



**GATESHEAD**  
**ART PROJECT**  
EXHIBITION 2015



# The Gateshead Art Project 2015

Working with Gateshead based artist Tommy Anderson, young people accessing the Gateshead ISS programme (Intensive Supervision and Surveillance) have produced a collection of individual and group artworks in response to the events, people and places of The First World War. Work includes photomontage, aerosol art, illustration, typography, printing, mosaic, modelling, photography and collage.

This booklet showcases the artwork that has been produced during the project and the journey of the talented young people who created it.

To celebrate the achievements of the young people, an exhibition of the artwork was displayed at Gateshead Civic Centre during the summer of 2015. A number of the artworks were also submitted for the 2015 Koestler Trust awards.

# Gateshead Youth Offending Team

## First World War Centenary project

Young people have learned about the local, national and international impact of the First World War. The harsh reality of war is something that the young people had not considered or appreciated previously, but through the project they have learnt about the many young men who gave their lives to create a positive future. One young person said, *“Before I started this project all I knew was that lots of people died and they played football on Christmas Eve”*.

Calendars were produced and these were sold or donated to various partners and external agencies. Proceeds from these sales were donated to the Ashington branch of the Royal British Legion. This is the last branch in Northumberland and the YOT felt it was important to support this local resource.

The Royal British Legion wrote to The Youth Offending team to thank them for *“The kind donation of the commemorative calendars. Everyone who received a calendar gave a very generous donation and this money will be used for any of our veterans or their dependants who are in need of a little help. Without the help and support of people like you we would not be able to carry on with this vital benevolent work”*.

Gateshead Youth Offending Team has made links with a local charity which helps the elderly in a weekly lunch club. The aim of this project was to allow the young people to participate in intergenerational work. The young people engaged with a Second World War veteran called Sid who is 95 years old. He took time to talk to the young people, show them his medals and explain his role within his platoon. The young people have gained an insight into Sid’s experience during the Second World War. The rector at the lunch club said, *“I want to express my gratitude for the work you do. It is excellent to better develop understanding across generations both young and old”*.

Gateshead Youth Offending Reparation Team has completed work at a local cemetery where several veterans are buried. The young people have tidied and cleaned the area and, as a result of this, they have uncovered gravestones that could not previously be seen due to them being overgrown. One young person talked about his passion for history and how it is his favourite subject at school – this is one of the reasons why he enjoyed completing reparation at the cemetery. He spent some time reading several gravestones and even saluted a war veteran’s grave from 1916.

A letter received from a member of the public read, *“I am over the moon with the work the reparation team have done. This place has been a mess for many years with vines and weeds everywhere. I am now 83 years old and cannot do what I used to do to keep my family’s graves respectable. When I visited the cemetery today I was amazed at the place. I am over the moon with the work young people known to Gateshead Youth Offending Team have done”*.

One young person said that the project had challenged some of his racist views saying, *“There were more countries involved in the war than I thought, some countries I had never heard of. It has helped me not to be racist. I was really bad for it (racism) and I have got respect for the ancestors of people who fought in the war and I don’t think badly of people anymore”*.

To link in with positive activities, the young people have completed several educational visits to Durham Light Infantry Museum, met Tommy the centenary sculpture in Seaham, and have been to the Marine Museum in South Tyneside. These activities have been extremely important in making the past come to life and giving the young people the opportunity to appreciate the lasting impact of the First World War. A young person commented, *“I learnt that they used to paint the ships different colours to stop the enemy calculating the distance so they would not bomb them”*. Another said, *“My dad has been impressed that we are learning about the First World War”*.

Gateshead Youth Offending Team is developing accreditation for young people involved in the project so they can achieve bronze and silver Arts Awards. The art exhibition is the final part of the project and gives the young people involved the opportunity to consolidate all the work which has been completed. A young person reflected saying, *“It was a good project, I liked the art and I was gutted when it finished”*. Some pieces of work will also be displayed at the National Youth Justice Conference being held in Leicester in November 2015.

Susan Butler, Service Manager said, *“Gateshead Youth Offending Team have been involved in a number of art projects over the years. This project has been exceptionally successful as it has challenged the knowledge and learning of the young people known to our service around the First World War. The quality of the art is outstanding this year and has led to the development of a calendar which has been well received by a number of organisations including the British Legion. The young people have benefited from being linked to a number of community initiatives across the borough; for example, St Oswald’s Church which has benefited from a restoration and an intensive cemetery clean up, resulting in the uncovering of two First World War grave stones. The young people have also been involved in an intergenerational project (luncheon club), where they have listened to the experiences and stories of the war from men who served in the British Army. This has been a powerful tool to help the young people understand the cost of human conflict”*.



## PHOTOMONTAGE (page 2)

A photomontage is made by cutting and joining a number of images to create a new artwork and is similar to the pastime of scrapbooking popular during the time of the First World War, where family images, ephemera and other decorative items would be combined. Photomontage was also a popular medium for war propaganda posters – most notably work produced as part of the constructivist movement. The group used photomontage techniques to create artworks that juxtaposed official and personal photographs from both the front line and the home front taken during the First World War.



## AEROSOL ART & ILLUSTRATION (page 8)

Inspired by the work of cubist artists during the period of the First World War, the group created a series of dynamic abstract paintings on canvas using aerosol art techniques, with the aim of capturing the chaos of war – from the battlefields of Ypres to Zeppelin air raids above London. Layers of colour and texture were built up on the canvases which were then overlaid with silhouetted hand drawn illustrations in order to produce the final composite artworks.



## STENCILLING (page 14)

Stencils are frequently used by the military to quickly and clearly label objects, vehicles and locations. The group were shown basic stencilling techniques and also introduced to Isotype – a picture language pioneered by graphic designer Otto Neurath that used pictorial symbols to relay a message. Inspired by picture languages and the use of symbols in society the group designed and made a number of skull and crossbone stencils which were hand sprayed using aerosol paint to create, *'He died for Freedom and Honour'* – an artwork intended to cross language barriers highlighting the massive loss of human life during the First World War.



## ILLUSTRATION (page 16)

Dazzle camouflage was a method of camouflaging military ships used extensively in the First World War. Complex patterns of geometric shapes in contrasting colours, interrupting and intersecting each other, were intended to mislead the enemy as to the exact position of a ship. Dazzle attracted the notice of artists such as Picasso who claimed cubists had invented it. Inspired by the concept of dazzle painting the group developed a series of intricate and colourful dazzle camouflage designs for First World War military uniforms.



## TYPOGRAPHY & PRINTING (page 18)

The First World War was the first war to systematically target government propaganda at the general public with themes such as patriotism and nationalism playing an important role. The group explored traditional printing techniques using wooden printing blocks to create, *'Rally Round Wor Flag'* – a parody of the First World War poster, *'Rally Round The Flag'*. The group also made their own printing blocks and hand-printed a short edition of work to produce, *'Never Forget'*, and used Letraset rub-down lettering to illustrate the famous First World War song, *'Oh It's A Lovely War'*.



## MOSAIC & MODELLING (page 24)

Through discussions about the origins of the First World War and the first sixteen countries to enter the conflict, the group designed and made series of mosaics depicting the national flag of each of these countries. The tiles used to produce the final mosaics were hand painted using action art techniques – splashing paint directly onto the tiles. A series of ceramic poppies were also made by the group using red, white and blue clay to create striking designs. The individual poppies were combined and photographed to produce, *'Remember'*.



## MACRO PHOTOGRAPHY (page 30)

Using digital cameras fitted with macro lenses, miniature painted model soldiers, and the outdoor space around Windmill Hills Community Centre as a backdrop, the group planned, staged, and photographed a series of images depicting life in the trenches for both the Allies and the Central Powers. The group was asked to think about what life would have been like for the soldiers in such awful conditions during the First World War and reflect this in their photography.



## COLLAGE (page 34)

Dada was a European artistic and literary movement that emerged during the First World War. It pioneered the art of photomontage, flouting conventional aesthetic and cultural values by producing works marked by nonsense, travesty, and incongruity. Inspired by the work of Dada artists the group projected combinations of images and text printed on to clear acetate combined with coloured plastic and other transparent found items in order to create and photograph a series of instant, textured collages depicting the chaos of conflict during the First World War.

**“I love coming to the art – I’d be gutted if I wasn’t doing this.”**



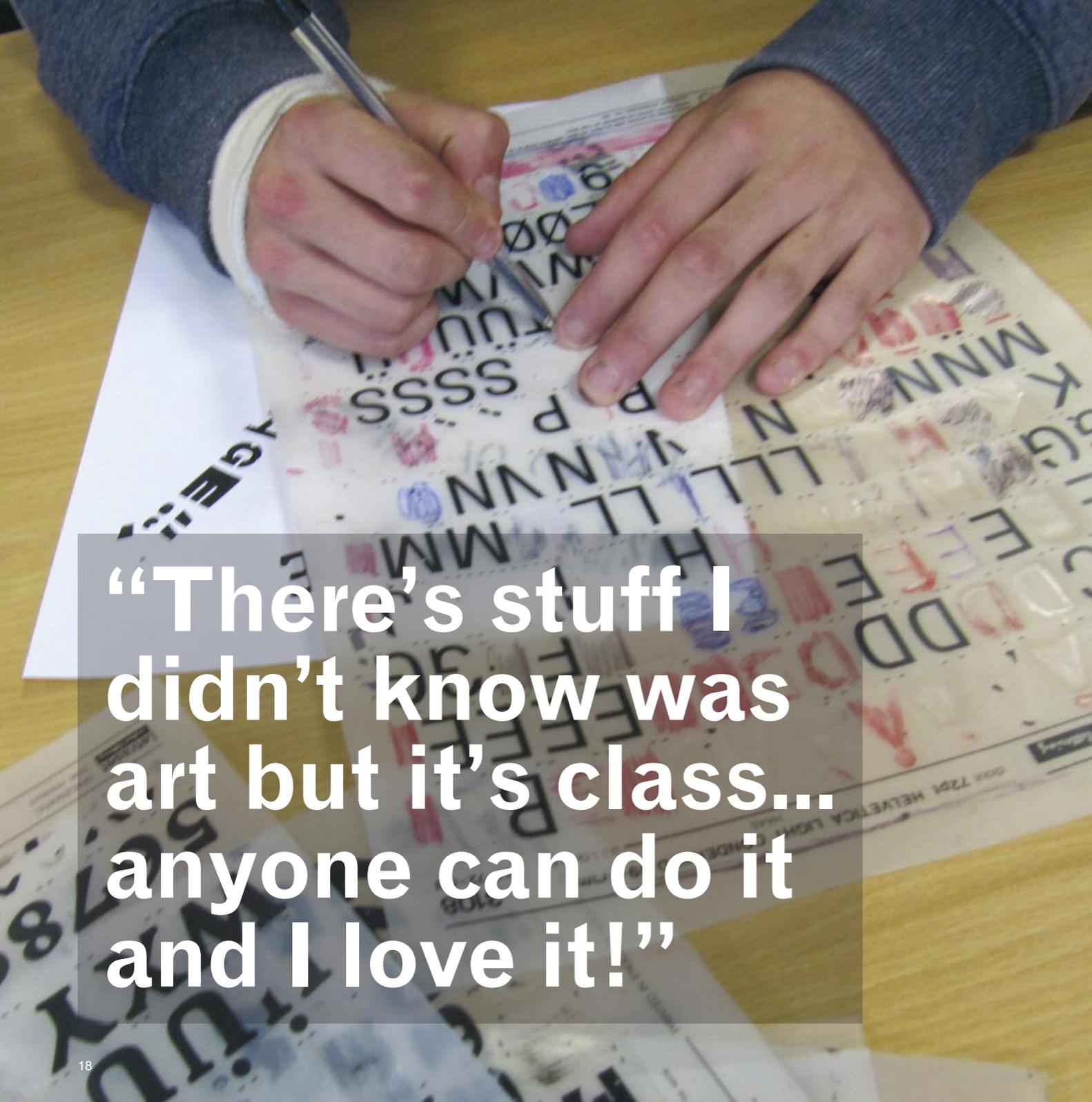








**“I’d do art when I’m  
at home now as well  
...I know what I’m  
doing now and I  
want to do more.”**



“There’s stuff I didn’t know was art but it’s class... anyone can do it and I love it!”



WHAT DO WE WANT WITH EGGS AND HAM  
when we've got Plum AND APPLE JAM?

FORM FORUS! RIGHT TURN!

HOW SHALL WE SPEND THE MONEY WE EARN

Oh oh oh it'S A lovely war



“I feel like an artist!”



**“You don’t  
just do art  
...you learn  
things all  
the time.”**



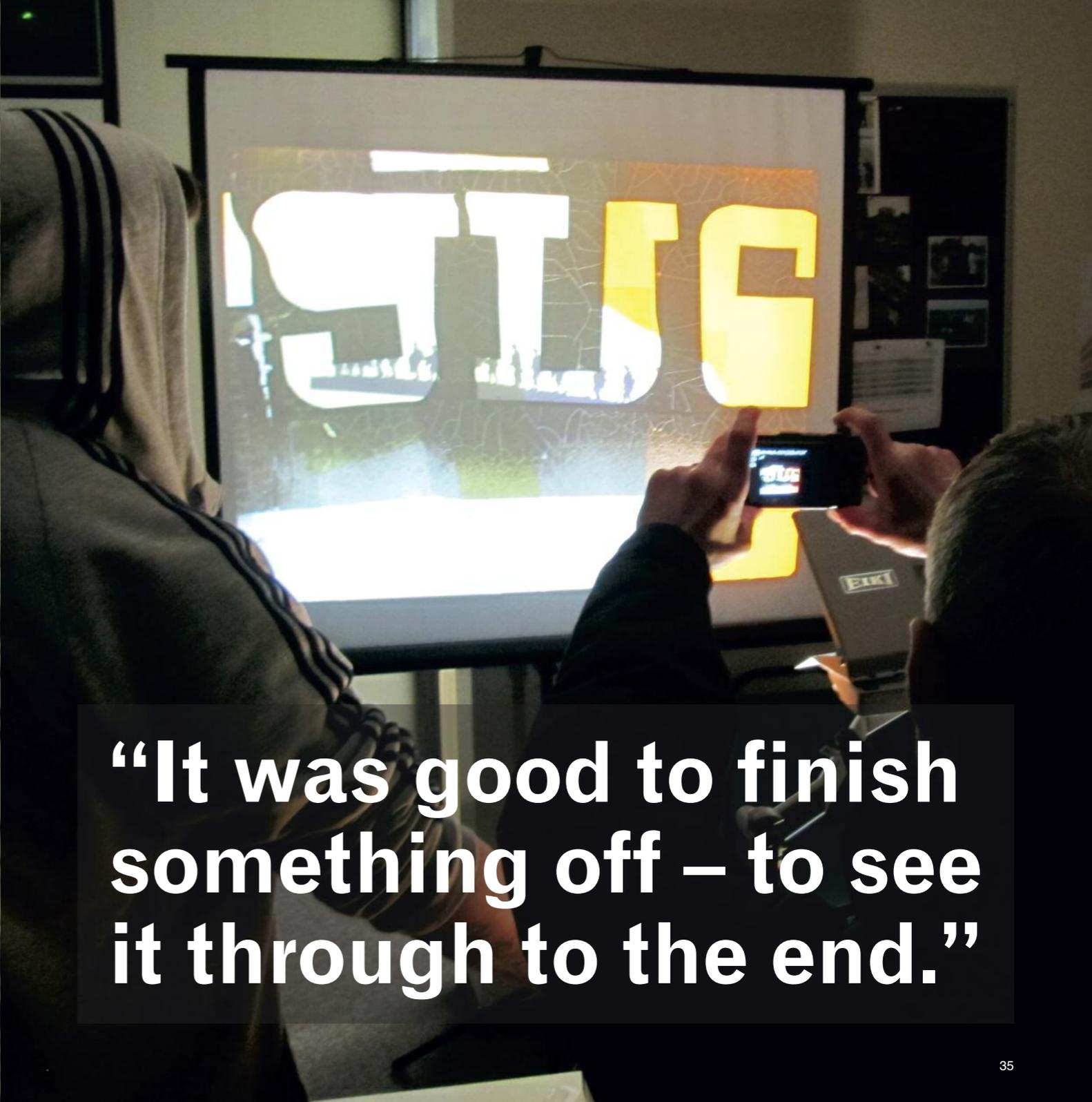




**“I take photos of my work on my phone and show people... you feel proud when other people say it’s good... I’d tell people that I made that.”**







**“It was good to finish something off – to see it through to the end.”**







## Thanks to all the participants...

Brandon, Courtney, David, Declan, Josh, Keiron, Kenny, Nathan and Robbie and Taylor.

### Gateshead Youth Offending Team

Gateshead Youth Offending Team is committed to multi-agency partnership working to prevent offending, reduce re-offending, safeguard young people and protect the public through:

- Inspiring, motivating and supporting young people and their families to make a positive contribution to their community.
- Providing quality support for victims and involving them in the restorative justice processes.
- Supporting and encouraging parent / carers to take responsibility for their child or young person.
- Building public confidence and reducing fear of crime.

### Tommy Anderson (Baseline Shift)

Artist Tommy Anderson is an experienced facilitator and mentor, managing and delivering progressive participatory and educational arts programmes inspired by his practice – *“I believe that not everyone can be a great artist, but great art can come from anywhere, and I’m passionate about providing creative opportunities for people who wouldn’t usually have access to the arts.”*

Tommy is also a graphic designer delivering innovative and exciting design, print and new media solutions for public, private and voluntary sector clients. Recent projects include publications, identity, branding, exhibition graphics, illustration and promotional films.

Thanks to: Windmill Hills Community Centre.

Booklet design: Tommy Anderson ([www.baselineshift.co.uk](http://www.baselineshift.co.uk))

