinds of art." (Mentee interview)*

Another mentee declared:

*"The matching was perfect. I've had no problems whatsoever." (Mentee interview)*

The following account of the matching process reveals the significance of age in relation to choice of mentor:

*"I was asked what kind of person – what kind of mentor I actually wanted to work with. They asked what age group. I said someone a lot older. It's easier for somebody younger to listen to somebody older. I don't think I could've handled it as much if they had been a lot younger than me. Somebody in their early-twenties hasn't got the same life experience as somebody over the age of thirty anyway. And when I met my mentor, I instantly got on with her. They matched what I asked for and I thought 'wow, unbelievable' because she's an older person, that was what I described. What a person to work with, they couldn't have picked a better person." (Mentee interview)*

According to a visual arts mentor, decisions about matching were related to the arts skills which she could offer.

*"Well, each of the two mentees was interested in furthering their art in different ways. One has a long-term interest in art using many media and wants to try oils. The other female mentee wants to pursue her art outside of prison and that's acrylics." (Mentor interview)*

Some mentees asked for specific mentors, whom they had met while they were in a prison establishment. This request was usually granted; one mentee noted,

*"so that worked well."*

For one mentor, familiarity with the mentees contributed towards the success of the mentoring relationship:

*“I felt that both of my mentees were a perfect match, as I had worked with them both individually within the prison.” (Mentor interview)*

Mentors as well as mentees had a choice in relation to mentoring matches. At the end of mentor training, they completed a matching questionnaire, which asked: ‘Which type of mentoring objectives or mentee issues are you willing to be involved with?’ Findings from interviews and focus group showed that mentors valued the opportunities provided to make informed decisions about this question.

Mentors were also asked: ‘Are there any types of criminal offence history you are uncomfortable working with? (Please be honest as this will help us make a successful match)’

A mentor noted that

*“I had a couple of things that I would find very, very difficult to overlook if I was working with somebody. And then a mentee came up and Adele gave me a ring and said: I know you have ticked this box, but this particular guy would like to focus on some of the things I can do, like portraiture and stuff like that. Well I said ‘Yeah, I’ll come along to meet him.’ And you realize that these things you have in your head are your own issues and that’s not the stereotype you’re sitting with. And everybody deserves a chance. I found that I got on really well with him, so it wasn’t an issue at all. Other than that, it would be the skills set we were matched up with: I could help with the skills he was interested in.” (Mentor interview)*

One mentor chose not to find out about mentee offences prior to the matching process.

*“I was very open to anybody. I didn’t stipulate that individuals ... men or women ... it just so happens that I had two men ... whether they wanted me, I’m not sure. I thought about what I’d be comfortable with, but to be fair to those individuals ... it’s not up to me to judge them and I feel it would be better for me to work with them not knowing what they’d done .... just so I could have that blank slate. There may be a point I’d be itching to find out what they done, but I don’t know if I’d ask or not, I’ll see. But the matching process from my end was fine. And whenever I met the individual for the first time it was very comfortable, in open spaces, with Adele, obviously. There were no problems or awkwardness, you know. We all got on well and just felt right. There was no challenge in terms of ‘are we going to work well together,’ but I felt from the start that we could.” (Mentor interview)*

## 2.9 PAF Support for Mentoring relationships

Both mentors and mentees commented on the quality and extent of support from PAF for the mentoring relationships.

*“The Coordinator has been fully available throughout the programme. Any queries or requests were dealt with promptly and efficiently.” (Mentee exit survey)*

*“The PAF staff was always there for info/advice. The supervision was great and comprehensive and things that were mentioned were done and followed up. I am happy with the support I got.” (Mentor, exit survey)*

*“There was steady contact, support and supervision from the Project Coordinator without intruding on the project or the mentoring. If problems arose there was good support and feedback from programme staff. The programme was organised well with clear communication and guidelines. Overall it went very smoothly.” (Mentee exit survey)*

Mentors contacted PAF for help with signposting when mentees had support needs outside the boundaries of the mentoring relationship. A mentee commented on the way in which PAF helped her with bereavement and other issues:

*“The PAF Coordinator is unbelievable; she’s really helped me doing this journey, so she has. And I’m still grieving over me partner and she introduced me...she got CRUSE up and running for me. There’s a few more things, and if it wasn’t for her...” (Mentee interview)*

Other mentees referred to the ready availability of PAF support:

*“And the PAF..., literally I can pick up the phone and if the Coordinator’s not there, she’ll get back to me. They’re there if you need them, there’s nothing that isn’t too much trouble. And she will say, if there’s paperwork you need to sort out bring it down to the office and we’ll go through it, you know, so I’ve had no problems whatsoever.” (Mentee interview)*

*“They [PAF] are all fantastic people really, you know, and the Coordinator is always good at keeping in touch, and it’s a very good team.” (Mentee interview)*

*“PAF staff, and the Coordinator in particular, is very professional and approachable. I know that help is there if I need it.” (Mentee exit survey)*

Another mentee described the interaction with PAF as

*“excellent. If you ask them for help, they’ll try and help you. They don’t just say, ‘aye no problem.’ They’re not like that. They’ll carry it through and do what they can do, you know. They’ve done a lot for me, like.” (Mentee interview)*

For a mentee who began his mentoring at the end of his sentence when he was still incarcerated,

*“communication with PAF is good. The writer in residence is excellent, and so is Adele – so fair play to both of them. The hold-ups really have been with the prison system, as always, but to be fair to them they have helped me get there. It’s just the speed of things.”*

Mentees who completed a questionnaire about their mentoring experiences expressed their gratitude towards PAF for their support:

*“Thank you so much PAF for introducing me to the mentoring programme. I would not be here today if it were not for the help and support that you have given me”.*

*“I am glad that I’m involved in this programme and grateful for the opportunity”.*

*“PAF have helped me a lot. They are so understanding and easy to talk to about the mentoring programme and everyday life”.*

*“The support from the [PAF] office is second to none”.*

PAF also gave mentees practical help:

*“If I felt like coming to Belfast, Prison Arts helped me to do it and going around the shops and seeing the arts supplies, it got me inspired. I really enjoyed the programme and I would like it to continue on, I really would.” (Mentee interview)*

Some comments about PAF support relate specifically to the Coordinator:

*“She’s the type of person, to her eternal credit, who puts you at your ease – that was the first thing; the conversation in here that day was a relief. She has the knack of putting people at ease; she keeps in touch and she’ll send you emails if there’s important issues you need to know about. She’ll respond to anything you enquire about promptly. And she seems to have a good handle on...how would you describe it...it’s kind of – I’m here if you need me but I’m not going to watch your every move; it’s that kind of relationship. Obviously, there’s paperwork to be done, I hope I do it right, she’s never complained so I’m assuming it’s OK ...” (Mentee interview)*

Another mentee said of the Coordinator that

*“She seems quite committed to this whole thing and it makes a difference. It makes a difference because...you believe in it more if the person you’re talking to comes across like they know what they’re talking about and can actually do some good.” (Mentee interview)*

## **2.10 Mentoring Venues**

Mentoring sessions took place in a range of venues, with more than a third place in PAF’s Creative Hub, a community space which PAF uses free of charge from a local homelessness organisation (Simon Community NI) in the northern part of Belfast.

One of the mentees explained in his interview with pride that he had played a part in helping PAF to secure the Hub as a base for mentoring. He was taking part in a PAF programme, Inspiring Change, in a Simon Community hostel in Portadown.

*“Through there, PAF and Simon [Community] were talking. PAF didn’t have their own space so the Simon Community gave them the Hub we’re at now, so that’s something good that came from it. We helped PAF and they helped us, so we felt proud about that.” (Mentee interview)*

There was only one negative response to the Hub as a venue, from a mentor who commented that

*“I hadn’t realised there was no internet connection in the Hub – an internet connection would mean we could look up music and also refer to tutorials online, or online blogs, websites, Instagram for ceramic sculptors.” (Mentor survey)*

A visual arts mentor considers the Hub an excellent venue.

*“It’s perfect. You’ve got your wet room there. There’s really bright light and white walls, so you’ve got perfect lighting, peace and quiet, and you can just get stuck in. My mentee will come down and he’s relaxed to the point where he’ll put the kettle on himself and make a cup of tea. I think sometimes, if you’re living in a hostel or halfway house, the beauty about this place is you can walk here and that’s handy for the Belfast-based people. It’s a good space for someone who needs to get out of the house.” (Mentor interview)*

*“This is a great space for the likes of one of my mentees, who is very focused and really enjoys coming down here: he could work for an entire day here. It gives him peace, light and he doesn’t have all the distractions of the hostel. And he really likes to come, sit*

*down, get his equipment out, use my inks because he's not quite sure whether or not purchasing, you know, his budget and that kind of thing ... He kind of uses the place like a studio." (Mentor interview)*



*Preparation for Solo Exhibition 'Reflective Moments'*  
Mentee's work produced whilst being mentored in the Hub

A writing mentee describes the Hub as

*"ideal. If you need some peace there's the back rooms as well, yeah, I think it's been ideal." He also meets his mentor in other venues: "Sometimes we go to a café. We'll be a bit more relaxed. We'll have a chat. You know Saint Anne's Cathedral; we'll stay there in the Cathedral Quarter. In this beautiful weather we'll sit outside on a park bench and its ideal." (Mentee interview)*

A mentee who engaged in the mentoring programme while he was on day release was unable because of the terms of release to meet in a public venue such as the Hub or a café. His mentoring sessions took place in a room in the building where PAF has an office; this room is a cramped space subject to interruptions. PAF itself only has one room, an open-plan office; this is not conducive to artists who are in the city centre dropping in to meet their mentors or to work in silence.

PAF mentors and mentees in Derry used two venues: one is the Playhouse Theatre, which has many studio spaces. A mentee commented:

*“It’s lovely and peaceful. If you need anything or you’re stuck for anything there’s paint here and you can use away. I feel comfortable in this building, very relaxed and nice.”*  
(Mentee interview)

This mentee found the Playhouse welcoming, and in fact held an exhibition there.



*Art room in Playhouse Theatre, Derry  
Work produced whilst being mentored*



*‘The Fork in the Road’  
Mentee’s solo exhibition in Playhouse Theatre*

Other mentors and mentees meet at St Columb's Park House, on the other side of Derry. One mentor initially met her mentee in the local library,

*"but the room was a tiny, wee booth, it was just too small. And St. Columb's gives my mentee that anonymity because we have mutual friends. It's just a wee bit more discreet. It's really quiet. There can be a lot of conferences going on but everybody's in their own room, their own space and it's not as busy or hectic as the City centre setting, you know." (Mentor interview)*

A writing mentee also really enjoyed having his sessions in the St Columb's Park House.

*"It's excellent, absolutely first class. It's an old building it has been renovated and been put to use for all sorts of things. There's a small cafe in it and they've got a mixture of different sized rooms. They run conferences in it and obviously they run things like our sessions. It's beautiful; it's away in the centre of St. Columb's Park, a beautiful green space in the Waterside [of Derry]. The staff are lovely and when you go in the room is ready and they chat away. It's a very comfortable environment, you're never disturbed: there's never an issue. We've a good-sized space. So you're having your half-hour conversations about fictitious characters there, and it doesn't feel stupid. It doesn't feel like you're wasting your time. The atmosphere is just right, I suppose, and that's down to people: it's down to my mentor – it just feels right. It's accessible; you could quite literally walk to it across the Peace Bridge. There's no issue with parking. It's an excellent facility. Excellent!*

*...And my mentor and I would take a 15-minute break, I don't know if I should say that, but we do, we'd go out and have a cup of coffee and continue our conversation about what we're doing. It's the kind of place I would have imagined a creative writing workshop would be held. If you asked me to paint a picture, that's the kind of place I thought it would have been." (Mentee interview)*

This description identifies the characteristics of an effective mentoring venue: it is easily accessible, private, and supportive, has friendly staff, offers a range of facilities, including a place for mentor and mentee to have a cup of coffee, and is in a beautiful setting. According to mentors and mentees who commented on the venue described above, these features make it relaxing and conducive to creative work.

## 2.11 Length of mentoring matches

While there was a high rate of mentee satisfaction about most aspects of the mentoring programme, many of them believed that more time should have been allocated overall to mentoring relationships. This was corroborated by mentors. In his interview, a writing mentor argued for the longevity of the mentoring relationship to support its benefits and to allow mentees' arts practice to evolve. This supports agreement in the mentoring literature that mentoring is most effective when it lasts for a year or longer.<sup>22</sup> Another mentor suggested that to ensure that mentees sustain their arts practice and the benefits of participation,

*"Maybe what's best is for the mentoring to take place over more time, maybe for two years after they come out." (Mentor interview)*

A mentor commented:

*"You know it's difficult when you only having twenty hours with somebody to really see changes. I think it would be better for him to have a longer process and I think you'd see more progress." (Mentor interview)*

Mentors and mentees made specific comments about the time allocated to the First Steps and Creative Futures programmes. Several mentors considered the twelve-hour FS programme too short, agreeing with the idea that

*"it's not just about work. It's about getting to know the mentee. It's very much about establishing that connection – it's a squeeze on creative time." (Mentor interview)*

One mentee had seven sessions on the FS programme, on a weekly basis.

*"Seven weeks is not long enough, like. I would've liked it to be longer. About three months, at least three months - I'd still keep on doing it because I enjoyed doing it." (Mentee interview)*

*"Well, First Steps is 12 hours and I think it could be extended to fifteen hours because you're only up and running and maybe narrow the gap between First Steps and Creative Futures, which is 12 and 20 hours, you know, if there was an in between ... " (Mentor, focus group)*

*"I think First Steps could've been longer. I think we were comfortable where we were at. I mean I paced it and timed it and wanted to have a sense of completion at the end of it. But I do think an 18-hour programme would work better because you can just tease it out*

---

<sup>22</sup> Finnegan and colleagues, 2010; Hansford, Ehrich and Tennent, 2004; Tovey 1998

*a little further. We had a few hurdles to overcome and by the time you get around that and settle down into the work...” (Mentor interview)*

Only one mentor regarded the twelve hours allocated to the FS programme as sufficient for his mentee to achieve his goals. The mentor pointed out that this was only the case because the mentee already had advanced music skills:

*“It’s not like I was trying to teach my mentee. He had a level of expertise and I just showed him. I didn’t have to teach him anything. If we were working on a song, I’d work out the chords and print them off and bring them along with me and we just sat there and played it because the music was in front of us and the chords. He knew how to do it, and we had plenty of time...”*

*The thing about the music is, music is immediate, and as soon as you play a note it’s gone. It’s not like you have a ceramics thing sitting in front of you. But with music you’re absolutely immediate, so for my first experience as a mentor I had a little bit of difficulty in sort of filling the time. We could rehearse a song, but the song is over after we’ve rehearsed it for five minutes, you know”. (Mentor interview)*

A mentor raised an issue about the relationship between timing, attendance and mentee engagement:

*“I think when we’re working with people who have difficulties in their lives, we know that with my mentees it sometimes takes quite a while to get them to a stage where they can turn up, you know, when the art sessions become more of a priority than they are at the minute. I think that does take a long while.” (Mentor interview)*

A visual art mentor reflected on the relationship between the duration of the mentoring relationship and the goals of the mentoring:

*“I didn’t feel the hours allocated to the mentoring scheme were sufficient. Perhaps I was too ambitious with the mentees being able to fulfil their goals in the allocated times (especially with one who was preparing for an exhibition).” (Mentor interview)*

The majority of mentees who participated in the interviews, focus group and postcard-making session expressed a desire for more mentoring hours.

*“I would personally like more time. I like doing my art, and I just enjoy meeting up with my mentor, and the staff at PAF, all those ones. I think the project was very worthwhile, so it was.” (Mentee interview)*

Another mentee would have liked more time so that he could continue to develop his skills.

*“I would like to continue on and develop my art; learn more about the paints, learn more about the different types of paint, like oil rather than water-based paints. In water-based paints if you make a mistake there’s no real comeback from it (laughs). It would be nice to develop my skills and take it further and get one of my pieces drawn by hand rather than tracing.” (Mentee interview)*

It may be speculated that some mentees’ desire to extend the mentoring relationship could be to do with their reluctance to leave its supportive space behind, particularly if there are challenges for them in continuing with their arts practice on their own. One of the main aims of mentoring is to foster mentee independence; this might be a subject for discussion in mentor training.

## **2.12 Additional opportunities for participation in the mentoring programme**

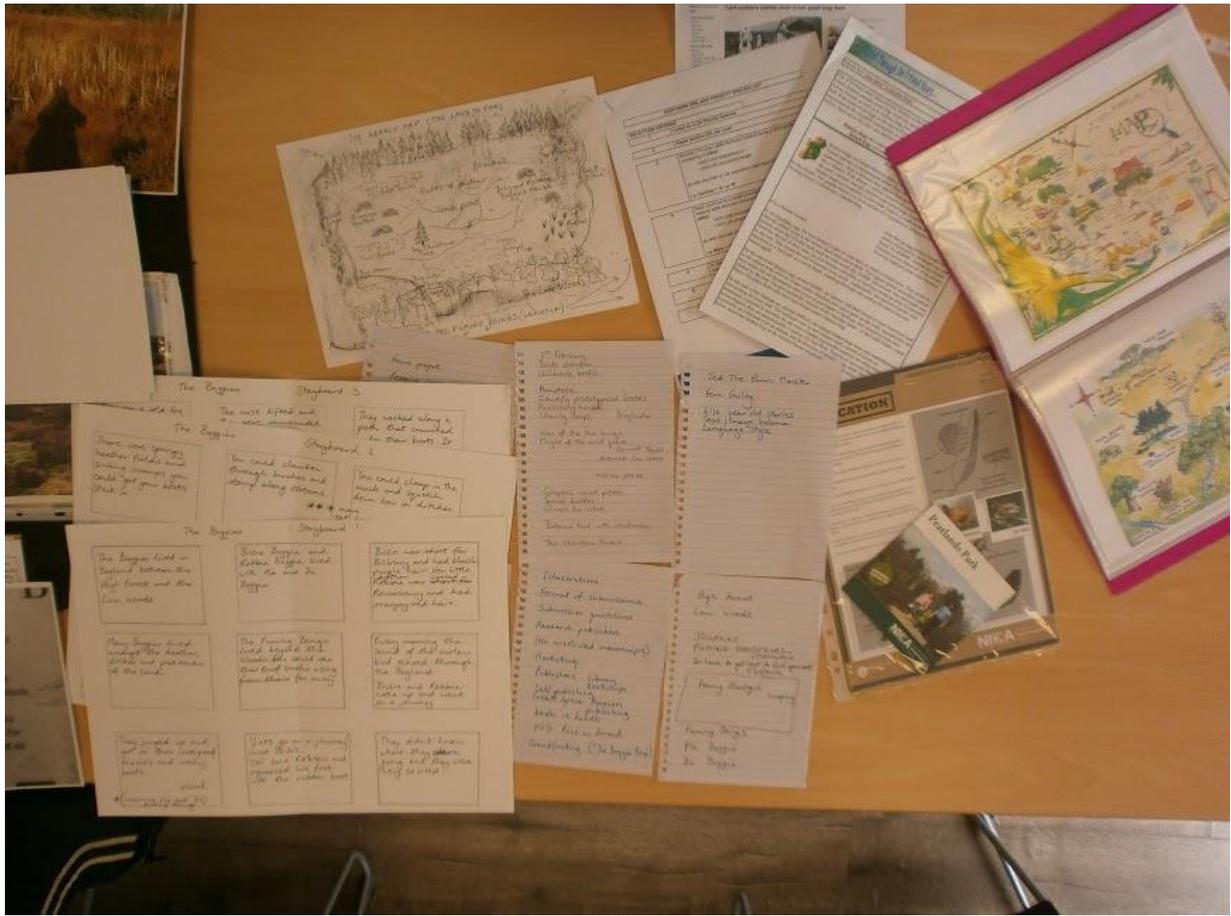
In the first mentee focus group meeting, mentees expressed their wish for more opportunities to develop their arts skills, and to share ideas with other mentees. PAF responded to this by providing a series of monthly visual art and creative writing workshops for interested mentees, facilitated by PAF mentors. These were well-received, and mentee feedback suggests that should the PAF mentoring programme continue, they might take place alongside the one-to-one mentoring relationships.

These group sessions, together with mentee participation in PAF’s annual exhibition, added another layer to the programme beyond the one-to-one mentoring relationships. They also scaffolded participation in the wider arts community. A writing mentee reflected on his learning from these workshops:

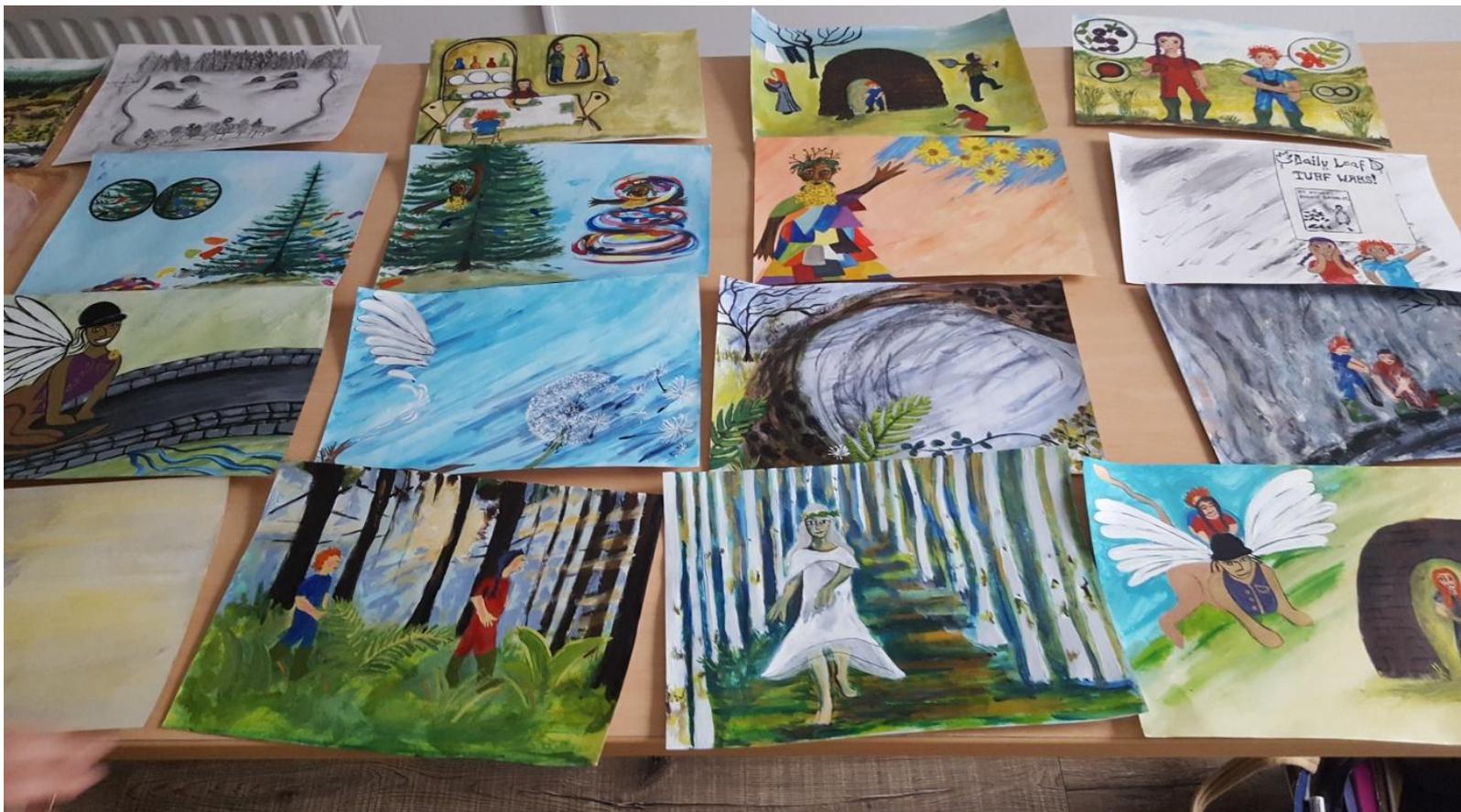
*“It’s so interesting listening to other people about what they’re doing. You pick up ideas and make them look at yours, you know, they’ll look at my poetry: have you tried this or tried that, we sort of bounce off each other as well. So it’s all helping each other.” (Mentee interview)*

PAF also supports its mentees to participate in the arts by encouraging them to submit to the prestigious annual Koestler Awards competition. The PAF Coordinator offered advice about submission to these awards at the first mentee focus group meeting. This was an opportunity for mentees who had achieved previously with Koestler awards to give advice to their peers about preparation for submission.

The next chapter focuses on mentor motivations and perspectives.



Work produced whilst being mentored





### 3.2 PAF mentors: skills and experience

One of PAF’s objectives for its mentoring programme was ‘To recruit mentors from different arts fields trained in supporting individual offender’. PAF’s callout for mentor applications received a response of over a hundred candidates, affording the organisation a choice of high-quality candidates, enhancing potential learning and benefits for mentees. A total of 54 individuals were shortlisted for interview and 30 selected for the mentor training which formed the final part of the application process. Fifteen of the 27 mentors who completed the training successfully have been engaged in mentoring relationships; eight of the remainder are still available for mentoring, as well as involved in other PAF projects.

Mentor application forms and the mentor survey indicate that PAF mentors have prior experience of working in the criminal justice system, a range of arts skills and expertise in preparing work for publication, performance or exhibition and marketing art work.

All of PAF’s mentors have more than one art and arts-related skill to offer mentees. The table below illustrates the range of mentor expertise available to mentees.

**TABLE 2: MENTOR ARTS SKILLS**

<b>VISUAL ART (1)</b>	<b>VISUAL ART (2)</b>	<b>WRITING</b>	<b>MUSIC</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book folding</li> <li>• Calligraphy</li> <li>• Card/Poster Design</li> <li>• Ceramics</li> <li>• Craft</li> <li>• Collage</li> <li>• Drawing</li> <li>• Fashion/Beauty</li> <li>• Felt-making</li> <li>• Furniture</li> <li>• Graphic Design</li> <li>• Glass</li> <li>• Indian inks</li> <li>• Magazine Design</li> <li>• Manga</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multimedia</li> <li>• Murals</li> <li>• Needlecraft</li> <li>• Oil, tempera &amp; acrylic painting</li> <li>• Photography</li> <li>• Pottery</li> <li>• Pyrography</li> <li>• Sculpture</li> <li>• Soft furnishings</li> <li>• Textile Art</li> <li>• Video</li> <li>• Watercolour/ gouache painting</li> <li>• Woodcraft</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poetry</li> <li>• Playwriting for radio/stage</li> <li>• Prose – Fiction &amp; Non Fiction</li> <li>• Writing articles, reviews and features</li> <li>• Memoir and life writing</li> <li>• Storytelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Song writing</li> <li>• Guitar playing</li> <li>• Performance</li> <li>• Recording</li> </ul>

Mentors brought to the mentoring programme their experiences as freelance self-employed artists, working in public art, in commercial and public galleries, and in community contexts. Eight of PAF’s mentors applied for the mentoring programme so that they could build on their practice as artists in residence for PAF in the three prison establishments in Northern Ireland. Another mentor, who was new to PAF, was artist in residence in the Mater Hospital

in Belfast, working with patients with a variety of health conditions, particularly mental health issues.

Motivating factors for artists in residence included the following:

*“My interest in becoming a mentor was mainly to offer support to ex-offenders to continue to develop their creative skills. Throughout my work experience as artist-in-residence within the prisons, many prisoners expressed an interest in continuing with art when they were released but didn’t know how to go about it.”*

*“As a writer-in-residence in HMP Magilligan I’ve experienced first-hand creative interactions among the prisoners which lead to positive outcomes. Mentoring will complement my work within the prison system through gaining the experience of working with prisoners when they have been released.”*

The PAF artists in residence went through the same application process for the mentoring programme as other candidates, and were also required to attend a two-day training course before they were signed off as mentors. One of the artists in residence commented on the training,

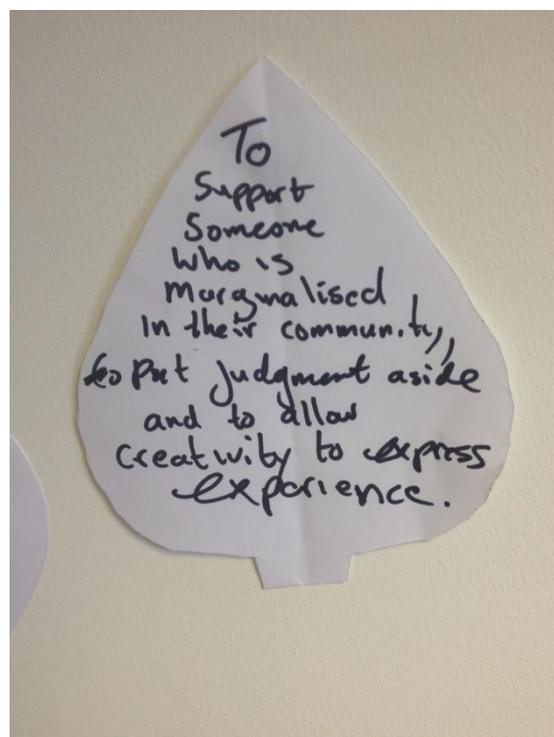
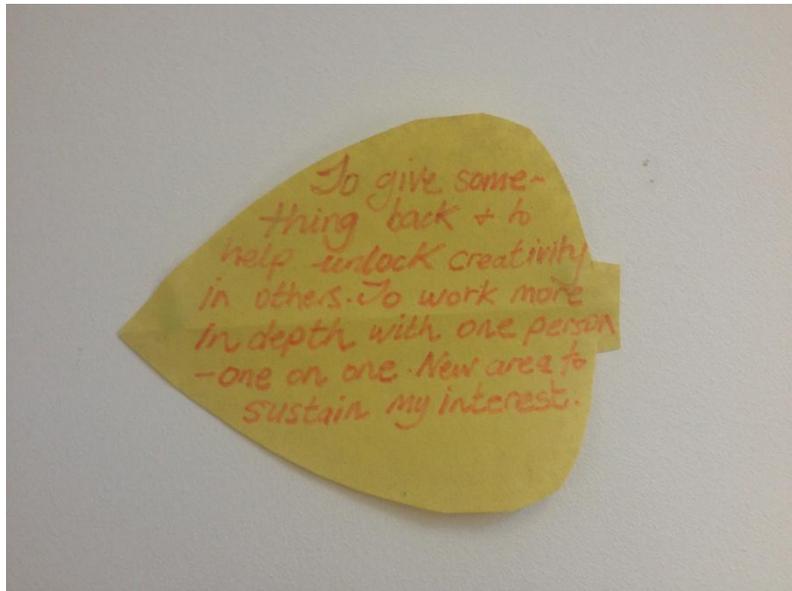
*“For those of us who have worked within the prison service for some time a lot of information on the training programme was superfluous”. (Mentor interview)*

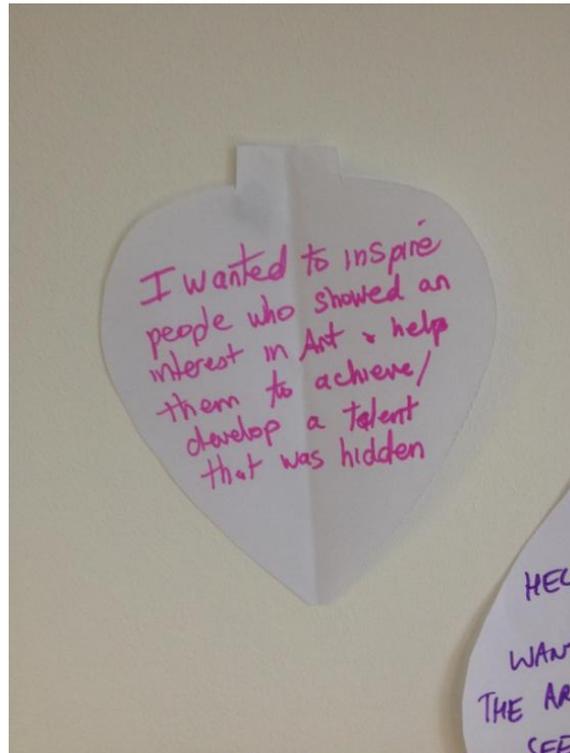
However, other artists in residence found the training useful, for example:

*“We were talking about the training in the focus group discussion, and I said I had been working in Magilligan and when the training came up I thought I didn’t need to do it, but there was a scenario that came up in the training in my mentoring, and I was grateful that it had been covered, you know.” (Mentor interview)*

### 3.3 Mentor motivations for participation in PAF's mentoring programme

The leaves below, created in the course of the mentor focus group discussion, reflect mentors' commitment to helping offenders, and convey their belief in creativity and its potential impact on mentees.





Findings about mentor motivations were also collated from mentor applications, the mentor survey and mentor interviews. They are arranged below according to theme.

**Enabling mentees to achieve their potential through creativity:**

*“To see a mentee develop their potential through art.” (Mentor application)*

*“To give something back and to help unlock creativity in others.” (Mentor focus group)*

*“I would like to impart what I know to someone who may find what I have to offer useful, and I would like to see how art can help people facing unique challenges. This is partly because I believe creativity and artistic self-expression can play a major role in how people see themselves and the world around them, and partly because I want to contribute to what I think is a very positive process.” (Mentor application)*

*“I have worked previously as a printmaking mentor and found it to be a highly rewarding experience. I enjoy working collaboratively – and I am keen to champion the positive impact of the arts on an individual.”*

*“I would like to use my skills to help mentees rediscover their creativity through making art.”*

*“I’m keen to support the development of others. I think participating in the arts can build confidence and sense of meaning and belonging.”*

**Supporting mentees to develop their arts practice and awareness of art opportunities in their local community:**

*“I am interested in sharing my knowledge of art practice and artistic resources available in Belfast, whilst learning from the mentee through conversation about their specific interests in arts practice and background experiences.” (Mentor application)*

*“I would like to share skills and knowledge about art and how to navigate the art world. It can be difficult for people to do this without art education, but I am able to share experiences that make it possible.” (Mentor application)*

**Desire to work one-to-one:**

*“I’m interested in it [mentoring] because it’s one-to-one rather than group work, and you actually get more out of people, and put more in.” (Mentor interview)*

*“To work more in-depth one-on-one.”*

**Desire for learning and career/ skills development:**

*“New area to sustain my interest.” (Mentor application)*

*“If I get the chance to engage with a mentee it would be valuable to me as a personal development activity for my career and I would really love to do it. It would be worth doing for the person I’m engaged with as well.” (Mentor application)*

*“I would like to become a better arts tutor, with more experience of people who have had different experiences and have faced different challenges.” (Mentor application)*

*“I’ve found I have a lot of personal and practical [help?] to offer a mentee, but also many opportunities to learn about my own practice through another’s eyes. In this instance the mentoring scheme is very reciprocal – I am able to inspire, and be inspired in return.”*

*“[I would like] to let the other person make me think about things from their point of view.”*

**Altruistic motivations:**

*“I’ve worked for charity organisations all my life and wanted to combine my arts and crafts skills with working with people trying to make a better life for themselves”. (Mentor interview)*

*“Because I have seen the benefits of how a mentoring relationship can assist in the personal and professional development of others.” (Mentor application)*

*“To hopefully help someone along their path.”*

*“I would love the opportunity to marry my two driving passions, which are creative pursuits and helping others. When I came across the Prison Arts Foundation I was immediately drawn to the organisation. It’s a wonderful opportunity.” (Mentor interview)*

Applications to PAF’s programme were prompted by previous experiences of mentoring and a belief in the transformative potential of the arts and creativity:

**Belief in the impact of the arts on individuals involved in the criminal justice system:**

*“I feel it’s important to encourage those with creative/artistic talents within the criminal justice system to take the next steps to ensure they continue with their artistic aspirations for the future.”*

*“The satisfaction of knowing that I have helped encourage and develop someone from the criminal justice system to fulfil their creative/artistic goals for the future.”*

*“I would appreciate the opportunity to help, support, inspire and encourage someone who has lost control of their life to find themselves again through creative expression. Being detained and serving a sentence [means there] needs to be a chance to bloom and grow.”*

**Commitment to PAF’s mission:**

The mentor survey which was one of the evaluation instruments required mentors to respond to select from a series of motivators for applying to PAF’s programme. There was universal agreement (17/100%) with the three motivators relating to PAF’s belief in the transformative powers of the arts:

- Commitment to PAF’s mission: to inspire creativity and encourage personal and social change through the arts in the criminal justice system
- Belief in the contribution which the arts can make to personal development, self-confidence, improving relationships and goal-setting
- Belief in the contribution which the arts can make to resettlement and rehabilitation after release.

Mentor support for PAF's mission is also revealed in additional responses to the survey:

*"The Foundation is underrated and deserves much higher recognition for the work taking place. It makes a world of difference to the lives of mentees."*

*"I think any programme or initiative that gives a guiding hand to ex-offenders has to be positive news. Encouragement of personal art work feeds into an overall sense of wellbeing and confidence."*

### **3.4 Mentor Attributes and Skills**

An aim of the evaluation process was to identify the attributes and skills of effective mentors; those referred to most frequently appear in bold below.

*"I think it's essential **to be able to build trust and a relationship with your mentee**. Then to be able to tap in and draw out their potential through whatever art form that might be. **To inspire and open up a world of possibilities** and bring them through the creative process." (Mentor application)*

*"An **established and competent artist** in their field of expertise will gain the mentee's respect, thereby mentor advice is trustworthy, and you can guide the mentee with their project." (Mentor survey)*

*"Mentoring is a fine balancing act **with pastoral care** and trying to provide a **realistic expectation** for the mentee about their future process and what to expect." (Mentor survey)*

*"**Flexibility and empathy** are also essential factors/qualities for a mentor. The ability to understand the complexity of a mentee's situation, whilst being clear about the parameters and opportunities being offered through the mentoring programme, as well as knowledge and practicalities of the art form, are equally important." (Mentor survey)*

In the focus group discussion about the PAF arts mentoring programme, a mentor commented on the complex expertise required for mentoring:

*"I think because we're working with adults who are extremely vulnerable and been through traumatic situations... not everyone would have a handle on that or the **interpersonal experience**. So I would worry about other people who don't have that extensive experience."*

*"But you have to engage and be involved, and the mentee has to know that you're in a position of trust. So it's a very fine line and it's only through my experience in mental*

*health and extreme sorts of environments and experience that's brought me to a comfortable understanding of that."*

*"I think there's a fine line between being an arts mentor and a counsellor, and its **interpersonal skills** that direct that. So it's not art therapy, it's not counselling, it's facilitating. And they are three very different areas where, as mentors, you don't want to be opening up too much that everything is out on the table. That's very much a **balancing act** as I've found with each encounter." (Mentor interview)*

*"The first skill ... in terms of **interpersonal skills** ... is **communication**. There's a way to be working with somebody and them to be working with you that is productive and hopefully useful. And there's ways of reading a problem, not just in terms of being expressed verbally, but in terms of shifts in their **body language** or behaviour in response to something you've said or done. So there's ways of communicating through those different layers so that you can achieve a way that's suitable for your mentee and you feel they're getting the best out of the programme." (Mentor interview)*

*"**Patience** in fostering creative talent." (Mentor survey)*

An inference from the comments above is that mentors on the PAF programme require a greater range of skills than those in more straightforward mentoring situations. This was corroborated by the following suggestion:

*"These are some of the nuances that could happen, when somebody could become very emotional when they turn up and tell you a big story. That part of the training could be expanded so that people weren't going in without **an idea where to signpost people to** and at least have that little booklet of resources for recently released prisoners on hand." (Mentor survey)*

Another important facet of mentoring identified by mentors was **the ability to help mentees promote and sell their work**.

Other important mentor skills and attributes identified in the survey, focus group and interviews included:

- Supporting mentee to **identify manageable goals** and work towards achieving these
- **Belief in mentee's talent and creative potential**
- A thorough **knowledge of current practice, resources and available opportunities** in the relevant field of the arts.
- **Awareness of personal issues** which might impact on mentee participation in the mentoring programme

- An ability to give **constructive feedback** to mentees about their artwork
- **Ability to address unrealistic expectations** which mentee might have about publishing, performing or exhibiting their work
- **Effective time management** and ability to keep accurate records
- Knowing how to give **feedback** in a fair and constructive manner. Also, letting mentee know it is your own subjective opinion on mentee's work.
- Artists who already know and have worked well with an individual should be allocated that person.
- You must identify what the mentee wants and focus on that rather than focusing on what you think they, the mentee, should want.

One mentor reflected on the importance of sensitivity to mentee needs:

*“I think...what I’ve learned, I think the pacing of the project is very important; as a mentor I don’t think you can go in and set that – I think I learned that from her. But I think sometimes when you’re coming from a certain discipline you don’t realise how much you know. As a mentor you go in with your craft – the thing is don’t intimidate anyone with it, you know. I think it’s important not to go in and say, ‘do this’ or ‘do that,’ say ‘how can I teach you what you need to know?’” (Mentor interview)*

### 3.5 Mentor training

*“Although I had experience of working with PAF before the mentoring training I still found the training worthwhile and insightful. The training played a vital role in preparing me for the one-to-one mentoring sessions”. (Mentor training evaluation)*

Mentor training consisted of a two-day course following the selection process. The majority of mentors, including PAF’s artists in residence, gave high ratings to a number of the elements of the training: these included the case studies of mentees presented on the training programme; information about mental health issues affecting mentees; guidelines for maintaining privacy, confidentiality and boundaries; and the implications surrounding specific offences.

Responses to the training reveal that mentors particularly valued the focus on boundaries in the course:

*“I thought that the mentoring training was very good, though there was a lot of information to get through over two days. But I really liked the emphasis on boundaries and clarity of boundaries in the mentoring relationship.” (Mentor training evaluation)*

*“The training was excellent, particularly in relation to boundaries and physical contact. The delineation of the mentoring role was clear.” (Mentor focus group)*

*“I found it useful in being able to identify what to do if you think someone has maybe been in a situation where there has maybe been drugs or alcohol in their system. And where to go from there: what to do and what to say and just keeping the relationship professional to a certain extent, but also being concerned about the individual themselves. But drawing that line where you’re not a friend as such, and you’re not there to help them in any other way. You’re there for their art, really. And to assist them as your role and to make sure there is a definite line there.” (Mentor, training evaluation)*

*“I found the guidelines in the training very useful ... the quite definite guidelines about confidentiality, even something as simple as – when a package of materials arrives for the mentee to my home it’s got my address on it and I must take it off before I take in to the mentee to unpack it, you know. Simple things like that I’ve learned from the training are useful, helpful, practical things. Even around discussions – my mentee is a lovely woman; she’s very open and chatty – chatty about her family but I’m very aware when I’m talking, I’m not talking in a guarded way but I’m aware that I’m not there as a friend though we have a friendly relationship obviously, but I don’t share about my family in the same way. But I listen and enjoy her conversation. I’m very aware of the guidelines around my personal life or where I socialise or anything like that because the city is very small.” (Mentor interview)*

*“There was a situation with a young fella who was turning up sporadically for mentoring. But during the process it became obvious that he was maybe using substances, but he also had a lot of issues going on in his halfway house. So the training kind of kicked in, in that regard. During the training there was a lot around that, setting boundaries, which I had in my mind from the very start.” (Mentor interview)*

In contrast with these mentors, one did not find the training at all useful *“because it was not the arts.”*

## **3.6 Issues identified in mentor focus group discussion**

### **3.6.1 Contact from PAF**

Dissatisfaction was expressed by a mentor who had not heard from PAF for a long time:

*“I was surprised and disappointed to find that there was no contact from PAF during the year following the training whilst waiting to be matched. I feel there was a missed opportunity here to keep unmatched mentors on board by means of a brief monthly email for example to inform them of the progress of the programme.”*

### **3.6.2 Mentoring fee**

PAF's fee for mentoring was an item in the focus group discussion; this fee is £30.00 per hour for direct contact time with mentees, with an allocation for preparation at £15.00 per hour. There was general satisfaction with the fee, although it was noted that the fee was low for the amount of expertise required for the role. One participant suggested that attendance at the mentor training programme should have attracted a fee.

Writing mentors were less satisfied than their artist colleagues were with the remuneration; they believed that this did not address the vast amount of preparation which was required between mentor sessions. Some examples of time-consuming activities included selection and preparation of material, and reading, annotated and editing mentee text between sessions. One writing mentor explained that

*“preparation time takes ages if you are cutting a 60-page draft to 30 pages – the £15 should be for the session and the £30 for preparation.”*

### **3.6.3 Expectations of mentees**

These had to be realistic

*“It's just that you risk disappointment for yourself if you always expect your mentee to be on track. It depends on their circumstances if they've had a bad week and they've gone off-track, so it's an achievement if they turn up for the session, or they phone up to say they can't make it. Achievement is on different scales so much as doing something between sessions or turning up with an idea, remembering what was done in the last session and being able to dwell on that is an achievement.”*

### **3.6.4 The importance of empathy**

In their discussion on the benefits that mentees might gain from the mentoring experience, mentors identified the development of empathy as a potential outcome for mentees. One participant in the focus group reflected that studying literature might afford an opportunity to learn about literature:

*“I suppose if someone develops empathy they’re less likely to make a victim and a safe and enjoyable way to develop empathy is to imagine characters in a story or a picture. I suppose I’m liking what you say about literature. I was listening to Philip Pullman on the radio during the week, when I was driving down the M2, he talked about a play he wrote when he was a teacher. I thought he was marvellous. He talked about how if you started off with truth, you’re going about it in the wrong way. You start with a lie and finish with the truth – so against the grain. If you try in life to do things against the grain – you find the mentees and work with that otherwise you’re going to be dissatisfied and unhappy.”*

### **3.6.5 Need for more contact with other mentors**

The collective experience of the mentoring training appealed to another mentor:

*“I also liked the fact; I think there was about thirteen of us or fifteen, that we were all there for a common purpose. And there was quite a bonding over the 2-days, I felt. I think there could’ve been a bit more, for instance, I think there was a small role-play, but it felt very scanty. So I think we needed to find ways of putting the information we were receiving into practice.”*

There was agreement that it would be useful for mentors to meet more often:

*“It would be good to have a get together for more informal stuff. Perhaps something that’s been fallen through (inaudible) or something that’s happened that we need to be aware of – like this may not happen to you but this happened or this person did this, this kind of crossover thing. We’re all different artists here, we’ve got different views and visions – so if that’s been applied in different ways we should be connected at a level to be able say ... maybe if we sent an email around or if we’re on the same mailing list to say what’s going on or if it’s a newsletter – it could be something along those lines.”*

## **3.7 Mentor Motivations and Responses: Postcard Session**

The mentor focus group session offered participants opportunities to use arts-based methods to express their ideas about the mentoring programme. An outcome of this process was a series of postcards, representing mentors’ motivations for being involved in the

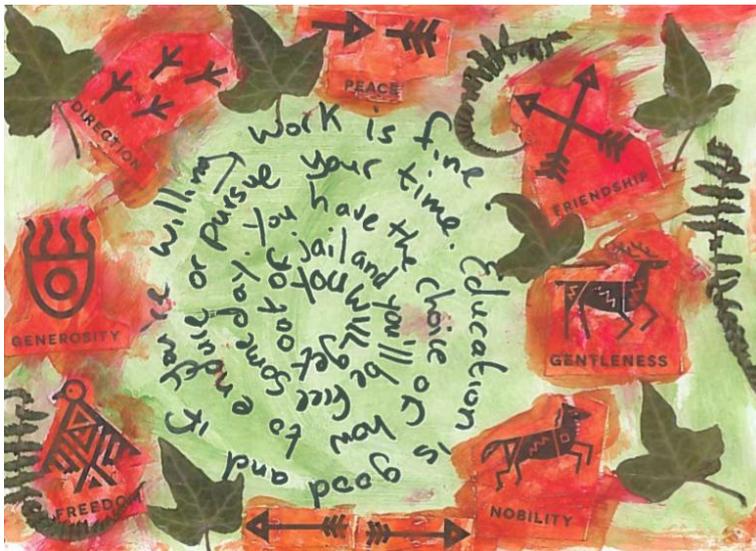
programme, as well as their perception of the benefits of mentoring. Some of their responses are verbal, others image-based, while a third group combines these.

### MENTOR POSTCARDS:



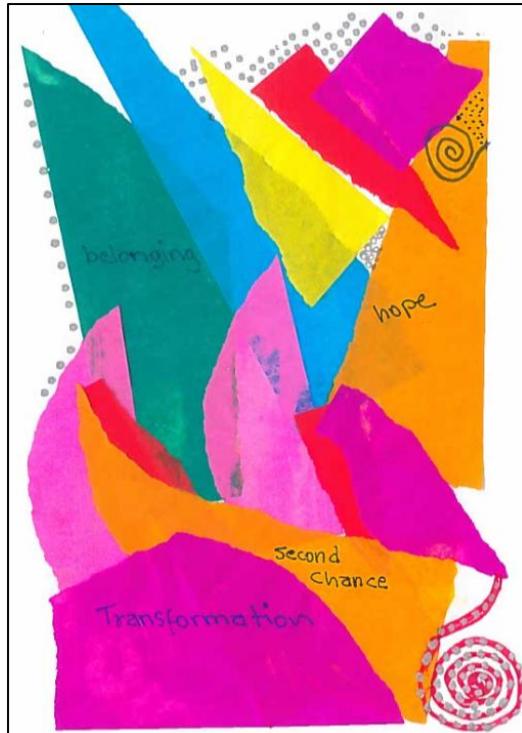
Some of the postcards, like the one on the left, are layered and textured; one mentor suggested that this reflects the complexity of mentoring.

The postcard below depicts a spiral of words, surrounded by positive qualities:



*"You will get out of jail and you'll be free some day and you'll have the choice of how to endure or pursue your time. Education is good and if you're willing work is fine".*

The spiral symbol, which appears in next postcard as well, is associated with change and transformation:



(WORDS)

*belonging*

*hope*

*second chance*

*Transformation*

This postcard combines words and art materials, as does the following one:



*"If you're afraid to feel, you're not in touch."*

The writer who created this postcard shared that he enjoyed playing with the art materials.





*'A Day out at the Market'*

Silver Award for Painting Koestler Awards 2018

*Work produced whilst being mentored*

## 4 MENTEES' CREATIVE RESPONSES

The second mentee focus group meeting provided opportunities for mentees to express their responses to the mentoring programme through the use of arts-based methods. This chapter presents a sample of the postcards and poems created at this meeting. More examples appear in the brochure which accompanies this report.

The idea of creating postcards as a response to the mentoring programme emerged early in the evaluation process. It was influenced by an idea by Fred Caulfield, Executive Director of PAF, about issuing postcards to encouraging offenders to participate in arts programmes while in custody. The process of making postcards in mentor and mentee focus group sessions offered an additional perspective for the evaluation to interviews and discussion, and a creative space for mentees and mentors whose chosen method of self-expression was image-based, rather than verbal. The evaluator was present at both postcard-making sessions as observer.

The mentor session was facilitated by an independent arts facilitator, and the mentee postcard session was designed and co-facilitated by a visual art and a writing mentor.

This session gave mentees opportunities to explore the relationship between image and word, to play with ideas and materials, and to create their own postcards. There were seven mentees present.

The process of creating postcards was scaffolded by some empathy exercises and writing and visual arts activities. Ideas from a poem by the ancient poet Amairgin the Gael were used as a template for mentee writing on the theme of identity. Two examples of mentee responses appear below, with the template in bold:

***I am a fighter and a creative soul***  
***I wonder*** if there is a purpose for me to have a hard time  
in my life  
***I wonder*** if everything happens for a reason  
***I hear*** a mother's voice on the other side of the road  
***I hear*** my children laugh that I haven't heard in two years  
***I want*** to see a life worth to live  
***I want*** to be an explorer  
***I am a fighter and a creative soul***

***I am** not black or white  
I am a voice for the voiceless  
I wonder why, I wonder how  
I hear a dog that never shuts up  
I hear my own voice which never shuts up  
I want to keep going  
I want to break and get to the end  
I am not black or white  
I pretend to know what I'm doing  
I pretend to know where I'm going  
I feel detached but yet alive  
I feel an arm around my shoulder helping me  
I imagine a path to achieve  
I imagine a life worth living  
I worry about stepping back  
I worry about taking a step forward  
I cry when I let my guard down  
I cry when I need to  
I am not black or white  
I understand that I'll never stop learning  
I understand that I'll never have an end date  
I say that I believe what I say may never be fully correct  
I dream of a life that I cannot have  
In my dreams I can live it  
I try everything at least once  
I hope to always have hope  
I reflect on the good, the bad and the ugly  
I am not black or white*

These poems are effective explorations of identity and aspiration; the reiteration of the phrase “I am” enables the writers to express their sense of self, and the active verbs such as “want” and “hope” connect them with their needs and desires.

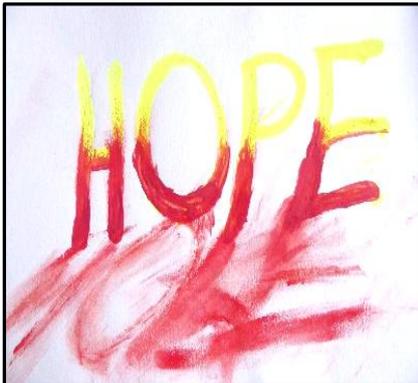
The next activity explored the process of combining words and images. Participants each focused on choosing a meaningful word and associating it with an image.

The creator of the “sea” postcard explained:

*“I was born in Cornwall. And I left school when I was sixteen. I always missed the sea. Ah...the sea, everybody forgets how pretty it is and so many people take it for granted. The place I was born was a little tourist place. People spend ages on the beach, but they never really look at the sea and think what it really is and the beauty of it as well.”*

The choice of the word “myths” according to the mentee, who wrote it on a card, was because

*“myth is now one of my story points, because you can adopt mythology and play with it as long as you stick to the story itself or, you know, have fun with it. The yellow is basically just the highlights. And the orange is basically; all the TV shows...Hercules was a Disney movie as well...”*



The mentee who created this postcard was experiencing great challenges in his personal life:

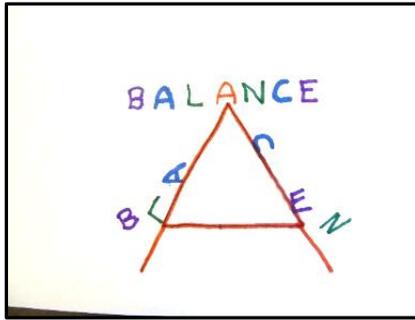
*“It took all of my strength not to break and go back to the way I was. So this is just, obviously, my experience through art. It gives me a different outlook on life and a career path. So art has given me hope in my life.”*



*“The unicorn is magical, his horn. And in that magic is my three children: two girls, and one special boy with special needs.”*



This mentee chose to sign his postcard with his tag, leaving the rest of the card blank; this reflected the importance of privacy to him.



*"It's in the centre of the page. It's also important to have balance, cliffs on either side. And it's centered either side of law-breaking. It's a metaphor, certainly, of life."*

The final stage involved creating postcards about the mentoring programme.

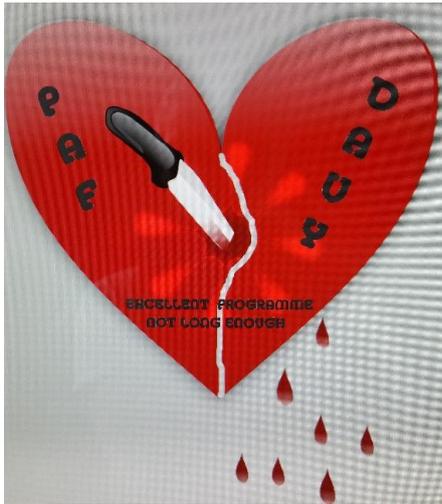


### Postcards about the PAF Mentoring Programme

The postcards which mentees created portray hope, the artist's beliefs and passions, and the transformation of identity. The message which some of the postcards convey is more oblique than others, but together they evoke the impact of the programme on mentees.

**M**y writing was a thing of the past  
**A**s my music, a distant memory  
**A** future that was not visible.  
**N**o longer a part of the community.  
**A** family no longer a part of.  
**C**reative Writing has changed that.  
**I** am now working towards being  
**A** poet. A natural move from music.  
**I** am learning about myself, through  
**W**riting. The truth can now be told.  
**M**y anger transferred to a page or verse.  
**I** have found a new me. **A**n honest me.

*My writing was a thing of the past.  
 As my music, a distant memory.  
 A future that was not visible.  
 No longer a part of the community.  
 A family no longer part of.  
 Creative writing has changed that.  
 I am now working towards being  
 A poet. A natural move from music.  
 I am learning about myself, through  
 Writing. The truth can now be told.  
 My anger transferred to a page or verse.  
 I have found a new me. An honest one.*



This image makes a powerful comment about the mentee's feeling of loss about the ending of the pilot mentoring programme.

Another mentee, who was unable to attend the postcards session, said in his interview:

*"It's very good and very inventive to have that idea (the postcards)."*

He speculated about the postcard which he might create:

*"One of the things I would do was to write on one side, 'I can't draw' and on the other side the trace of an image I was trying to draw. This shows that you don't need to draw to be able to paint and create art."*

These responses to the creative session suggest that postcard-making can be an effective method for supporting mentees in reflecting on arts participation and arts processes.

## **Conclusion**

The arts-based methods session demonstrated effective mentoring in action: it offered a safe and supportive space with scaffolded activities for developing techniques and creative expression. In response, mentees were open and creative, sharing their experiences and emotions freely in images and words. The successful collaboration between the two mentors who facilitated the session suggests that there is much to gain from engaging mentees in both verbal and visual art explorations, whatever their preferred artistic medium. The session also showed the benefits of bringing mentees together to share their ideas.

Finally, the processes and outcomes of the session make a case for the use of arts-based methods in evaluation, as they enable participants to reflect on their experiences and to express complex ideas.

## Alone

A usual evening sat in my living room.  
A drink for one and the radio on.  
Then it happens, as I was expecting.  
Perhaps anticipating?  
A song comes on that takes me back.  
Back when you were still alive.  
The realisation that you've never left me.  
The fact I never really grieved for you.  
Was I too scared to accept the truth?  
Am I drinking to escape?  
Or to face the heartbreak?  
Wanting to go back?  
Back to that dark corner of my mind?  
The sensation of hurt.  
That feeling of pain.

The sun shines on you through the window.  
In a world of your own.  
The kitchen alive with song and melody.  
The beauty touching my soul.  
A warmth you radiate.  
Larger than life, swaying to the beat.  
Oblivious to me and the children.  
Not a care in the world except us.  
Face glowing with happiness.  
That infectious laugh.  
Eyes with that certain twinkle.  
That show a smile,  
With a look of tenderness and passion.

I can still see you, hear you.  
Singing along with Aretha Franklin.  
"I Say A Little Prayer".  
The words still resonate.  
"Forever and ever, you'll stay in my heart".  
"To live without you",  
"would only mean heartbreak for me".  
Did you love me that much?  
I am sure you did.  
Did I love you the same?  
I can answer that without thinking.  
Whatever my state of mind.  
It is always yes.  
My only true love.  
To this day my only love.

I am alone now.  
Alone with my drink.  
My thoughts and memories.  
I feel the tears sting my eyes.  
The loneliness closing in.  
I'm no longer in a home.  
Just a room.  
A flat where I eat, drink and sleep.  
No wife.  
No children.  
Just alcohol and memories.  
Four walls and wine for company.  
The music somehow not so musical.  
The words not so meaningful.  
A void unable to be filled

I could write a book, but, like this,  
It wouldn't do you justice.  
No matter how many times I try.  
No words can describe you.  
How do I explain my love for you?  
The pain of not having you in my life?  
I do not want these feelings to leave.  
I do not want to ever forget.  
You will never let me forget,  
What was and all that has been.  
It keeps me alive.  
Keeps me human.  
Still in love.  
Always alone, lost, but,  
Forever yours

## 'Alone'

*Foundry Chambers Silver Award for Spoken  
Word Koestler Awards 2018*

*Selected by families supporting someone  
inside for the Koestler Trusts 'I'm Still Here'  
exhibition at Southbank Centre London  
2018*

*Work produced whilst being mentored*

## 5 IMPACT OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME: “I AM OVER THE MOON”

This chapter focuses on the impact of the mentoring programme, incorporating mentee responses and mentor reflections. The second part of the title comes from an excerpt from a mentee interview:

*“I’ve got a load out of the mentoring programme. When I went inside last year, ten days into my sentence, my partner passed away... everything kind of hit me in the one go, and my art tutor at Hydebank kept pushing me and pushing me to get out of my cell and do something. I’m so happy she did that, and I’m over the moon with everything that actually happened since then on the mentoring programme.”*

### 5.1 Mentee achievements

The mentee who made the above comment participated in visual art classes in Hydebank, and joined the mentoring programme after release. In the course of the mentoring relationship, she achieved great success with her art. Her mentor explains that she *had*

*“a one-person exhibition showcase in the Playhouse gallery, ‘A Fork in the Road’ 13-15 December 2017, participation in two group exhibitions in Belfast – ‘Time to Change: NI Mental Health Art and Film Fest, Arts Disability Forum, Belfast 16 May – 16 June 2017, and ‘Liberation’ PAF showcase exhibition, Crumlin Road Gaol 14 March 2018, and a submission to exhibit in the Koestler Trust exhibition 2018. This is a powerful record of achievement in a relatively short period of time.”*

The mentee commented on her showcase in the Playhouse gallery:

*“It was just like...I couldn’t believe it. It was like a dream: wake me up now. It was pure surreal, having my mammy there and friends at the exhibition. It was just brilliant, unbelievable.”*

Another mentee also held a solo exhibition, selling all of her work, while a third mentee, who was completing a Foundation Diploma in Art and Design, took part in student exhibitions, and is preparing for a one-man exhibition in North Down later this year.

At the first mentee focus group meeting, the PAF Coordinator gave information and guidance about PAF’s annual exhibition. Mentees with previous experience of exhibiting their work also gave advice to new exhibitors, and offered help with framing and other practical aspects. They told their peers about the experience of discussing their work with visitors to exhibitions, and shared their learning from seeing their peers’ work at the

exhibitions. The majority of PAF's mentees subsequently contributed visual art and writing to the exhibition, Liberation, in the Crumlin Road Gaol in March 2018.

A visual art mentee, reflecting on the impact of the mentoring, reported that

*"The good work PAF does matters a great deal. It really has helped me a lot and it's...the swell of pride...even my parents: my mum and my gran, whenever they came up to see my work at the PAF exhibition, they were very proud of me for it, and I didn't have a lot of pride before."*

Findings from mentee interviews and exit surveys reveal that participation in the mentoring programme also impacted on other mentees' relationships with their families:

*"My family have supported me, my wife in particular" (Mentee interview)*

One mentee reported that she used art as a communicating with her children, who were living elsewhere at the time.

*"My aim for the mentoring was to learn something that I can show them."*

An art mentee was able to support her family with sales from her work. A writing mentee used her mentoring sessions to create a storybook for her child.

Another aspect of achievement in the mentoring programme was the number of Koestler awards received by mentees in 2018, 27 which is a substantial number. The awards encompassed visual arts, writing and music, with three gold awards, five silver and one bronze, as well as other prizes. Six further works created by Prison Arts Foundation's participants in the mentoring programme were shortlisted for Koestler's annual exhibition at Southbank Centre in London, I'm Still Here 19 September– 4 November 2018. Examples of works which won awards or were exhibited are included in the brochure which accompanies this report.

Most mentees, whether or not they exhibited their work or received awards for it, expressed a sense of achievement. For some mentees, this came through mastering new techniques, such as pyrography, oils and mixed media, or poetry and playwriting. Other examples of achievement include:

*"the programme has allowed me to put together a small anthology of work so that my family can read it initially, and if that's the only audience it gets then I'd be happy enough, I'd say. Whether anything develops beyond that, I don't know, writing competitions or putting together other bits and pieces of work, I don't know, at this stage it's really not that important for me. At this stage it's about finding out whether or not*

*there's a modicum of probability there to do something – so from that point of view it's been a very positive experience.” (Mentee interview)*

One mentee acknowledged:

*“Never painted in me life before unless it was a door or a wall or something, you know. So once I started it, it's got a bit addictive. I'm getting more out of it now than I thought I would've got to be honest.” (Mentee interview)*

An art mentee is proud of the painting techniques which he has learnt. In his interview, he showed the evaluator one of his art works to demonstrate how effectively he is now able to capture the three-dimensional aspects of an image. He declares:

*“This gives me pride that I can make something myself, even if it's for my own enjoyment. I'm very proud of that. I know I've created it.” (Mentee interview)*

This mentee also referred to another kind of achievement:

*“When I came out of prison I stayed in my room. I didn't want to socialise with anyone, but now it's [the mentoring] getting me out in the world. It got me to museums what I haven't done since I was a child. Field trips, standing in front of a piece by Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci is quite profound...” (Mentee interview)*

A mentor offers a reminder that achievement is relative, contingent on the goals, needs and challenges of individual mentees:

*“Achievement is on different scales, so much as doing something between sessions or turning up with an idea, remembering what was done in the last session and being able to dwell on - that is an achievement.” (Mentor interview)*

The following comment by a mentee is a reminder that a sense of achievement is related to the freedom to identify one's own goals and ambitions (mentee interview):

*“It's good that with PAF let you do what you want and build around it rather than what they want. The actual arts stuff and meeting other people through PAF helps me with my anxiety issues and with meeting new people, going out and doing other stuff. When you come out you think PAF are going to judge you so you they have been really nice and supportive. One of the most important things that PAF offers is for people when they get out to actually have somewhere to go.”*

Other mentees also remarked on the positive impact of the mentoring on their mental health:

*“I'm getting more out of it now than I thought I would've got; to be honest. I think I'm using it as a type of therapy ... Because if I'm painting I'm not thinking about other*

*things. I'm just relaxed. I'm in that zone, if you know what I mean. That's the way I work at it, like.* (Mentee interview)

*"It's a good help mentally and everything."* (Mentee interview)

A mentor observed:

*"My mentee's anxiety levels have decreased throughout this mentoring."* (Mentor exit survey)

*"She has found a way of using her experience [to address her] fear of reoccurrence of mental health issues through art practice".* (Mentor exit survey)

## **5.2 Impact on mentee outlook**

The impact of the mentoring is evident in the positivity with which mentees speak about the arts in their interviews and focus group discussions. The transcripts are imbued with passion for the arts, joy, hope and a sense of possibility.

This chapter began with a comment by a mentee stating that she is "*over the moon*" about the mentoring. Another mentee states that he is "*so open and advanced in my happiness*" because of the mentoring.

A writing mentee remarks that as a result of the mentoring,

*"Writing becomes a need, a joyful need, it really is. Now I don't think I could do without it, I really don't."* (Mentee interview)

The next mentee comment conveys a sense of hope and possibility:

*"I'm getting excited about the next steps I can take since mentor tried her best to introduce me to the art world and widen my knowledge of what's available outside our sessions with PAF. Thankful to her."* (Mentee exit survey)

## **5.3 Mentoring and resettlement**

Mentee responses to their experiences of the mentoring and their commitment to the arts suggest they have found a new focus and sense of purpose. According to one of them,

*"When I came out, I was very angry and insecure and I had no future, and if it wasn't for these sort of programmes I don't know where I'd be. And I'm looking at myself again and understanding myself again and it's given me a purpose. And I'm sure that other people in prison, because there's something I've noticed before especially with the younger generation within the Prison Service, everyone's put them down. They're never any good at anything. And then they attempt something like this and they think: God, I can*

*do something. And it gives them self-pride...and I'm pretty sure that the mentoring does keep people out of prison, I'm sure of it. And it gives you something to work for. It gives you pride, self-pride." (Mentee interview)*

The last part of this comment is supported by this statement by another mentee:

*"Coming out of prison, I see things that normal people wouldn't and I can see the change in individuals. I've talked to people with very serious offences and they're different people because of this. And for the first time in their lives they're working at something and achieving something that they've probably never done before, and it does help. It keeps them on the straight and narrow. It makes them part of the community, it really does." (Mentee interview)*

The connection which these comments make between participation in the mentoring and resettlement is ratified by a mentee who began his mentoring prior to release, as an integral part of his resettlement programme. For him, the mentoring represents *"easing out and easing in to society. So it's very beneficial." (Mentor interview)*

A mentor suggests that the arts offer a space to support resettlement:

*"In terms of resettlement, you're leaving a prison environment and entering a hostel environment, and the hostels are not ideal. You're in those environments among prisoners. If you're going back to a family you could be meeting old friends you were with in terms of the crime you committed. And I think I heard someone say earlier, the arts are like an oasis - a kind of space that you have - a neutral space outside all those other things and pressures and everything that's leading you to re-offend. Somewhere you are not judged." (Mentor focus group)*

A visual art mentee echoes the idea of the arts as a safe space, valuing the lack of judgement and sense of belonging which he has experienced in group situations with other PAF mentees:

*"I hope PAF get the funding for more projects and developing even further, both in prison and for us who are already out. It's been a while, but it's nice to be in a group setting, where the person you're working with knows you've committed offences and you don't have to worry about discovering what they are. The mentor knows and the other ones there have their own offences. It's a comfortable environment because it's the one thing I'm paranoid about is the fact of lying about my offences and that means I can't do that activity anymore and being able to go back to it. So having that avenue to go, where everyone's in the same boat as yourself, and having that release in your mind so you can be freed up and concentrate on your work and not worry about things."*

This comment reflects the way in which the arts can cultivate a sense of belonging and increase confidence during the challenging process of resettlement.

A mentor considers some of the issues facing mentees during resettlement, and how he might play the role of the “middle person” to scaffold resettlement:

*“If I put myself in the shoes of people who were coming out of prison; if it was me: it’s difficult enough getting a foothold in the arts and making a living for a person who hasn’t been to prison. Somebody coming out of prison, they’re already a further step back than somebody who hasn’t had that opportunity. PAF’S ability to help them in that situation and give them confidence and show them some direction is perfect. It works so well in the sense that, even if that person came out and PAF would say, here’s some shops and they’d possibly be interested in getting you work, you go on and talk to them. That’s far too daunting a thing to do. So you have a middle person there, a mentor, I mean, to bring them into that world and give them the confidence to go on and talk to the shops either on their behalf or with them, that’s extremely important because they’re further back than someone doing that who hasn’t been to prison.” (Mentor interview)*

Mentees gave several examples in their interviews of how mentors supported them to pursue the arts in the wider community: they shared contacts, liaised with potential employers and gallery owners, and introduced mentees to individuals who might purchase their work or services.

#### **5.4 Confidence**

Findings from the evaluation indicate that participating in mentoring impacts positively on mentor confidence. Examples include:

*“I have had a wonderful time with my Mentor. She has really helped me with my confidence and self-esteem.” (Mentee exit survey)*

*“I feel more confident about my art skills.” (Mentee interview)*

*“I’m more confident and I’m more outgoing, and I lost that for a long time. Jail was the worst experience of my life, but I made it something more. I got something out of it and not a lot of people can say that.” (Mentee interview)*

Mentors value the contribution which the mentoring has made to mentee confidence:

*“I enjoyed seeing my first mentee flower and get his confidence performing in front of people. And I’ve enjoyed seeing my second mentee learn the skills that I know, and he can make money and help himself in his future life.”*

This comment relates to specific arts-based aspects of confidence; others refer to confidence more generically:

*“Feedback from my mentee has been very positive. My mentee has attended the programme fully, shown great commitment and enthusiasm and has always got in touch if she expected to be delayed. She has spoken about an increase in her confidence levels as a result of participating on the FS programme.” (Mentor exit survey)*

*“The mentoring project made a huge difference and had a positive impact. It gave my mentee confidence and a constructive project that helped her cope and see an alternative through a very difficult time.” (Mentor exit survey)*

An art mentor explained how the incentive of submitting some work to the Liberation exhibition had contributed to the development of a mentee’s confidence.

*“He worked really hard coming up to it. At the start he had absolutely no confidence in his work. Then in the build-up he started to get a bit of confidence to the point where he couldn’t get enough of his pieces in. He just wanted more and more in.” (Mentor interview)*

The same mentor described another mentee’s experience in relation to confidence:

*“He was told that he couldn’t do cartoons for art in school...cartoons were out. You had to produce a still-life, whereas his Manga was his life. When he couldn’t do it, he said, ‘Right then. I’m not going to do it.’ But being in the prison system, given the time and opportunity to go back to that, he started creating different pictures and selling them in the prison. And then to come to the likes of the mentoring where people see his work and tell him how really, really good he is, it just lifts him. And he’s got that confidence now, and you can see how happy he is when working on something.” (Mentor interview)*

The following comment by a mentee connects confidence, resettlement and mentoring:

*“When you come out, I know how I felt, I was no longer part of the community, I was scared of the community. The mentoring has helped me to re-adjust, not just this, but it has been a major part of it, it really has. And I look at me from where I was 3 years ago; I’m a totally different person. I’m far more confident. I’m more outgoing and I know for a fact the writing has been a major part of it.” (Mentee interview)*

## **5.5 Developing a new identity**

One of the projects of resettlement involves the development of a new and positive identity. Mentee responses to the evaluation suggest that participation in the mentoring has

contributed to the cultivation of their identities as artists. This is also indicated in references to the way in which arts practices have been integrated into their everyday lives:

*“I was lying in bed, and I had this thing about a drawing or a painting that I wanted to do. I had it in me head when I was going to bed, I had it drew out in me head. So before I went to sleep I had to get up, get a sketchpad and sketch it out so when I got up in the morning I knew what it was like, you know.” (Mentee interview)*

*“Something will pop into my head and I’ll do it. I haven’t stopped painting as such [since the mentoring ended]; I’m always doing something during the week. Last week I went out to the charity shops and I bought canvasses, you know, like with art on them to re-purpose them. Then I give them 2 or 3 coats of titanium white or whatever to cover all that in.” (Mentee interview)*

A mentee explained that art acts as a resource for her when she is experiencing difficulties:

*“Art always kind of motivates me if I feel down; I would rather sit down and do something. It makes me feel better, and the same for writers... I spoke with someone who has a mentor for creative writing - I would understand exactly the same feeling. They want to tell a story rather going and doing something silly they would sit down and take their time because they know it makes them feel better.” (Mentee interview)*

Mentees’ artist identities were also enhanced by participating in the arts in their communities.

*“My mentor got me out and about gigging, in various locations. Each location I played and enjoyed. I learned that each gig is different, different atmosphere.” (Mentee exit survey)*

*“I always lived in Derry all me life, and going to galleries and stuff, and not knowing that was in my town was a shock.” (Mentee focus group)*

In their discussions on success factors for mentoring, mentors identified the importance of mentee commitment to the process. A mentor compares two of her mentees:

*“So, it’s the commitment; if mentee A doesn’t put the time aside, he’ll not get anything out of it. So, they need to want to be here in the first place. So, there’s a difference in mentality in how they see the mentoring, because I think this mentee sees it as a thing he must do, whereas mentee B sees it as something he wants to do.” (Mentor interview)*

Another mentor acknowledges her mentee’s commitment:

*“My mentee has had such a difficult year, so many challenges - so you can see how important the art is in helping her through that - I’m so impressed with the work she’s put in given the difficult year she’s had, it’s amazing. But with all her ups and downs she did not break her commitment to it. It was really important to her through the whole thing and she was very appreciative of it and to have it come to fruition. And you could see that times she had a particularly tough week, but she was always taking steps forward with it. She saw the mentoring as a commitment she didn’t break.” (Mentor interview)*

## **5.6 Acknowledging the contribution of mentors**

*“My mentor worked with me really well and provided consistent support throughout the programme. She gave helpful feedback and was inspirational in terms of my project content. We have similar interests in our passion for literature, creative writing and the arts. It was a very positive experience.” (Mentee exit survey)*

*“From the start, he was more than a mentor. He was a friend, you know, someone you can talk to. Looking at my work: it was constructive criticism. He’d say, have you tried this, or have you tried that. and he gave me ideas to work on. And eventually we started to look at other poetry. And he’d say, take this away and read it and tell me what you think. And we’d discuss it and we’d both have different ideas. Then I realized that there’s no right way and no wrong way to look at poetry. Unless you know the background to a poem you can only take what you read from it. People are going down these different routes. Now I feel I’m beginning to understand poetry because I’ve never looked at it this way before. I’ve never really analysed poetry. I’ve read it but never really looked deeply into it. I’ve got a far better understanding than I ever had.” (Mentee interview)*

The comments above are examples of mentees’ acknowledgements of the contribution of their mentors towards their new skills and learning. Further acknowledgements are arranged according to theme below.

### **Development of arts skills:**

*“The mentor helped me realise there are ways to paint and develop my talents and think positively towards art. Encouraging me to consider different perspectives and opening my eyes to art in development.” (Mentee, exit survey)*

*“I’ve only took five sessions with the mentor so far, but to be honest she’s brought out things in art that I didn’t know I had in me: different skills and different ways of putting yourself out there.” (Mentee focus group)*

*“The sessions are informal but very focused. They also introduce me to new writing, new writing forms and techniques for developing my own work.” (Mentee exit survey)*

### **Mentoring relationship:**

*“I think D is really funny, and really easy to get along with. It makes it easier; art can make you really stressed, and it helps when she is laughing with you and it can make it flow ... I’ve enjoyed working with someone I like that she pushes me to do other things. I am afraid of doing something wrong so it’s good to be pushed.”*

*“My mentor would check up on me if I wasn’t feeling well and just to keep the friendship going through the relationship.” (Mentee interview)*

*“I think the relationship with the mentor was fantastic, I don’t know, we became friends at first ... I loved the discussions and the giggles and all those kind of things and then taking the ideas to something completely different from the first stage. The mentor has so many ideas, how could you not be excited?” (Mentee interview)*

### **Mentees appreciated mentors’ sensitivity to their needs:**

*“It wasn’t like a chore. It was something I wanted to do and if I wasn’t feeling up to it, my mentor wouldn’t push me.” (Mentee survey)*

*“My mentor is experienced and talented and is a very good listener. He has an understanding of what I am trying to achieve.” (Mentee questionnaire)*

*“My mentor really takes an interest in what we do and think and really encourages us.” (Mentee survey)*

*“When you’re sitting down with someone who is realistic, my mentor is very realistic and very much down to earth, saying you can do this, and you can do that or we can do it another way. And it makes you realise: maybe it wasn’t so crazy; it made you think that you weren’t an idiot for wanting to do this. And they treated you like an equal in that sense.” (Mentee interview)*

### **Mentees also commented on the relaxed atmosphere created by mentors:**

*“I am enjoying the relaxed atmosphere, the flexibility to express myself in a more calm way. (Mentee exit survey)*

*“The mentoring has learned me to relax more.” (Mentee exit survey)*

*“My friend who recommended the mentoring programme to me said it’s very relaxing and there’s no pressure. So that done me lovely like, you know. The last thing I wanted was*

*anybody pressurizing me. So, in that respect it worked out fine. It's not pressure as pressure; it's showing you what you can do and what you can't do. It's up to you at the end of the day if you want to go ahead and do it." (Mentee interview)*

*"My mentor never pressurized you to do anything. It would be more a case of: what do you think if we try and do this for a change, you know." (Mentee interview)*

## **5.7 Interactions with PAF**

Mentee responses indicate that these interactions were positive and supportive. A mentee who had completed the First Steps programme commented:

*"I very much enjoyed it. Even from the beginning the communications from the Coordinator and the mentor: about the programme and how long it's going to be was all very clear. When it started there were no surprises. It was very helpful, so you're not running around clueless or nervous." (Mentee interview)*

Another mentee stated that *"PAF have kept encouraging me." (Mentee exit survey)*

Mentors also applauded the ways in which PAF supported the mentoring relationship, for example:

*"The care put into making a suitable match - my mentee and I were well matched from the beginning. Consideration/payment for extra hours if required and awareness of the work required for admin, reports, preparation etc." (Mentor exit survey)*

## **5.8 Expressions of altruism**

There is a discourse of gratitude and appreciation towards PAF and the mentoring interactions in mentee interviews, focus group discussion and the postcards created in the mentee focus group session. This manifests in expressions of a desire to be of help to PAF and other mentees, such as:

- by providing practical help to PAF and to other exhibitors at PAF events and exhibitions
- by assisting with editing the in-house magazine in HMP Magilligan, *Time In*, produced by the creative writing group
- by sharing arts skills and ideas with other mentees
- by encouraging potential mentees to participate in the mentoring programme. In their interviews, some mentees articulated the encouragement they might give to others considering taking part. Examples:

*"Go into mentoring with open arms and don't be hesitant." (Mentee interview)*

*“Take the mentoring with both hands; I really would. And use the mentors that are there. Be like a sponge and take everything off them and use it. If you’ve got any concerns, if you need a bit of advice talk to them and they will help you. And if you want to, you can take so much away from this. It’s entirely up to you; the more you put into it the more you get out of it.” (Mentee interview)*

### **5.9 Aspects of the mentoring experience valued by mentors**

*“Feeling of ‘making a difference’ and helping someone learn a new skill.” (Mentor exit survey)*

*“This programme is really making a difference to my mentee’s life and how she feels about herself.” (Mentor exit survey)*

*“I felt pleased that my mentee felt comfortable to push herself to new experiences with my help. A natural, friendly and relaxed feel to the mentoring throughout.” (Mentor exit survey)*

### **5.10 Conclusion**

Participation in the mentoring programme has impacted on many aspects of mentees’ lives, raising their confidence, giving them a sense of purpose, achievement and hope.



**'Reflections'**

*Silver Award for Photography Koestler Awards 2018*

*Work produced whilst being mentored*

## 6 “IT’S GIVEN ME A GLIMMER OF HOPE”: RESETTLEMENT CASE STUDY

This chapter presents a case study of a mentee whose involvement in the PAF programme began while he was still incarcerated. The chapter also explores the connections between mentoring and resettlement, drawing on the perspectives of some of PAF’s mentors and mentees.

The case study is based on an interview with mentee Sean which took place at PAF’s offices while Sean was on day release. At the time of writing of this report, Sean had been released several months previously, and was still involved in the mentoring programme.

Sean is a writer.

*“I’ve been in prison about six and a half years. I started writing when I came in, bits and pieces. I began my first novel in 2013, I think it was. Since then I’ve written: seven full-length novels, two children’s books, screenplays, short stories: I’ve actually written about 850,000 words over the last four years.”*

While Sean has been interested in writing since he was a child,

*“I suppose I went away from that for a while. I owned my own business. I didn’t do much writing, because I never had the time or opportunity. In prison you have plenty of time and opportunity, if you have the dedication to do it.”*

Sean explains that

*“The whole reason I started writing was because my voice was taken away from me in prison and from the moment that you are arrested – specifically in court you can’t speak, you speak your name and that’s it. Then somebody gets up and talks about you, who doesn’t know you and doesn’t actually explain what has happened. And to be honest, nobody listens, so it doesn’t matter.”*

Sean first became aware of the mentoring programme through posters on the landing in the prison.

*“When I first saw it, I couldn’t believe it. I thought, this just sounds fantastic. It’s exactly what I want and at a perfect time.”* This prompted him to speak to the writer in residence at Magilligan, who contacted PAF to make enquiries for Sean about participating in the mentoring programme. PAF sent him the application form. *“So I filled it in as best I*

*could, and I spoke to the writer in residence for a bit of assistance. I also spoke to my Sentence Manager up in Magilligan. I explained what was happening, what I wanted - the process wasn't difficult, it was straightforward. The only thing was my situation; I didn't know was if I was going to be allowed to do the mentoring or not because I wasn't released, and I was told that the programme was for guys who'd been released in the last year. So that wasn't set in concrete and PAF discussed it and it was OK; that was brilliant for me, and it all began...*

*"The next hurdle for me would've been resettlement days that I wanted to avail of. I had potentially 12 resettlement days to take and utilise in PAF's offices, and that had to go before the Governor, the Sentence Manager etcetera, etcetera, and fair play to them - the Governor actually welcomed it and said, 'That would be an excellent use of the time'."*

Sean notes that,

*"My situation is a wee bit different from other mentees because I'm still in prison, but I'm on day-release. I've now been involved in the mentoring for several months. It took a long time, but eventually resettlement days were issued to me to come here and avail of the service with a writing Mentor."*

In terms of resettlement, Sean regards the mentoring process as

*"Excellent. For me personally, it's given me a glimmer of hope - a light at the end of the tunnel kind of thing, because I've been in, like I say, six and a half years. It's been a daunting time for me, thinking - what am I going to do outside. It's almost impossible to get a job and I can't really go back to what I did before - all that sort of stuff. So writing for me wasn't just pouring out my soul in a sense. This could potentially provide an income if it's done on a high level and that's what I want to do. So this whole process, God willing, will put me on course to sustain myself and my family."*

Sean's aspiration for the mentoring is to have his work published:

*"And God willing that will lead to self-employment."*

Sean is delighted about the bursary of £250.00 given to mentees on the Creative Futures pathway:

*"I heard something about that but I assumed it was for pens and stuff or for visual artists for paint brushes and stuff. So yeah, one of my big concerns for my books is cover design and I did my own research and it's three for £100 per cover, and maybe it's a bit*

*more if it's a local designer. So I don't have £3-400 to spend on a cover and the PAF Coordinator said - you could use your bursary for that. I said 'What?' So she explained it and my mentor explained it, and it's possible that it could be used for it. So that would be fantastic."*

Sean is also pleased that his request to be mentored by a specific writer was granted. His mentor has spent nearly three decades working in NI's prison system as a Writer in Residence. Sean explains that his mentor

*"Is a published author and I'd worked with him before and he gave me good feedback. He is a pretty unique individual. He knows what he's talking about."*

In his role as artist in residence his Mentor helped him

*"Develop as a writer. He proofed some of my books in the beginning and gave me feedback. And then due to budgetary constraints basically, his services as writer in residence were terminated. Before he left, he told me ... look, your work is at a level now that I know you'll be a published author. That stayed with me and kept me going, and when the opportunity arose for me to work with him again, it was brilliant."*

Sean points out that having a mentor is very important for developing one's craft:

*"Whenever you're in your cell for a lot of the time, you're trapped in your own mind. You can put it on paper but it's still your own thoughts. I'm hopefully my own worst critic but even then, you still have to get feedback."*

During his sessions Sean's Mentor has been giving him feedback on one of his novels;

*"he's been going through it sixty pages at a time. And now we're three quarters of the way through it."*

His Mentor goes through his writing

*"page by page. Today for example, he used his orange marker and said, 'Today we are going to cut,' so everything highlighted stays and everything else is cut. I saw little dribs and drabs of orange on the page and thought – oh no! He wants me to cut half of this. But that's good. I'm not going to take all he says as gospel because I've got my own way, but I'll take it onboard. I've been with him from day one and the first story I wrote was 15,000 words; he came back to me and said he wanted me to cut it down to 3,000 words."*

The Mentor's feedback is very useful, although it can be challenging:

*"It's what you need and it prepares you for the big, bad world again. In prison some of the feedback you get from people in the creative writing class is pampered, you know, 'Och that's a great wee story. It's lovely.' Then the likes of my Mentor comes in – bam!"*  
(laughs)

Sean explains that his Mentor also supports him with other aspects of writing. He makes suggestions about books which Sean might read to broaden his awareness of different writing styles. He shares information about useful contacts, such as

*"a particular girl I use for copy – copy proofing – she's brilliant! And as regards the cover design for my books, there's a guy he's going to put me in contact with."*

The mentoring experience has given Sean the confidence to think about writing as a career. *"I would love to make a career of writing. Like I say, I've always had that dream – now I've got something to write. Anybody's fear is – what do I write about. I have so many books in my head already."*

Sean is thinking ahead:

*"It's great to have someone read your book and give you feedback and then one day, there it will be – then what happens? How do I sell it? One of the things I'd like help with is marketing, sales, advertising and a strategy of how to implement that. Now on the outside I would've done a lot of that, but it's been a long time – plus this is a completely different industry. I've been doing a lot of reading, but still you need someone who is doing it all the time. Also, I would like a bit of help in approaching an agent with the aim of going towards a publishing deal – maybe that's in the future. That's the dream."*

As well as his Mentor's expertise, Sean appreciates his interpersonal skills and his encouragement. He is also grateful for PAF's support.

*"The hold-ups in the mentoring really have been with the prison system, as always, but to be fair to them they have helped me get there. It's just the speed of things – it's slow and stop up there."* He acknowledges the PAF Mentoring Handbook as a resource for information about PAF policies and procedures, although his own experience of mentoring in business meant that *"for me, it was standard enough read through every word and thought – yeah, I understand that. But for a lot of guys who've never had or been through this sort of thing, it would be a good wee handout for them."*

The only negative aspect of the mentoring for Sean is that when he comes to his sessions when he is on day release,

*“There is no private space for mentoring while I am still inside; we have to meet in the PAF office. The prison said it has to be here where you’re surrounded by everybody.”*

(After release, Sean was able to meet his mentor in a venue more conducive to privacy).

Sean advises others considering applying for mentoring:

*“I would say, go for it. But I would also give them...it depends...if they were in my position pre-release, so they’re getting closer to getting out, I would tell them my story. I would say, here’s the things I have learned; here’s the things you have to focus on and you need to have a good relationship with your Sentence Manager. A lot of people don’t up there, unfortunately, for whatever reason.”*

Sean points out that it’s important for mentees to be *“able, willing and dedicated to do it, because it is hard work.”*

He suggests that more clarity is needed about eligibility for the mentoring programme:

*“If PAF was clearer about the criteria for the mentoring, it would be good. It would be helpful to say: ‘you are eligible for the mentoring if you’re at this stage in your sentence or just released’, etc. etc.”*

Sean explains that at the moment,

*“You would have to apply for mentoring through the creative writing group in Magilligan, and I would urge anyone interested to do that. It’s a great wee group if you can get into it. - the spaces are very limited, so that’s the only negative. There are guys on the landing who’ve written quite a bit, and I’ve told them to go along to the creative writing class, and because I would go they would go, which is good. But there’s nobody in the creative writing group who is pre-release like me.”*

Sean is proud of the fact that he is taking part in a pilot for mentoring programmes which begin while the mentee is in custody. He regards his experience to date as *“a success story.”* He is keen to demonstrate his gratitude to PAF;

*“if there’s anything I can do to pay back, in a sense, I’ll help out. I did the in-house magazine in Magilligan, Time In, while I was inside. It was good to be able to do something on a decent level, to give back to the guys and I want to engage in that down the road, if I can.”*

He adds that he can offer help prospective writers by creating an online publishing template for their work through the site CreateSpace.

The positive nature of Sean's experience suggests that mentoring can act as a bridge to resettlement. In Sean's case, it has helped to foster a sense of purpose and altruism, a focus for his time and energies post-release, a more positive sense of identity, and a potential source of income.

A PAF mentor who is also an artist in residence in one of the NI prison establishments considers how she might connect potential mentees with the mentoring programme:

*"The overlap is ... as artist in residence I can encourage people to go for the mentoring, especially when you see somebody who is gifted... the difficulty with the residency is that the support ends when they're out of custody and I can see with some people that they're really gifted artists and writers and they should be supported in the community. When you're engaging in the arts, you're less likely to offend, especially when you're in that first year. I would definitely be encouraging people to apply for the mentoring programme.*

*"I think it is maybe important to have the mentoring set up before the person is released, so they could meet their mentor once or twice and set the project up and so they're not going in cold when they leave the prison environment. So if I was to give PAF advice, and I know it's something they've been looking at already, I think the mentee should meet the mentor one or two times. If you have the relationship with the mentor already established it might work better. ... I think it would be really useful to meet your mentor before your sentence is over so that you actually have a sense of purpose and the fear of the unknown – of meeting. If they got that underway it would be really useful - as they're adjusting to all sorts of things anyway when they get out."*

In their interviews and focus group discussions, PAF mentors also reflected on resettlement and the role which the arts can play in supporting it. In the following statement, the arts are perceived as an "oasis" or a neutral space for offenders post-release:

*"In terms of resettlement, you're leaving a prison environment and entering a hostel environment, and the hostels are not ideal. You're in those environments among prisoners. If you're going back to a family, you could be meeting old friends you were with in terms of the crime you committed. And I think I heard someone say earlier, arts are like an oasis a kind of space that you have – a neutral space outside all those other things and pressures and everything that's leading you to re-offend. Somewhere you are*

*not judged. Someone quoted Mike Moloney earlier [first director of Prison Arts Foundation]: whether it's a positive or a negative, you're using art to express it." (Mentor focus group)*

The arts offer a range of benefits:

*"I think that the arts give you hands-on something to do that can be beneficial in many ways. Depending on the art form, it can be relaxing if it's visual art; it can improve your literacy if it's writing – it can improve your grammar and practical stuff. And I think that having somewhere you can call your own, be it a theatre or a hub, like this for example, just having that slight difference from your normal routine could give you a good grounding. Plus the fact that you're meeting new people, you're having positive role models based in the arts. You're getting feedback from people who are experienced. You're getting support from PAF in general throughout the process. Also, the mentoring aspect, I'm sure that it's going to be an influence to some. I think it's just opening you up to a world view and I think the arts, like nothing else, do this so well - and empathy and understanding others." (Mentor focus group)*

According to another mentor, the arts contribute to resettlement through fostering empathy:

*"I just wanted to say something about the resettlement question that, for my first mentee, one of the goals we set was to look at literature from around the world: short stories and poetry because he felt very confined in his own knowledge base. So once we started to do that he started to look outside himself and look at the world instead of his small enclave of the world. And I think this has been good for developing his empathy and understanding the psychology of people." (Mentor interview)*

Participating in the arts also fosters a sense of belonging:

*"I believe that in general, regardless what kind of resettlement, whether it's resettlement in a new area from a negative situation, creativity empowers you to feel comfortable in a space and therefore always has value in that context – be that drawing on a wall, a graffiti artist or drawing on a piece of paper and putting it in a gallery, that connection you build can be discovered through creativity." (Mentor interview)*

The arts also offer ex-offenders something positive to focus on and an opportunity for learning:

*"I think of it as getting something out of your head and getting new things in. It just gives you something to focus on while the rest is being developed. So if you're focusing on artwork in your community, you're getting a load of stuff from that – like learning about*

*yourself, learning about others and all that. It's about having that focus, not on yourself, but on your response to this or whatever this is, which is really good. It takes the onus off them [ex-offenders] going into themselves or giving something of themselves when perhaps they've given so much ..."* (Mentor interview)

A mentee describes the nature of the learning gained from immersion in the arts:

*"You're learning about something you don't know and get a bigger understanding. You're learning about yourself and what you can do; right from the very start you can write about it and get it out of your system. You can put anonymous, you can use any name. You can relate your experiences and put it down and it starts as a therapy. And then when you start writing you can go your own way. You find out what you like and become immersed in it. At times it can be tiresome, but at the end of the day it's so relaxing and you get something, you know, I've done that and I've achieved that and it's a great feeling."* (Mentee interview)

The arts can offer an alternative to old habits:

*"My mentee is at a stage where she had a difficult time over the summer and she has come back on board again. When the PAF Coordinator and I were talking, it seems that the arts programme is the only thing constructive thing that she's been participating in, which is really important. It's really encouraging that she's still investing in the programme... But I think this programme still needs more balance with those other supports, considering this is her main support. Despite that she's stumbled and fallen, but she's quite resilient to come back. But certainly her connectedness to the programme is making a difference in terms of her not going back to her old ways, habits and other way of life. She sees it as a positive thing that she's engaged in."* (Mentor interview)

The comment about support refers to the importance of a multi-agency approach to managing resettlement. The complex range of issues involved in resettlement is acknowledged by the National Offender Management Service's (NOMS) reducing reoffending model, which

*"targets seven 'pathways to reducing reoffending' (accommodation, education, training and employment, health, alcohol and drugs, finances, benefits and debts, children and families, and attitudes, thinking and behaviour) in its work with male offenders (Home Office, 2004)"<sup>23</sup>.*

---

<sup>23</sup> Markson and colleagues, 2015.

Sean, the mentee on whom this case study is based, has the last word in this chapter:

*“The mentoring ticks the resettlement box for me. It’s been a great help. It means now, when I get out, I’ll have somewhere to go, I can come up here and work with a mentor – it’s easing out and easing in to society, would be a better way to put it. So it’s very beneficial.”*

## 7 “I REALLY APPRECIATED EVERY MINUTE OF IT” MENTORING CASE STUDY”

This case study focuses on the mentoring relationships between art mentor Teresa and mentee Laura. It provides insights into mentor-mentee interactions and the way in which art works emerge in the mentoring process; it also reveals some of the complexities of mentoring in the criminal justice context. Mentor and mentee names have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

Teresa mentored Laura on both the First Steps and the Creative Futures programmes. Findings from interviews with Teresa and Laura, which took place at different stages of the mentoring relationship, are interwoven in this case study.

Teresa has been a freelance, self-employed artist for over 20 years. She has a PGCE and a Master’s Degree in Fine Art. She is currently artist in residence at the Mater Hospital in Belfast,

*“where I work with patients and service users right across the hospital, particularly in mental health. And I also freelance in public art sculpture and my medium is glass.”*

Laura’s goal, according to Teresa, was

*“to increase her skill set and use art as tools for communication with her children. It was also to learn more about the community: the arts community and the Belfast environment. She felt she was in a good place and she wanted to sustain that. She hoped by doing this she would remain at the level she was at. So they were quite general goals, but we did refer to them and we did look at them. The easiest to define was the skills and techniques, which she covered in a week or two.”*

Laura explains that her experience of art techniques while she was in Hydebank was limited to painting. She was therefore delighted to be matched with Teresa:

*“She is so versatile; she knows so much about different kinds of art... So for me it was a totally different story for First Steps and Creative Futures: the mentor actually mentored me for completely different techniques. First Steps was fine art and drawing and on Creative Futures I learnt felting and print making.”*

Laura notes that the mentoring offered the opportunity

*“to do a bit of everything as a taster: how you present your work, how to do exhibitions, how you go to other people’s exhibitions and what sort of things you want to look for. It is very important, yeah. It’s nice to go out and about, you know, and talk it through with a*

*mentor. Some things we don't notice really in life, we're too busy. It's nice to sit back and enjoy that."*

Laura also used the mentoring to help her develop her coping mechanisms:

*"You know it was so raw after I was released from custody and I just wanted to continue with the work to actually help me mentally. And there was no indication if I would go back to my family or if I was ever going to see my kids again, and all of this. It was really hard to keep myself busy and tell my story; I thought I could probably tell my story through the arts."*

Teresa describes how the ideas for Laura's art works arose:

*"We discussed issues around Laura's experiences, not personal so much, and I think that we had a mutual understanding not to go too far into that because obviously I didn't want it to become a counselling session, but something to draw out the work, and she came up with this beautiful analogy – we started looking at symbols and we simply came up with the chair as a symbol of mental health..."*

*The symbol of a chair gave us a focus point, and it sort of unlocked some way of translating what she was going through – and what I wanted to happen happened. It was no longer about skill sharing and technique sharing; it was about giving her a vehicle to connect and something to really value what she was doing and visualise it. So the work she produced was two chairs and both done very differently, using different techniques."*

Laura explains,

*"I knew I wanted something about mental health and also a chair, like the chair you sit in in prison. And in the hospital, you sit in a chair. You know this kind of thing where you just stop. And my life was in full stop whenever I was thrown in to Hydebank because I had a psychotic episode, and I don't know why. I was just completely cut off from reality and that's exactly what it was. For me it was full stop, I had to sit. I probably had to take time to heal myself, to get the professional help which I believe I deserved from the beginning."*

The titles of the two chair images which Laura created are 'Absence' and 'Support'. Teresa explains:

*"We thought how a chair can represent an absence of someone missing and loss - Laura was absent from her family -and how it can also be something that supports you and is a place to rest. I think something clicked when that came out because it was just, I guess, nudging her to think how to visualise."*



*'Absence'*

Renne Cressey Highly Commended Award for Textile Art Koestler Awards 2018  
*Work produced whilst being mentored*

Laura confirms that

*"Mental illness is a lonely place. And probably for people who lost someone to mental illness. But at the same time, I got a lot of support and comfort. You know there are a lot of people who have lost their lives, or families with a lost loved one and there is no one in time to help or anything like that. But at the same time, I am lucky in the sense that I got help and support from professionals and people from my own church, people who believe in me and all that sort of thing."*



**'Support'**

*Matthew Cornish Highly Commended Award for Textile Art Koestler Awards 2018  
Work produced whilst being mentored*

These two pieces have been exhibited in Koestler's 'I'm Still Here' exhibition in the Southbank Centre in London. Laura says of about the two pictures:

*"So it's a simple wee contrast. It looks simple, but there is a lot of thinking in it. We did different sort of stuff until I clicked the idea: yeah that's exactly what I want to do. And I knew that for myself, there was no suggestion from Patricia. I just knew. So I was really glad with the result."*

Laura comments about mental health issues that

*"None of us ask for this illness. Not only me, not only my family, but all the rest. What big issue this is. Before I only thought: why me, is it just me? But now I realise it could be anybody. In fact, I was the lucky one; a lot of people are losing their lives with mental illness and not only people who are taking their own lives and anything, but the families left behind to suffer. And it probably rolls over and over for decades and always things, you know, are not resolved, so I was kind of thinking about that, especially when we started with felting. There was a black and a white, and other colours. And there was just a wee thread and kind of seeing it in my head: a wee picture ... I think it is so powerful to my own thinking".*

Teresa refers to the metaphor of the thread in her in her comment that

*“Laura took onboard everything I said and she got it, you know. We giggled quite a lot because we found a sense of humour in there and I think it helped her, for example, we used a piece of thread ... and tying knots; there were twists and turns, and she herself thought it was like a journey for her. She understood, I guess, that I was trying to let her into a world of letting go in the creative process, and not being totally in control and to manage her expectations...”*

*So Laura was able to see these little occurrences in her work and then hang meaning on to it, and she really started to understand her work and I think that’s very mature for someone just coming into the work. So she very much took onboard suggestions and made it her own, more importantly.”*

After creating the ‘Absence’ and ‘Support’ pieces, Laura and Teresa explored print-making. Laura learnt that

*“Some prints are mistakes, not even mistakes, but just didn’t come out. The first one I did [in the image on the next page on the right] was very blurry because I kind of moved it. But the other one is really clear and successful, and we just came up with the idea of clarity, you know because when I was very ill you don’t really have any vision at all. It’s just hard to describe: in your head: there is no picture. And then clarity comes from your work and you get your concentration, like you get your memory and things like that.”*



‘Escape’

Artists’ Collecting Society Gold Award for Printmaking Koestler Awards 2018  
Work produced whilst being mentored

Laura's confidence in herself and in her art flourished, to the extent that she presented her chair-pieces as a mini-exhibition at Liberation, the exhibition by PAF artists at the Crumlin Road Gaol. Her desire to raise awareness about mental health issues also motivated her to show her work.

*"Mental health and the reflection on t mental health was the motivation to present, you know, because a lot of people have it and don't want to talk about it. So that kind of thinking, you know, and purely from my own experience, knowing that there is a lot of people suffering. So maybe just raising a bit of awareness of mental health."*



**Mini exhibition of chair images at Liberation exhibition, Crumlin Road Gaol**

The experience of taking part in the PAF exhibition was

*"fantastic, because you can feel part of an actual exhibition and especially for us [PAF artists], it was magical. A jail is not a place you want to have memories about, but whenever we went into exhibition it felt like home (laughs)."*

During the exhibition, Laura met some people involved in the arts from her time in Hydebank, including

*"some other art teachers and the Governor, you know; he really played an important role for people in prison. He used to sit in with us in the art classes together, in the pottery classes on Saturday. It kind of brought me back. It will never go away, I cannot delete those experiences. I can't press the button and delete it, and it kind of satisfies you, you know. It showed me, look, I have come so far. So I think that's fantastic."*

Laura was also pleased by the way in which Teresa responded to the exhibition.

*"I like the way she was so excited by it; she was just running about saying: 'we are going to do this and we are going to do that', which was good for me to watch, because I want*

*to see what artists do, you know, and how to present and all those kind of things I never knew. It was nice to absorb how you present your work.”*

For Laura, the relationship with her mentor has been fulfilling and helpful:

*“It’s really good. We talked about a lot of things and she is always...for what I’ve been going through the past year health wise; she always meets you, greets you, supports you. Her humour is absolute hilarious. We had really, really good times. It was just nice to have that relationship. She was really, really good.”*

Teresa also commented favourably on the mentor-mentee relationship:

*“We had good conversations during the sessions. I was very honest with her and I felt she was very honest with me and I think that was very important. We touched on issues around mental health and I felt again, because of my experience there – I wasn’t afraid of it, in fact it actually informed the artwork.”*

*“And she’s a very quick learner and took onboard everything I said, which I really value as it sustains your interest as a mentor.”*

Laura’s agency was important to Teresa.

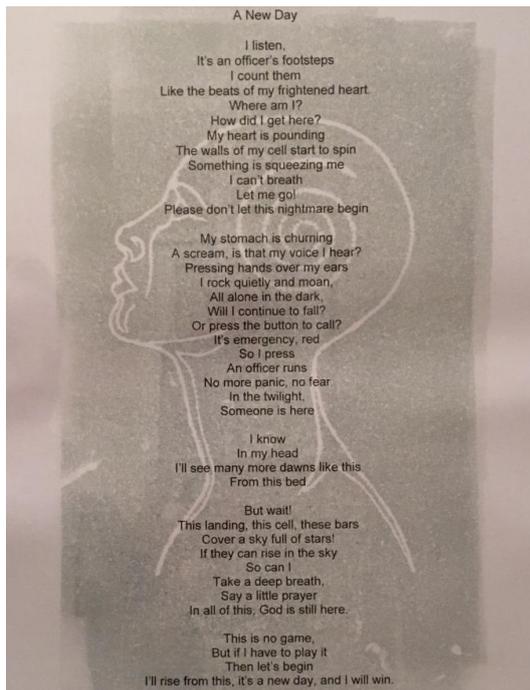
*“She made her own decisions, and I was very careful to allow her to do that really.”*

*“So she arrived at a positive frame of mind, I’m not saying the art was completely responsible for that and she’s a positive person now, but I think she knows she can look at these two images and reference where she’s at now and where she was at. And we hope to do a series relating to what she plans to do in the future so that when she does feel that she’s going off on a tangent again, she can have some visual reference in her home as well. So yeah, she’s most definitely proud of the work she’s done.”*

Laura submitted five of her art works for the Koestler Award.

*“I would like people to see it and potentially can feel it: that pain, that illness,”*

One of the pieces is the result of an experiment in combining art and poetry:



**'A New Day'**  
*Work produced whilst being mentored*

As the mentoring comes to an end, Laura's rheumatoid arthritis is inhibiting her ability to do art. She is keen to continue her involvement in the arts by joining a creative writing group, as writing is more manageable for her. She hopes that PAF will be organising more group workshops for mentees.

Laura is grateful for the opportunity to participate in the mentoring.

*"It has been a hard and difficult time, but I got through it with Teresa and the art, and I really appreciated every minute of it. It is worth doing it, a hundred percent it is. For me it was a healing, so important. I know I am in a better place. The mentoring takes you to a different level."*

## **Conclusion**

This case study reveals the positive impact of mentoring on a mentee's arts skills, sense of self-confidence and emotional wellbeing. The mentoring process enabled Laura to externalise issues which were concerning her and to express them creatively. Teresa's reflections on the mentoring process end this chapter:

*"There was a nice pace to the relationship. It was slow, organic, the way the process evolved. I know the mentee wanted to try a certain technique and I was very comfortable with that. We had no set outcome in mind: I wanted the mentee to take that lead, trusting that something good would come out of it, which it did. So we're both very pleased with what we achieved over the time."*

## **WAGTAIL**

Outside today I walked in squares  
And watched a Wagtail twist and weave,  
Black on white, the uniform he wears.

He had no fear, no rush to leave,  
But marched with sprightly step. He paced  
And paused and pecked, morsels to retrieve.

Then from the North a chill wind raced,  
And Wagtail rose and sang, and caught  
The breeze and left. And on I paced

In squares and with each pace I thought,  
That I, like Wagtail, one day too,  
Would rise and sing and leave. I brought

My mind back to the square and knew,  
That turning left held just one view.

Line Count: 14

### **'Wagtail'**

*Silver Award for Poem Koestler Awards 2018*

*Work produced in HMP Magilligan*

## 8 DISCUSSION

Findings from the evaluation indicate that PAF's pilot arts mentoring programme is achieving its aim of supporting transition from custody into the community through continued participation in the arts. The programme has been effective in creating structures and processes for engaging mentees in the arts and supporting resettlement and reintegration into the community (please see Table 3 on the next page for details).

PAF's mentoring programme was based on the Koestler Trust mentoring scheme, which its evaluators describe as

*“an arts-based programme that is precisely aimed at prolonging and enhancing ‘secondary desistance’ through providing ex-prisoners with opportunities to continue engaging with the arts after release.”* (Cheliotis, 2014, p. 13)

There is encouraging evidence from the PAF programme of mentee ‘secondary desistance’ identified by Maruna and Farrall (2004) as an alteration in ex-offenders’ sense of self.<sup>24</sup>

A challenge to ‘primary desistance’<sup>25</sup> or refraining from recidivism is that the possession of a criminal record might impact negatively in many ways on an ex-offender’s life. This might include limited employment prospects and issues such as self-isolation and social isolation. A high proportion (67%) of the mentees involved in the programme have a record of serious violent and sexual offences; this reduces their opportunities for employment even further, with a potential raised risk of reoffending. However, findings from the pilot mentoring programme indicate that PAF mentees are exhibiting features of secondary desistance, such as a sense of purpose and achievement, reduction in anxiety, raised self-confidence, an interest in learning, and evidence of a pro-social orientation, such as willingness to help others. Examples of these characteristics and behaviours in PAF mentees have been included in previous chapters of this report.

The table on the next page summarises the factors which contribute towards the success of PAF's mentoring programme; items in italics identify areas for development.

---

<sup>24</sup> Maruna, S. and Farrall, S. (2004 ‘Desistance from Crime: A Theoretical Formulation’, *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 43, pp. 171-194.

<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that the short-term nature of the mentoring programme does not allow for the six-year post-sentence period required to determine its impact on recidivism, or “primary desistance.” (Maruna and Farrall, 2004).

**TABLE 3: EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IN MENTORING: PAF MENTORING PROGRAMME**

FACTOR	PAF PROGRAMME
<b>STRUCTURE OF PROGRAMME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-structured with clear entry and exit points</li> <li>• Strong organisational support system</li> <li>• Participation via two pathways: First Steps and Creative Futures</li> <li>• Rigorous application systems: for mentors and mentees</li> <li>• Mentoring supported by initial training programme</li> </ul>
<b>PROGRAMME GOALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligned with those of mentees: focus on supporting mentee participation in the arts</li> </ul>
<b>MENTEE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Promotion of programme by artists in residence, current mentees, PBNi, NIPS</i></li> <li>• Inclusion of individuals in community settings as well as those with custodial sentences</li> <li>• High retention rate</li> </ul>
<b>MENTEE AGENCY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for setting achievable goals</li> <li>• Choice regarding mentor matches</li> <li>• Flexibility around goals and timing of mentoring meetings</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From First Steps to Creative Futures</li> <li>• <i>Training as peer mentors</i></li> </ul>
<b>MENTOR EXPERTISE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional, well-trained mentors</li> <li>• Expertise in arts; business</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Experience in mental health</li> <li>• Group facilitation skills</li> </ul>
<b>MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing trust and confidence</li> <li>• Well-defined boundaries</li> <li>• Structured activities with achievable outcomes</li> <li>• Cultivation of skills</li> </ul>
<b>MENTORING VENUES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe, well-equipped, welcoming (<i>The Creative Hub</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>SUPPORTING MENTEE INTEGRATION INTO COMMUNITY (RESETTLEMENT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor contacts with businesses, gallery owners</li> <li>• Raising awareness of arts opportunities in local area</li> <li>• Including mentees in annual exhibition</li> <li>• Cultivating a sense of belonging -opportunities to interact with other mentees e.g. group workshops</li> <li>• Opportunities to help PAF/ others with arts skills and events</li> </ul>
<b>BUILDING ON TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITIES OF THE ARTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts as self-expression, development of skills,</li> <li>• capacity to focus, developing self-belief and resilience</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING/ DEVELOPMENT OF NEW POSITIVE IDENTITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of arts skills, opportunities for achievement through submissions to Koestler Awards, career development opportunities</li> </ul>

The range of items included in the table reveals the complexity of the mentoring process, and by implication the comprehensiveness of the mentoring programme and the wide range of skills and expertise which mentors in this context require.

### **Benefits of PAF's Arts Mentoring Programme**

In the two-year pilot period, the PAF mentoring programme has already addressed the majority of its objectives<sup>26</sup> in relation to the following:

#### **For individual offenders:**

- There is qualitative evidence of reduced isolation, continued interest in the arts and improved self-esteem.
- Mentees have gained a sense of achievement through realising their goals for the programme, through participation in exhibitions and through achieving a high success rate in the 2018 Koestler Awards, annual awards for achievement in the arts in the criminal justice context.

#### **For policy:**

- PAF has created an effective mentoring model which has the potential to contribute to the Department for Justice's policy on offender management and rehabilitation.
- Findings from an interview with a mentee who engaged with the programme before and after release indicate that continued engagement with the arts can support resettlement, through the partnership of the prison service, Probation NI and PAF.

#### **For communities**

- The mentoring programme successfully included participants in community settings such as hostels, reducing isolation and cultivating a sustained interest in the arts.
- Mentees reported that their families recognised the positive impact of their participation and were proud of their arts achievements.
- Mentees are able to contribute to community activities through participating in and supporting local exhibitions.

#### **For the arts**

- Ex-offenders have been able to access arts opportunities
- PAF's creation of an arts mentoring training programme, supported by a comprehensive mentor handbook containing relevant information and guidelines, contributes to opportunities for professional development in the arts in Northern Ireland.

---

<sup>26</sup> PAF Mentor Handbook, p. 7 (PAF's objectives in bold in this chapter)

In his interview and in the mentor focus group discussion, a mentor reflected on the potential benefits of the arts for mentees. These may be distilled into three main areas:

*“I think that it gives you hands-on something to do that can be beneficial in many ways. Depending on the art form, it can be relaxing if it’s visual art; it can improve your literacy if it’s writing – it can improve your grammar and practical stuff and I think that having somewhere you can call your own, be it a theatre or a hub, like this for example – the Flower Field Arts Centre in Portstewart or wherever, just having that slight difference from your normal routine could give you a good grounding. Plus the fact that you’re meeting new people, you’re having positive role models based in the arts. You’re getting feedback from people who are experienced. You’re getting support from PAF in general throughout the process. Also the mentoring aspect, I’m sure that it’s going to be an influence to some. I think it’s just opening you up to a new world view.” (Mentor interview)*

*“I remembered when I was interviewed as part of the application for mentoring, I was asked a question – what can the arts teach you? And I remember saying during the interview that **the arts can teach you compassion**. Then I thought about it afterwards, and I thought what a completely outrageous thing to say – was it a huge boast or something, but when I thought about it afterwards it was really true. If you empathise with characters in a book, if your reader empathises with your characters – you have to kind of feel for them, you have to have those archetypes within a story and each one of them teaches something. And I think that anybody who works in the arts knows that you care about your art because most of the time you do it outside your working hours. There’s a compulsion to do it, so my interpersonal skills are fine if the arts are there beside me, you know, maybe if you put me in a social situation without it – I don’t know how I’d feel. As long as the art is there – the interpersonal skills are there.” (mentor focus group)*

*There was also a suggestion that **the arts can provide an alternative focal point during a stressful period in one’s life**, such as the process of resettlement:*

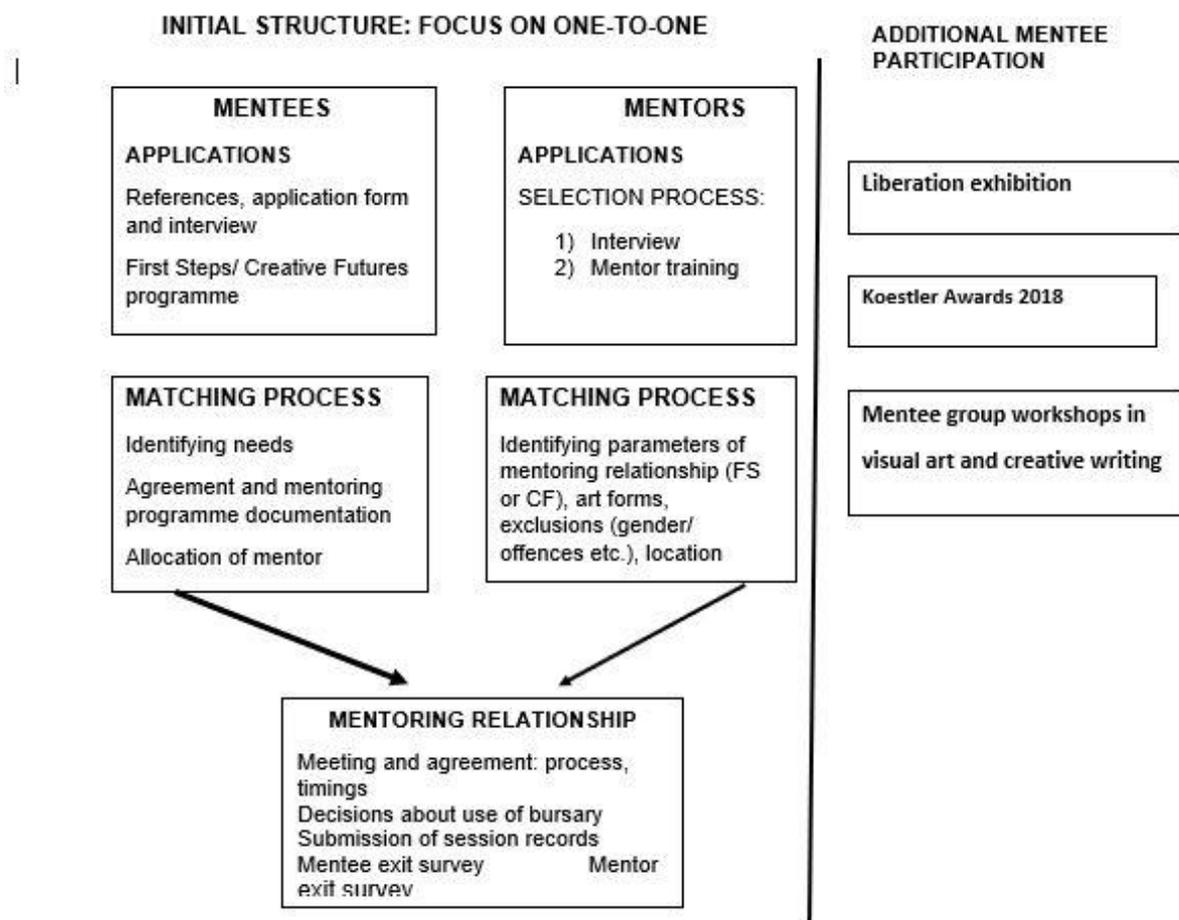
*“So I think about it as getting something out of your head and getting new things in. It just gives you something to focus on while the rest is being developed. So if you’re focusing on artwork in your community you’re getting a load of stuff from that – like learning about yourself, learning about others and all that...., the focus isn’t on the*

problems. It's on their response to something else or whatever that is, which is really good." (Mentor interview)

As well as the one-to-one mentoring relationships, PAF also offers mentees group-based creative writing and art workshops for mentees, enabling them to collaborate with their peers, share ideas and extend their arts networks and interest in the arts. These are incorporated into the diagram below:

**FIGURE 3:**

**STRUCTURE OF PRISON ARTS FOUNDATION MENTORING PROGRAMME: SUMMARY**



The extension of PAF's mentoring programme beyond the one-to-one context, depicted in the diagram above, suggests that the organisation has begun the process of developing a community of artists, with the effect of enhancing resettlement and a sense of belonging.

## Conclusion

PAF's pilot mentoring programme is well-structured, and has been successful in training effective mentors and engaging mentees, impacting on their self-confidence and motivation and goal-setting, arts and interpersonal skills.

The next chapter makes recommendations for sustaining and developing the programme.

***“For me personally, it’s given me a glimmer of hope”*** (Mentee who engaged in the programme as part of the transition between custody and release, interview)

***“Something important that PAF offers is for people when they get out to actually have somewhere to go.”*** (Mentee interview)



**'The Thinking Man'**  
*Bronze Award for Painting Koestler Awards 2018*  
*Work produced whilst being mentored*

## 9 RECOMMENDATIONS

The PAF programme is innovative and effective, with a range of strengths in relation to its structure and implementation, the quality of its mentors, and outcomes for mentees. The recommendations which follow identify strategies for building on these strengths.

### 9.1 Dissemination of information about the programme

- The majority of the mentees who have participated in the PAF mentoring programme had prior experience and knowledge of PAF through participation in arts programmes in custody, or via its programmes in the community. A wider range of potential participants for the programme could be targeted through dissemination of information, via the mentoring postcards created in the focus group sessions and the brochure which accompanies this report. The brochure and postcards could also be used in mentor training to extend awareness of the programme.
- Findings from case studies and arts-based responses to the mentoring programme should be shared in mentor training and disseminated to other organisations supporting ex-offenders.

### 9.2 The Name of the Mentoring Programme

- In response to mentee requests, it is suggested that PAF consider changing the first part of the name of the mentoring programme, '**Prison**' Arts Foundation Arts Mentoring Programme to one without a criminal justice connotation.

### 9.3 Extending the length of mentoring relationships

- The majority of the mentees, especially those who only took part in one of the programmes, First Steps or Creative Futures, commented that they would have liked more time allocated to the mentoring relationship. Mentors agreed with this in relation to the time required to complete certain pieces of art, and the time it takes in some cases to build the mentoring relationship and develop mentee confidence. It is recommended that future iterations of the programme consider extending mentee participation.

### 9.4 Resourcing PAF's Mentoring Programme

- PAF is a small organisation. The Coordinator provides support for support for all mentoring relationships, as well as administering all of PAF's programmes. Although the mentoring programme has been managed effectively thus far, more resources would enable it to build on its good practice, extend its services and continue on a long-term basis.

- The Creative Hub on the Antrim Road, Belfast, where many mentoring sessions took place, was an effective venue for this purpose, but as PAF does not own this venue, it is not accessible outside mentoring sessions. PAF only has one office, with no additional rooms for meetings or studio spaces. A bespoke venue for the mentoring programme is a priority, with a similar option in Derry, where the highest proportion of mentoring relationships outside Belfast occurs.
- Dedicated PAF premises incorporating offices, studio and meeting spaces would support the work of the organisation as a whole, the development of the mentoring programme and the cultivation of a community of artists. It would also enable mentees who lack space in their homes to sustain their participation in the arts.
- The employment of a mentoring development officer would enable PAF to enhance its community of mentors and mentees, establish partnerships with relevant organisations, and develop and disseminate its innovative approach to arts mentoring, supporting resettlement and desistance.
- Enhanced resources for the programme would also enable PAF to train more mentors, and train experienced mentors as trainers themselves. A training programme for peer mentors might also be piloted.

### **9.5 Maintaining PAF'S mentor base**

- Contact should be maintained on a regular basis with mentors who are not currently mentoring to sustain their involvement and knowledge. This could be supported by regular meetings.
- The provision of more regular meetings, workshops and seminars for mentors would afford opportunities for sharing and developing good practice in arts mentoring.

### **9.6 Mentor Fees**

- The allocation of fees for mentoring should take account of the extensive preparation time involved in mentoring writers.

### **9.7 Mentor Training**

- PAF provides an initial two-day training course for mentors, supported by a Mentor Handbook. While mentors regarded the information proved as very useful, consideration should also be given to providing more of a focus on the arts, and more interaction and practical activities.
- PAF's comprehensive mentor training would also benefit members of organisations involved in offender management, who might also contribute towards this training.

- PAF's mentoring model might extend to work with young offenders.
- With its focus on mentee values and the process of identifying meaningful goals and activities, the PAF mentoring programme has similarities with strengths-based models used in offender rehabilitation, such as the Good Lives Model.<sup>27</sup> Findings from the evaluation suggest that the PAF mentoring programme supports mentees to acknowledge their skills and strengths and to develop new, more positive identities. It is proposed that PAF combines its approach with aspects of the Good Lives Model and programmes such as Reset, in partnership with other organisations working with ex-offenders.<sup>28</sup>

### **9.8 Evaluation**

- Evaluation processes need to be embedded into the programme to support the improvement of practice.
- Assessing participants before and after they engage in mentoring might help to determine the effectiveness of the process.
- PAF should consider the inclusion of arts-based methods, such as the creation of postcards, in their evaluation processes.

---

<sup>27</sup> Good Lives Model

<sup>28</sup> Hamilton, 2016.

## 10 CONCLUSION

The results of the evaluation indicate that despite its limited time-span, the PAF mentoring programme has been innovative and effective in engaging mentees in the arts, with a range of personal and social benefits for participants, policy and communities.

The first part of the title of this report, “The start of something good in my life” is one of many positive responses by mentees to PAF’s arts mentoring programme, relating to new beginnings and possibilities in the process of resettlement.

The discourse of the mentee interviews and focus groups, as captured in the transcripts, abounds with references to possibility and change, delight in the arts, and a sense of self-worth and wellbeing. There are also many examples in the interviews and focus group discussions of reflective engagement with the processes of creativity and art-making.

These findings indicate the importance of ongoing opportunities for mentees and mentors to experience the transformative potential of the arts.

This report ends with comments by three mentees about the impact of participating in the mentoring programme. These comments include references to opening doors and change, conveying a sense of hope and new beginnings.

*“I never was one for being social. Working with my mentor it’s helped me open up a lot. I’d probably be stuck in my room all day if it wasn’t for PAF and the mentoring programme.”  
(Mentee interview)*

*“PAF have been exceptional the way they’ve gone about the mentoring. and I couldn’t let them down. I think I’d be selling myself short by not using the opportunity and skills they’ve given me – and I suppose that’s a change made to me too, instead of sitting around the house.” (Mentee interview)*

*“Those events in my life that drove me into myself, they kind of forced me into locking the front door and not coming out. So on a practical, personal level I’ve come out; I’m no longer hiding behind the door.” (Mentee interview)*

## 11 REFERENCES

- Allen, T. D., Eby, L.T., Poteet, M.L., Lentz, E, and Lima, L. (2004) Career Benefits Associated With Mentoring for Protege´s: A Meta-Analysis, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol 89, 1, pp. 127-136
- Barak, A. and Stebbins, A. (2017) Imaginary dialogues: Witnessing in prison-based creative arts therapies, *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 56, (53), (2017)
- Charlton, M. Art-based evaluation 101
- Cheliotis, L. K. and A. Jordanoska (forthcoming) Desistance: Assessing the Role of Arts-based Programmes in Reducing Reoffending', *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*. Get the exact ref
- Clayton, AN (2009) *Mentoring for Youth involved in Juvenile Justice Program: A review of the literature*, University of Massachusetts
- Creative Scotland (2012) *Creating Change: Effective Arts Practices in Prisons*
- Clutterbuck, D. (2004). *Everyone Needs a Mentor: Fostering Talent in Your Organisation*, CIPD-Kogan Page
- Finnegan, L., Whitehurst, D., Deaton, S. (2010) *Models of mentoring for inclusion and employment. Thematic review of existing evidence on mentoring and peer mentoring* MOMIE Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion
- Good Lives Model *The Good Lives Model for Offender Rehabilitation: A Strengths-Based Approach for Lives in Transition* <https://www.goodlivesmodel.com/>
- Gosling, H. and Buck, G. (2015) Mentoring: Crossing boundaries with Care? *Criminal Justice Matters*, Vol 99, 1, pp. 22-23
- Hamilton, S. (2016) 'Reset: An opportunity to enhance offender resettlement and rehabilitation through mentoring,' *Irish Probation Journal*, Vol. 13, pp. 134-142
- Hansford, Brian C. and Ehrich, Lisa C. and Tennent, Lee (2004) Formal Mentoring Programs in Education and other Professions: A Review of the Literature. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 40(4):pp. 518-540.
- Hughes, J., Miles, A., and Mc Lewin, A. (2005) *Doing the Arts Justice. A Review of Research Literature, Practice and Theory*. The Unit for the Arts and Offenders: Centre for Applied Theatre Research.

Jenkins, S (2013) David Clutterbuck, Mentoring and Coaching, Vol.8, (1),. *International Journal of Sport Science and Coaching*, pp. 139-254.

Maruna, S. and Farrall, S. (2004 'Desistance from Crime: A Theoretical Formulation', *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 43, pp. 171-194.

Meggison, D. and Clutterbuck, D. (2005) *Techniques for Coaching and Mentoring*, Abingdon, Routledge.

Mooney, G., Simmey, G. and Moles, J. pp. Educating the Critically Reflective Mentor in in S.J. Fletcher and C. A. Mullen, Eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Mentoring and Coaching in Education* Los Angeles, SAGE. 107-121

Joliffe, D and Farrington, D.P. (2007) A rapid evidence assessment of the impact of mentoring on re-offending, London Home Office Research Report

Leavy, P. (2015) *Method Meets Art, Second Edition: Arts-Based Research Practice*, Guilford Publications.

McHugh, R. (2011) 'Art in Custody: Guilty until Proven Innocent. Strengthening the case by demonstrating the value of prison arts interventions.' MSc dissertation in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Nickeas, S. (2013) The Use of Art Education as a Tool for Education: An Overview of Recreational and Social Enterprise Approaches Used within Female Custodial Settings, UCL School of Education, IfL [https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/media/897457/2013\\_Sophie-Nickeas-PRP-article.pdf](https://set.et-foundation.co.uk/media/897457/2013_Sophie-Nickeas-PRP-article.pdf)

Parkes, C. and Bilby, B. (2010) 'The Courage to Create: The Role of Artistic and Spiritual Activities in Prisons', *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, Vol. 49, (2), pp.97-110

Pfund, C. (2018) Mentoring webinars *The Science of Mentoring and Fostering Independence* <https://www.aps.org/programs/minorities/nmc/upload/Fostering-Independence-032718.pdf>

Prescott, D. S. The Good Lives Model (GLM) in Theory and Practice [https://www.unafei.or.jp/publications/pdf/RS\\_No91/No91\\_10VE\\_Prescott.pdf](https://www.unafei.or.jp/publications/pdf/RS_No91/No91_10VE_Prescott.pdf)

Scottish Prison Service Arts Review (2015) The Benefits of the Arts for Desistance

Simons, H. and McCormack, B. (2007) Integrating Arts-Based Inquiry in Evaluation Methodology: Opportunities and Challenges, *Qualitative Inquiry* Vol 12, 2, pp. 292-311

Tolan et al. (2008) Mentoring Interventions to Affect Juvenile Delinquency and Associated Problems, the Campbell Collaboration

Tovey, MD (1998). *Mentoring in the Workplace: A Guide for Mentors and Managers*

Erskineville, NSW: Prentice Hall.

House of Justice Commons Committee

Tett, L., Anderson, K., McNeill, F., Overy, K., & Sparks, R. (2012) 'Learning, rehabilitation and the arts in prisons: a Scottish case study', *Studies in the Education of Adults*, Vol. 44 (2)

Tracey, S. (2017) *Building Foundations for Change through the Arts: An inquiry into the impact of participation in Prison Arts Foundation's programmes*, Belfast, Prison Arts Foundation.