

# Annual Review

2018-2019

Kyra Women's Project

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**Charity No. 1154290**  
**Company No. 08707011**



## Foreword by Dame Penelope Wilton

*(Patron of Kyra Women's Project)*

Every town and city in England should be lucky enough to have its very own Kyra. Would that it were the case that charities such as Kyra were not necessary, but the fact is, they are. A haven, a place of support, a centre of vitality, encouragement and



empowerment: Kyra is an amazing project that gives the power of choice back to the women who go there. I believe that having choices and options is key to personal growth and that is why I am so happy to be associated with Kyra.

Each time I visit, I am struck by the fact that Kyra is a joyful place to be. Women who have come through difficult times - some having faced more than their fair share of trials in one lifetime - are happy and buoyant at Kyra. I am quite certain there are tears; I am sure there are moments when a woman might say, 'I can't', but my overwhelming sense, when I visited again this May, is that Kyra is a place where women can, and where women do.

This year I took away with me the smiling faces of Kyra Voices as they sang to me during my visit - even persuading me to join in! I remember the pride and satisfaction of the gardeners who took me on a tour of Kyra's blooming, sprouting, burgeoning garden in the courtyard: a soothing, green haven in the heart of the city. I was moved by many individual stories of courage and progression, and I will forever remember the oft-repeated refrain of, 'I don't know where I'd be without Kyra.'

Such success would be impossible without the consistent support that Kyra has garnered from the local community in York. From its impressive battalion of volunteers - strong, bright, savvy, heart-centred women - to the local businesses, York's voluntary agencies and statutory providers, I thank them all for continuing to support Kyra and helping it become the dynamic charity it now is.

I met many of you on my visit to Bishopthorpe Palace this year and, in particular, I would like to thank Mrs Margaret Sentamu and Archbishop John Sentamu, as well as Middlethorpe Hall, for their hospitality on that special day in May.

In a world that seems to become increasingly adversarial, Kyra is a place that can hold its head high as somewhere that operates from a culture of kindness and compassion. Long may it continue to blaze a trail of hope for the hundreds of women who pass through its doors.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Penelope Wilton".

## Forward by Natalie

(Chair of Trustees)

I'll begin by introducing myself as the new Chair of Kyra. It has been a privilege to be appointed as Chair in July, last year. I wanted to experience Kyra first-hand beforehand and paid a visit to one of the drop-in sessions in June prior to accepting the role. I was inspired by the feel of the place, the amazing volunteers and staff and how inclusive the drop-in was. Open to all! This definitely sealed it for me.



Over the last months I have experienced the range of services that Kyra provides from Spanish classes to singing and from walking to poetry. There really is something for everyone. There is clearly a need for such a charity in York with demand continuing to increase and the overwhelmingly positive feedback we receive from the women who join and use our services (as demonstrated by the information in this report). The offer that Kyra makes to the community in York has continued to broaden and as a board of trustees we are keen to keep developing and growing to meet the demand of women.

The fantastic and dedicated volunteers that are the life blood of Kyra need to be acknowledged and their work recognised. This extends to our wonderful and passionate employees too. Quite simply, without you, there wouldn't be a Kyra and many women would have their needs unmet. We appreciate your time, commitment and enthusiasm every day and it is important that we share this regularly.

I wanted to take the opportunity to share our priorities, as a board, for Kyra now and in the near future. We need to continue to identify and develop sustainable income streams and to raise the profile of Kyra across our community in terms of members accessing services and to access funding sources. These are both critical in our view to ensure Kyra is sustainable.

Finally, looking ahead to this year, I am delighted to have the opportunity to be Chair of Kyra and will continue to bring my passion and commitment to supporting women in our community.

Nataie

**“A place where I feel safe, to get help, to share, to be listened to and to just be.”**

These are the words of one woman who told us about her experiences at the Kyra Women's Project in 2019, but it is a sentiment shared by many. In 2019 we registered our 1000<sup>th</sup> member, each woman with her own experiences, stories and perspectives to be shared. It was thanks to these unique and incredible women that the past year has been another great one, as we continued in our mission to be every woman's place for support, connections and community.

We don't have an ambulance with flashing lights; we don't have a helicopter; we don't have expert mountaineers and sniffer dogs; and we don't have surgical equipment.

That's not how we change and save lives at Kyra.

We have passion and dedication and the will to make a difference and we have scores of brave women who have lifted the phone, rung the bell, sent an email and ended up at Kyra armed with a desire to turn their lives around.

Our impact is changing women's lives so that they can: move on from abuse; heal from trauma; stay free from addiction; reduce their isolation and loneliness; return to work; begin volunteering; learn better coping techniques; improve their health and wellbeing; strengthen their relationships. Indirectly, the knock-on effect upon the family of the women who come to us, and the effect upon the communities where they live, is immensely positive.

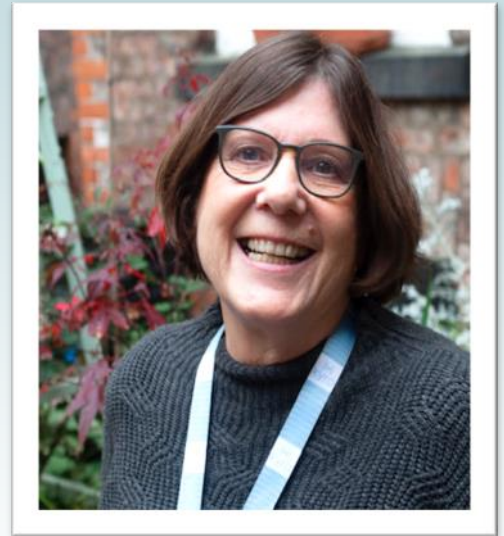
The demand on the service increases daily and meeting the demand is difficult due to lack of resources and space. With the support of the Trustees and the wider community of York we will continue to provide for some of the most vulnerable women in York and area. Much of our work wouldn't be possible without the funding we receive. We appreciate the support and belief funders have in us. The difference we make to individuals is phenomenal and we look to them for support in the year ahead.

Our volunteers are our strength and give so generously of their time and expertise. Each day brings something new – volunteers might be unsure what they will have to deal with, who they are going to meet, what will make them smile, what will bring a tear to their eye – but each day the volunteers arrive, hang up their coats, pop on their lanyards and leave their personal needs at the door in order to focus on the women they are there to support. This is done day in and day out, always with professionalism, empathy and a smile – they are all truly amazing.

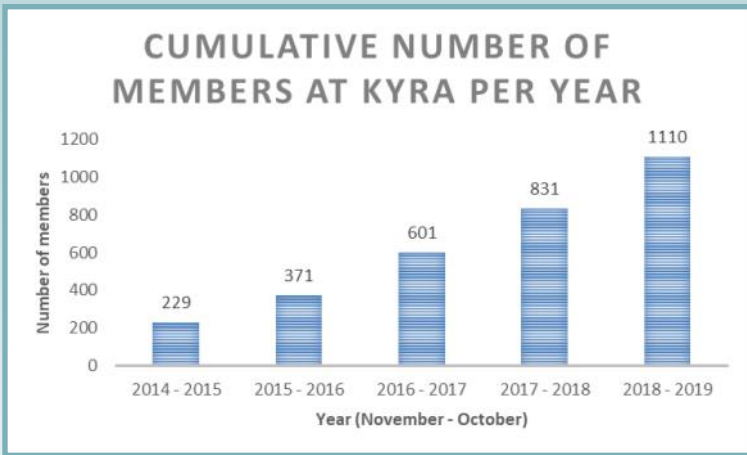
I hope you enjoy reading the review, which gives a glimpse of the amazing, busy and successful year in the world of Kyra Women's Project.

With best wishes and sincere thanks to **all** who support Kyra

Yvonne CEO



# Members



| Year        | Number of members |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 2014 - 2015 | 229               |
| 2015 - 2016 | 371               |
| 2016 - 2017 | 601               |
| 2017 - 2018 | 831               |
| 2018 - 2019 | 1110              |

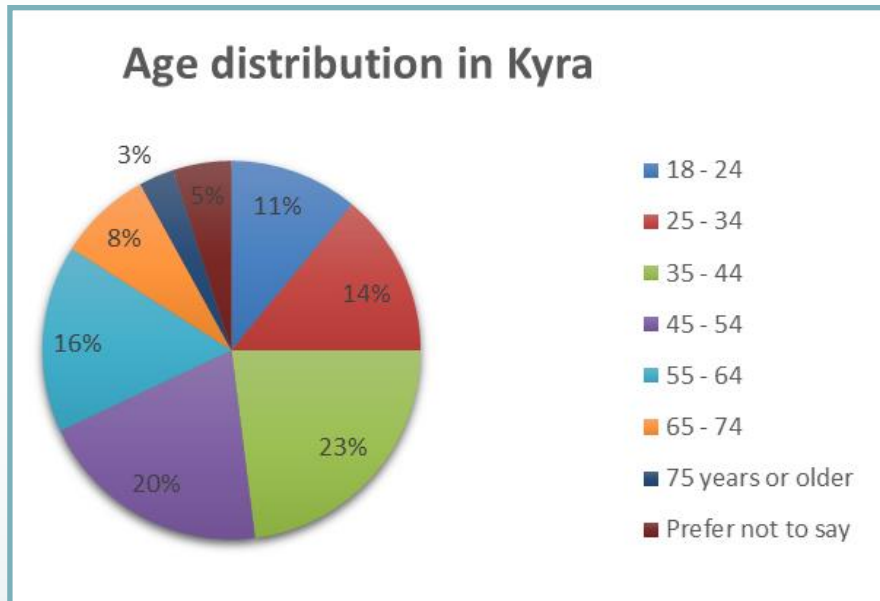
The number of members have increased by 25% since last year and has steadily increased year on year.

Kyra has on average 132 members attending each week

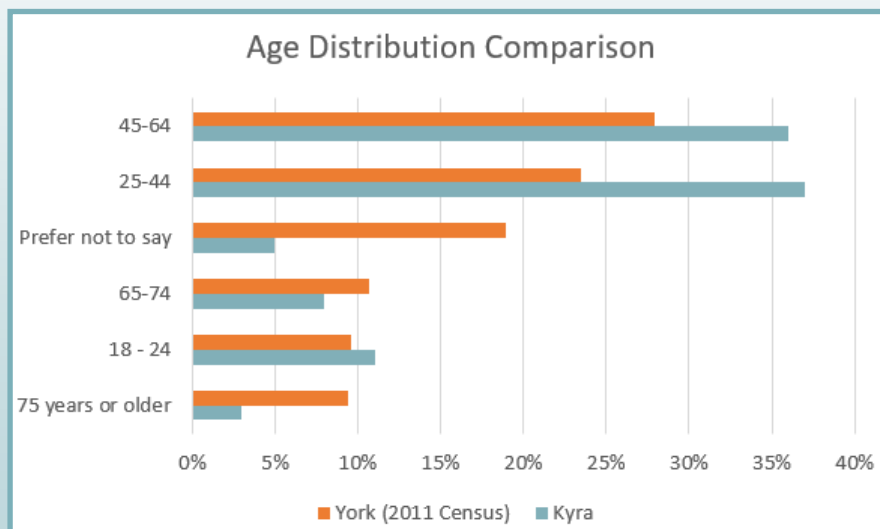


## Is the 2018-19 KYRA members data in line with York's diversity data?

| Age range         | Percentage of Kyra members |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 18 - 24           | 11%                        |
| 25 - 34           | 14%                        |
| 35 - 44           | 23%                        |
| 45 - 54           | 20%                        |
| 55 - 64           | 16%                        |
| 65 - 74           | 8%                         |
| 75 years or older | 3%                         |
| Prefer not to say | 5%                         |



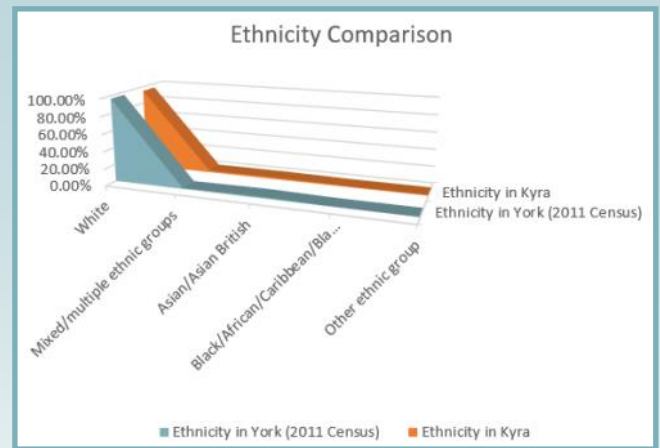
The majority of York's age distribution at the last census was 25 to 64 year olds, demonstrating an aging population. Members at Kyra over the last year reflects this with a peak in the 35-44 year old bracket. Sample size 279



## Is the 2018-19 KYRA members data in line with York's diversity data?

|                                       | Ethnicity in York (2011 Census) | Ethnicity in Kyra (279 new members) |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| White                                 | <b>96.8%</b>                    | <b>95%</b>                          |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic groups          | 0.9%                            | 2%                                  |
| Asian/Asian British                   | 1.7%                            | 2%                                  |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 0.3%                            | 1%                                  |
| Other ethnic group                    | 0.3%                            | 1%                                  |

Kyra is reaching the different Ethnic groups in line with the population of York.



### Religion in York 2011 Census

|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Christian           | <b>59.5%</b> |
| No religion         | <b>30.1%</b> |
| Religion not stated | 7.8%         |
| Other religions     | 0.4%         |
| Buddhist            | 0.5%         |
| Muslim              | 1%           |
| Jewish              | 0.1%         |
| Hindu               | 0.5%         |
| Sikh                | 0.1%         |

### Religious diversity in Kyra (279 new members)

|                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Christian         | <b>40.9%</b> |
| No Religion       | <b>33.6%</b> |
| Prefer not to say | 15.9%        |
| Other religion    | 5.9%         |
| Buddhist          | 1.3%         |
| Muslim            | 0.9%         |
| Jewish            | 0.2%         |
| Hindu             | 0%           |
| Sikh              | 0%           |

**In York 59.5%** of residents recorded their religion as Christian (down from 74% in 2001) which was similar to the national picture. **Kyra has 41%** Christian and 34% stated no Religion. This is in line with the York population. Kyra has a higher proportion of Other Religions represented.

### Marital Status



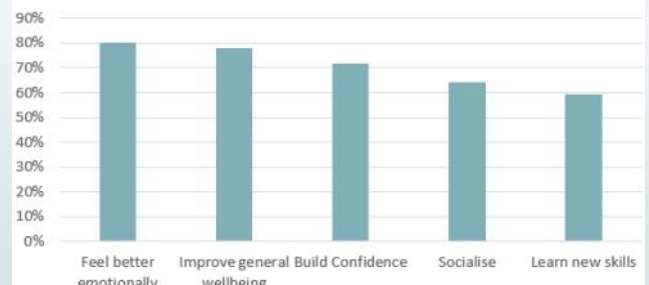
When comparing the new members marital status to the York Census, Kyra has a disproportionate number of Single women compared to those in a civil partnership or married.

When analysing members goals and referrals, being able to socialise and build relationships is a major reason for accessing Kyra.

The main goals members identified was to feel better emotionally and improve their general wellbeing.

Building confidence was also a major reason for joining Kyra.

### Goals (I would like to...)



**50%** of Kyra members consider themselves to have some form of disability with **44%** declaring as having a form of **Mental Health or Learning Difficulties**.

Interestingly 44% of referrals come from Healthcare professionals

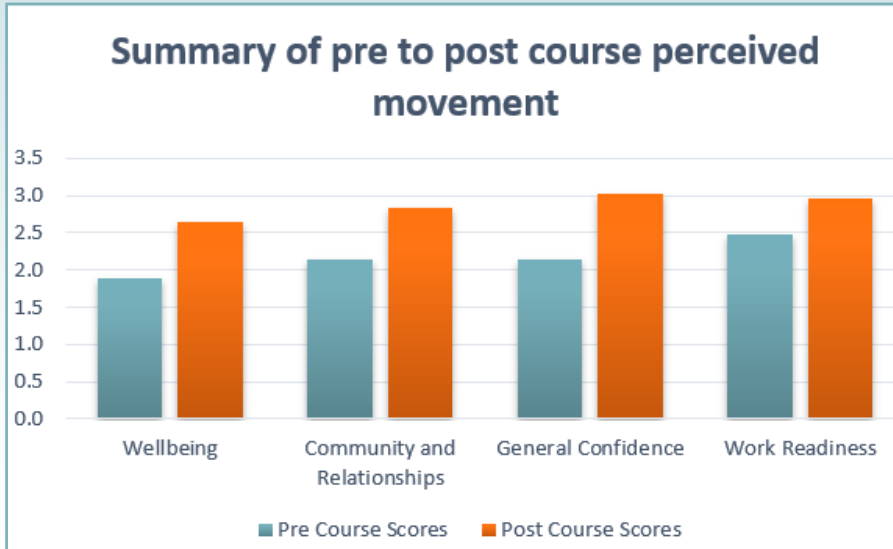
### Self-declared Disabilities in Kyra

|                                       |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Mental health & learning difficulties | <b>44%</b> |
| Mobility                              | <b>2%</b>  |
| Other - eg. Sight, hearing            | <b>4%</b>  |

In Yorkshire and The Humber (Census 2011) 34% of householders declared there are 1 or more occupants with a disability.

## Kyra's Impact on members through the various courses, drop ins, events and beyond Kyra

All members who attend a course within Kyra are encouraged to complete a pre and post course questionnaire which tells the course leaders where the member feels she is before the course starts and then after the course finishes. This helps to illustrate the general progression and effectiveness the course has had on the member.



This chart shows that on average, from a sample of 110 members the courses run in 2018-19 in Kyra have helped members to meet their goals. It demonstrates that they have **improved most** in their **general confidence** and have experienced a **better feeling of Wellbeing**.

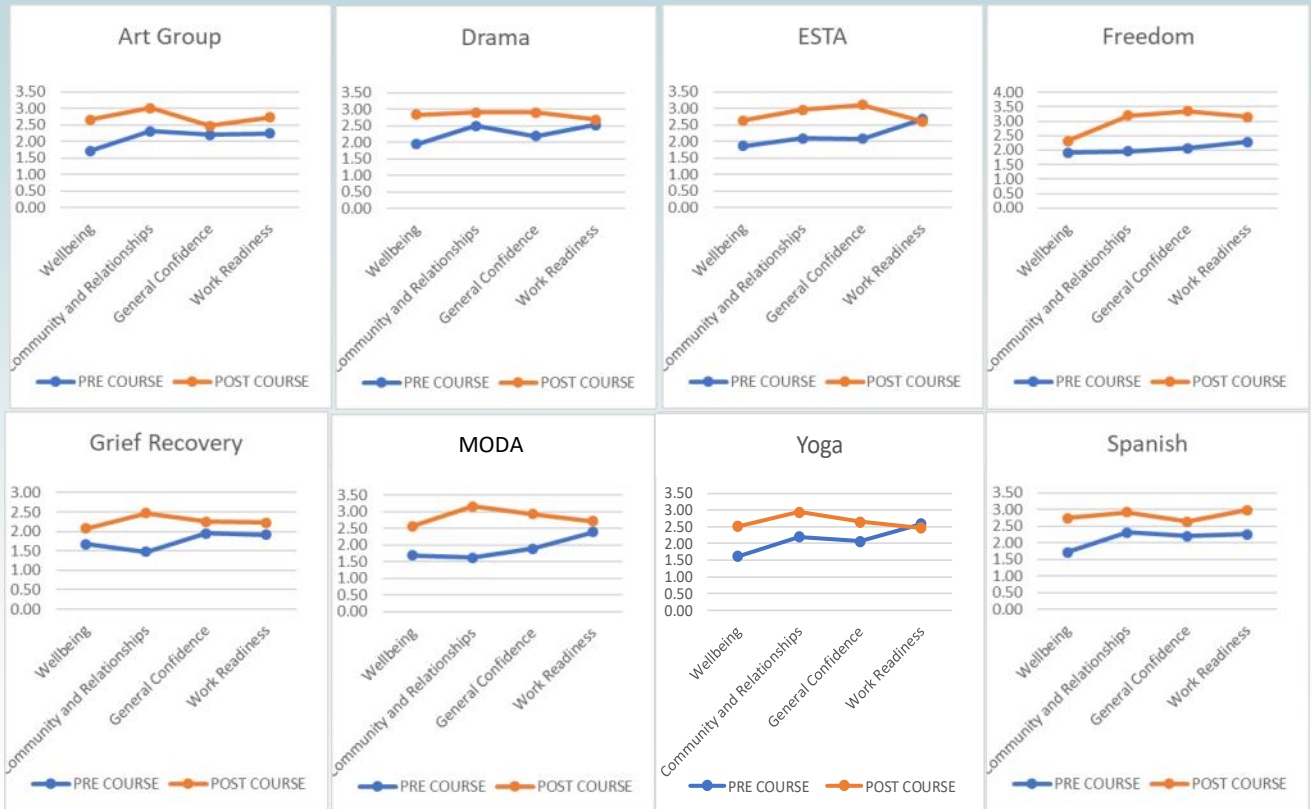
These statistics have a Sample Confidence rating of 95% ±7.26%

A snapshot survey is completed by 10 randomly selected members at least 3 times a year to give us a greater understanding of members progress to making change; 31 were completed in 2018-19.

|                         | I feel safer in an all-women environment | My mental health has improved | I am less lonely | My self-esteem has improved | I am more assertive | I am more optimistic | I follow a more healthy lifestyle | I have learned new skills | My relationships have improved | I am more relaxed | I am more confident about the future | I am better at managing my time | It has helped my recovery overall |                    |          |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| YES                     | 30                                       | 29                            | 29               | 31                          | 24                  | 28                   | 17                                | 29                        | 22                             | 21                | 28                                   | 20                              | 30                                | In Years           | 1.93     |
| NO                      | 0  | 0                             | 1                | 0                           | 3                   | 0                    | 3                                 | 1                         | 1                              | 4                 | 0                                    | 6                               | 1                                 | In Days            | 704.9718 |
| NOT SURE                | 1  | 2                             | 1                | 0                           | 4                   | 3                    | 11                                | 1                         | 8                              | 6                 | 3                                    | 5                               | 0                                 |                    |          |
| Percentage Yes          | 97%                                      | 94%                           | 94%              | 100%                        | 77%                 | 90%                  | 55%                               | 94%                       | 71%                            | 68%               | 90%                                  | 65%                             | 97%                               | Average Years Stay |          |
| Percentage No           | 0%                                       | 0%                            | 3%               | 0%                          | 10%                 | 0%                   | 10%                               | 3%                        | 3%                             | 13%               | 0%                                   | 19%                             | 3%                                |                    |          |
| Percentage Not sure     | 3%                                       | 6%                            | 3%               | 0%                          | 13%                 | 10%                  | 35%                               | 3%                        | 26%                            | 19%               | 10%                                  | 16%                             | 0%                                |                    |          |
| Max Score coloured      |  |                               |                  |                             |                     |                      |                                   |                           |                                |                   |                                      |                                 |                                   |                    |          |
| Min Score coloured      |  |                               |                  |                             |                     |                      |                                   |                           |                                |                   |                                      |                                 |                                   |                    |          |
| No of forms completed = | 31                                       |                               |                  |                             |                     |                      |                                   |                           |                                |                   |                                      |                                 |                                   |                    |          |

The highlight from the snapshot survey indicates that everyone (**100%**) felt that their **self-esteem** had improved. Other notable scores are **97%** felt Kyra has helped their **overall recovery** and **94%** feel that their overall **mental health** has improved. A clear message that Kyra works!

The following charts demonstrate how a sample of individual courses has helped members make change in their lives. Wellbeing and General Confidence make the greatest impact overall



**Kyra has 7 counsellors** who have helped 75 women over the year. 23 are continuing; 37 have completed successfully and 15 have been signposted to other organisations/courses.

Satisfaction with the counselling was high with all clients scoring over 7 out of 10 and 88% of clients scoring a maximum 10 of 10; this is an example of feedback:

*"The counselling service has been invaluable. I have improved so much. I can't begin to praise it enough, and I am very grateful to have been given this opportunity. Thank you!"*

**The following charts show the longer term impact Kyra has had on members.** The results are taken from a sample of 25 members who no longer attend Kyra. 68% attended at least twice a month of which 52% attended one or more times a week. 32% attended once a month.

### When asked, Has Kyra had a positive impact on your life?

- 84% agreed
- 16% were indifferent
- No one felt Kyra had a negative impact

### How long have the effects of Kyra lasted?

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Ongoing            | 80% |
| Up to 6 months     | 8%  |
| No effect          | 8%  |
| 6 months to 1 year | 4%  |

### What aspect of your life has been impacted the most by Kyra?

|                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Social Life                          | 28% |
| Mental Health eg. depression/anxiety | 24% |
| Self-esteem and finding support      | 24% |
| Unable to say                        | 24% |

### If you hadn't attended Kyra, what other services might you have engaged in?

|                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| None             | 44% |
| Visits to GP/NHS | 40% |
| Counselling      | 12% |
| Other            | 4%  |

### Has Kyra helped you to achieve

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 84% |
| No  | 16% |

**From the above data we can conclude that the effects of attending Kyra, for a significant majority, will last for longer than just the intervention time. Kyra is also helping to take some of the strain off GP's and the NHS (40% of those surveyed), whilst also reaching those who would not have asked for help or looked for alternative support (44% of those surveyed) and who may well have become a further cost for the country without the support from Kyra.**



The one-to-one mental health mentoring 'JOY' project began in June this year. I am working with women experiencing mild to moderate mental illness. I have worked with 21 participants. We have had a great amount of interest in the project meaning numbers are not an issue. The project is a combination of one-to-one mentorship and small group work within my 'creative wellbeing' classes. During one-to-one sessions I support women with their mental health and we set SMART goals for their recovery. These goals can include participation in Kyra's courses and groups of interest. Women who are not currently economically active are supported on the path to volunteering, training or work. For many of the women I work with, gaining support for their mental health and confidence building is a significantly positive step in this direction. The 'creative wellbeing' groups are craft based with a positive mental health theme. They have been very well received, particularly in November and December, which can be a difficult time of



then continue on their journey with the Kyra community, in a new phase of their recovery journey. I am personally finding the work highly rewarding and fulfilling as I see these women grow and progress in positive directions. All exit reviews will be completed by March 2020. Below are some testimonials from participants.

"I love the activities you are offering and I think they are very beneficial. You come at mental health from a different angle with self-care and well-being strategies that I have never heard of or used before. I am starting to understand what you mean by self-care and am trying to put it into practice in my daily life. I can see that has been a big gap in my life. I have found all the activities we've done very helpful and have been surprised at how my initial discomfort can change and I can feel more relaxed with the strangers in the room as we chat and make things together. Also to meet more women who feel many of the things I feel is a real comfort. In our one-to-ones I always feel that you really listen to me and respond to what I am saying in a helpful and supportive way. I can't tell you what that alone means to me as I get and have been very lonely in my life at times, feeling very misunderstood and alone." (RS)

"I have had numerous meetings with Lulu through Kyra which I have found her creative ideas, understanding nature and passion towards helping others extremely beneficial. As someone receiving help from professionals already for anxiety and eating disorder I can honestly say that meeting Lulu has given me not just additional support but made me feel I am more than a number and actually heard. Whether it be a one to one meeting or a group creativity session I welcome the fact I have Lulus support, also her openness that she too has been in a dark place makes me feel I am not alone and one day I may also beat my demons." (AJ)

Laura



year for many. All women involved with the project attend these groups, which can be a huge step when experiencing anxiety/depression. At the commencement of the project women are asked to fill in the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing scale (WEMWBS), which is then reflected upon in reviews during the project and at its completion. An outcome of the project is to see an improvement in the WEMWBS scores which measure a person's feeling of wellbeing. Reviews have begun and all members have reported very positive improvements in these scores. Women who were previously isolated and lonely are making friends and feeling they belong to our community, through joining groups and activities at Kyra. Participants are reporting they are more hopeful for the future. Women who were previously not economically active have either moved into training, volunteering, paid work or are building skills to move in this direction. So far, all women have achieved at least one of their set goals, most have achieved two of their goals, and many have achieved them all. Exit reviews for the project commenced in November. These women will



## Sound Healing Meditations

I was invited to deliver therapeutic sound meditations at Kyra in October 2018 after delivering a one-off session earlier that year. The classes ran twice a month from January to June 2019 and restarted again in September 2019.

### The benefits of therapeutic sound:

Therapeutic sound produced by instruments such as chimes, Himalayan singing bowls and steel tongue drums encourage the brainwaves to slow down from a stressful, busy state into more relaxed, meditative state, thus allowing mind and body to function at a calmer level and stimulating the body's own healing response, bringing a greater sense of healthfulness, balance and mental well-being. Relaxing sounds have a healing effect that work at an emotional as well as physical level. Research has shown that particular sound frequencies can help to release stress and tension, induce relaxation, relieve pain and encourage better sleep patterns. By bringing the body into balance and helping to release negative thought patterns and emotional upheaval, it has been shown that therapeutic sound can contribute to helping people to recover from traumatic life events and long-term health conditions.

#### In essence, therapeutic sound can help to:

- Manage & reduce pain
- Reduce stress, anxiety & depression
- Release negative emotions & thought patterns
- Release toxins from the body
- Improve general health & well-being
- Improve sleep & increase energy levels
- Improve creativity, intuition & concentration
- Restore balance for mind & body



### Sound Wave Meditation: What I do in A Class:

The class lasts for one hour and begins with the group settling into the space and being guided into mindful breathing followed by a grounding technique to bring awareness to their feet and to develop their connection to the earth. This is important for core stability when beginning to connect with therapeutic sound and is a useful technique for them to use outside the class if they feel in a place of stress or challenge.

I introduce the sound slowly using my voice to guide them into a safe place in nature whilst playing a recording of gently flowing water. I then begin to gently play both the large deeper and smaller higher sounding tongue drums to introduce the sound and induce relaxation. I allow the sounds to flow and move to playing the larger deeper sounding drum for about 20-30 minutes, which I develop into a rhythmic melody for deeper relaxation.

To bring the group back into the room I change the rhythm of the sound and gently move to playing both drums again. Using my voice I begin to guide the group slowly back into the room and to reconnect with their feet and feel grounded. I change the background noise of water to birdsong which induces a sense of awakening and aliveness and then gently play Koshi wind chimes to indicate the end of the meditation and to guide them back into refocussing on their breath before they open their eyes.

I encourage them to drink water and are fully awake before leaving the room as it is so relaxing! I give them an aftercare sheet and details of the next class and I leave notebook for general feedback and the group often share their experiences with each other. Here are some of the member's comments:

"During the sound wave meditation my spirit goes to another place; when it returns towards the end of the session, all the pieces of my mind, which were in conflict, are at peace and in harmony."

"I feel released, as though an essential part of my mind has gone off to be healed. When it comes back I am whole again. My mental health is much improved".

"Very relaxed, elevated mood, I see nice colours".

"Calm and relaxed and happy. I could see all kinds of wildlife in vibrant colour".

"It made me feel relaxed and lighter in my mind".

"So much better after treatment, more at peace, relaxation".

"The sound of the drums is so unbelievably relaxing. I'll have to see if I can get them on YouTube when I'm at home".

Julie Keen



## ROSE Project - Young Women's Project for 17-25's

I began working for The ROSE Project (Reaching Out, Supporting and Empowering) in late May 2019.

I began to liaise with other professionals and agencies and over the next six weeks I made contact and met with:- Youth Justice Service, SASH, Probation, MIND, Door 84, Network 2, IDAS, Survive, staff from All Saints School 6th Form, Changing Lives, Local Area Co-ordinators (CYC), Pathways, Howehill Hostel, York's two Universities and York College.

I also ran two focus groups/outreach sessions with young women at SASH and Door 84

These conversations helped identify the needs of young women in York and where gaps were identified, we engaged those professionals and young women into the ROSE Project thus would enhancing future referrals. We are keen at Kyra not to replicate what is already available to ensure we work with other agencies for the wellbeing of women.

In the summer I ran the first ROSE Project sessions. Of the four that were run in August, three were drop-in format and one was a visit to Cocoa House. In all, eight young women attended these sessions.

In September I developed the sessions into a weekly drop-in called, 'Just Be'. The idea behind this was that an informal drop-in session would help young woman who were anxious about attending and wanted to come with mums, workers, etc. to support them. It was a space for young women to pop in and find out more information as well as a space for young women to come in and be part of the group and be involved in activities. These drop-ins are quiet and so are proving to be the right place for those feeling anxious about coming. In the lead up to Christmas, some members make Christmas crafts and ROSE Project bunting.

The first course is now completed. It was a six week course on self-esteem known as 'Be Awesome'. It featured sessions on what self-esteem is, on identity, body image and the media, on communication and assertiveness, and on being positive and setting goals.

6 women have attended these sessions.

Some women have attended both Drop-in and self-esteem sessions.

Sometimes it takes intense one-to-one work to engage young woman due to her anxiety and fear of the unknown. In these instances I engage with them via text or email and I update them on sessions I am running and hopefully give them confidence to attend.

Agencies such as Door 84, Survive, Local Area Team (City of York Council) Connexions and Changing Lives have referred young women into the Project

### Future Plans include;

'Be Safe'. A six week evening course looking at safety in the home, outside the home and online. We have talks and information sessions from the Police and Changing Lives as well as self-defence classes.

Building and developing the drop-in, 'Just Be', with a view to creating a user-led steering group with members having a say on what the ROSE Project offers and the shape of future projects.



### Feedback has included:

- 'Many thanks for last night. 'A' came out with a smile on her face, which was great to see. She's looking forward to attending the course'
- (from Mum of daughter attending self-esteem sessions)
- 'I have learnt how to change my mindset. turn my negative thoughts into more positive thoughts'.
- 'Overall I have loved my time on the project and coming to talk to people'
- 'I have learnt to love and accept myself just as I am. I have learnt how my feelings affect my behaviour.'
- 'It gave me the confidence to find a job.'
- 'I've had a really great time with the Rose Project team. Both Sherrie and Hattie are very dedicated and welcoming. I am very glad that I took this course'
- 'I've learned that it's not so scary coming to a group.'
- 'I have more confidence to go to a group situation.'

Sherrie

**‘Good People, Nice Times’** - a York based organisation that brings people together through food—this year linked up with Lewis & Duncan Catering and York CVS to host a pop-up gourmet dinner in aid of Kyra Woman's Project. As a sustainable event planning service, Good People, Nice Times takes care of the nitty gritty parts of events so the guest hosts, in this case Kyra, can relax and focus on connecting with the guests, not checking guests off or fluffing around with AV equipment.

The dinner, in the Main Hall at the Priory Street Centre, was a chance for guests to learn about the wonderful work Kyra do in the community, stories from members and information on how to get involved in an informal, casual setting.

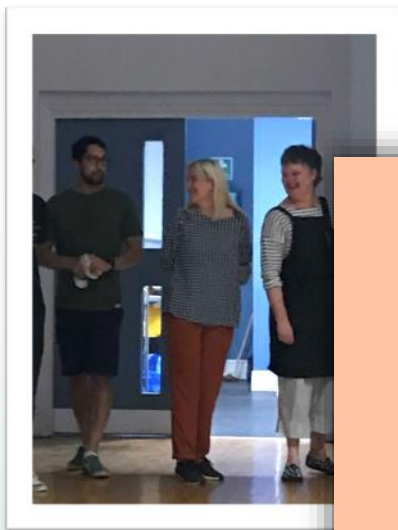
Guests were seated on a large communal table and served a delicious feast of vegetarian Middle-Eastern sharing plates which provided an opportunity to connect with others, sharing food and conversation. The environment was cosy, fun and inspiring. The members stories were heartfelt and it was evident that the support Kyra provides really does turn lives around.

Kyra were the perfect hosts and we are grateful they gave us the opportunity to try our new format out with them and fortunately we have discovered that it works!

We donated 20% of each ticket purchased to Kyra, raising £140. We hope to work with them in the future to raise much more.

With so much waste in the events and catering sector, we want to change this and showcase eco-catering. This meant no single use items, that people took home the leftovers and that we composted the remainder. Where at all possible, all décor and

tableware is reusable. You won't find any paper plates or balloons at our events!  
Finola



**GOOD  
PEOPLE,  
NICE  
TIMES**



Kyra Women’s Project has been a delivery partner on the Action Towards Inclusion programme since it began in March 2017. Action Towards Inclusion is part of the national Building Better Opportunities programme funded by the European Social Fund and National Lottery Community Fund. This programme supports those furthest away from the labour market to progress closer to or into employment.

Working for Your Consortium Ltd, I have been the Programmes Coordinator assigned to Kyra Women’s Project for quite some time. My experience of working with Kyra has been nothing but enjoyable and it is crystal clear how passionate the staff are about supporting the women they work with. Having visited on several occasions you can feel the welcoming and caring atmosphere as soon as you arrive – a variety of activities available, member’s art/craft work on display and the kettle ready for a cuppa and conversation!

The Keyworkers on the ATI programme have supported a multitude of women facing a wide range of barriers within their lives. To date, they have engaged with 46 women and progressed 23 of these into job-search, education, training and/or employment. Having met a few of these individuals and listened to their views on Kyra and the support they have received, it became very clear that the impact on their lives was phenomenal. Some had left situations of domestic abuse, some were recovering from drug/alcohol addictions, some were lone parents, but all were facing huge barriers which were alleviated with the support from Kyra and the ATI programme. We had the opportunity to meet with two of Kyra’s participants on ATI who filmed a case study

which was truly eye-opening: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vG\\_BD8VIFeg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vG_BD8VIFeg)

Action Towards Inclusion has been granted an extension which means the programme delivery will now run until September 2022. Kyra Women’s Project will continue to with their Keyworker support for women in the York district as well as adding an Intervention role to deliver counselling sessions. I have no doubt this will be a highly sought -after intervention within the partnership and we are lucky that Kyra are now able to offer this to women on the programme.



Aside from ATI, Kyra Women’s Project is also delivering on two other programmes managed by Your Consortium. On ESF Community Grants, Kyra are offering various courses around self-esteem, assertiveness, ‘This Is My Job’ and also counselling sessions

are available.

On the TEWV Innovation Fund programme, Kyra is delivering one-to-one support and group workshops for women facing various levels of mental health difficulties. Kyra has been using a creative approach – making ‘sunshine jars’ and ‘little boxes of calm’ to support members to approach their mental wellbeing in a positive way and raise their self-esteem: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdnjRTwQliQ>

Kyra has got off to a flying start on both of these programmes this year, exceeding their targets for this point in the programme which is fantastic.

All in all, Kyra has been a truly valuable partner to Your Consortium for a number of years – and hopefully many more to come.



Lorna—Programmes  
Coordinator Your Consortium Ltd



It's been just over two years since I joined the Kyra volunteer team and each month I am still blown away by the people I meet; other volunteers as well as the members. The patience, generosity and care from all is amazing.

Working as a coach for Kyra gives me the opportunity to offer tools, techniques and other perspectives for the members. Some are looking for ways to achieve their dreams, and coaching provides them the space to share ambitions, that they may not have told anyone else about, and together we look at what is possible from where they are now and what they need to get closer to that goal.



Others are looking the next steps so that they can create stability of routine and a sense of normality in their lives.

Other members simply want to feel good, feel better than they currently do about life. It's the collaborative nature of coaching that helps them discover what they can do to make this happen.

I love the unfolding nature of coaching, not knowing who I am going to be working with, or what they need, then through our conversation finding the ways to connect and support each woman. The light bulb moments bring me joy, as well as meeting members after they have completing their coaching and them sharing the changes that they have made. I am privileged to have been part of their life.

These women blow me away with their determination, resilience and passion to make a difference to themselves no matter what they are or have faced.

Each member can access up to three sessions of coaching, some may need more and we are looking at ways that we can support that further development. My intent is to share resources and guide them to what may be helpful next.

There was one member this year, Liz, whose determination to make change in her life really stood out. After just one hour of coaching she was talking about the insights and how she could use them. The following month, she recounted what she had done, the changes she had made and was hungry for more. It was joyous for me to share her coaching journey, and part of me didn't want it to end.

And so, with Yvonne's consent, I emailed my private clients and asked whether any of them would be interested in sponsoring a Kyra lady. I explained the passion and eagerness shown, and hinted at the challenging life she had led.

At my next meeting with Liz, the final coaching session, I handed her a card explaining that six strangers had sponsored her to continue her coaching.

She couldn't understand why. "They don't even know me."

"No, but I do Liz, and I know how committed you are to your development. That's why they want to support you."

And her commitment has only grown. I am grateful to have found KYRA and to be able to share the insights that changed my life and to see these making a difference to others who really need it is a blessing! Jules



**Accessible Arts & Media** is a small charity based in Acomb, York. We've been running inclusive arts and creative media learning projects in and around York since 1982.

Our projects include singing and signing choirs, creative digital media programmes, specialist creative sensory activities, and training programmes where learning-disabled adults and young people train as workshop leaders.

We support over 700 people each year, including disabled adults and young people, older people living with dementia and memory loss and people with mental ill health. A lot of these people often face difficulty with everyday activities and can end up feeling isolated and cut off.

Our programmes help them develop the skills and confidence to connect with their local community and have more of a say in the things that matter to them. And everyone has a lot of fun along the way!

Early in 2019, we came to Kyra for a day to offer Kyra members an iMUSE taster.

iMUSE is a one-to-one therapeutic multi-sensory experience. It uses interactive technology to help people relax, make music and create visuals. iMUSE brings

about a range of benefits, including reducing anxiety and improving mood, being creative, increasing confidence, making choices and improving physical wellbeing.

Women who tried MUSE on the first taster day gave really positive feedback. As a result, we wanted to work with Kyra to provide further iMUSE sessions for their members. We worked together to secure funding and we're now offering monthly iMUSE sessions over 12 months.



Partnership working is at the heart of our work at Accessible Arts & Media and it's central to the development of iMUSE and its sustainability. Working with Kyra strengthens our presence in central York and ensures that we reach the people most in need of our service. We hope this partnership with Kyra continues.

Julie Green



## **Crombie Wilkinson and KYRA**

Hi! My name is Juliette Kilkenny. I am a Chartered Legal Executive and work for Crombie Wilkinson Solicitors. I qualified as a Chartered Legal Executive in 2011 and have worked for Crombie Wilkinson for over 13 years.

For the last three years I have been offering free legal advice to Kyra members and volunteers on the first Thursday of each month between 10am and 12pm. My specialism and area of expertise is Family Law, including Divorce/Separation, Financial Settlement, Child Arrangements and Domestic Abuse, however I am able to signpost anyone to colleagues at Crombie Wilkinson for advice on other issues.

It has been wonderful to assist so many of you over the last three years whether it be to obtain urgent protection from harm, provide a second opinion on agreed arrangements with your former partner or guide you through the court process. Meeting lots of you at Kyra means we can chat in a setting comfortable and familiar to you which has been invaluable. I am looking forward to meeting more of you over the next 12 months and assisting you on your individual journeys.

Finally, I am delighted that at Crombie Wilkinson this financial year, our chosen charity is Kyra which means that throughout the year we will be (and have been already) organising lots of fundraising events to raise funds for Kyra to ensure it continues the brilliant work it already does. We have already held raffles, tombola's, a Halloween fancy dress day and bake sales, so we are well on the way to raising lots of money. I was also very pleased to take part in the Dragon Boat Race earlier in the year to raise yet more money and joined lots of Kyra volunteers and friends in their boat. It was hard work but a real lot of fun!

Juliette





York Mind are delighted to be working alongside Kyra Women's Project again in Year 3 of the Mental Health and Well-Being Activities Programme.

The Activities Programme is a city wide activities programme, providing early intervention and prevention activities for individuals who require support for their mental health and well-being.

Our programme model centres on the principle that mental health and recovery journeys are supported and maintained by a combination of activities which fall under three pathways: Learning and Development, Well-being and Social with the underpinning principles of Connect, Grow and Hope.

Delivery is completed by key project partners, with York Mind as lead partner.

Partnership working provides a great opportunity to network and share information and experience across the sector.

York Mind value the specialist knowledge and experience provided by all our partners and Kyra are no exception. Our relationship is one of positive collaboration, as we strive to support a wide range of people with differing needs and expectations.

In Year 2, Kyra delivered a successful Pause for the Menopause group and also a Blue Butterflies group offering opportunities for participants to develop skills in craft and fundraising for Kyra.

Both activities provided great opportunities for women to learn, develop, socialise, progress their recovery and improve well-being.

Year 3 has just begun and Kyra are continuing their Pause for the Menopause group, providing this valuable information and support resource to women in need.

Working in the current partnership has

expanded everyone's knowledge of client needs in York and as project partners we can clearly identify gaps and needs where work can be progressed.

As partners we have learned and developed alongside each other. We have had to come together as a group to create a way of working that is uniform to this service, whilst still meeting the principles and values of each organisation.

We look forward to the next year of delivery and hope that we can continue our connections with Kyra long after the lifetime of this project.

Some examples of Kyra feedback.....

- Excellent facilitator. Meeting new people with similar issues.
- Everything about coming to the course was very interesting, it's just a lot for me to take in and think about, with my anxiety.
- Learn about this natural process in our lives with other women in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere...for me everything was good.
- I think that the idea of a course is fantastic, very useful.
- It's confirmed I do not have mental health issues, it is only the menopause and I have learnt so much about myself.
- I would like to thank Melanie and Elaine for taking time out to do the Pause for the Menopause course, and I hope my anxiety and confidence improves soon. Thank you both so much, and the lovely people I have met on your course have been so nice and understanding. I just wish I could remember everyone's names.
- Just to say thank you, I really enjoyed. I learned new things and I met new people.

Jamie Edwards, Activity Manager



I am very proud of the continuing partnership between Kyra and IDAS. We have now been working closely for years and together, we deliver our MODA (Moving on from Domestic Abuse group) for victims and survivors of domestic abuse in York. These groups are vital in helping women understand and begin to recover from their abusive relationships and, through these, we have supported over 60 women in the last year.

Kyra also provides vital counselling, support and befriending services to women living in York. This helps not only victims of abuse but any woman experiencing loneliness, low self-esteem or mental ill-health. Through their services, Kyra finds creative ways to help women build friendship groups, receive the counselling support they need and re-build their lives free from abuse. The positive impact of Kyra's support can last a lifetime.

We look forward to continuing working closely with Kyra during 2020 and for many years to come.

**Sarah Hill** CEO





# Collaborative Working

# Collaborative Working



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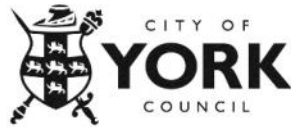
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## National Garden Scheme Elspeth Thompson Bursary Award



In my first year as National Garden Scheme County Organiser I have found there is an enormous amount to learn but even more to enjoy, and getting to know about organisations such as Kyra as a result of a grant from our Elspeth Thompson Bursary (now called the Community Gardens Award) has been an unexpected pleasure.

The NGS raised over £3 million last year to give to caring charities, but I had been unaware that through these awards we also help local community organisations. These are relatively small awards so it was exciting to see how just a few hundred pounds could make such a difference to Kyra and it was a privilege to be involved even in such a tiny way. This small local charity felt much more personal and easier to relate to for me, and to be able to see and hear about it first hand was fascinating and heart warming.

Gill organised my visit beautifully and went to great trouble to make sure I parked in the right place (free!) and could find my way (not easy!) and also that I would arrive at a time when I could meet Yvonne too. It was lovely to see the garden as soon as I turned the corner, so I got the same impression of Kyra's premises as would any new visitor in need of Kyra's support. We explored the courtyard in the sunshine and Gill explained how the Award application had been made and how many women had helped with the construction and upkeep of it. The garden was all up and running and gave a lovely vibrancy to such a small space surrounded by buildings in that historic part of York. Benches, a table, planters and pots full of both sensory and colourful seasonal and perennial plants gave the courtyard a very calm but cheerful atmosphere. There was even a tiny fountain. I could imagine what a welcome place it would be to any woman in need of Kyra's care or help: to sit in company or alone, and in which to garden or just to look and enjoy. The volunteers at Kyra are very aware of what its members need in all sorts of ways and there seemed no doubt that the courtyard sensory garden was a great asset to everyone. I was really delighted to hear about the Project and to gain a new perspective on how life can be for the less fortunate amongst us.



This is not a particularly easy site for a garden as it doesn't get a great deal of sun, and all the plants are growing in pots, but the large planters have given the space lots of structure to enhance the table and benches, and the wooden obelisks have given height and space for climbing roses to thrive. Gill was delighted how quickly insects had found the garden and its flowers: such a compliment and encouragement to the gardeners. Anyone and everyone can help care for and nurture the garden and its planting and I gather watering is fairly constantly on the 'to do' list!

We made our way inside and upstairs to the meeting room where Yvonne joined us and I heard more about how Kyra Women's Project works and whom the organisation helps. The 'drop in' system must be very appealing to anyone who chooses or needs to visit Kyra and the atmosphere in the building is at once warm and peaceful. There is a buzz and energy about the place but also a quiet calm. I love the fact that volunteers can offer their own specialisms at Kyra and that all their skills are joining to bring strength and comfort and practical help to the women participating in their classes and I had the feeling that everyone, the givers and the receivers, are benefitting.

Veronica Brook, County Organiser, West and South Yorkshire.

# Kyra Sensory Courtyard Garden Project 2019

**Imagine.** You're sitting on a Cornflower blue bench, with the afternoon sun warm on your cheeks. You're in the company of climbing roses the colour of clotted cream. You catch their heady myrrh and vanilla scent on the air. You're in the company, too, of Chocolate Cosmos. You discover its burgundy silk petals really do smell of... chocolate! Your ears pick out the soft, intermittent hum of a Honey Bee, as its translucent wings carry it from the swaying Cat Mint to the rambling purple Cranesbill. Next, you tune in to the quiet, constant trickle of water over pebbles. You stretch and take a stroll, smiling at how the scalloped leaves of the Lady's Mantle cradle droplets of water – perfect glass spheres, catching the sunlight. A butterfly – a Painted Lady with its apricot wings – rests momentarily on the Lavender, then flutters, completely silent, to the violet Salvia. Then a soft breeze swishes the Pony Tail grass. You run your fingers through its delicate stems, finding them soft as feathers...

Thanks to a generous donation from RHS/Open Gardens Scheme, everything I've invited you to imagine has, this year, become a reality. And it's amazing! Volunteers and members have worked together to create a truly relaxing sensory garden – a place which feels calm and safe and is a balm for all the senses. It's hard to believe, sitting in the courtyard garden, that we are in a city centre, that less than a minute's walk away all is awash

with traffic, noise and bustle.

At the start of spring, we asked Kyra members what they

would like from a sensory garden. A space to de-stress, calm colours, lots of lovely scents and the sound of water were top of the list. In April, volunteers and members started clearing the courtyard and giving all the benches and window boxes a lick of paint – we chose a pallet of soft blues and greens which would blend well with all the proposed planting. Through May and June



we set about choosing plants and bedding them into their new home – lots of compost, and lots of manure especially for the roses. We had to choose plants very carefully as the courtyard is surrounded on all sides by high walls. Some parts of



the it receive little or no direct sunlight, while other parts get more than their fair share. 'Right plant, right place' as the saying goes.

Off to a great start, the courtyard bloomed gloriously from early July onwards, as the plants all became established. The final touch was the water feature. Designed by us, a small fountain splashes over pebbles and is powered by solar energy.

Kyra's regular gardening group will ensure the courtyard remains a beautiful place for everyone to spend time in. And, of course, green-fingered members will continue to experience the benefits which gardening can bring to both physical and mental health.

Already, so many of our members – gardeners and non-gardeners alike – have commented on how they are finding the new sensory garden a delightful and peaceful place to be.

Gill Stephenson







**In 2002**, when I retired from teaching, I hoped that my new found freedom could be put to good use and I would find somewhere to offer my services as a volunteer. Then unexpected family circumstances arose, and it was some years before I could resume my original retirement plans. In May 2015 an item in The Press caught my eye. Kyra Women's Project was holding an open session for potential volunteers. I had never heard of Kyra, but this sounded interesting, so on 15th May 2015 I came to St Saviourgate, found Kyra and embarked on a new and exciting phase in my life. On that first day, the more I learned about Kyra and met volunteers, who gave me such a warm welcome, the more I knew it was where I wanted to be.

Now, as a volunteer, I help at the twice weekly drop-ins. This has given me the opportunity to meet, and get to know, many of our members and to hear from them the circumstances that led them to Kyra. I also coordinate the Saturday bring and share drop in lunches and poetry lunches. These take place alternately every

month. At the lunches we sit around the kitchen table and chat about anything and everything. At the poetry lunches we have lunch, then share poems. What began as an occasional event is now a regular feature. And during the last year, with the Art Group, and thanks to funding from York Minster Lions, we have been able to produce a long awaited book containing a selection of poems written and illustrated by our members. I have also been able to support Penny from IDAS in delivering the MODA course at Kyra. This has given me additional insights into the nature and extent of domestic abuse. The statistics are alarming and depressing, but they reinforce the need for organisations such as Kyra.

I am so happy to have found Kyra and to be able to play a part in helping and supporting women. I am constantly amazed and impressed by the courage, fortitude and resilience of our members. To be a volunteer at Kyra is to be part of a loving community in which we are all, volunteers and members, valued and respected. I experienced this on personal level when when I was supported and encouraged following a health problem. Recently I reached the age of 80 and I want to thank everyone for making it so special. From the cake to the gifts and cards, not to mention the messages and photos, it is a birthday I shall always remember and treasure. And that for me is the essence of Kyra - kindness and hope. There are often tears in the process, but there is also lots and lots of laughter - and plenty of cakes and fun.

Ann





I started volunteering for Kyra when the charity had just turned one. I came along planning to volunteer for an afternoon a week at drop-in, and quickly became more involved in other areas of the charity. I started co-facilitating the ESTA programme with Yvonne, going on to lead the group. Around the same time, I became a buddy leader. I have worked on two community grants funding projects and am currently working as a Key Worker on the ATI project mentoring women who are out of work and wanting to get back into work or training along with being the Project Manager for the charity. When I first came to Kyra, I had no idea the impact it would have on me and how much I would grow within the charity.

The impact Kyra has on the members lives is incredible and a wonderful thing to be a part of. Working with a team of volunteers who tirelessly give their time and expertise to benefit the lives of the members is a constant inspiration. Being a part of the journey of the members, witnessing their strength and resilience is such an incredible experience. Kyra not only provides a safe supportive place for its members, it also does for its volunteers. The support, opportunity and friendship offered to every volunteer is special and helps in making Kyra unique. In the time that I have been at Kyra the charity has grown unequivocally and is continuing to do so. The range of services offered is continuously expanding and changing to meet the needs of the members. Kyra benefits not just the volunteers and members but also the wider community in countless ways.

Frances

*We wish Frances much happiness as she leaves us to go on adoption leave. Frances has contributed so much to the work of Kyra and will be greatly missed, but we look forward to welcoming her back in 2021.*



# Walking Group

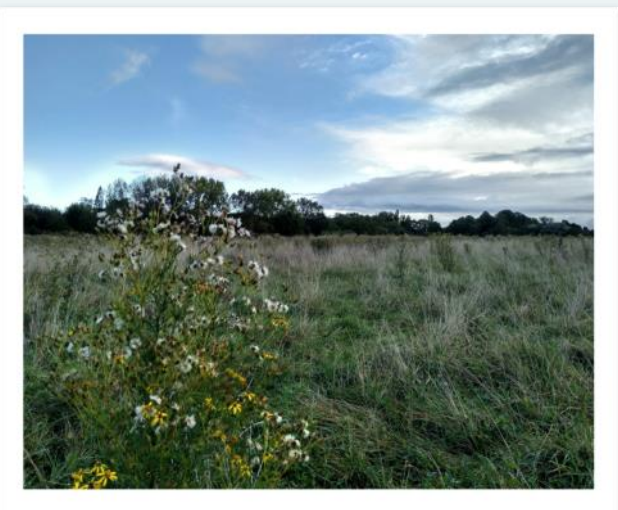
When I heard that Elaine (volunteer) was hoping to set up a Kyra Walking Group it ticked lots of boxes for me.



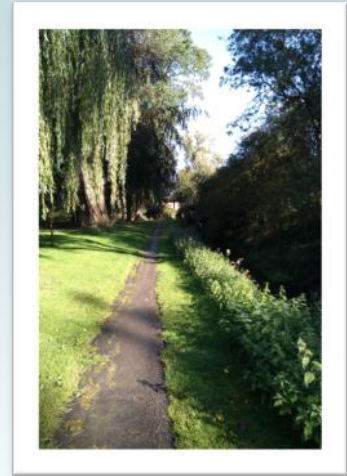
I love the idea of getting people together socially out in the fresh air. A social walking group, a time to walk and talk, a time to explore parts of York we may never have ventured to before. A time to improve fitness levels, get out in the fresh air and enjoy green urban spaces. Now doesn't this sound appealing?

It's proven that exercise and walking can improve your mental health. A good **walk** really can do wonders for your **mental** wellbeing.

It can improve mood, sleep quality, and reduce stress, anxiety and fatigue. Physically active people have up to a 30% reduced risk of becoming depressed, and



staying active helps those who are suffering from depression recover.



So Elaine and I completed our walk leaders training, became Health Champions and planned our first two walks. The first one a gentle urban walk of about 2.5 miles close to Kyra. The second 5-mile walk took us over Walmgate Stray with great views and a feeling of been out in open green spaces. There was a real sense of excitement when our small group set off on the first walk.



We very much look forward to welcoming more members to join us. We will always walk at the pace of the slowest walker and can tailor future walks to suit different levels and distances.

Becky



My name is Hattie Myers and I have recently finished my 8 week placement with Kyra. Here is a little insight into my experience and some information on what I got up to on my placement. I am currently on the NHS Graduate Management Training Scheme, where we have the opportunity to organise a placement in an organisation of our choice. I was confident I wanted a placement in the third sector, to develop my understanding of the services they provide and the pressures they face; but I was unsure which charity to apply to. I learnt about Kyra through a friend and their purpose really struck a chord with me. There is a clear link between Kyra and healthcare, as nearly 50% of women are referred to Kyra via healthcare professionals, and I was intrigued to learn more about the holistic approach Kyra

take to support the women of York and the surrounding areas.

I was lucky enough to spend my first two weeks with Kyra on "orientation", experiencing a range of different services they provide, including drop ins, mindfulness, assertiveness course, creative writing, conversational Spanish, group wellbeing sessions, job search sessions and much more. This gave me a first-hand insight what Kyra offer and I felt inspired to see the hard work the volunteers put into their sessions, tailoring them to suit the women's needs. I could see the difference these activities were making to women's lives and how different activities both complimented each other but served different purposes.

As part of my placement I was involved in researching organisations in York to try and identify suitable organisations which Kyra may wish to partner with, whilst also creating a business sponsorship package for Kyra. As well as this, I learnt about the difficulties securing funding and how bid applications were made. I also completed some data analysis, created questionnaires and collected feedback to help measure the impact Kyra was having on members, hoping to capture why members had left and their experience with Kyra. This information should be invaluable to help with funding understanding the impact Kyra can make to peoples lives. Finally I also helped with the Rose Young Women's Project and volunteered on the self-esteem (ESTA) course.

I believe I have learnt a lot from my experience with Kyra, perhaps most notably from how Kyra live and breathe their values; something which I hope to take with me into my role as a manager in the NHS. The volunteers have been so welcoming and I want to thank each and every one of them for helping me settle in so quickly. I enjoyed myself so much with Kyra that I couldn't say bye, and can't wait to continue volunteering with Kyra on the ESTA course.

## Sue Ferguson, Clinical Hypnotherapist and Psychotherapist

I joined Kyra in November 2019 as a student Solution Focussed Hypnotherapist, initially providing relaxation sessions for members and then moving on to full hypnotherapy sessions.

I qualified in June 2019 and have continued to provide weekly sessions for between three to five individuals each Thursday afternoon.

Solution Focussed Hypnotherapy (SFH) is very different to other forms of hypnotherapy in that it combines elements of both psychotherapy and hypnotherapy. It is particularly effective for supporting those experiencing anxiety, depression, phobias, low self-esteem, grief, disordered eating/weight issues, addiction and more.

I focus on helping clients to formulate solutions rather than focussing on their problems. In our initial consultation, I explain how the brain works in relation to the problem or issue they would like to overcome and I explain how the process of SFH will help them reframe their thinking to allow them to move forward.

The weekly sessions thereafter are really fun and informal, as research shows that when people are relaxed happy they're more likely to be operating from their left pre-frontal cortex and therefore calmer, more positive and more open to taking on new ideas and making positive changes.

Each week, in the talking part of the therapy, we focus on what's been good/better than the week before, we go over how the brain works and I relate this back to the client's experiences of the previous week. I use scaling to determine how happy the client is week on week and I facilitate a goal-setting session where they paint a picture of what small changes they would like to make each time.

With the client now very much in solution mode, we then move into the trance part of the session. While in trance, the conscious and the subconscious minds come together, enabling new ways of thinking to be fully taken on board. It's also very relaxing.



Hypnotherapy does require commitment from the client to turn up every week and to listen to a hypnotherapy CD/download that I provide every night when they go to bed. The people that do this make significantly faster progress.

At some point during the first few sessions there's usually a light-bulb moment where the client experiences an epiphany about the new direction they'd like their life to take and then the big changes really start to happen.

I've worked with members with a range of issues and I'm enormously proud of all of them for the giant steps they've made towards living more positively and on their own terms.

Sue

# Kyra name and logo

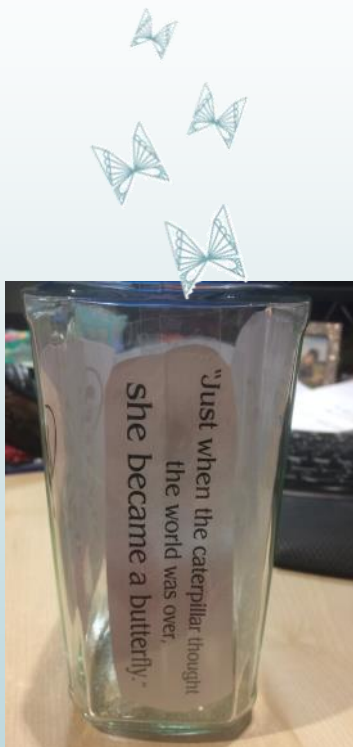


When we chose the name, we wanted something simple and easy to remember. We wanted a woman's name so it could be added to phones without anyone querying. In Slavonic, Kyra means "strong woman" we felt this was very appropriate

The Kyra logo was created by volunteers Glynis and Joy who both have backgrounds in design. Their brief was to come up with something

that could be used on stationery, business cards and within a website. The butterfly was chosen, as it reflected the change some of the women at the Kyra project are going through – with an end result of freedom and flight. Glynis and Joy wrote:

*"We tried to produce a design which responds to Kyra's aim of supporting women to make positive change within their lives. The name 'Kyra' means strong woman and with this in mind we decided to use the Century Gothic type face because of the strength and clarity of its characters. Support is suggested through the underscoring of the word whilst the butterfly presents a symbol of change elevation and the ability to move on. It is hoped that the butterfly can also be used alone as a decorative motif on promotional items some of which can be made by Kyra attendees"*



## Bishopthorpe Palace

Kyra's patron is Dame Penelope Wilson and once every year she comes to visit us all in York for a day, providing her busy schedule allows.

My first experience of meeting her was in May this year, when Dame Penelope visited us for that special day. We were all very excited, anticipating the day and planning a programme for her.

We had such fun with a small presentation from our Drama group, then the music group with Dame Penelope joining in enthusiastically. We finished with some poetry reading from our 'Reflections' book which is a compilation of work from the poetry group, illustrated by the art group.

I was thrilled to be invited to join her in the evening at Bishopthorpe Palace, the home of the Archbishop of York. Penelope was holding a reception there in the evening, hosted by Margaret



Sentamu for several sponsors and potential donors and benefactors who had been invited.

I was asked to address the guests about my experience of becoming a member of Kyra. I am always keen to extol the virtues of Kyra and was very happy to give my account and read a poem I had written to reflect some of mine and other members past sad, difficult circumstances. This is what Kyra is all about.

We started with a champagne reception and greeted the guests as they arrived. It was interesting to meet people that had helped us in the past and to meet new

people curious to learn more about the work of Kyra.

Becki, one of the trustees at Kyra gave a brief rundown of the work going on at Kyra.

There followed an introduction from Yvonne and a brief history of how her idea of Kyra came to fruition.

I followed with my poem and expressed my thoughts, affection and gratitude for this wonderful organisation.

Penelope gave a very interesting talk about her early life and her long, diverse acting career. Then there was a question and answer session which was both touching and amusing.

Margaret Sentamu was the last to speak and we then showed our appreciation to her for her hospitality.

I found it easy and enjoyable to talk to the guests after the presentations.

A lot of them didn't know about the work going on at Kyra, some even were surprised at the extent of members diverse and complicated concerns. I was also keen to express my affection and admiration for all the volunteers who make the atmosphere in Kyra so special.

Now when I reflect on the impact Kyra has had on my life, how I washed up at Kyra's door a broken woman and blossomed in their warm caring care. Being able to stand in front of an audience and reveal myself in poetry and words and to meet and discuss Kyra with the guests has truly been remarkable and life changing.

Heather

We met in September 2018 at the Freedom Project course run by Kyra. A small group of strangers, nobody spoke, no eye contact, heads down, feelings inside were worse, each person had forced themselves to be there, feeling uncomfortable, unsure of their own future.

It felt like we had hit rock bottom, but the once a week course became our lifeline. After the first session a huge sense of understanding from the experienced mentors began, along with the two most transforming facts. One, we were not alone. Two, comprehending this was not our fault.

We started going out for coffee after the two-hour session, which progressed to a small lunch. Then regularly we began to go to Zumba back at Kyra. The whole group built up a strong bond. We formed a "group chat" on our mobiles. This group got most of us through Christmas and New Year, we were there for each other, this still exists today over a year later. Confidence slowly built up along with a kindred friendship.

We began to venture out a little more into the real world. Suddenly, after so many years fighting alone we had someone to rely on, being there for each other through the highs and lows, being 50 something, living with elderly parents and trying to make sense of it all. We are still experiencing the backlash of ending our abusive relationships, still have some bad days, but now we have Kyra to support us and each other.

A large achievement was staying in London for four days, one day of which, was an open air "party in the park" concert. We danced all afternoon and evening, chattered to people around us, we reminded each other how far we had come, we did this with our heads held high, looked each other in the eye, feeling comfortable in our surroundings and felt on a wonderful high on the inside, knowing we had a future.  
E and J

Hope....

I would like not only to say thank you to Kyra for the help and support it gives, but also for the hope which Kyra gives.

When I first arrived at Kyra's door my hope had gone. With Kyra's help I saw a glimmer of hope and then more and more, one tough step at a time.

I am grateful for the courses and activities which Kyra provides. Each one that I attend adds to my hope. I am thankful for the women I meet at Kyra: women from all walks of life, whose examples give me hope. Hope deserves to be a two-way street, and if sharing my story gives hope to other women then I am thankful for that too.

Hope drives us on in difficult times and gives us the courage to make changes in our life, even if those changes are long overdue. Unfortunately, hope does not come gift-wrapped in a ribboned box, yet it can be encouraged and nurtured and found in the smallest of things: conversations, activities and a much-needed hug.

These are the things which Kyra has provided and is continuing to provide for me and so many other women.

*Jo – member of the creative writing group*





# Members

# Outside Support



**Statement of Financial Activities  
(incorporating Income and Expenditure accounts)  
for the year ended 30th September 2019**

|  | Unrestricted<br>Funds<br>£ | Restricted<br>Funds<br>£ | Total<br>2019<br>£ | Total<br>2018<br>£ |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Income</b>  |                            |                          |                    |                    |
| Donations and Legacies   | 22,484                     | 102,003                  | 124,487            | 117,055            |
| Activities for generating funds  | 11,548                     | -                        | 11,548             | 2,223              |
| Investment income  | -                          | -                        | -                  | -                  |
| Income from charitable activities  | 3,792                      | -                        | 3,792              | 221                |
| Other incoming resources   | -                          | -                        | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Total incoming resources</b>  | <b>37,824</b>              | <b>102,003</b>           | <b>139,827</b>     | <b>119,499</b>     |
| <b>Expenditure</b>   |                            |                          |                    |                    |
| Cost of raising funds  |                            |                          |                    |                    |
| Cost of generating voluntary income  | -                          | -                        | -                  | -                  |
| Fundraising trading costs  | 2,005                      | -                        | 2,005              | 400                |
| Investment management costs  | -                          | -                        | -                  | -                  |
| Charitable activities  | 12,814                     | 105,549                  | 118,363            | 106,361            |
| Governance costs   | 360                        | -                        | 360                | 360                |
| Other resources expended   | -                          | -                        | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Total resources expended</b>  | <b>15,179</b>              | <b>105,549</b>           | <b>120,728</b>     | <b>107,121</b>     |
| <b>Net Income/(expenditure)<br/>before other recognised gains/(losses)</b>   | <b>22,645</b>              | <b>(3,546)</b>           | <b>19,099</b>      | <b>12,378</b>      |
| Other recognised gains/(losses)  | -                          | -                        | -                  | -                  |
| Gains and losses on revaluation of fixed<br>assets for the charity's own use | -                          | -                        | -                  | -                  |
| Gains and losses on investment assets  | -                          | -                        | -                  | -                  |
| Gross transfers between funds  | -                          | -                        | -                  | -                  |
| <b>Net movement in funds</b>   | <b>22,645</b>              | <b>(3,546)</b>           | <b>19,099</b>      | <b>12,378</b>      |
| Total funds brought forward  | 24,592                     | 42,993                   | 67,585             | 55,207             |
| <b>Total funds carried forward</b>   | <b>47,237</b>              | <b>39,447</b>            | <b>86,684</b>      | <b>67,585</b>      |

Kyra is the very best!

I arrived at Kyra lost, broken and extremely depressed 7 months ago.

There are no words to express my absolute gratitude to all these wonderful volunteers.

I am always made welcome by everyone working there. Without judgment, just acceptance. Besides all the kindness and support, I am also supported fully by these ladies to get my self confidence back. I have never felt so accepted anywhere else. Just go and see for yourself. Believe me you will walk out stronger and with a smile on your face.

5 stars to all the earth angels at Kyra. I love you 😊 😊 xx



kyra

women's  
project

supporting women to make change



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