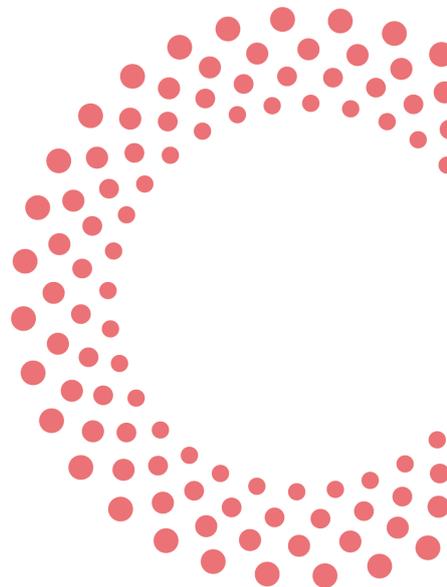
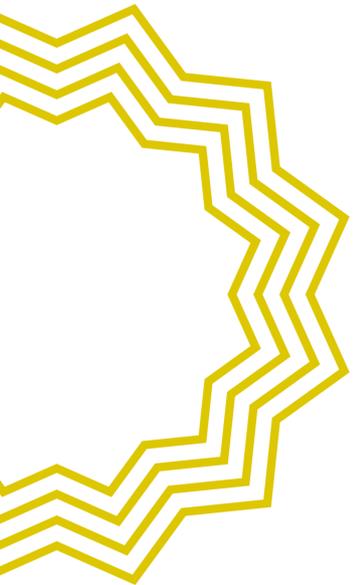


Abianda

Services, training and
professional development
2018



About

Abianda is a London-based social enterprise that works with young women affected by gangs and county lines, and the professionals who support them.

Our mission is to bring about a culture shift in the way services are delivered to young women affected by gangs and county lines, so that:

- they feel safe to access help
- they are no longer a hidden group in our communities
- they are free from harm and abuse

We do this by

- delivering frontline services to gang-affected young women aged 10-25
- delivering training and professional development programmes to professionals who work with them

Our unique model of practice addresses the barriers that stop young women seeking help. By asking young women the right questions and offering an equal, transparent relationship we help them to discover their own resilience and competence, and to develop the power to change their situation. Our former service users co-facilitate all our training, and so shape the way professionals understand young women affected by gangs and county lines, and work with them.

We have been recognised as a 'trailblazer' in our field by Nesta and the Observer who awarded us a [New Radical award in 2016](#). These awards are given on a bi-annual basis to organisations that are tackling social problems in an innovative way.



Our services are commissioned by:



We are grateful to our funders:



Services and work with young women

What do Abianda services look like?

Our flagship service is The Star Project, which is a wraparound one-to-one and advocacy service. Young women follow a structured programme of topics which are designed to help them grow their **critical thinking**. By asking young women the right questions and offering an equal, trusting, and transparent relationship we help them to discover their own **resilience and competence**, and to develop the power to make the changes they want in their lives. We have successfully worked with young women who have unique safeguarding and risk issues due to their gang-association, and who have complex needs and a history of non-engagement.



Topics covered include: healthy and unhealthy relationships; sexual violence, exploitation and other VAWG issues in the context of gangs; anger, power and harm; trauma; risk for gang-affected young women; and safety planning. We use our unique model of working with young women to create safe spaces and support them to achieve the changes they want in their lives and to develop skills and strategies to navigate risk. By keeping our work solution- and future-focused, we keep our spaces safe for young women. They know we will not ask them to share information about their past or about their associates, because this could create significant risks for them, and could retraumatise them.



As well as the structured programme of work, we provide **wraparound advocacy** for young women. Our advocacy is rights based and designed to support young women influence decisions affecting their lives. Examples of our advocacy include: young women's voices being represented in child protection processes; ensuring that young women receive the statutory assessments to which they are entitled; recognising young women as victims of trafficking through the National Referral Mechanism; and supporting our professional partners to recognise young women's complex needs and vulnerabilities. As a result of our advocacy, young women independently navigate services and are an equal partner in the professional network around them.



The Star Project also includes three sessions with both the Abianda practitioner and a Young Trainer. Our **Young Trainers** are young women who have used our services and have since been trained to be trainers and peer mentors. They deliver a session at the beginning, middle and end of the service, in order to support engagement and provide hope that things can be different for gang-affected young women.



After working with Abianda, one young woman said:

“I feel like I am living now...I can breathe”

Where does Abianda deliver services, and what are the referral criteria?

Locations	Project	Ages	Criteria
Pan-London	Out There: Rescue and Response	10-25	Abianda is part of a consortium supporting young Londoners affected by county lines activity, including St Giles and Safer London. We deliver services to young women and girls with known or suspected involvement in county line activity, or known or suspected association with others involved in county line activity – more information available on our website: http://abianda.com/rescue-and-response-county-lines-activity/
Islington	The Star Project	10-24	Open to any gang-affected young women across a broad spectrum of engagement. Some are adversely affected by gang activity in the areas in which they live, some are in intimate relationships with gang members that may include abusive power dynamics and abuse, some perpetrate gang crime and violence, some come from families with multi-generational gang involvement.
Barnet		16-24	
Enfield			
Greenwich			

The young women we work with may have experienced: sexual exploitation, rape, group sexual abuse; threats of violence and abuse towards them and their families, including threats to life; gang harassment and assault; and coercion into criminal activity. This coercion may have led young women to participate in county lines and drug dealing; to carry weapons; and/or to perpetrate violent assault.

*One young woman described her life as:
“living in a war zone on my doorstep.”*



We deliver services in partnership with the boroughs highlighted in strong blue here, as well as pan-London services for young women affected by county line activity

What other work with young women does Abianda deliver?

The Star Project - group work

A 12-session group work programme for young women and girls that can be delivered in various settings, including schools, pupil referral units, residential and secure units and prisons. The programme is delivered by two Abianda practitioners, as well as one of our Young Trainers. In addition to group work, young women will have three one-to-one sessions with a practitioner to address additional needs and support engagement.

Young women develop the knowledge and skills they need to better navigate the risks they face in their lives, and a peer support network. They also gain work and life skills so they can make their own efforts to raise awareness about how young women are affected by gangs and what needs to be done to prevent it. Impact evidence is available on request.

Abianda Young Trainers

Young women who have used our services can be trained to be Young Trainers, should they wish to continue their engagement with Abianda. Our Young Trainers co-facilitate our training and act as peer mentors for our Star Project one-to-one and group work.

Through this training, young women develop the confidence, knowledge and skills to directly influence the way future services are delivered, as well as inform professionals about does and does not work when supporting gang-affected young women.

All this work is paid. Gang-affected young women tell us that they need legitimate, paid and professional opportunities so they can disrupt cycles of dependency on a pro-criminal life style and/or abusive and dangerous associates, and so that they can create a new positive identity based on competence and skill. Impact evidence is available on request.

Young Women's Business Advisory Group

Young women are in the fabric of our organisation. Abianda's Young Women's Business Advisory Group meets regularly and allows young women to influence and define how Abianda develops and what new opportunities are created for young women, both internally and externally.

Through the Business Advisory Group, young women who have used our services have access to all aspects of the organisation including financial management and accounts, governance, business strategy and planning, fundraising, social media, marketing and PR, sales and income generation. Through working across all aspects of the organisation, young women develop business, leadership and administration skills that are transferable into other professional environments in support of their own career development.

How we work with gang-affected young women

Our **guiding principles** inform our **approach and techniques**, which put gang-affected young women at the heart of the process and supports them to remain engaged.

We believe that:	<p>Young women are experts of their own lives.</p> <p>Young women have innate resources, competence and resilience.</p> <p>People affected by a problem are best placed to find the solutions.</p> <p>We must shift traditional power hierarchies in service delivery in order to enable young women's participation in solution building.</p> <p>We must support young women to have their voices heard in order that they can influence the design and delivery of services.</p>		
We therefore adopt:	Youth work principles	Participation principles	Solution focused brief therapy techniques
This means that in our approach we:	<p>Work 'alongside' young women</p> <p>Start from where they are and be led by their "felt needs"</p> <p>Respect their empirical knowledge of their own lives</p> <p>Encourage them to develop a "critical consciousness" of their worlds, their experiences, and how they are affected by these</p>	<p>Work in a non-hierarchical way</p> <p>Challenge unequal dynamics power & oppression</p> <p>Tip the balance of power in favour of young women</p> <p>Ensure young women inform future practice and services</p> <p>Recognise that young women are best placed to identify issues and solutions</p>	<p>Work to the young woman's 'best hopes' or desired outcomes</p> <p>Engage with competence</p> <p>Look for alternative narratives of her and her life where she has previously demonstrated competence</p> <p>Obtain detailed descriptions of what life will be like when changes are made</p> <p>Trust the young woman's 'version of events'</p> <p>Are interested in the young woman and not the problem</p> <p>Develop techniques to understand and strategise around big and sometimes 'unmanageable' feelings</p>
Our work is trauma informed and trauma responsive because our services embody these five values:			
Safety	We never put pressure on young women to disclose. We provide explanations of what we are doing and why. We are consistent in our approach.		
Trustworthiness	We do what we say we are going to do. We are transparent in how we share young women's information. We continually seek the young woman's consent.		
Choice	We work to the young woman's best hopes. We support her to influence decisions that affect her life.		
Collaboration	We work in a non-hierarchical way. We work shoulder-to-shoulder and in partnership with young women.		
Empowerment	We help young women identify their own strengths and resilience. We provide advocacy support to help young women navigate statutory services. We create spaces where young women take power and control.		

Services Impact Report

How have Abianda services been evaluated?

An independent evaluation from 2014 concluded that The Star Project is an innovative service that has developed a unique model of practice that is clearly articulated and implemented in practice. The evaluation also stated that the project uses “approaches and techniques that establish trusting relationships quickly and engage successfully with young women, hitherto with a history of non-engagement” (Dr Lisa Bostock, University of Bedfordshire, 2014).

This service impact report draws on data from the delivery of The Star Project in Islington and Barnet and offers an insight into the way our evaluation will develop over 2018.

Who does Abianda work with?

Of the young women referred into the Star Project:

- 91% know associates that are on the Metropolitan Police's Gangs Matrix
- 86% are from BAMER communities
- 20% have children
- 30% are or were looked after children
- 64% have unstable housing situations
- 27% have a disability
- 11% stated they have problematic drugs and alcohol use
- 85% use cannabis regularly
- 59% were not in training or education
- Nearly three-quarters have experienced domestic violence
 - 33% have experienced familial domestic violence
 - 11% have experienced intimate partner assault
 - 28% have experienced both familial domestic violence and intimate partner assault
- 50% have been charged with an offence
- 9% have been convicted of an offence

How successfully does Abianda engage with young women referred to them?

For the high risk, high vulnerability cohort we work with, we are really pleased with our levels of engagement:

- Of the young women referred to work with Abianda from July 2016 to December 2017, **81% consented to the referral** and met with an Abianda practitioner
- Of those who met with an Abianda practitioner, **90% went on to participate in the programme for at least two sessions**
- Overall therefore we have a **73% engagement rate beyond the first two sessions**

Very occasionally, young women do not consent to the referral and do not want to attend the introductory meeting with an Abianda practitioner. We are reliant on referring agents to explain the project to young women, and we know this can be detrimental for engagement as they are unable to express our approach in the way that we would.

What does the Star Project involve?

The Star Project typically involves 12-15 sessions, but we are flexible to the needs of young women referred to us.

For our closed cases:

- Young women on average attended 11 sessions
- Where young women carried on beyond the second session, they attended 12 sessions on average
- Three young women attended 16-20 sessions

For our open cases:

- Young women on average have attended 10 sessions
- One young woman has attended 19 sessions

The following table outlines averages of various outputs in our work with young women:

Event	Average per young woman
Indirect contacts with young women	150
Individual acts of advocacy	50
Joint interventions and/or professionals meetings Abianda practitioner attended	6

Over 40% of sessions scheduled are not attended by the young women, representing the challenges of engaging with young women affected by gangs and county lines. Abianda demonstrates persistence in engaging with young women despite barriers to engagement, and uses indirect contacts (e.g. texts, phone calls, WhatsApp messages) to maintain links with young women between sessions.

How does Abianda impact on Young Women's knowledge and understanding?

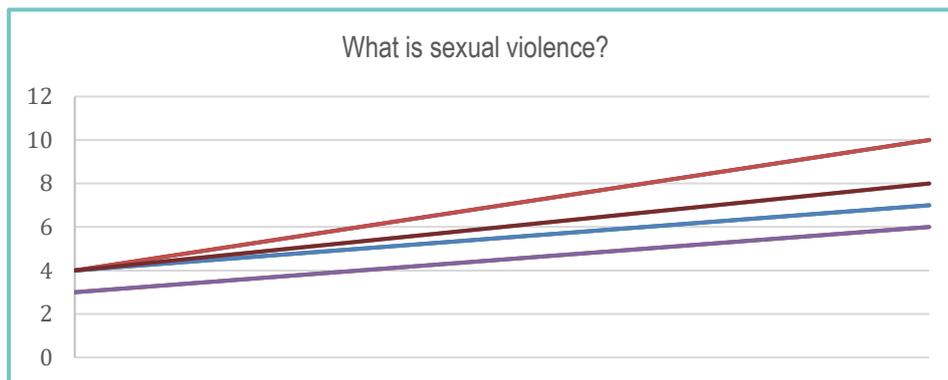
In the Star Project, young women explore topics including relationships, sexual violence, power, trauma, anger, and safety planning. At the start and end of the programme, we ask young women:

1. What is sexual violence?
2. What are the risks for young women who are associated with gangs?
3. What is a healthy / unhealthy relationship?
4. What could a young woman do to keep safe if she was associated with gangs?

By tallying the answers young women give to this question, we can assess their increased knowledge and understanding of these topics. The following tables show number of answers at the start and end of Star Project for these questions.

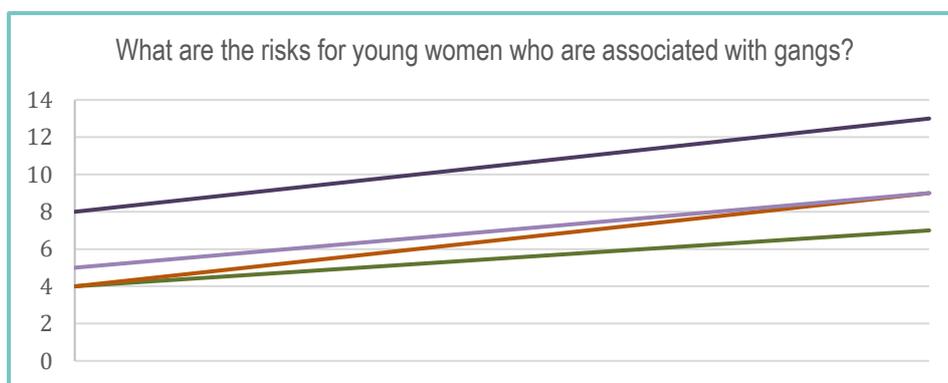
We are pleased to see positive progression across all questions, demonstrating **consistent increases in knowledge** for the young women who have completed the Star Project.

Young women's knowledge increases as a result of their work with Abianda

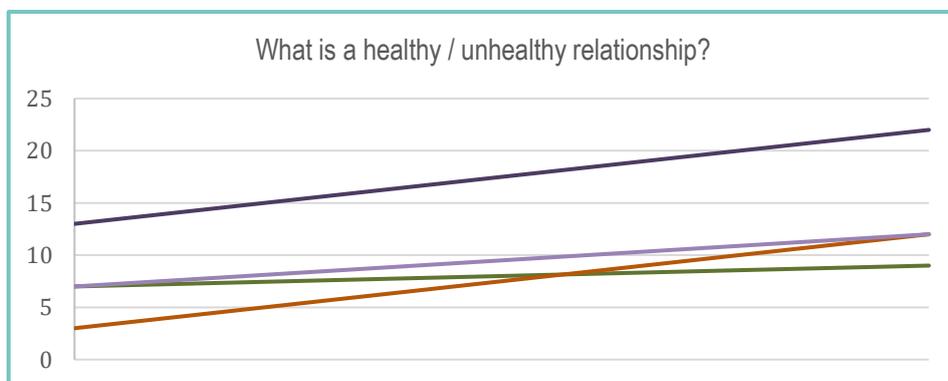


At the start of the programme, these young women could identify just 3 or 4 acts of sexual violence.

At the end of the programme most had at least doubled the number of examples of sexual violence they are aware of.



When asked to list risks for young women who are associated with gangs, we see significant increases. One young woman could identify 13 different risks for young women associated with gangs.



When asked what defines a healthy or an unhealthy relationship, young women on average at the start of The Star Project can give 8 responses - at the end, the average was 14 responses.



One young woman could list 3 ways to keep safe at the start of The Star Project – and 8 ways to keep safe at the end.

What impact on desired outcomes or Best Hopes does Abianda have?

In our services, we work to shift power to the young women we work with. We do not enforce a rigid action plan. Instead, we ask young women what their Best Hopes from our work together are. These Best Hopes or desired outcomes form the basis of our work together and mean the young woman can set the agenda for our work together.

Young women's Best Hopes have included:

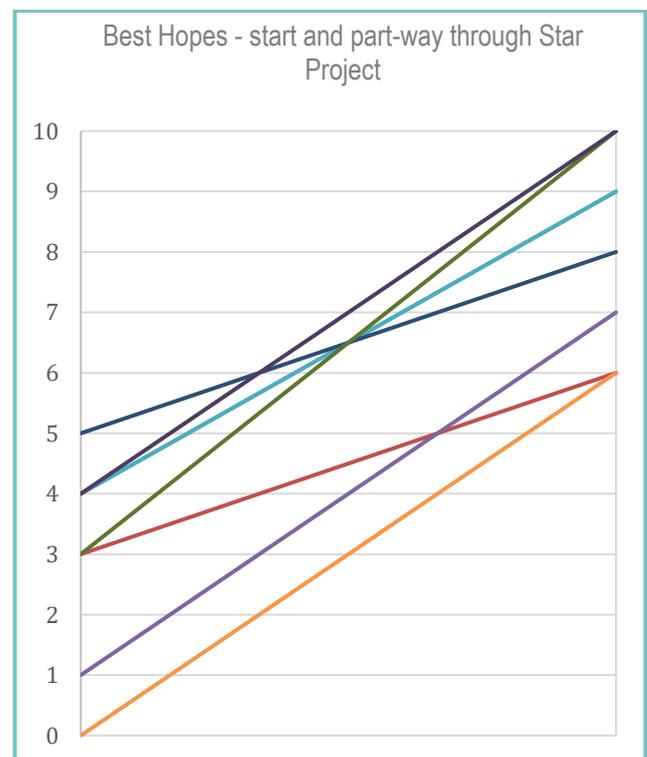
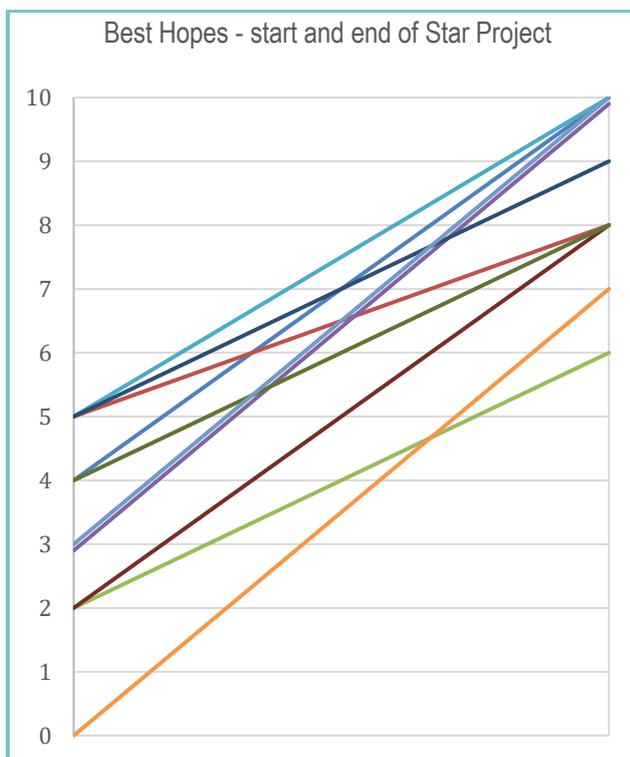
- Having freedom and safety
- Professionals to stop saying that I am involved with gangs
- To be independent and have a better attitude
- Being a good mother and keeping my child safe
- Being able to say no
- Think before I act... make positive choices and take positive actions
- Focus on my future
- Managing my anger

We ask young women:

- On a scale of 0 – 10, where '0' is the worst things have ever been and '10' is where you've got your best hopes, where on the scale are you now?

These two charts demonstrate young women's responses at the start and end of the Star Project where they have completed it, and at the start and current stage of the Star Project where they are still taking part.

- The average increase was 5.2 points up the scale
- The smallest increase was 3 (for 3 young women, 2 of whom are still participating in the project)
- The largest increase was 7 (for 4 young women)

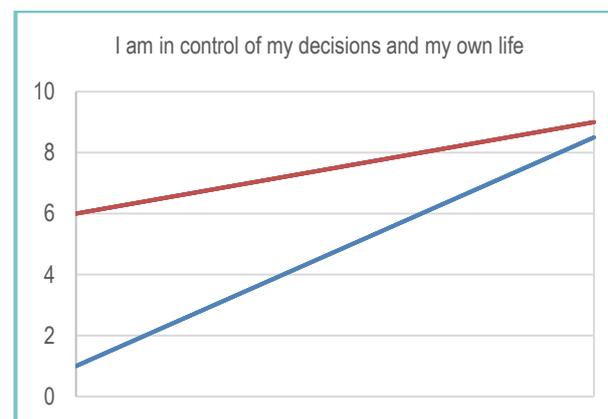
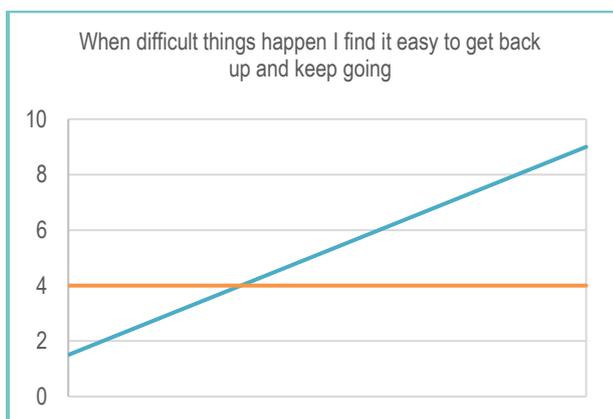
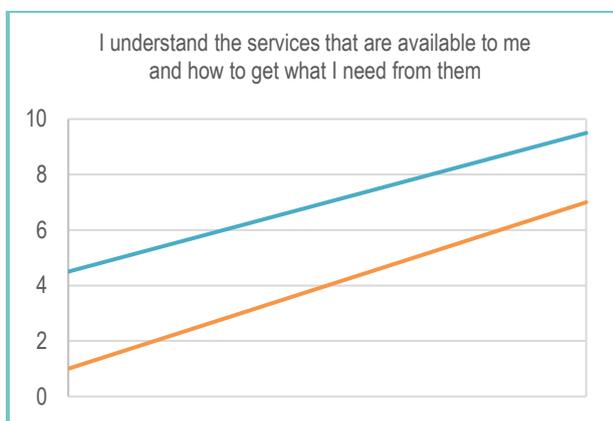
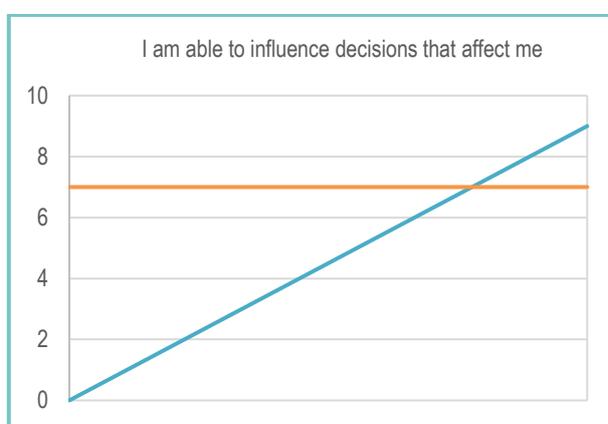
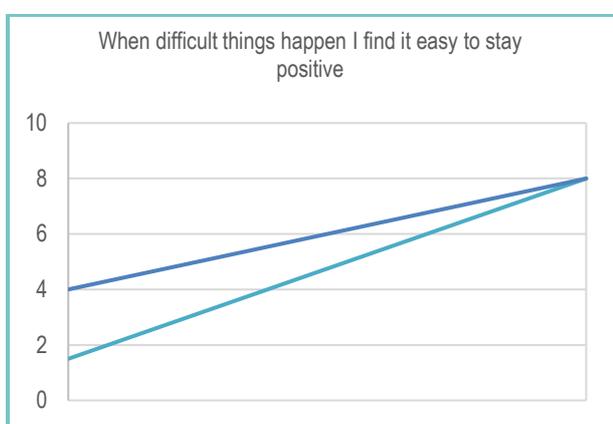


Future impact tracking

Abianda is introducing further assessment of the impact of our work with young women, exploring indicators of resilience and self-efficacy. We have the complete data for two young women, which is presented here, and will continue to grow this impact evidence.

We are pleased to see positive progression against almost all of the indicators, which is really encouraging. We are particularly pleased to see that **young women feel more able to influence decisions that affect their lives, and feel more in control**, as this is central to Abianda's model of practice.

We are also pleased to see that young women are more aware of the services available to them and how to get what they need from services. A lot of our advocacy work with, and on behalf of, young women focuses on ensuring they have the skills and confidence to navigate system wide services.



Advocacy and next steps for young women

Abianda supports young women develop the skills and confidence to navigate system-wide services. After completing the Star Project, young women are often referred into further services, demonstrating their increased skills to access this support, and our advocacy for their ongoing needs. We work closely with each young woman to ensure the services are right for her, attending introductory meetings and supporting with meaningful engagement.

In addition to referring young women onto the National Referral Mechanism, Abianda has referred young women onto:

- Adult Social Services
- Counselling and mental health services
- Employment and training opportunities
- Housing
- MARAC
- Other VCS organisations
- Police Sexual Exploitation Team
- Police special schemes
- Rape Crisis

Young women are also able to join our Train the Trainer programme, enabling them to work as Young Trainers for Abianda – a paid role co-facilitating training to professionals, and working as peer mentors to young women currently enrolled on the Star Project.

Further outcomes for young women include taking up apprenticeships in youth work and building office experience with Abianda. One young woman has been able to move back into her family home (having been denied access to the borough due to her bail conditions) and is now working for the NHS. Two young women have gone to college, one having completed National Citizen Service. Three young women attended sessions on Abianda's and [London Village Network's](#) Be Your Own Boss partnership project, where they learnt about business start-up and were connected with inspirational women in business.

One young woman (after significant service neglect) was relocated with her mother to another borough. She received the statutory assessments she was entitled to in regard to her disability, which in turn allowed her to access services and resources after she was 18 years old.

Training and Professional Development

Training and professional development – what makes Abianda different?

Our training is all co-facilitated by our former service users and informed by our frontline services

All of our training is co-delivered by Abianda Young Trainers to ensure that young women are influencing the design and delivery of future practice and services.

Having young women who have been affected by gangs or county lines deliver training ensures that professionals from a wide range of sectors and specialisms understand the realities of young women's lives and experiences, and the problems they face in the context of gangs. Our Young Trainers explain the barriers that stop gang-affected young women accessing services. As a result, professionals will be more informed and equipped to: identify gang-affected young women, know how to overcome the barriers they face in accessing services, and how to engage with gang-affected young women more effectively. As a result, we would hope that escalation of risk would be prevented as the issues are identified earlier, potential crimes against and/or perpetrated by gang-affected young women would be reduced as they are being identified and supported more efficiently and in a way that works for them.

“The Young Trainers were very brave, honest and professional.”

“The Young Trainers were very very impressive. Very powerful and a sense that they led & participated in meaningful way.”

Our training receives outstanding feedback

During 2017 Abianda trained over 340 professionals, 99% of whom would recommend our training to colleagues. Within the first five months of 2018, Abianda trained over 200 professionals, 100% of whom would recommend our training.

“This has been the best training I have attended in a long time. I have really learnt a lot of new skills and increased my confidence in dealing with this issue. I would recommend this to all my colleagues and have come away with a tool kit to deliver.”

Our training delivers significant increases in knowledge

The table below is from one of our training feedback reports from May 2018 training delivered to Tri-Borough MASH police officers (Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster). Participants were asked to rate their knowledge and understanding out of 5 at the start and end of the training – the table below gives average scores:

Topic	Before	After
My understanding of how gang-affected young women are affected	2.5	4
My understanding of what stops gang-affected young women getting help	2	4.5
My knowledge of how to respond to gang-affected young women	2	4

As a result of the training, professionals will also be more aware of the specialist support services that Abianda deliver in and thus refer into our services where we will further support young women and work to reduce and prevent crime.

“The seminar was excellent, really interesting and informative. I think anyone working in public services would benefit from it and definitely all police officers!”

Commissioning training

To commission training, please contact Mary at mary@abianda.com or on 020 7686 0520. Mary will be your main point of contact through the contracting and scheduling of training, and will share a comprehensive feedback report afterwards – sample feedback reports are available on request. We have Provision of Services contracts which must be signed by both parties, and payment is required in advance of training delivery.

Training audiences

During 2017 Abianda trained over 340 professionals nationally, including sixty Metropolitan Police officers from the pan-London Sexual Exploitation Team (SET) and Trident Gangs Command, Youth and Social Workers, teachers including pupil referral unit staff, and charity professionals.

Our audiences have expanded in 2018 to include Anti-Social Behaviour teams, foster carers, borough MASH teams, health professionals including safeguarding nurses, and teachers.

Our training ranges from awareness raising to professional development, depending on the professionals' likely level of engagement with vulnerable adolescents generally, and gang-affected young women specifically. The table below suggests target audiences for our training.

Training title	Length	Pitch	All professionals who may encounter young women affected by gangs and county lines	Professionals whose role makes them likely to work with young women affected by gangs and county lines	Professionals with experience of working with vulnerable adolescents including young women affected by gangs and county lines
Young Trainer Seminars	½ day	Awareness-raising	✓		
Working with gang-affected young women	1 day	Awareness-raising and skills development	✓	✓	
CSE awareness raising	1 day	Awareness raising	✓	✓	
Young women and county line activity	1 day	Awareness-raising and skills development	✓	✓	✓
Working with gang-affected young women	3 days	Professional development		✓	✓
Participatory and strengths-based approaches to responding to adolescents at risk	1 day	Skills development		✓	✓
Participatory and strengths-based approaches to responding to adolescents at risk	3 days	Professional development		✓	✓
Solution focused brief therapy	2 days	Professional development		✓	✓

Young Trainer Seminars

Half-day awareness raising for all professionals who may encounter gang-affected young women

Seminar content includes:

- An introduction to Abianda's approach and model of working with young women
- First hand testimony from young trainers with facilitated Q&A
- Interactive exercises to illustrate the need for a culture shift in the way services engage gang-affected young women
- Understanding the various roles of young women in gangs, the associated risks and the barriers they face in accessing services
- Understanding the complexities of young women's 'victim' and 'perpetrating' behaviour



On average, attendees' **knowledge of how to respond** to gang-affected young women increases from 2.5 to **4 out of 5**.

“Very interactive and useful. It's great to hear the real life case studies and see the young girls' positive progress.”

£1125 for up to 30 attendees

Working with gang-affected young women

One-day awareness raising for professionals who may or are likely to work with gang-affected young women

Training content includes:

- First hand testimony from young trainers with facilitated Q&A
- Policy and research context relevant to supporting gang-affected young women
- Understanding the various roles of young women in gangs, the associated risks and the barriers they face in accessing services
- Understanding the complexities of young women's 'victim' and 'perpetrating' behaviour
- Understanding of Abianda's unique and effective practice model
- Interactive exercises to illustrate the need for a 'culture shift' in the way services engage with gang-affected young women & vulnerability
- Introduction to practical tools to ensure a relationship based, and young-women led, approach to enhance engagement and young women's trust in our services



Attendees' **knowledge of what stops gang-affected young women getting help** increases from 2.5 to 4.5 out of 5.

“Today's training was the most engaging and thought-provoking insight into the subject matter I could have hoped for.”

£3000 for up to 30 attendees

Young Women and County Line Activity

One-day awareness raising for professionals who may / are likely to work with gang-affected young women, or have experience in working with vulnerable adolescents

Abianda is part of a pan-London project bringing together boroughs and service delivery organisations, to develop and deliver a support service for young people who are vulnerable and caught up in county lines drug distribution networks.

Training content includes:

- First hand testimony from young trainers with facilitated Q&A
- Policy and research context relevant to county line activity
- Understanding the various roles young women play in county line activity and the subsequent risk and harm they experience
- Understanding how we proactively identify, respond to and engage with young women involved in county line activity
- An introduction to the practical tools that Abianda uses to engage and safeguard young women in the unique and complex context of county line activity



£3000 for up to 30 attendees

Working with gang-affected young women

Three-day professional development for professionals with experience of working with vulnerable adolescents including young women affected by gangs and county line activity

An intensive and practical three-day training programme that improves the skills of practitioners so they are more able and confident to support gang-affected young women affected by gangs and county line activity. Co-delivered by Abianda Young Trainers, senior Abianda specialists and our Solution Focused Therapist.

Content includes:

- First hand testimony from young trainers with facilitated Q&A
- Policy and research context relevant to supporting gang-affected young women
- Interactive exercises to illustrate the need for a 'culture shift' in the way services engage with gang-affected young women & vulnerability
- Understanding the various roles of young women in gangs, the associated risks and the barriers they face in accessing services
- Understanding the complexities of young women's 'victim' and 'perpetrating' behaviour
- Understanding the need for a participatory and strengths-based response to these young women and the associated vulnerabilities
- Understanding the need for a contextualised safeguarding approach in order to respond to the realities and risk that young women experience as adolescents in various contexts
- Introduction to practical tools to ensure a relationship based, and young-women led, approach to enhance engagement and young women's trust in our services
- Understand and practice the delivery of Abianda's structured programme of work for young women affected by gangs and county line activity
- Understand theory, techniques and tools (including solution focused therapy) from the Abianda model that can be used straight away in day-to-day practice

On average, attendees' **skills** in working effectively with gang-affected young women increased from 3 to 4.5 out of 5

“Excellent training, informative, creative, participatory, young person focussed.”

“I've never been on a more practical training!”

“I'm taking so many things back to change the way I practise.”

£8400 for up to 20 attendees



Child Sexual Exploitation

One-day awareness raising for professionals who may or are likely to work with gang-affected young women and other vulnerable adolescents

This day combines trainer-led presentations, participatory exercises, group discussions and case studies. At the end of the training participants will be able to:

- Understand the research and policy context of child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Understand definitions of CSE
- Understand different models/profiles of CSE
- Identify the risk factors for children and young people at risk of CSE
- Identify the indicators that would tell them that a child or young person was being sexually exploited
- Understand the steps they should take in responding to CSE
- Apply knowledge of identifying and responding to sexually exploited children and young people, using case study and practice outcomes

On average, attendees' **ability to identify young people at risk of CSE** increased from 3 to 4.5 out of 5

“Trainer had excellent knowledge. I found the training very useful, worthwhile, well delivered.”

£3000 for up to 30 attendees



Participatory and strengths based approaches to working with adolescents at risk

One-day skills development for professionals who are likely to work with gang-affected young women, or have experience in working with vulnerable adolescents

This training introduces professionals to the principles of participatory and strengths based practice and how these are beneficial in working with high-risk adolescents (including young people affected by sexual violence, CSE, peer on peer violence, gangs and associated vulnerabilities), and how they are essential in addressing children's rights in service delivery.



We address the challenges and ethical implications in applying a participatory and rights based approach within a safeguarding and statutory context. This training can be extended to offer a more in-depth understanding, as well as offer practical tools and techniques for practice to support young people to participate in efforts to prevent harm.

£3000 for up to 30 attendees

Participatory and strengths based approaches to working with adolescents at risk

Three-day professional development for those who have experience in working with vulnerable adolescents

An intensive programme that explores the concepts of participatory and strengths based practice. We support professionals to explore how these are beneficial in working with high-risk adolescents (including young people affected by sexual violence, CSE, gangs and associated vulnerabilities), and how they are essential in addressing children's rights in service delivery.



We support professionals to address the challenges they might face in applying a PSB approach in different professional cultures, and statutory and safeguarding contexts. We provide techniques and tools to support professionals to apply a participatory and strengths based approach in their practice with high risk, high vulnerability young people and action plan with practitioners on how they will implement the principles and tools in their own practice.

£8400 for up to 20 attendees

Training in solution focused brief therapy

Two-day professional development for those who are likely to work with gang-affected young women, or have experience in working with vulnerable adolescents

A comprehensive and experiential introduction to the tools and techniques of solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT). Participants will:

- Understand the principles of solution-focused brief therapy
- Understand and practice SFBT techniques with the support of Abianda's SFBT therapist
- Apply the tools and techniques within the context of their own practice setting
- Receive worksheets, tools and techniques to use in their practice



£5600 for up to 20 attendees

Organisation Background

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Abi Billingham founded Abianda in 2014. Her vision was to create an organisation that would bring about social impact through frontline services and training for professionals. These services and training would in turn bring about a culture shift in provision for gang-affected young women who traditionally neither felt safe accessing, nor trusted, statutory services. These young women would therefore deal with adversity, risk and harm within their peer group, rather than reaching out for professional support. As this service provision was not working for gang-affected young women, Abi wanted to create something that did. Keen to embed participation at the heart of the organisation, she therefore founded Abianda so that it would:

1. Stand shoulder to shoulder with young women

- No one knows a young woman's life like the young woman herself, so it is right and logical that they are embedded within the organisation so that we can understand the realities of their lives.
- We work in a collegial and collaborative way so that these young women influence the design and delivery of our services.

2. Have a model of growth which supported social impact

- Young women are embedded into the infrastructure of the organisation, so as Abianda grows, we have the opportunity to support young women to develop new skills and to learn new organisational functions themselves. All our training is co-facilitated by young women who have used our services, received training, and are paid for their work.
- We therefore can deliver social impact through the services we deliver, as well as through our infrastructure as we grow, thus staying loyal to the principles of participation at the heart of the organisation.

3. Work as a not-for-profit business, and not a charity

- We are self-sufficient and innovative in our income generation, working to be sustainable and commercially viable, with the freedom to pursue social impact defined by young women.

As an example of these founding decisions in action, we have a Young Women's Business Advisory Board in addition to a traditional company Board of Directors, so that young women can have their say on our strategy, help design new training activities, and influence the design and delivery of services to future service participants.

Abi's background is in youth work and she has collaborated with a number of organisations to develop participatory approaches to working with vulnerable adolescents. She has worked with [The International Centre: Researching Child Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Trafficking at the University of Bedfordshire](#), supporting specialist social care teams in Wigan and Rochdale to implement strengths and participatory approaches to CSE. Abi co-wrote training for these teams with [Dr Camille Warrington](#) on behalf of [Research in Practice](#).

With the University of Bedfordshire, Abi also worked on the [LEAP project](#) (2015-17) with [Dr Kate D'Arcy](#). Abi wrote [training tools](#) for young people and professionals across Europe, in order to respond to young people's experiences of sexual violence and to support efforts to prevent sexual violence. The three-day youth facilitator training programme is called "Life-skills, leadership and limitless potential (LLLP)" and can be found on the Child Protection Hub for South-East Europe [website](#). All these programmes provide knowledge and tools to apply participatory approaches to practice with young people.

To learn more about Abi's work and Abianda, you can listen to a podcast she recorded in January 2018 for two organisations: the [Contextual Safeguarding Network](#), and Our Voices - a programme of work coordinated by [The International Centre](#) at the University of Bedfordshire. The podcast is available on the [Our Voices page](#) on our website.



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