



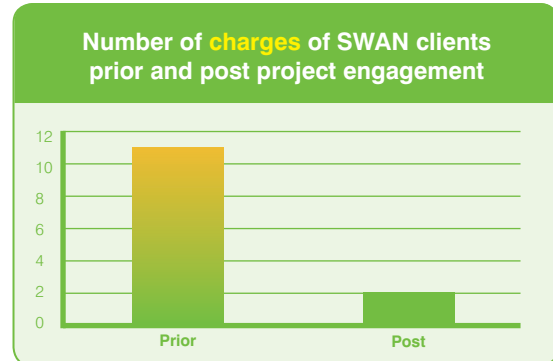
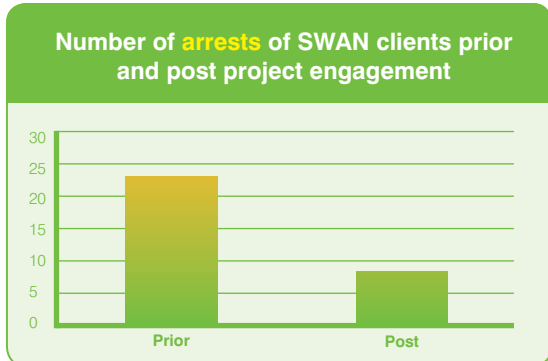
**Support for Women  
Around Northumberland**

# Progress Report

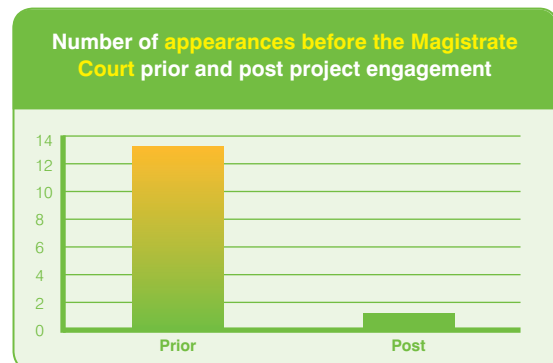
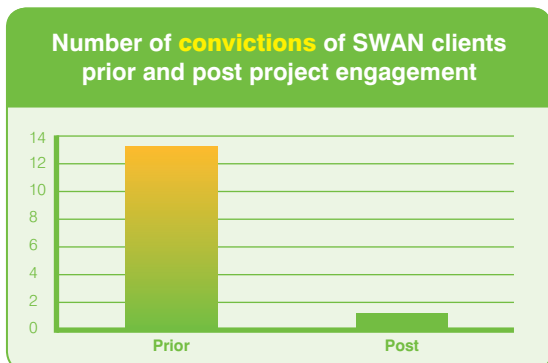
**NOVEMBER 2011**

SWAN, Support for Women Around Northumberland, has now been working in Northumberland for 20 months improving outcomes for female offenders, vulnerable women and those at-risk of offending. This is a progress report which looks at these outcomes and importantly their continuing impact on reducing re-offending and diverting women from prison.

SWAN is funded to divert women from custody and to reduce re-offending. The project has achieved both the objectives in a very effective and efficient manner, as can be demonstrated by the following figures.



We have measured how SWAN reduces re-offending using data supplied by Northumbria Police\*. This has consisted of data on the number of arrests of women in the six months before coming into the project compared with the number of arrests during their time with the project. In a similar way, we have also measured the number of charges made by the Police, number of convictions and the number of appearances before Magistrates.



\* Grateful thanks go to the Disclosure Unit of Northumbria Police which has worked in a true partnership sense and provided data to SWAN in a timely and efficient manner.

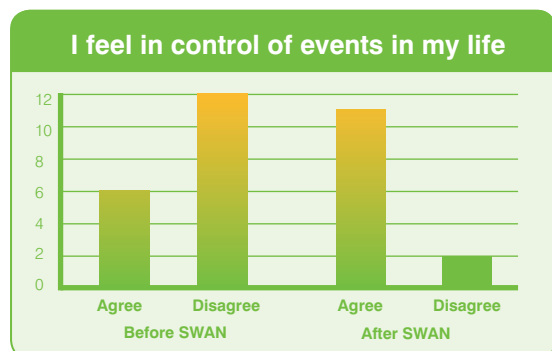
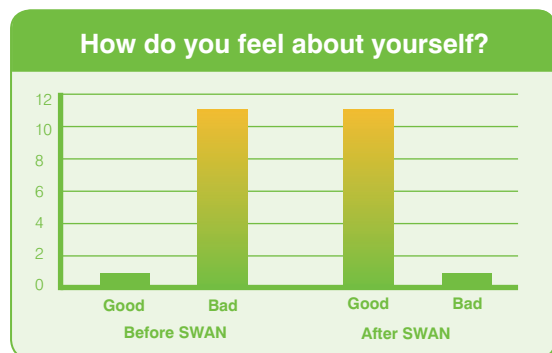
## Diverting women from custody

We measure if women have been stopped going back to prison again by using data provided by Northumbria Police. This concerns women judged to be most at-risk of going back to prison - these are either those on suspended sentences or women who have previously received sentences of less than 12 months. In the last 12 months a total of 14 women who fall into this category have been referred into the project and have been worked with.

The total number of women in this cohort who have returned to prison is... **zero**

## Better lives for vulnerable women

Other than achieving the important criminal justice outcomes which improve community safety and reduce government spending, SWAN has also made a significant impact on the welfare of individual women. These women would have otherwise gone unsupported and this would have had a major negative impact not only on the communities where they live but also on their families and children. We have been continuously monitoring these impacts and two areas have stood out: improving women's self esteem and self confidence; and the level of control women have over events in their lives. This is demonstrated by the following graphs.



Service users sculpted the above swan at a local park to show how far they had come in their journeys

### We ask clients questions like...

“What would you be doing if SWAN did not exist?”

### We get answers like...

“In a gutter, drunk, with no support and no family.”

“I would sink further and further down because SWAN is the only support I've got.”

## What now?

SWAN is currently funded by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the Corston Coalition of Funders until March 2012. The project needs continuation funding to enable it to carry on providing a quality service to vulnerable women in Northumberland, to reduce re-offending and to stop women going to prison - to do everything that Baroness Corston said was vital in addressing the issues of women and offending.

For issues of equality women in Northumberland need access to a service like SWAN. Without it, women in Northumberland would be at a disadvantage compared with other areas across England and Wales which have similar projects. Thus, vulnerable women will be again more likely to re-offend and more likely to go to prison. Baroness Corston also argued for an equitable service; without a funding commitment, women in the rural and urban areas of Northumberland will lose the support to enable them to turn their lives around.

### SWAN can be contacted through:

**Katie Wheatley**

Tel. 01670 544055

[katie.wheatley@escapefamilysupport.co.uk](mailto:katie.wheatley@escapefamilysupport.co.uk)

93 Bondicar Terrace, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 2JR