

# VASWLP

## Final Report for VASW: Leadership Programme - from early planning to conclusion September 2012 - November 2013

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*"At the beginning I struggled with the term leadership – found it tricky. But I have learned that it is about how you define how you work in the world. This course has been critical in my development and came at a particular juncture in my practice, finding a new way of working. It led me to reflect on my practice, and how I link with colleagues and friends, reflected on contemporary art and my role as a curator and within the organisations I work with. I've analysed my skills and it's been fun and cathartic, and given me time to think. It has built my confidence and developed my skills in sharing information with my colleagues and partners. I have learned how I want to work with artists. The key is how you think of yourself being a leader, - it's not text book, it's about how you work with your colleagues, being true to yourself and having a strong vision through your work."*

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## **Executive Summary**

This is the evaluation report for Visual Arts South West Leadership programme (VASWLP). The aim of the report is to review and evaluate the programme for programme commissioners VASW and the programme funder Arts Council England, South West.

### **The programme**

VASWLP was a leadership development programme commissioned by Visual Arts South West and funded by Arts Council England, for artists, curators and managers working in the visual arts in the South West. VALPSW was about developing individuals, organisations and the sector and put participants' artistic vision first and looked at how they can work to achieve that vision.

The programme was made up of five day long workshops running from April to November 2013, plus 1:1 mentoring for all participants.

### **Recruitment and attendance**

We received 32 applications and although we had initially anticipated recruiting 15 participants, the applications were so strong that we invited 23 people to join the programme. At the close of the programme, we had 21 of the original 23 participants who actively engaged with the programme.

### **The facilitator**

The programme was designed, delivered and facilitated by Debbie Kingsley, author of this report.

### **Communication between workshops and archive resource**

A closed facebook group was set up for the participants and this has been well used, focusing not just on workshop content and issues but related information included job opportunities, networking events and papers that cropped up during the programme.

Dropbox was used to share the programme material and create an archive that participants can refer to and add to.

### **Action learning tasks**

Each face to face workshop session resulted in a challenging action learning task for participants.

## **Leadership challenge**

Workshop 5 was set aside as a challenge for the group to create a collaborative event that:

- delivered an action learning leadership challenge activity/event, designed and delivered by participants (with support from the facilitator) for a wider group of invited peers in the visual arts sector
- developed a collaborative way of working that has the potential to support participants in their leadership development beyond the programme
- celebrated the achievements of the cohort

## **Venues**

VASW organised the venues and we met in Bristol and Exeter, which worked well for participants.

## **Evaluation**

A range of evaluation approaches, both formative and summative, were used throughout the lifetime of the programme including: process discussions took place at the end of sessions; discussions between the facilitator and the Director of VASW to ensure continuity; a comprehensive evaluation questionnaire at the close of the programme; anecdotes and quotes were recorded by the facilitator throughout the programme; an interim report was produced by VASW and this final report has been produced by Debbie Kingsley for the programme commissioner and Arts Council England.

## **Networking and collaborating**

One of the hoped for outcomes of VASWLP was a natural collision of interests between participants that result in tangible collaborations. There have been many examples of this and it is hoped that there will be more in future.

## **Observations**

- There was a constant refrain from participants that participating in the programme had given them permission to take time for strategic thinking.
- The programme clearly demystified the concept of leadership and those who were wary of the term and what it stands for (the majority of the cohort) are now hugely more comfortable with the concept and the reality of behaving as a leader, on their own terms.

- A core of participants has given a high level of commitment to the programme and is actively putting their learning into action, quickly.
- Participants became increasingly more confident in appreciating the need for taking personal responsibility for their own development. What they found far harder to grasp was the opportunity/necessity of taking responsibility for the development of the visual arts sector. On balance I think only three or four participants were comfortable with this concept, but the others certainly were more understanding of the potential for engaging in sector development as a result of the programme.
- There are benefits to a smaller group in terms of generating sympathy, empathy and understanding across participants as they get to know each other well. A maximum of 15-16 participants may have been preferable for collaborative learning.
- Participants have built a bond of trust and respect that is likely to last beyond the life of the programme, and has resulted in the promise of tangible collaborations.
- Participants are rightly demanding and the balance of comments suggests the programme carefully trod the right path.
- A programme such as VASWLP which targeted freelancers and sole traders for the most part would be impossible to deliver without major subsidy.
- The mentoring elements of the programme have been very useful to the majority of participants, in some instances significantly so in unlocking blocks and enabling action.
- The action learning tasks or "homework" are important aspects of the programme and the onus on carrying out the activity relates entirely to the personal responsibility that individuals take for their own development.
- Participants indicated a keenness to engage in ongoing action learning sets, but for this to work it would need to be administered on their behalf and probably facilitated initially.
- The leadership challenge was indeed a challenge for participants – more initial guidance or parameters around expectation might have been useful – the deliberate attempt to put the responsibility for the creation of whole event over to the group was problematic, although the final results were very positive.
- There was a desire to see continuing opportunities for leadership development in the sector, including the potential for running the programme again in 2015.

## **Recommendations**

1. Sustained professional development learning opportunities are increasingly few and far between, but they can have a transformative effect as seen by some of the participants' journeys. It is recommended that both VASW and the Arts Council continue to support longer term programmes that build learning and development into the sector, in particular for emerging and existing leaders, who in turn have a significant impact on the vitality of the sector.
2. VASW should contact the participants in twelve months and ask them to reflect at that point on the longer term impact of the programme on their work and development as a leader.
3. VASW should consider running similar programmes every two or three years to embed the importance of effective leadership in and on behalf of the sector.
4. The cohort from this programme is eager for future opportunities to continue their learning. An advanced programme could move the group forward, with new challenges, interaction with peers, a focus on sharing work and collaboration. In the short term, facilitated geographic action learning sets would be an effective way of maintaining momentum and support.
5. Future learning opportunities for the cohort and others in the sector might include leadership seminars and masterclasses on topics such as:
  - a. defining excellence
  - b. business planning
  - c. advocacy
  - d. sector development and profile
  - e. policy priorities for the visual arts
6. Brokering mentoring for freelancers and sole traders should be explored and created if possible – a great deal can be achieved in the space of an hour if the mentor is cognisant of the issues and strengths of the mentee beforehand.

A list of participants, their response to the evaluation questionnaire and more detailed information is given in the body of the report below.



## Introduction

*"I wanted a stronger voice at my Board and now I'm called the Director. I wanted to get more critically engaged and I have seen more work in the last 6 months than in the last 3 years. I now have the tools for strategic planning and prioritisation. I am facilitating a strategic awayday for the organisation for which I am trustee – I wouldn't have done this without the programme. I wanted to do more public speaking and have spoken at two conferences, several seminars and regional meetings. And I am a leader in my own particular way of working with others and creating a vision with them."*

This is the evaluation report for Visual Arts South West Leadership programme (VASWLP), covering the period from September 2012, when I (Debbie Kingsley) was contracted to deliver the programme for VASW, to its conclusion in November 2013. The aim of the report is to review and evaluate the programme for programme commissioners VASW and the programme funder Arts Council England, South West.

Sincere thanks go to both VASW and Arts Council England whose vision and funding made the leadership programme possible.

## The programme

*"It was different to my expectations, which were more along the lines of traditional learning of skills, models, theory and behaviours. However, I think it was many times better and will have far more impact on me"*

*because of this. One can learn and forget behaviours and models, but deeply thought-through vision, values and conviction in oneself and the sector are powerful and hopefully long term."*

**What:** A leadership development programme for artists, curators and managers working in the visual arts in the South West

**Who:** For artists, curators, producers, managers, freelancers and sole traders working in the visual arts in the South West region. Participants may be an established or emerging leader, or see the potential in developing their leadership skills to develop their practice.

**Why:** Because good leadership supports the creation of good if not great art

VALPSW was about developing individuals, organisations and the sector

VALPSW put participants' artistic vision first and looked at how they can work to achieve that vision

The programme aimed to:

- Help visual arts leaders and producers develop an exemplary practice
- Foster a better support network for leaders from freelancers and small organisations to large institutions
- Raise the level of ambition amongst visual arts leaders in the SW
- Help share resources, expertise and knowledge
- Enable a forum for collaboration
- Promote the role of the established freelancer, artist leader and network making a critical contribution to the development of cultural leadership in the UK

As part of the programme participants were expected to:

- consider the nature of leadership, innovation and sustainability and develop understanding of how we see ourselves in relation to the concept of leadership
- develop collective and individual visions for personal and professional development as the basis for action planning
- develop advocacy skills
- consider collective priorities for the sector
- become more confident in taking responsibility for their own development and that of the sector
- develop collective and individual action plans and leadership goals
- create and deliver a real leadership challenge that in itself will take the group closer to achieving their individual and collective vision

- bring ideas they wish to explore collectively which might (or might not) include: effective management, management and leadership, trend forecasting, insight and analysis of the sector, learning from other sectors, partnership and collaborative working, business modelling, crowd funding etc.
- test out the individual learning competencies of the group by embarking on a shared Development Needs Analysis activity
- discuss and determine the ways of working that will have most impact on the group including understanding the balance required between information sharing, peer learning, self-reflection, critical thinking and environmental analysis and what is best carried out collectively and individually
- review their learning experiences, both collective and individual
- assess the progress of action plans
- review and update action plans and set new leadership goals

## **Day 1**

The start of the programme focussed on building up an understanding of the individual participants, their challenges and aspirations. Participants were asked to prepare in advance to present their thinking to the wider group. We delved into their understanding of leadership and how we see ourselves as such (or not). We clarified how the group sees leadership within the sector and agreed an action learning task to be carried out before the next workshop.

### **Learning objectives for day 1**

- To get to know each other and develop an understanding of each other's challenges and priorities and the ideas they wish to explore, and to start honing advocacy skills
- To explore the concepts and nature of leadership and the differences between management and leadership
- To understand how we see ourselves in relation to the concept of leadership
- To consider the individual leadership competencies in the group through a shared Development Needs Analysis activity
- Collaborative working: to share the sense of collaborative working within the sector to date and our aspirations for it going forward.
- To agree an action learning task for participants to achieve before Day 2
- To participate in the formative evaluation process

## **Day 2**

We discussed the effective achievement (or not) of the action learning task. The day focussed on the concept of vision, knowing where you /your

organisation wish to be, and used this to start developing individual leadership development action plans. We also started to discuss the options for the collaborative leadership challenge.

### **Learning objectives for day 2**

- Sharing the outcomes of our action learning task
- Exploring the meaning and purpose of vision (organisationally and individually) as the basis for action planning
- Starting to develop individual leadership development action plans
- Taking advocacy skills one step further
- Collaborative working: sharing initial ideas of how we might work collaboratively to deliver a leadership activity for the wider sector on day 5 of the programme.
- To agree an action learning task for participants to achieve before Day 3.
- To participate in the formative evaluation process

### **Day 3**

We discussed the effective achievement (or not) of the action learning task). We considered innovation and sustainability and what these concepts mean in relation to leadership individually and sectorally. We tussled with the concept of having SMART objectives to deliver the vision. We used the framework of the action learning set to explore the achievement of our individual leadership development action plans.

### **Learning objectives for day 3**

- Sharing the outcomes of our action learning task
- Investigating the concepts of innovation and sustainability and what that means for individuals and the sector
- Investigating what it might mean to develop a shared action plan for developing and supporting leadership within the visual arts sector
- Setting SMART objectives and knowing when you've got there
- Taking advocacy skills yet one step further
- To participate in an action learning set group with fellow participants based on the challenges of individual leadership development action plans.
- To agree an action learning task for participants to achieve before Day 4.
- To participate in the formative evaluation process

## **Day 4**

We discussed the effective achievement (or not) of the action learning task). We explored mentoring and coaching skills and practiced these to support the development of fellow participants and achieve individual development. We discussed the various leadership styles. We did further work on finalising individual leadership development action plans.

### **Learning objectives for day 4**

- Sharing the outcomes of our action learning task
- To develop skills to mentor and/or coach each other and others to cascade learning
- To consider how these techniques can provide an approach to thinking, questioning and self reflection (being your own mentor)
- To consider the various leadership styles and reflect on the pros and cons
- To create SMART individual leadership development action plans
- To agree an action learning task for participants to achieve before Day 5.
- To participate in the formative evaluation process

## **Day 5**

This was the action learning leadership challenge activity/event, designed and delivered by participants.

### **Learning objectives for day 5**

- To deliver an action learning leadership challenge activity/event, designed and delivered by participants (with support from the facilitator) for a wider group of invited peers in the visual arts sector
- To develop a collaborative way of working that has the potential to support participants in their leadership development beyond the programme
- To celebrate the achievements of the cohort
- To participate in the summative evaluation process

## **Mentoring**

In addition to the five days of face to face collective activity the facilitator offered up to 1.5 hours of 1:1 mentoring with each participant, either face to face or by phone as geography dictated.

## Recruitment and attendance

*"Debbie I am devastated I couldn't be there (at the final workshop). The course has been really helpful to me - perfect timing."*

We received 32 applications and although we had initially anticipated recruiting 15 participants, the applications were so strong that we invited 23 people to join the programme in the belief that there might be a handful of dropouts for reasons varying from unsuitability of dates, ill health, pressure of work etc. Participants are listed below.

At the close of the programme, we had 21 of the original 23 participants who actively engaged with the programme. Two participants (both artists) withdrew after attending one session each

Two participants went on maternity leave in the middle of the programme but both managed to attend the final workshop and took full advantage of the mentoring whilst on leave.

Although the group of 21 was manageable, it was clear that when around 15-18 participants were present at a workshop that participants preferred the slightly smaller grouping.

## Participants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job role</b>
Anna Searle Jones	Communications Manager, Spike Island and Co-founder, The Collect
Cara Lockley	Public Programmes Officer, Bristol Museum & Co-Director, Hand in Glove
Carol Carey	Development Manager Somerset Art Works
Carolyn Black	Founder, Flow Projects
Claire Carroll	Arts Coordinator, Rook Lane Arts Trust.
Claire Gulliver	Independent contractor / consultant
Fiona Winning	Artist
Gill Bliss (withdrew)	Freelance artist/sculptor/designer/ animator.
Grace Davies	Freelance Curator, Regional Development Coordinator VASW
Hannah Brady	Freelance Creative Facilitator and artist

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job role</b>
Katie Daley-Yates	Freelance Visual Arts Producer
Katy Connor	Artist, PhD student
Kirsty Lowry	Artist and Freelance Education and Participation Curator
Lucy Ward	Programme Manager, Bath Artists' Studios
Nancy Clemance	Director, Burr Projects Community Interest Company
Nicky Williams	Digital Media Producer at Knowle West Media Centre and Freelance Creative Practitioner (mid way through the programme took a new job as Creative Adviser for the Creative Skills Hub, West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP))
Paul Harper	Freelance and Director of Alias Arts CIC
Paula Orrell	Freelance Curator
Rachel Nee	Artist
Sally Taylor	Coordinator Artsite Ltd
Sarah Bowden	Project Coordinator, Meantime Projects
Simon Lee Dicker	Artist, Director of OSR Projects
Zerelda Sinclair (withdrew)	Artist

## The facilitator

It's difficult for the designer and deliverer/facilitator of the programme (me, Debbie Kingsley) to comment on her own suitability for delivering the leadership programme. What I can say is that I found the whole process hugely enjoyable, thought-provoking, challenging, interesting, surprising. Enjoyable, because the group were a joy to work with; lively, intelligent, keen, demanding. Thought-provoking and challenging because the cohort questioned intelligently. Interesting and surprising because participants are artists, creative producers, creative thinkers and doers, and one would expect nothing less.

Below are comments made by participants about the facilitator's suitability in response to the evaluation survey question: "Did the facilitator show

understanding about you, the sector and the challenges you face? Was the facilitator appropriate for the effective delivery of the programme?"

- *Absolutely. The facilitator was not only appropriate but fundamental to the effective delivery of the programme. Her understanding of the sector and the challenges we face as individuals and more widely were excellent. Moreover, her conviction and ability to find positive approaches to every challenge, without exception, were hugely affirming. This was balanced with a determination not to allow us to indulge in wishy-washy ideas ('can't define excellence') or wishful thinking ('not enough diversity on Boards') without challenging us to work out what we, personally, are going to do about them.*
- *Debbie was good at making things relevant to the group. We were all treated as pros, and that was interesting as I don't really regard myself as such. This made for a very positive outlook.*
- *The facilitator was good, but seemed to be experienced in working with existing hierarchical organisations, so approaches which can work with the team of a single organisation were not necessarily very successful with a group of 21 disparate individuals who are in professional competition to some extent at times.*
- *Yes, Debbie was very knowledgeable and interested all round. Understanding the difficulties of the 'portfolio career' which seems pretty normal in our sector; also in understanding that one just has to choose the pragmatic over the 'pretty' solutions to problems sometimes.*
- *The facilitator made the programme interesting and relevant to everyone there. She helped the group develop their voice.*
- *DK seemed to understand our work and the challenges of the sector. The framework she presented was very productive, but I wish there had been a bit more time for moving away from it to discuss as a group some other aspects of leadership that maybe came up in our own development plans - e.g. rhetoric, managing risk.*
- *Yes 100%. Her broad knowledge of the arts and leadership in the sector was critical and how she applied this to the visual arts.*
- *Yes Yes Yes.*
- *On all levels Debbie was fantastic, knowledgeable, thoughtful, focused, challenging, and really good fun.*
- *Debbie was a great choice for facilitator. Her knowledge and understanding of the sector is fantastic and she is a very good listener! She gave very good advice and most importantly encouragement.*

- *Debbie was a great facilitator and had a solid grasp of the challenges the sector is facing.*
- *I thought the facilitator was knowledgeable and lead the sessions well, but ... I felt that the programme was too general to have a dramatic effect on my practice and the way I work.*
- *Yes, the facilitator was able to appeal to each of our needs regardless of our different stages and levels of understanding.*

## Communication between workshops and archive resource

A closed facebook group was set up for the participants and this has been well used, focusing not just on workshop content and issues but related information included job opportunities, networking events and papers that cropped up during the programme.

Dropbox was used to share the programme material and create an archive that participants can refer to and add to. This worked as people clearly used the site to download agendas and supporting papers as necessary. There was one hairy moment at the end of the programme when a participant inadvertently deleted every single item in the shared Dropbox folder, but the facilitator managed to recover the documentation.

## Action learning tasks

Each face to face workshop session resulted in a challenging action learning task for participants:

- To start drafting an individual action learning plan
- Draft the vision and mission for your practice
- To draft 4 (or more) SMART objectives that move your vision and mission forward
- Determine if you want a coach or mentor and if so, making arrangements to put that in place.
- Finalise your leadership development action plan for 2014 and put it into action

The beginning of each session reflected on the action learning tasks (the process and outcomes) and vision, mission and objectives were regularly pinned up on the walls of the meeting rooms for the rest of the cohort to view and comment on.

## Leadership challenge

Workshop 5 was set aside as a challenge for the group to create a collaborative event that:

- delivered an action learning leadership challenge activity/event, designed and delivered by participants (with support from the facilitator) for a wider group of invited peers in the visual arts sector
- developed a collaborative way of working that has the potential to support participants in their leadership development beyond the programme
- celebrated the achievements of the cohort

The leadership challenge was indeed challenging; it took some considerable time for individuals to either step up and take charge or come up with concepts for the day. Participants were better at responding to concepts once raised by a brave peer (as one would expect) and there was positive networking and rallying round. As facilitator I tried to take a back seat for as long as possible to allow the cohort to shape the event themselves. An external speaker was invited to deliver a provocation on leadership and managing change, but she dropped out a week before the event. Ultimately I had to play more of a role than I would have wished, but there was clearly a comfort factor for the cohort that I did so, and in fact the final day was seen as a real success by participants. The group decided that the event should be for them and not for a broader peer group.

## Mentoring

As part of the VASWLP package the participants were offered 1.5 hours of mentoring time. Experience of past programmes shows that mentoring activity is most useful for participants in the latter part of a programme when they have more clearly identified their needs, and determined how the facilitator might support them in addressing these. Nineteen of the Twenty-one participants have fully engaged with the facilitator, using their full mentoring allocation, often in two slots (mostly a one hour session and a half hour follow-up a few weeks later).

The range of activity undertaken included:

- professional development
- career advice
- business planning
- leadership goal setting and action planning

Feedback received on the mentoring element of the programme has been for the most part very positive:

- *The mentoring was very useful and a new experience for me. Being able to talk through ideas with Debbie and come up with some concrete actions to take away was rewarding and motivating. Her*

*knowledge of the sector was helpful in getting me to the nub/structure of what I was aiming at.*

- I was nervous about the mentoring session and left it until near the end. But felt very much at ease and was able to bring resolution to the last session.*
- The mentoring was great to talk through plans and advice on how to move these forward with a leadership plan.*
- I particularly enjoyed the 1:1 mentoring and found it especially helpful after my circumstances had changed somewhat. I felt that the mentor enabled me to see my situation and circumstances from an outside position- which enabled me both to gain clarity and identify procedures and strategies i needed to take in order to achieve my goals but within a different time-frame and personal circumstance. The mentoring was very reassuring and yet also professional in this respect.*
- 1-2-1 Mentoring: Very helpful. Helped to translate my rather unsatisfactory work situation into real, positive actions that I can take to change things and hopefully move forward in a number of steps. Helped me to think about how I position myself in particular, and how I should build a public profile based on what I can offer and what it is like to work with me. Made me see that it's ok to personalize my 'offer' or 'menu' and the experience of working with me and in fact it's better if I do personalize it. This in itself gives me confidence because I don't have to try to be something I'm not, but I can focus on what my distinctive character strengths and passions are. There's an authenticity to that which is empowering and liberating.*
- Yes, the mentoring was helpful. I felt a real tension going on. In the room, I felt confident about my leadership skills, yet outside my workload is terrifyingly low. I am struggling with this and no mentoring can assist really. Sometimes my emotional vulnerability probably undermines my professional profile. I felt that was understood.*
- The 1:1 mentoring was also incredibly useful and gave me some really clear support to help with challenges and dilemmas.*
- I don't think I made the best use of the mentoring.*
- I found the 1:1 mentoring was very useful in helping me to clarify and articulate my needs.*
- My mentoring session was very useful in the end. I have never done this sort of thing before, so wasn't sure it would be beneficial, but it was.*
- Thanks again for providing such a helpful mentoring session. I think my colleagues have noticed a difference in me as a result of doing the VASWLP - I certainly have.*

- *Thanks so much for the (mentoring) session, it really helped formulate a way forward through the 'molasses for brains' period. It's was great to feel the enthusiasm and drive running through me.*

One participant said: *"It would have been helpful to discuss briefly in the group how we could prepare for the mentoring - I didn't feel like I got as much out of the first session as I could have because I wasn't very well prepared"*. It should be noted that advice was given to the group about this on at least two occasions collectively, and also in response to individual queries, including the pointers that they could use the session as they wished to move forward their leadership development and if they were struggling as to how to prepare for the session they might:

- a) use the actions emerging from their leadership development action plan as the starting point for discussion and support
- b) consider where they want to be in five to ten years time to kickstart the session.

## Venues

VASW organised the venues and we met in Bristol and Exeter, which worked well for participants. We used:

- Workshop 1: Spike Island, Bristol, 17 April 2013
- Workshop 2: Spacex Gallery, Exeter, 20 May 2013
- Workshop 3: Knowle West Media Centre, Bristol, 19 June 2013
- Workshop 4: Exeter Phoenix, Exeter, 2 October 2013
- Workshop 5: Royal West of England Academy, Bristol, 20 November 2013.

## Evaluation

A range of evaluation approaches, both formative and summative, were used throughout the lifetime of the programme:

- Brief process discussions took place at the end of sessions
- Discussions took place between the facilitator and the Director of VASW to ensure continuity - however there were few issues to resolve
- A comprehensive evaluation questionnaire was set up using survey monkey for all participants to complete at the close of the programme
- Anecdotes and quotes were recorded by the facilitator throughout the programme.

- An interim report was produced by VASW with input from the facilitator for Arts Council England, and this final report has been produced by Debbie Kingsley for the programme commissioner and Arts Council England.

## Networking and collaborating

One of the hoped for outcomes of VASWLP is a natural collision of interests between participants that results in tangible collaborations. There have been many examples of this and it is hoped that there will be more in future:

- *Yes, discussions about potential projects, that I probably wouldn't have had with the person.*
- *I've had discussions, certainly, though most have been others suggesting things I could do rather than potential collaborations.... My only frustration is that I feel a little geographically isolated when there are some obvious clusters of group members in Bristol and Stroud, for example. It's getting tougher in Devon, especially North Devon. I hope this answer is a case of 'Watch this space'.*
- *I have asked other participants for advice, and got to know some interesting people who work locally in the same areas as me. I hope that these encounters will mean we can call on each other in the future.*
- *Yes*
- *A few embryonic discussions.*
- *I've had discussions with one of the other participants who has similar interests about the potential for collaboration in the future... I wouldn't have met them if I had not been on the programme.*
- *I am intending to contact three of the other participants in the near future to arrange meeting up with the view to some form of collaboration or project. I would not have been able to make these encounters without being on the programme. For this I'm really grateful and I am looking forward to any future opportunities that might develop.*
- *No, but I would like to set up an action learning set independently.*
- *Not yet, but I can see the potential.*
- *Fiona Winning developed a series of interviews - sound recordings with artists and young people in Somerset. (She is a superb interviewer and we are very happy with the results). I would like to pursue the idea of inviting someone from the group to become a critical friend to SAW team.*
- *I've had a couple of discussions with one member of the programme - not explicitly about collaborating - but about mutual interests that could hopefully develop further. We also spoke about*

*possibly setting up an Action Learning set locally...these have been key encounters that could never had happened without the programme.*

- *Yes, planning a collaborative research project with one other participant that will involve visiting up to four other individuals that were part of the programme.*
- *Yes, but not as many as I would like. I'd love to get a Gloucestershire group together, it's exciting to see so many Gloucestershire people involved, we're usually largely ignored as a region, being overshadowed by Bristol*
- *Yes! Hand in Glove are planning a project with OSR projects next year. Details are unsure at the moment but we are thinking about a residency working with artists Hand in Glove have previously exhibited taking place around West Coker.*
- *I've met someone that I'll definitely keep in touch with. We are good at supporting each other. I've nurtured existing relationships and will develop those further. I'm excited to have a new network of contacts that I have the potential to work with.*

## Observations

- There was a constant refrain from participants that participating in the programme has given them permission to take time for strategic thinking.
- The programme clearly demystified the concept of leadership and those who were wary of the term and what it stands for (the majority of the cohort) are now hugely more comfortable with the concept and the reality of behaving as a leader, on their own terms.
- A core of participants gave a high level of commitment to the programme and are actively putting their learning into action, quickly.
- Participants became increasingly more confident in appreciating the need for taking personal responsibility for their own development. What they found far harder to grasp was the opportunity/necessity of taking responsibility for the development of the visual arts sector. On balance I think only three or four participants were comfortable with this concept, but the others certainly were more understanding of the potential for engaging in sector development as a result of the programme.
- There are benefits to a smaller group in terms of generating sympathy, empathy and understanding across participants as they get to know each other well. A maximum of 15-16 participants may have been preferable for collaborative learning.

- Participants have built a bond of trust and respect that is likely to last beyond the life of the programme, and has resulted in the promise of tangible collaborations.
- The participants are rightly demanding and that the balance of comments suggests the programme is carefully treading the right path.
- A programme such as VASWLP which targeted freelancers and sole traders for the most part would be impossible to deliver without major subsidy.
- The mentoring elements of the programme have been very useful to the majority of participants, in some instances significantly so in unlocking blocks and enabling action.
- The action learning tasks or “homework” are important aspects of the programme and the onus on carrying out the activity relates entirely to the personal responsibility that individuals take for their own development.
- Participants indicated a keenness to engage in ongoing action learning sets, but for this to work it would need to be administered on their behalf and probably facilitated initially.
- The leadership challenge was indeed a challenge for participants – more initial guidance or parameters around expectation might have been useful – the deliberate attempt to put the responsibility for the creation of whole event over to the group was problematic, although the final results were very positive.
- There was a desire to see continuing opportunities for leadership development in the sector, including the potential for running the programme again in 2015.

## Recommendations

1. Sustained professional development learning opportunities are increasingly few and far between, but they can have a transformative effect as seen by some of the participants’ journeys. It is recommended that both VASW and the Arts Council continue to support longer term programmes that build learning and development into the sector, in particular for emerging and existing leaders, who in turn have a significant impact on the vitality of the sector.
2. VASW should contact the participants in twelve months and ask them to reflect at that point on the longer term impact of the programme on their work and development as a leader.
3. VASW should consider running similar programmes every two or three years to embed the importance of effective leadership in and on behalf of the sector.

4. The cohort from this programme is eager for future opportunities to continue their learning. An advanced programme could move the group forward, with new challenges, interaction with peers, a focus on sharing work and collaboration. In the short term, facilitated geographic action learning sets would be an effective way of maintaining momentum and support.
5. Future learning opportunities for the cohort and others in the sector might include leadership seminars and masterclasses on topics such as:
  - a. defining excellence
  - b. business planning
  - c. advocacy
  - d. sector development and profile
  - e. policy priorities for the visual arts
6. Brokering mentoring for freelancers and sole traders should be explored and created if possible – a great deal can be achieved in the space of an hour if the mentor is cognisant of the issues and strengths of the mentee beforehand.

## Participant quotes

In addition to the evaluation survey, participant comments made over the duration of the programme have been collated – they are given below and elsewhere in this report.

- *Who am I? What is important to me? Being on the leadership course has put these considerations at the forefront of my mind and has given me a voice of my own. It's allowed me to spend time thinking about this.*
- *I now feel like a leader. I wouldn't have done (described board intervention she'd led) before doing this programme. Valuing myself is one of the key things I wanted to achieve – to value myself as someone who would be considered as a leader.*
- *Thanks so much for the (mentoring) session, it really helped formulate a way forward through the 'molasses for brains' period. It's was great to feel the enthusiasm and drive running through me.*
- *Putting together the proposal (we discussed) has also helped me enormously in terms of thinking about what to put on my forthcoming website about the kind of work I do, the approach I take and what it is like to work with me. It's been a great opportunity to think about my personal strengths as strengths that I can highlight and that will make it clearer what I can best bring to clients (and fend off those who just want me to be a task manager*

for them). Thanks again for providing such a helpful mentoring session. I think my colleagues have noticed a difference in me as a result of doing the VALPSW - I certainly have

- It's certainly giving me the tools to think about how my role at SAW can develop and help the directors frame the future.
- I welcome the opportunity to be part of the programme, I do find it difficult to switch between thinking about SAW and my own personal development. Also I am use to thinking from the organisational collective perspective so in these sessions where most are 'portfolio' artists /curators I really struggle.
- I would like to see in the final sessions a way that the choice of speakers could help us find shared values and interests come together under a collective message 'voice'. I would like to see the shared purpose ultimately focus around the visibility of the contemporary visual arts and its distinctive cultural value to the south west keeping VASW at the centre in the critical advocacy role
- Feels it's a very short time to get to know a relatively large group of people and find a common purpose.
- I find the sessions very useful, but most of all I find working in this big group challenging. Both in a good and a bad way. Good because Debbie's direction is excellent and everyone gets attention and is listened to. Not so good because the size of the group can prevent really intense, lengthy dialogue because of being constantly aware that there are so many others waiting to say something, it feels a bit contained and restrained by the formality needed to keep order (just cos of sheer numbers of bright, sparky wonderful people in one room!)
- The first few weeks were particularly difficult because there's a slight conflict in the room - an awareness that whilst it is a 'safe' group the truth is one doesn't know everyone so there has been no trust built up previously. To allow oneself to be vulnerable one needs to feel safe. That has built up over the weeks but has taken longer, I suspect, due to so many in the group. For me personally, I hope I have improved my ability to operate within a largish group - and if nothing else I feel more confident speaking up at symposia etc .also, in terms of relativity, it's helped me recognise both my strengths and my weaknesses.
- One thing that has become clear is that whilst we may be functioning as 'a group' we easily divide in to areas of specialisms and interests. I'd quite like to see everyone declare those areas and make a map of that range, just out of interest, to see cross-overs and how we might support each other beyond the course.
- I think Debbie is a really good facilitator. It would be brilliant if there could be a VASWLP advanced course, or some way of

*continuing to have mentoring provision. But then we all want that! The action learning concept is useful to take forward. I'd definitely like to pursue the Gloucester one.*

- I've enjoyed every moment of it. It's so useful to be able to think about what makes a great leader, and how your vision really shapes so much of what you do. The sessions have helped me create a framework for my practice in the arts; the framework is one you can keep going back to, no matter what trajectory you take - that framework is always a useful way to develop and lead on anything! It's great to chat to others, and it is increasing my confidence hugely in my own opinions and perspectives. There's always so much to be learnt by listening to others, and understanding where ideas are derived from. I enjoy having artists in the group - they provide a perspective which is different, and refreshing.*
- I'd like to hear about conflict resolution and I'd like to discuss confidence - what makes great leaders so assured, so confident that they are right? How can we attain that?*
- I must admit I hadn't expected so much focus on collaboration. It is useful to discuss and look at ways in which individuals in the group may stay connected or help one another out, I do sometimes think it can be a little distracting because I think it should develop naturally. This may also just be because I don't work in groups or collaborate, my work is done solo, so I enjoy coming together to discuss, debate and exchange, but I think we need to be careful about forcing the need to remain as a working cohort - we are all from different parts of the sector not to mention the geography of the region, so I think this should be left to naturally develop.*
- I think the most useful thing is having deadlines and meeting on a regular basis it helps you to focus and produce work that you would tend to put off in favour of day-to-day work, admin and emails.*
- I personally think that there could be more criticality. I would be interested in thinking about how we could introduce a critique format into the group so that we give each other honest feedback on our ideas. This might work well in the last session when we all have to do a 5-minute presentation. For me this would be really useful because I am producing a new project and it would be great to hear from the group in terms of it working or not working.*
- I want to add on a personal level I feel very honoured to be part of such a interesting, diverse and dynamic cohort!*
- I appreciated the way you led the day, I found your friendly, inclusive and assertive style encouraged me, thank you.*
- A fantastically rich and full day again*
- Thanks for another good session today!*
- Thanks for a great workshop*

- *One of the things this course has done for me is to make me think in the long term for the first time ever.*
- *Thanks for another inspiring session*
- *The work we've been doing in VASWLP was a huge motivator in my submitting a text to the Frieze Writer's Prize, and turns out I was selected as runner up! I'm grateful for the support of the group.*
- *This course has demystified leadership and made us understand that we take responsibility for the sector – I now think "how could I engender change" and has changed the way I view leadership.*
- *My work's a blur and I don't tend to look back, but this process has helped me hold onto my work. The programme made me look at my artistic projects and OSR separately and seeing how they work together – made me realise that OSR is mine. The vision and mission has helped me create a backbone for my practice.*
- *I have developed a notion of leader that suits me – I understand how leadership works for me, not about being extraordinary but being open, accessible, transparent, team working and collectiveness and moving towards removing barriers.*
- *the programme has put focus on my vision – a settling process, given me focus and clarity, I've gained confidence and increased my ambition. I've realised the power of the individual within the institutions too – the work I am doing at RWA is new territory, an outreach programme that works cross sector.*
- *The programme has given me a support structure, I've used the course to develop a new visual arts organisation and created my vision and mission for it.*

## **In conclusion**

From a delivery and participant perspective, it would appear conclusive that the programme has been successful in achieving its objectives, that its impact has been tangible and significant, and that there has been real value in terms of personal and leadership learning, networking and collaboration as a direct result of the programme.

There was general agreement that the participants would very much welcome the opportunity to participate in an extension programme.

It is clear that a programme of this depth and breadth is highly rated by participants and that they would have been unable to attend if Arts Council England had not been able to invest substantially in the programme.

## Evaluation questionnaire results

The responses to the evaluation questionnaire are given below in full. Seventeen out of twenty-one participants completed the questionnaire at the time of writing this report.

### **Qu.1 Did the programme enable you to consider the nature of leadership, and develop an understanding of how you see yourself in relation to the concept of leadership? Please explain.**

1. Yes and there are some basic requirements that I need to put in place before I can move forward and sustain forward movement.
2. Yes. It enabled me to see leadership as something that is best driven by vision, values and a passion for making great art happen, rather than something to do with personality and style. That's something that sits very comfortably with me, whereas leadership without substance, leadership for its own sake, does not. As a lowly freelancer, it can be hard to feel any sense of agency or influence – and it is indeed much harder – but the idea that leadership can come from anywhere, within an organization or outside of it, is subversive and compelling. I hope it will be allowed to grow as a leadership model in our sector.
3. Yes, I did consider what leadership was, and what leadership might be in the context of my workplace and role within it.
4. Yes, it provided a focused space for me to consider my role as a leader in my field
5. Yes it did. The programme updated my sector knowledge and introduced me to geographical area/organisational knowledge.
6. Yes, I understand that there are many types of leadership and they are applicable for many different situations. I learnt that I had a pretty narrow view of what leadership was before the programme, having mainly experienced it on a more autocratic level. I have learnt that it is not a necessity to be an extrovert to be a leader as I had always thought, and that it is something that, in its best form, is something driven from a need to create change towards ones perception of a better future through influencing and empowering others; and not by inflicting compliance! This vision centred leadership as opposed to power centred leadership has allowed me to think that yes, I do have the potential.
7. It has broadened my understanding of what leadership means. It has not only allowed me to think of myself as a leader but it has given me the permission to act as one.
8. Yes, it definitely expanded and developed my concept of leadership and shifted my understanding of my role as a leader.

9. Yes it has. The most important aspect about understanding leadership is how you determine your vision and mission, take ideas forward and work and manage people.
10. Yes . it allowed me to revisit the various leadership concepts and find one that related to my situation
11. yes the programme enabled me to deepen my understanding of leadership and apply this understanding to my rather 'portfolio' career in the arts - bringing together key elements of importance
12. Yes. The insightful provocations, intense and focused learning during the sessions and the time between the sessions to filter and process information has really helped me develop my idea of what leadership can be, and how it relates to my practice.
13. Yes it did. As a freelancer, with no 'team' to oversee, other than project by project, I have not previously considered myself to be 'a leader'. It does however result in my having yet another unfunded job to do - to understand how I can act upon this revelation
14. Yes, very informative about the nature of leadership, leadership styles and who we consider to be leaders in the visual arts at present.
15. Yes, it has given me a better understanding of what leadership is and my place in that concept (not what I had originally thought!)
16. Yes.
17. Yes very much. It has helped me to position myself in the art sector and understand the contribution that I am able to make.

**Qu.2 Did the programme enable you to articulate an individual vision and mission as the basis for action planning and setting yourself leadership goals? Please explain.**

1. Yes, I was able to articulate my mission and create a meaningful vision statement
2. Yes. It was very hard to do, and you have to buy into the idea that it's possible to lead from anywhere. However, the time we spent working and re-working individual vision and mission was time very well spent. It has to be the starting point and it won't work, it won't motivate or guide you, unless you get it right. It has to come from within and you have to work in a very critical, self-aware way to set aside extraneous influences and get to the core of what drives you. From establishing my vision and mission I found it harder still to translate those into SMART objectives. That's when, in a way, you have to throw out your theoretical aspirations and try and come up with a plan that will work for the actual situation you find yourself in. If that's not a situation that's conducive to developing your leadership goals then that's incredibly hard. My first attempt at SMART objectives was very poor. I had to go through several very

different iterations to get there, helped along by my one-to-one mentoring session. When I returned to the objectives after the summer break, I was actually surprised and impressed with their potency and realism.

3. Yes, I found this very useful, and hope to apply it to new roles in the future. I found it helpful to take the time to reflect on what we did, what we were for and what we wanted for the future. This was also helpful in getting others 'on board' with us.
4. Yes
5. Yes it did. I needed to move up a gear in relation to organisational activities, and I needed to prioritise my own arts practice more.
6. Yes, and it was hard. Honing down all the 'mush' towards a vision and then all the way to creating actionable SMART goals was invaluable. I learnt also that it is vitally important to strictly allocate time to reviewing/revisiting and reflecting on these things on an ongoing basis, or busy work can stop you moving forward towards these goals, especially if they are challenging and avoidance/procrastination can slip in.
7. The programme was incredibly helpful in making me focus on myself and what I want to achieve in the future. It has helped me to recognise the different strands of my art practice and to define separate vision, mission and smart objectives for them.
8. Yes, it challenged me to think about why I do what I do, and, in that sense, how I could push myself further in that direction. It is valuable now to have concrete steps to take as well as a framework for using in the future.
9. Yes, this aspect has been the most important to determine a plan forward. Extremely useful part of the course to interrogate this in detail and work with colleagues to support and gain critical feedback.
10. I re-visited the organisations vision and mission to share with my board and team. From this I am in the process on refocusing my leadership goals
11. yes - I articulated a vision and mission - and this has helped me to clarify my goals - although I 'm still in the process of identifying these as they may change and shift as the next 12 months progresses
12. Yes, developing a vision and mission through the programme was an incredibly hard and valuable process. I see this becoming the backbone to my practice that will help with all aspects of my ongoing practice.
13. Yes. Never having been part of an institution I also fall short on training opportunities. What I do has always been intuitive. Doing

these things has informed My professional development and taught me how to verbalise my intentions

14. Yes, understanding what a 'vision' is and a 'mission' is and the differences between the two allowed me to write my own vision and mission statement to keep in mind when working. This statement will adapt and change over time and the idea will be to revisit the statement regularly to ensure I am staying true to it or adapting it if my interests change.
15. Yes, this is something that takes lots of 'head space' for good planning but a very useful process
16. Yes.
17. I have been able to focus on my future path and for the first time really articulate what it is that inspires me and where I want to be heading.

**Qu.3 Did the programme enable you to develop your advocacy skills? Please explain.**

1. Yes, I put a proposal to an organisation for an alternative approach to getting audience feedback.
2. Yes. It's still something I struggle with, but repeatedly doing elevator pitches helps a lot. It's a hugely useful skill to be able to express oneself clearly and compellingly in just one minute – there are so many situations in which that skill is critical. I'm aware that I'm still not able to talk comfortably and confidently about myself and my work. However, the practice on the course has enabled me to get better at verbally presenting ideas in a clear and persuasive way that I hope is imbued with my own personality and passion for art and the sector. The vision-led model of leadership is a factor in enabling this, I think.
3. Whilst the programme encouraged me to articulate my individual vision and mission I don't think that it was able in the time to support the development of specific skills.
4. Having to present opinions and work in front of others was helpful in developing advocacy skills.
5. Yes, gaining focus from vision/mission exercises allowed confidence to grow from the clarity gained in the exercises. I found myself more willing to go out and talk/network with people and from this finding more people willing to become involved with my project.
6. The programme has really helped me feel more confident in speaking in front of people, which has never come easily to me. This will help me with presenting future projects.
7. Yes, though I think that some more time could have been spent on this given the urgency of these skills at the moment - perhaps some

exploration of rhetoric would have been valuable in developing our arguments.

8. Yes and no. I think we did not interrogate how as a group we could take on advocacy and support the development of the sector in the SW?
9. Yes and no. I felt it would have been useful to agree on the key aspects of 'what is special about the sector in the southwest'. Develop and share a common strong message to enable everyone to advocate such as for the visual arts to be better understood as critical ingredient of contemporary life .
10. yes - through meeting other like-minded 'leaders' from the sector, I have started to feel more connected to a regional arts ecology that I can certainly advocate for in many different circumstances now
11. I'm not sure I understand this question.
12. I'm not sure it did. It may be raised my awareness of the differences that leaders have as their motivations. So that for me flags up the value of experience
13. I'm unsure exactly what you mean by this question! It has enabled me to understand more about people and projects in the SW that I was unaware of before so I am able to tell others about them (so I suppose I am an advocate in that way). It has improved my confidence in what I do and allowed me to be more confident speaking to others about my work, therefore seeking advocacy from them.
14. I think it enabled me to have a clearer voice but I still lack the understanding of the mechanics of advocacy I think.
15. No. I didn't feel that this was a particular focus of the course. The course programme seemed more focused on leadership styles and collaborative working.
16. I feel that it has increased my confidence in articulating my own opinions within the sector with conviction and understanding.

**Qu.4 Did the programme enable you to become more confident in taking responsibility for a) your own development and b) that of the sector? Please explain.**

1. I believe that I have more confidence and determination in broadening my practice. Certainly in terms of utilising new media methods for translating my ideas.
2. a) Yes. I've taken responsibility for my own development for several years, but have often found it a trying and lonely process. Being part of a cohort of such interesting, resilient and independent people, with an unerringly affirmative and convinced course leader, has helped me feel a lot more positive about my opportunity, ability and indeed entitlement to develop. b) I'm not sure. The feeling that

it's hard to influence unless you're in a position of power or authority still lingers. However, this course has done much to lessen that perception. I will certainly be looking for ways that I can influence – indeed one of my SMART objectives is about influencing from within.

3. Yes, I certainly recognise the benefits of taking responsibility for my own development. Whether I will have the time or opportunity to do this is another matter. One of the things I found hardest about this programme was finding the time to do the homework. Our organisation is small, with a big remit, so there isn't much time for self reflection. I do understand its value though, so hope that I will be able to squeeze some in.
4. Yes, I think that this was prime focus of the programme
5. It gave some context for the work I already do in relation to taking responsibility for myself and the sector.
6. a) The programme gave me the tools to refer to help take responsibility; and gave confidence to take myself seriously enough to invest in professional development such as Action Learning Set and Mentoring. b) Programme raised my ambitions on what I feel I can achieve, I have taken this on already to increase the scale of a project and therefore its influence/outcomes for the sector.
7. I have definitely become more confident. This has shown itself in decision making, with both my own artwork and in the carrying out and developing of my collaborative activities. This confidence will enable me in future networking and collaborations outside of the town.
8. Yes, the process of identifying concrete tasks and goals was very useful. Also, the opportunity to review the skills and experience I already have has made me more confident in moving forward in my own work and in making a greater contribution to the sector.
9. Yes, it has actually helped me understand my place in the sector and how my work can be useful to the SW.
10. I think I was able to understand my role in the organisation better and that of how to empower the team. This has led to a change in job description from Development Manager to ECO - Director.
11. yes - i feel more confident in my own position in the sector - and this enables me to carry through this confidence into my own development - taking responsibility for this also
12. (a) Yes, it has led to a more proactive approach to turning ideas into actions (b) I don't consider that I am taking responsibility for the sector but I now see myself as part of the sector.
13. Yes, it made me more confident about taking responsibility for my own development. I was already on that journey before the course began so the timing was perfect. Within the sector? I sometimes

feel my apparent confidence actually creates a barrier, there's a rub there that still hasn't been resolved for me.

14. Yes, however I have always known that my development is ONLY my responsibility no one else's, but the programme has made me more confident in developing projects which are more ambitious and support / challenge wider concerns the sector.
15. I definitely feel more confident in taking responsibility for my own development and have a better understanding how I can be an important part in developing the sector
16. I wasn't looking for this kind of support as I already felt I had the skills to ensure my own development. The sector was only addressed in a very broad way, so I don't really think I have developed any new skills in relation to 'taking responsibility for the sector' other than perhaps being reminded I should be more involved and active.
17. Very much so. I have never before really focused upon my future path beyond my study.

**Qu.5 Do you feel that your participation in the programme will help underpin the long-term viability of your work? If so how? Has the programme provided an opportunity to review the way in which you work? Will you take anything away from the programme that may inform your work? Please explain.**

1. I'm not sure about 'viability'? I have demonstrated the importance of taking risks, to ask for help, and to consider longer term planning.
2. Hmm...I certainly hope so. From January 2014 I will be 100% freelance for the first time so it's a new page for me. I hope that the timely experience of the programme will give me the strength and resilience to stand up for what I believe in and the way I prefer to work, helping me to shape my work rather than simply accepting it. Financial viability is always going to be a challenge, but there are a number of people in the VALPSW group who show that it is possible and who have been useful peer role-models in that respect. For this reason as well as many others I hope that the group or network will continue in some way. Clearly the nature of the sector is changing, with increasing numbers working independently and in a freelance capacity. VALPSW has recognized that and the programme is enormously valuable as a mechanism to help support and unlock the potential of a group of talented thought-leaders. While I will continue to worry about financial viability, I hope that the vision and mission that I developed during the programme will make my work more viable personally and emotionally, which is an equally important battle, and with some good fortune and more forward-

thinking programmes like VALPSW, I hope that financial viability may ultimately come from this.

3. I will take away from the programme that in order for people to know what you do and to think it's important, you have to know what you do and how to tell people it's important. being able to consider this, even if we are not able to do it, will help us in the future.
4. I think that the emphasis on individual responsibility was very useful in this respect
5. Only to some extent. I think the time limited nature of the programme, and the variety of backgrounds may have slowed the potential of some aspects of leadership development. Namely whether each participant was attending in order to learn about styles of leadership or because they wanted to lead. I found the dynamic between the two facets a little frustrating.
6. Underpinning in terms of one part of my work, yes; understanding and accepting that creating a strong partnership and not 'going it alone' will provide the best hope of success for the long-term viability of the vision. Viable in terms of finance needs working on still. Reviewing the way I work has led me to drop some unnecessary distractions and commitments that I'd fallen into through apathy or not having the guts to say no, I have spent so much time doing this. I am training myself to ask if it'll help with my vision in some way. One doesn't always have to say yes to every request. I really struggled to bring together the two parts of my practice and in the end decided to make this work I would focus solely on one part it has certainly helped. I now need to apply the same rigour to the other part, which is my artistic practice. I am excited to be able to use things we have learnt to move this forward too as there currently feels like an imbalance.
7. The understanding of different leadership roles and work on defining targets and goal planning has helped me already and I know will underpin how I go about things in the future. My meeting and working with other leaders on the course has broadened my horizons and will help inform my future actions.
8. It was very positive to step outside of the way I work to reflect on it, and hope that I can incorporate that discipline into my day to day practice.
9. Yes, it has. The programme has made me consider lots of different aspects of my work and triggered a process of self reflection and set of actions, which are in place and that are already being effective that will impact on my long term goals.
10. I think changes in how I lead the organisation will contribute to our viability. Engaging the team to be empowered and proactive in

shaping our future. sharing a desire to co-create and co-own ways of working.

11. yes - i feel my participation has strengthened my confidence - which in turn strengthens the long term viability of what I do. Finding out about other individuals working in the sector (a sector that is both geographically dispersed and often relies on freelance individuals) can be isolating at times - it is empowering and inspiring to build a strong network of like-minded leaders across the region, all advocating the visual arts.
12. It has given me increased confidence in approaching ideas of leadership that is helping me to connect with other individuals and organisations and challenge and inform my ideas of professional practice, that will have an impact on the long term viability. I continually review the way I work but the focus on presenting this to a group of peers has been particularly challenging and rewarding.
13. Definitely. The development of my business plan has been hugely informed by the rigorous conversations and debates. I also understand where I sit in the wider ecology - can acknowledge my strengths but also be wary of areas in which I lack confidence
14. I'm yet to see or understand how the programme will really affect the long term liability of my work; I think that will come in time. Having the opportunity to tell others in the sector what I do and how I do it in some depth has allowed me to take stock to some extent. Having taken part in the programme with such mix of people at different levels in their careers and ages has allowed me to feel more confident talking about my practice to people outside of my direct peer group. I'm quite shy usually, particularly talking to people more 'grown up' than me (even though I'm much older than I feel)!!
15. Yes - it has enabled me to understand my expertise better, and develop some areas that I am less skilled in. Understanding what it is that you need to refine feels like half the battle!
16. Yes. I was reminded of the importance of making time for strategic thinking and long-term planning.
17. I think that it has helped find direction and potentially influence any work that I may take on as a freelancer. Now that I have a path it is easier for me to see if I am heading in the right direction with the work that I take on as a freelancer.

**Qu. 6 Did the programme create and deliver an effective leadership challenge? Was it useful and if so, how?**

1. I don't believe so. I think we could have been more creative and innovative.

2. Ha ha! It was certainly revealing and I think it showed that those of us in the visual arts sector need to work on our teamworking skills! Was it a leadership challenge or a teamworking challenge that we found so problematic? Splitting into informal geographic groups and sub-conversations made it even more difficult to feel that we achieved it as a group. That said, it was probably too big a group to attempt a task of this nature. Even before taking into account the fact that everyone on the programme was a leader or aspiring leader, I did think that it highlighted the tendency of the visual arts sector to go round in circles, without resolution or forward momentum. It's a problem we need to deal with. I think it was by a combination of luck and design that we ended up with the very successful day on 20 November. It was one of the best sessions and a satisfying, reflective, thought-provoking and affirming end to the programme.
3. I felt that this was not a clearly understood element of the programme. Perhaps more time was needed to cohere as a group in order for it to have been more effective
4. Not for me. I championed the idea of each participant presenting actively, from the beginning, but found opposition from some quarters, which confused me greatly as delivering was what I thought we were there to do. I'm glad that the closing day was embraced, but it seemed to have been enjoyed by default of the speaker withdrawing rather than intention and belief in the work and worth of ourselves. I'm still waiting for notes of the day so I can see what happened, and what the plan is for the outstanding budget unspent on the speaker.
5. I think we all realise that creating and delivering a leadership challenge was.. a challenge. The day itself however was very interesting but not sure how useful it was. I would have preferred to do something more outwards facing that allowed others into, and practising, what we have learnt.
6. I felt slightly confused about the leadership challenge and whether it could achieve a useful outcome in the time frame. The session proved a stimulating conclusion to the programme.
7. Not really. The size of the group made it very difficult to have a voice heard in this process, and it came down to a series of surveys rather than a conversation that built upon itself - people kept chucking in new ideas rather than responding to/developing ones that were already out there. I feel like the outcome was unambitious and fractured given the budget and timescale we had, which was disappointing.

8. Debbie was key to this. She challenged the group and individually. The last session was particularly useful creating a series of provocations to challenge ourselves as leaders in the sector.
9. I became very disconnected to the process between workshops 3 and 4 . Working in a rural context throws up a very difference set of challenges to the urban context. The challenge became irrelevant. In a way the workshop 5 became reflective which was a successful outcome
10. It was useful - as I have gained confidence in my abilities to 'go and do' i.e. setting up the outside speaker. It had turned into rather a frustrating exercise before that - but I think that's because there were 'too many cooks' in the room - who all wanted something slightly different - even if they couldn't quite articulate it? (!) The fact that she, the speaker, cancelled, although very disappointing originally - turned out to be the best thing that could have happened for the final days session.
11. The concept of having a leadership challenge was really effective and generated a whole host of conversation and debate but in practice designing an event by committee in the way we did was not effective. Although the final session was a rich and rewarding experience I wonder if thinking about it for the future the challenge could be set for how a group would proceed beyond the life of the programme.
12. Yes, i was challenged mostly intellectually, but sometimes emotionally too. One side that developed was my ability to write better about my thoughts without being pedantic. To reflect curiosity in the way I write. Not shouting but encouraging enquiry. It made me aware of how much I have learnt over the years. I wavered between feeling like a toddler learning to walk and being a wise old woman. Thank god I got through puberty!
13. It hasn't happened yet, but will!
14. We will see. I found the process quite difficult and we are a diverse group.
15. I think the programme was perhaps too broad to be considered as a 'real challenge'. By allowing the group to be so varied the programme material and work was quite general and aimed at one level.
16. The leadership challenge was a difficult task to complete as a group that was relatively large and dispersed. I felt that the overall day was successful and that I got a lot out of it. The group became stronger and developed a fuller understanding of each others position within the sector. I feel that I have walked away with a new network that I can look to in the future.

**Qu. 7 To what degree did the programme deliver a balance between information sharing, peer learning, self-reflection, critical thinking and sector analysis? Please explain. Which activity/ workshop did you find most helpful to the development of your leadership ambitions? Why?**

1. Number 4 because the group more familiar, was smaller, it felt more engaged, the content provided opportunities for sharing each other's practice and issues, and for reflection
2. A perfect balance. All of these elements were crucial to the experience. Which activity/workshop did you find most helpful to the development of your leadership ambitions? Why? All were immensely useful. Perhaps the elements that will have the strongest impact will be the vision/mission-led notion of leadership, translated into realistic and achievable objectives, as well as the notion that there is indeed a role – even an obligation - for independent individuals to shape the future and the enticing suggestion that the future may well be the better for it.
3. I found the group working useful, and sharing of ideas amongst the group about how we worked and about the activities we were given as part of the programme.
4. I think that the programme might have had a stronger emphasis on supporting peer learning combined with self-reflection. The final day, when we shared our reflections on our own practices and collectively identified some key issues for the sector was the most satisfying - and that it helped to create a sense of coherent purpose.
5. The first workshop was the most helpful for me. The programme delivered a balanced programme.
6. The programme itself delivered all these, ones commitment to self-reflection and critical thinking away from the sessions was a vital part to creating that balance and gaining the most out of the programme. Vision statement was most helpful. Writing this was like getting blood from a stone but so worth it! I have realised there are many ways to achieve the same vision. It becomes a lodestone to come back to and remind yourself what is personally important.
7. I feel the balance in the sessions was good. I enjoyed the sharing sessions and particularly liked the fourth session with the work in smaller groups. The mentoring sessions were really helpful to me as I was able to talk about important issue.
8. I thought it struck a good balance between these elements but would have been a richer experience with a smaller group (see answer to question 8). I was very pleased to be introduced to action learning sets and hope to incorporate them into my practice.

9. It was an even balance and FB was a useful tool to share out of the sessions.
10. Needed more sector analysis and critical thinking to pin down key issues and differences SMART objectives. and generally providing structure and access to all the tools and supporting literature links
11. Good balance - although at first I found it unsettling as to why freelancers and individual artists were 'shoe-horned' together with people from organisations - it seemed our respective roles and priorities were too different? I wonder if this is why 2 artists left the programme? However - I think the course developed to take these differences onboard after the first session. It is a shame the 2 artists didn't continue, as I think the course/peer group would have been richer in scope for their input. I particularly liked the Action Learning sets - they were great to share experience/issues and to find out how other people are managing key areas - and to gain insightful feedback on ones own situation too.
12. There was a good balance but I felt when the groups were a bit smaller the conversations were more productive. The time between the scheduled events allowed development of ideas that were then shared with the group. This was a powerful aspect of the programme.
13. Oddly I found the structured parts, with clear outcomes, like vision and mission stuff, most useful in terms of learning. The peer learning was good but I think would have been better had the group been half the size. Self reflection very helpful, critical thinking yes, honed and polished. Not sure about sector analysis, didn't recall much of that. So most important were the formal things - those that supported clear thinking and were pushed and pushed until they said what they need to say.
14. I'd say the whole programme was pretty balanced overall.
15. The balance of learning styles was effective and thinking more broadly put that learning in to perspective. I think setting up action learning was very helpful, and I'd like to continue with that.
16. I thought there was a balance between all the sections mentioned above, although there could have been more emphasis on critical thinking and critiquing within the group discussions.
17. There was a good balance between the information provided and the self directed learning. The sessions felt balanced and well considered with both practical learning and self-reflection. I learn best when being part of a discussion and being able to contribute rather than being just spoken to. The balance of the different activities allowed me to walk away from the sessions with a clear understanding of what the session set out to achieve.

**Qu.8 Were your expectations of the programme met fully, partially, hardly, not at all? Please explain your answer.**

1. My expectations were partially met. I haven't had a conversation with everyone in the group. It was a big group, and not all art forms were represented, which was a shame. People are busy, but I think there could have been more activities conversations between sessions to spark ideas.
2. It was different to my expectations, which were more along the lines of traditional learning of skills, models, theory and behaviours. However, I think it was many times better and will have far more impact on me because of this. One can learn and forget behaviours and models, but deeply thought-through vision, values and conviction in oneself and the sector are powerful and hopefully long term.
3. Partially - see the above answers
4. Partially. I was hoping to be amongst a whole cohort wishing to challenge and develop themselves as leaders, rather than academic discussions around what makes a good leader. It sounds as though this happened at the last session, the framework of which I think should have been introduced at the second session so we all had a much more informed idea about each other.
5. Expectations were nearly all met. I certainly learnt a lot and am so grateful for having had this opportunity; it has had a big impact on me. My only disappointment was that we did not really 'gel' as a group till the last session. However this takes time and hopefully we will continue online. Consequently not as much collaboration and involvement with each other outside of the workshops as I'd have hoped. I am, of course, as responsible for this as anyone else!
6. The course totally met my expectations. The programme came at a time when I was looking for help with my career. I was pleased to be accepted on to it and the timing of the sessions throughout the year also helped motivate me.
7. Partially. I definitely feel more confident in my own work and as a leader. My biggest issue was the size of the group - I'd imagined it would be more like 10 or 12 participants. I found participating in discussion for the first couple of the sessions quite stressful, and didn't feel like we got the depth of conversation that I was hoping for in terms of challenging/developing thought very often. Even from a practical perspective, it was difficult to remember who everyone was and where they were from - I didn't feel like I got to know or bond with the group very well.

8. Fully. It was the exact type of course that I was looking for 18 months ago. It has provided me with skills and knowledge that I needed to expand upon to develop my confidence.
9. Partially. Found it difficult to feel connected. Where that relates to the time between workshops. Size of the group takes time to get to know people, build openness and trust.
10. My expectations changed (and are still changing) halfway through the course due to my personal circumstances. After this, they were fully met.
11. The programme exceeded my expectations, the learning, sharing, openness and generosity of all involved was energising.
12. It was more personal than I expected, in a good way. I had done a 3 day leadership course before and it was very task led. I had expected a more 'taught' course and am pleased it wasn't so tightly or explicitly taught. It was more of a shared journey for many of us. I had been concerned that it might be kind of theoretical and I would be bored, but it was all useful and can be applied in daily practice. I was also concerned I would speak too often - when I'm engaged and enthused I can take over too much in a group. I deliberately paced that - self gagging is an art in itself. So my listening has improved, I think. I'll shut up now.
13. I did expect to get a little more out of the programme, but due to family responsibilities that is fully my own fault as I couldn't commit to attend every session unfortunately.
14. They were more or less fully met. The sessions were packed with useful stuff. As ever, I'd like time for more, but it was a good starting point for taking forward my development.
15. The benefit of the programme for me was being able to take time out of day-to-day working to consider what leadership could mean for my new role as a full-time freelancer and encourage me to develop tools to enable this new way of working such as: a vision, website, mentor and business plan.
16. I did not know what to expect of the programme so have been extremely pleased with the results that it has given me. This is the first time that I have really given my time to assess my leadership skills and the value that they hold. It has been a valuable task to sit back and analysis my skills, my pathway and my future ambitions.

**Qu. 9 Did the facilitator show understanding about you, the sector and the challenges you face? Was the facilitator appropriate for the effective delivery of the programme? Please explain. What was your experience of the 1:1 mentoring? Was it helpful and if so, how?**

1. In as far as I was able to explain my situation. Yes I found the mentoring helpful. One wasn't enough for me. I think it is an essential part of a successful business/ enterprise/project/practice.
2. Absolutely. The facilitator was not only appropriate but fundamental to the effective delivery of the programme. Her understanding of the sector and the challenges we face as individuals and more widely were excellent. Moreover, her conviction and ability to find positive approaches to every challenge, without exception, were hugely affirming. This was balanced with a determination not to allow us to indulge in wishy-washy ideas ('can't define excellence') or wishful thinking ('not enough diversity on Boards') without challenging us to work out what we, personally, are going to do about them. 1-2-1 Mentoring: Very helpful. Helped to translate my rather unsatisfactory work situation into real, positive actions that I can take to change things and hopefully move forward in a number of steps. Helped me to think about how I position myself in particular, and how I should build a public profile based on what I can offer and what it is like to work with me. Made me see that it's ok to personalize my 'offer' or 'menu' and the experience of working with me and in fact it's better if I do personalize it. This in itself gives me confidence because I don't have to try to be something I'm not, but I can focus on what my distinctive character strengths and passions are. There's an authenticity to that which is empowering and liberating.
3. Debbie was good at making things relevant to the group. We were all treated as pros, and that was interesting as I don't really regard myself as such. This made for a very positive outlook. My mentoring session was very useful in the end. I have never done this sort of thing before, so wasn't sure it would be beneficial, but it was.
4. I found the 1:1 mentoring was very useful in helping me to clarify and articulate my needs.
5. The facilitator was good, but seemed to be experienced in working with existing hierarchical organisations, so approaches which can work with the team of a single organisation were not necessarily very successful with a group of 21 disparate individuals who are in professional competition to some extent at times.
6. Yes, Debbie was very knowledgeable and interested all round. Understanding the difficulties of the 'portfolio career' which seems pretty normal in our sector; also in understanding that one just has to choose the pragmatic over the 'pretty' solutions to problems sometimes. The mentoring was very useful and a new experience for me. Being able to talk through ideas with Debbie and come up with some concrete actions to take away was rewarding and

motivating. Her knowledge of the sector was helpful in getting me to the nub/structure of what I was aiming at.

7. The facilitator made the programme interesting and relevant to everyone there. She helped the group develop their voice. I was nervous about the mentoring session and left it until near the end. But felt very much at ease and was able to bring resolution to the last session.
8. DK seemed to understand our work and the challenges of the sector. The framework she presented was very productive, but I wish there had been a bit more time for moving away from it to discuss as a group some other aspects of leadership that maybe came up in our own development plans - e.g. rhetoric (as above), managing risk. It would have been helpful to discuss briefly in the group how we could prepare for the mentoring - I didn't feel like I got as much out of the first session as I could have because I wasn't very well prepared.
9. Yes 100%. Her broad knowledge of the arts and leadership in the sector was critical and how she applied this to the visual arts. The mentoring was great if anything to talk through plans and advice on how to move these forward with a leadership plan.
10. I thought the sessions were focused toward the issues of leadership. I only took up half of the mentoring, partly because of my own time management issues. I don't think I made the best use of the mentoring.
11. Yes Yes Yes - I particularly enjoyed the 1:1 mentoring and found it especially helpful after my circumstances had changed somewhat.. I felt that the mentor enabled me to see my situation and circumstances from an outside position- which enabled me both to gain clarity and identify procedures and strategies i needed to take in order to achieve my goals but within a different time-frame and personal circumstance. The mentoring was very reassuring and yet also professional in this respect.
12. On all levels Debbie was fantastic, knowledgeable, thoughtful, focused, challenging, and really good fun.
13. Yes, the mentoring was helpful. I felt a real tension going on. In the room, I felt confident about my leadership skills, yet outside my workload is terrifyingly low. I am struggling with this and no mentoring can assist really. Sometimes my emotional vulnerability probably undermines my professional profile. I felt that was understood
14. Debbie was a great choice for facilitator. Her knowledge and understanding of the sector is fantastic and she is a very good listener! She gave very good advice and most importantly encouragement.

15. Debbie was a great facilitator and had a solid grasp of the challenges the sector is facing. The 1:1 mentoring was also incredibly useful and gave me some really clear support to help with challenges and dilemmas
16. I thought the facilitator was knowledgeable and lead the sessions well, but again I felt that the programme was too general to have a dramatic effect on my practice and the way I work.
17. Yes, the facilitator was able to appeal to each of our needs regardless of our different stages and levels of understanding.

**Qu.10 Have you developed any projects or had any embryonic discussions with other course participants about potential collaborations that you would have been unlikely to develop without the encounters created through the programme? Please explain.**

1. Yes, discussions about potential projects, that I probably wouldn't have had with the person.
2. I've had discussions, certainly, though most have been others suggesting things I could do rather than potential collaborations. I'm still finding it hard to answer the question 'What kind of work do you do?' so that's a clear priority for me to sort out. A number of group members have wanted to pick my brains about the museum sector, which I do welcome, albeit I'm a little typecast. I think the final session on 20 Nov was perhaps the point at which I felt I was getting to know the group members as individuals. I very much hope that we'll be able to continue the conversations online as I would love to think that there is potential to work with other members of the group. My only frustration is that I feel a little geographically isolated when there are some obvious clusters of group members in Bristol and Stroud, for example. It's getting tougher in Devon, especially North Devon. I hope this answer is a case of 'Watch this space'.
3. I have asked other participants for advice, and got to know some interesting people who work locally in the same areas as me. I hope that these encounters will mean we can cal on each other in the future.
4. Yes
5. A few embryonic discussions.
6. I've had discussions with one of the other participants who has similar interests about the potential for collaboration in the future. We have met informally, nothing concrete yet, but I am hopeful. I wouldn't have met them if I had not been on the programme.
7. I am intending to contact three of the other participants in the near future to arrange meeting up with the view to some form of

collaboration or project. I would not have been able to make these encounters without being on the programme. For this I'm really grateful and I am looking forward to any future opportunities that might develop.

8. No, but I would like to set up an action learning set independently.
9. Not yet, but I can see the potential.
10. Fiona Winning developed a series of interviews - sound recordings with artists and young people in Somerset. ( She is a superb interviewer and we are very happy with the results). I would like to pursue the idea of inviting someone from the group to become a critical friend to SAW team.
11. I've had a couple of discussions with one member of the programme - not explicitly about collaborating - but about mutual interests that could hopefully develop further. We also spoke about possibly setting up an Action Learning set locally. Chatting with another member of the group at each session was very interesting, as he was completing a PhD and recommended some reading materials that have since proven to be v useful and interesting to my own research.. Both of these have been key encounters that could never had happened without the programme.
12. Yes, planning a collaborative research project with one other participant that will involve visiting up to four other individuals that were part of the programme.
13. Yes, but not as many as I would like. I'd love to get a Gloucestershire group together, it's exciting to see so many Gloucestershire people involved, we're usually largely ignored as a region, being overshadowed by Bristol
14. Yes! Hand in Glove are planning a project with OSR projects next year. Details are unsure at the moment but we are thinking about a residency working with artists Hand in Glove have previously exhibited taking place around West Coker.
15. I've met someone that I'll definitely keep in touch with. We are good at supporting each other. I've nurtured existing relationships and will develop those further. I'm excited to have a new network of contacts that I have the potential to work with.
16. No. I didn't apply to develop collaborations, but neither have they developed naturally.
17. Yes, I will be part of an informal discussion group set up in Stroud.