

Project Proposal



SECTION 1: PROJECT PROPOSAL AND CASE FOR SUPPORT			
Proposed Project Title:	<i>Trauma, textiles, and technologies: participatory sewing of electronic-textiles as a metaphor for post-traumatic healing</i>		
Project Summary: <i>(Maximum 100 words)</i>	This PhD explores metaphors of <i>sewing as repair and post-traumatic healing</i> by bringing together theoretical understandings of Trauma Studies and the practice of sewing electronic textiles (e-textiles). Collaborative sewing has wellbeing impacts in post-traumatic settings and by turning these handcrafted pieces into interactive artefacts, we embed additional meanings into the stitches and create multi-layered, interactive trauma-responsive objects. Working with Changing Lives’ women’s services, the candidate will collaboratively work on an e-textiles project with women who have been touched by the criminal system; empirically explore topics of healing, sewing, and digital technologies; and develop a comprehensive theory of trauma-responsive, collaborative e-textiles design.		
Name of non-HE Partner Organisation:	Changing Lives (CL) Women’s Services		
Name of Contact at non-HE Partner Organisation:	Laura McIntyre	Email Address:	Laura.mcintyre@changing-lives.org.uk
Primary AHRC Subject Area:	Design: History, Theory and Practice		
Secondary AHRC Subject Area (if Interdisciplinary):	Choose an item.		
Does the project Include a creative practice component?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
If you have listed two subject areas above, do you consider the project to be interdisciplinary?			YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, please briefly state why: <i>(Maximum 100 words):</i>			
Please provide full details of the proposal and make your case for support below: <i>(Maximum 750 words)</i>			
Research Aims (RA) This PhD explores metaphors of ‘sewing as repair’ and post-traumatic healing by bringing together theoretical understandings of Trauma Studies and the practice of sewing electronic textiles (e-textiles). Through theoretical explorations of craft, healing, and trauma, as well as participatory design work through the collaborative making of an interactive piece of textile art the candidate will engage in a praxis that is “made with love, filled with hope” (MacDonald&Peach,2020) with women who experience multiple forms of disadvantage, including engagement with the criminal system. The work will, therefore, also have interdisciplinary reach into Criminology. It builds on 6 years of collaboration between Strohmayer and Changing Lives (CL), and particularly their previous e-textiles collaboration, which lays the groundwork for this exploration (Strohmayer et al.,2018) and led CL to set up a Trauma Pathway Group. The candidate will develop a comprehensive theory of design that brings together metaphors and practices of healing and building hope through collaborative e-textiles making. The candidate will: RA1. Develop a comprehensive literature review of academic and sewing literatures on topics of trauma, healing, sewing, and digital technologies.			

- RA2. Conduct an **interview study with amateur and professional sewers** to explore their perceptions of ‘sewing as repair’ to build resilience in response to everyday traumas.
- RA3. Facilitate a **participatory e-textile making** project with staff at and women supported by CL to document women’s healing after trauma through stitches, voice, and other interactive elements. The outcomes will be (1) an interactive piece of textile art that tells the women’s stories of healing from the traumas of the criminal system, violence, or stigma they have experienced; and (2) a toolkit for others to carry out similar projects.
- RA4. Build a **comprehensive theory of trauma-responsive design work through e-textiles-making** by weaving together theoretical learning (RA1) and empirical findings (RA2&RA3).

Research context

Ann Cvetkovich’s (2003) pivotal work on queer trauma theory changed our perceptions of what is understood as trauma, including mundane trauma (such as stigma, intergenerational oppressions, racism, sexism, etc.) alongside traumatic events. For centuries, textiles have been used to tell stories of those who have experienced trauma (Hunter,2019) and to communicate everyday healing from ongoing and everyday traumas (Agosin,1989). Recently, this approach to sewing has also been used in collaborative making activities (Shercliff and Holroyd,2020), and collective e-textiles making to support women in sharing experiences (Strohmayr and Meissner,2020). The embedding of technologies in these artefacts gives the pieces of craft new affordances, which in turn can layer the meanings of the making processes as well as the finished artefacts for advocacy work.

Weaving together these two disparate research fields (trauma studies and participatory e-textiles making), the candidate will work alongside staff at CL women’s services who support women who are experiencing multiple forms of oppression and stigma on a daily basis to better understand how sewing, e-textiles, and collaborative making can help the healing in a trauma-responsive way and how the process of sewing can be understood as a metaphor of healing.

Research Questions:

1. In what ways can the metaphor of ‘sewing as repair’ be useful to build resilience for those who are experiencing trauma every day?
2. In what ways can the participatory process of making e-textiles be useful for individuals who make them and the communities they represent?
3. How can we bring together disparate literatures to theorise metaphors and practices of healing and building hope through collaborative e-textiles making?

Methodology and timeline

This project follows a Research through Design (RtD) (Durrant et al.,2017) and participatory textile making (Shercliff&Holroyd,2020) methodology. The candidate will use collage (Holbrook&Pouchier,2014) and other visual methods to illustrate the “sometimes convoluted lines of inquiry” (Desjardins&Key,2020) that make up RtD projects. Within these methodological parameters, the student will have the opportunity to develop appropriate research and design methods in conversation with the supervisory team, based on the students’ expertise, skills, and interests. They will also build on existing participatory work practices in CL.

Months 1-12: Familiarisation with University and CL; RA1, RA2

Outcomes: A written literature review and a charity-facing visual report, including implications for trauma-responsive service design

Months 13-24: RA3

Outcomes: (1) an interactive piece of textile art that tells diverse stories of post-traumatic healing; (2) exhibitions for CL, key public health and criminal justice commissioners, and the general public; and (3) a toolkit based on the project, including a visual report on the process, its outcomes, and implications for design

Months 25-36: RA4

Outcomes: a visual representation of this theory and charity-facing report bringing together theory and practice

Months 37-42: working with supervisors, the candidate will finalise their PhD thesis.

Please provide details of any resources and facilities, including details of any high cost equipment, fieldwork, training, etc., that may be required to complete the project successfully, and where you will seek these resources (e.g. NBCDTP; partner resources; departmental/school funds). Please include estimated costs:

(Maximum 200 words)

The candidate may need and/or wish to complete additional complex needs and trauma-informed practice training or may wish to shadow staff to better understand the research context. Where necessary and appropriate, they can participate in CL or their partners’ training, as an in-kind contribution by CL. If other training incurs a cost, they will apply to NBCDTP (~£250). To support the candidate’s wellbeing and resilience while working in trauma-responsive services, they will be offered two clinical supervisions with expert CL staff ever year, as an in-kind contribution.

Fieldwork and research costs will be minimal for this project as it does not necessitate international travel or high cost equipment. The candidate will seek the following from NBCDTP: ~£500 to cover material costs for RA3, printing costs for visual reports, and weekly return train tickets from Newcastle to Doncaster for fieldwork in months 13-24 (£30 return journeyx48=£1,440). The candidate will obtain inductions by CoCreate research group members, and have access to workshops that contain specialist equipment such as sewing machines, laser cutters, or electronics equipment at Northumbria University.

Where appropriate, the candidate can apply for internal funds at NU (e.g. funding to cover conference attendance) and CL (e.g. funding for workshop refreshments and dissemination events).

Please outline the arrangements for communication between the partner organisation and academic host organisation in regard of the project management and the monitoring of academic progress:

(Maximum 150 words)

The main communication channels are already well-established as the main supervisor (Strohmayr) has worked extensively with CL (with McIntyre and Latibeaudiere) for over 5 years. The candidate will spend time at virtual and physical CL premises regularly, learn about trauma-responsive services, and attend Trauma Pathway Group meetings to present findings, with more intensive weekly visits during months 13-24.

Strohmayr will be the main point of contact; Wallace will provide further support and insight. McIntyre will facilitate CL induction and collaboration with non-academic partners, introduce the student to relevant members of staff who may act as mentors, and encourage trust-building between all parties. Latiboudiere will support fieldwork in months 13-24.

Supervisory meetings between the candidate and Strohmayr will take place bi-weekly, bi-monthly with Wallace, and quarterly with McIntyre (and Latiboudiere in months 13-24). This includes ensuring project milestones are met and planning for dissemination, including publication and exhibitions at major academic and cultural venues.

What benefits will accrue to the student and the partner organisation as a result of your collaboration?

(Maximum 300 words)

Benefits for the candidate

- Access to expert staff and the women they support
- Unique access to inner workings of a national charity to network with staff, managers, and wider service networks
- Participatory research allows for multifaceted impacts of research, with clear indications of real-world changes the candidate is making through their research
- Developing links with other charities and researchers in the UK (and internationally) for potential future avenues for work or research
- Gaining real-world experience of delivering trauma informed women's services
- Being encouraged to and supported in submitting manuscripts to world-leading publication venues, developing their research portfolio
- Developing international research networks and leadership skills by participating in PGR and wider seminar series at NU

The candidate will gain a deep insight into this field, that will be highly publishable in academic and cultural settings. It will also lay a foundation for a post-doctoral academic career at the intersection of design and criminology, a growing field of research at NU and internationally.

Benefits for CL

- Development of novel services and insights at the cutting edge of digital and creative practice
- Potential to influence development of CL-wide Trauma Pathway, meaning impact of work can go beyond women's services (and beyond CL)
- staff and service users will reflect on existing services, improving their current practice
- staff and service users will develop new research, sewing, and technology skills
- Increased awareness and skills development in designing digital service delivery

The project will create an interactive textile artefact, which will show off CLs trauma-responsive services. This will have lasting impact as craft, scholarly, and support work, as well as an interactive artefact itself. Using this, CL will be able to show public health commissioners the impact of their work and advocate for the further need of such creative services.

Please briefly state what financial (if any) or in-kind contribution the partner will be making over the duration of the award:

(Maximum 100 words)

- Quarterly supervision with McIntyre throughout and quarterly supervisions with Latiboudiere in months 13-24
- Biannual clinical supervision
- Delivery of relevant training, including shadowing of staff at Doncaster Women's Centre
- Space to carry out research and access to staff and service users; especially in months 13-24

- Facilitation of networking opportunities to participate in CL service delivery nationally, and with other third and public sector services (e.g. presenting their work at national events to widen impact, or to build new connections for future projects)
- Support to communicate research outcomes within CLs national services
- Support from PR team for media engagement

Please describe the nature of the collaborative arrangement and the activities the student will be taking with the organisation:
(Maximum 300 words)

The candidate will engage with CL supervisors and other staff regularly to attend meetings, participating in the Trauma Pathway Group at least annually, and shadow staff. The schedule and nature of involvement with CL will be developed in collaboration between the candidate, supervisory team, and other relevant CL staff.

The candidate will:

- Months 1-12: introduce Trauma Pathway Group to the project; presenting the plan, potential risks, and intended outcomes. They will complete NU and CL ethics in conversation with Latiboudiere and staff at Doncaster
- Months 13-24: work more independently with CL staff. They will visit Doncaster at least weekly to facilitate their collaborative e-textiles making session and/or to shadow staff, plan future sessions, or familiarise themselves with the space and women who visit it
- Months 24-36: feed back outcomes from the project to the CL team in Trauma Pathway Group meetings, meetings across various services they provide nationally, and in virtual training events to disseminate research findings from the reports and toolkits they produce
- Months 36-42: work with their supervisors to develop a toolkit for trauma-responsive service delivery through e-textiles making, and to disseminate this with CL staff in virtual and in-person activities

The supervisory and advisory team are experienced in and aware of ethical risks of carrying out participatory, in-the-world research in sensitive settings, and will support the candidate mitigate these risks, including managing and following strong institutional ethics procedures at NU and CL.

The project has the potential to create novel e-textiles and interaction techniques that have high value in creative, cultural, and trauma-responsive support sectors. These results will be published open access and exhibited for CL and publicly. All findings, reports, and toolkits will be made available to CL and other trauma-responsive services.

SECTION 2: SUPERVISION AND EXTERNAL ADVISORS

First Supervisor:	Dr Angelika Strohmayer	School/Department:	School of Design
Second Supervisor:	Prof Jayne Wallace	School/Department:	School of Design
Additional Advisor:	Laura McIntyre	Organisation/Institution:	Changing Lives, Head of Women's Services
Additional Advisor:	Stephani Latibeaudiere	Organisation/Institution:	Changing Lives, Director of Doncaster Women's Centre

Explain how the expertise of the supervisory team and external advisors will allow them to support the proposed project and the selected student:

(Maximum 500 words)

Dr Angelika Strohmayer is an Early Career Researcher and Lecturer in Interaction Design at NU's School of Design. Previously she has worked at Swansea University's Centre for Criminal Justice and Criminology and has guest lectured at various universities across a range of disciplines, including Criminology. She is a leading researcher in feminist and justice-oriented technology research, and co-founder of fempower.tech, an international collective of feminist technology researchers. She uses participatory Research through Design methodologies in charity settings to understand and advance their creative use of technologies. She currently has a monograph under contract (publication in January 2021) with Palgrave Macmillan on justice-oriented e-textiles practices in women's services. She has published 2 book chapters, journal articles in women's and museum studies, and 14 articles at high impact Human-Computer Interaction venues, winning several awards.

Prof Jayne Wallace is Professor of Craft and Wellbeing in the School of Design at NU. She has been Co-Director of the AHRC Centre for Doctoral Training in the Northumbria-Sunderland Consortium 2015-2017, and has seen 9 PhD candidates to completion. Her research explores the potential of design, contemporary art jewellery, digital technologies, and the act of making to support sense of self across a range of human contexts. Her current research champions the concept of ongoingness – a forward focused dynamic of continuing bonds – working with people who are bereaved, people who are living with dementia, and people who are approaching end of life. She co-founded

the Research Through Design Conference, which is the principle methodology of this project with Prof Joyce Yee (who is also a CoCreate member) in 2013 and co-founded the Journal of Jewellery Research in 2017.

Laura McIntyre is Women's Service Manager at CL and chairs the Trauma Pathway Group. She has over a decade of experience in supporting women with complex needs as support worker, line-manager, and now service manager. She is dedicated to improving the organisation's client-centred services and has worked on a series of projects involving creative, cultural, and arts practice over the years, witnessing the unique impacts of creative and digital services on the women she supports. She has extensive experience of line-management, supervision, and supporting early career professionals, including working with PhD candidates and academic researchers.

Stephani Latibeaudiere is manager at Changing Lives' Doncaster Women's Centre and has experience of front-line trauma-responsive services for over 4 years. She leads an innovative multi-agency hub and dedicated space for women who experience multiple forms of oppression, violence, and traumas. She knows that creative activities are particularly important for women who find it difficult to engage in talking therapy. Her service offers creative and statutory services for women who have been in touch with the criminal justice system and those who have experience of sex work, survival sex, or sexual exploitation; women-only courses at their Community Hub; and childcare facilities. Situated in the city-centre, they are part of a network of services in the region, using a multi-agency approach including mental health services, probation, prison services, adult education, and the Doncaster Complex Lives Alliance.

SECTION 3: RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Please provide details about the research environment the selected student will be joining and its suitability:

(Maximum 500 words)

The central academic setting of the project will be the CoCreate group at Northumbria University's School of Design, within the Faculty of Arts, Design, and Social Sciences. The group is diverse but shares an ethos of co-created design research involving various stakeholders, including expertise in working in sensitive settings. It is the academic home of over 30 co-located design researchers who share an office space and practical 'making' facilities in the newly equipped maker space. CoCreate has a vibrant research community with weekly group meetings and frequent cross-disciplinary collaborations.

CoCreate has a strong group of PhD students who organise bi-weekly seminars on design research, to accompany other support structures to help students find their own place in the research community. The School's PGR numbers are growing rapidly with internal and externally funded PhDs, including a Northern Bridge-funded CDA student who started in October 2020.

Furthermore, in the School of Design students are already working on projects that closely relate to this topic such as cultural heritage in African textiles or human-centred design for mental health care services. Strohmayer will start the supervision of a PhD student in January 2021 to explore women's co-created making to shape understandings of criminological narratives. Prof. Jayne Wallace already supervises an investigation into the role of co-creation and gifting symbolisation within Restorative Justice processes, and a practice-based exploration into the role of embroidery and textiles as identity and heritage of isolated communities.

The candidate will also benefit from the bi-weekly international seminar series organised by Northumbria Responsible Technology for Humanity Lab (NORTHLab), an interdisciplinary and cross-faculty research centre for Human and Digital Design. And the seminar series and making activities organised by Craft Futures, a cross-disciplinary group of researchers and makers working in digital-traditional hybrid spaces of craft and technologies.

The partner, Changing Lives, also forms a vital part of the research environment. They are a national charity supporting people across all walks of life based in the North East who work closely with other charities; statutory, public, and social services; and cultural organisations nationally. They are forerunners in the delivery of trauma-informed services after setting up their Trauma Pathway Group to develop trauma-informed policies and services with the help of Strohmayer. It is part of their women's strategy to incorporate more creative and digital approaches to service delivery, and to work with Northumbria University in doing so. Accordingly, the candidate will become part of a team that already works together closely, who are experts in their fields, and who other organisations look towards to develop their own trauma-informed policies and services. They also work closely with a number of cultural organisations, such as Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, the Open Clasp Theatre Company, or other organisations who provide support and advocacy services for people through creative approaches. Since Changing Lives work closely with other charities; statutory, public, and social services; and cultural organisations nationally, they are a perfect partner to help the candidate develop their professional, research, and cultural networks.

SECTION 4: STUDENT SPECIFICATION

For further information about this Collaborative Doctoral Award and to submit an expression of interest, please contact:

Lead Supervisor (or alternative Contact)	Dr Angelika Strohmayer	Email:	Angelika.strohmayer@northumbria.ac.uk
Expressions of interest must be received no later than:			06/01/2021
Expressions of interest should be accompanied by the following documentation:			<i>Please provide a 2 page CV and a personal statement indicating your reason for being interested in this project, any previous experience they may have in this space (professional, volunteer, or personal experience), and the contribution you would make to the project.</i>
Interviews for shortlisted candidates are expected to take place:			February 2021

APPLICANT SPECIFICATION

Note, applicants must also meet the criteria for the acceptance on a doctoral programme as set out by the host institution's Postgraduate Admissions Service.

Education and Professional Qualifications	Essential Criteria	Applicants should possess an Undergraduate degree of at least upper second class Honours (UK), or equivalent from an overseas university plus a Masters degree in a relevant discipline completed or in progress and due for completion before the start of the PhD. Applicants who do not hold these qualifications must demonstrate equivalent intellectual competence: a record of high-quality and relevant professional practice or work experience that has equipped the applicant with outstanding research skills
	Desirable Criteria	
Research and Impact Experience and Training	Essential Criteria	Ability to manage the research project and meet timescales. Experience of research skills and methodologies relevant to the project
	Desirable Criteria	Experience of working with e-textiles and/or in sensitive settings
Professional Practice and Job-related Experience	Essential Criteria	
	Desirable Criteria	Experience of working in sensitive settings
Interpersonal Skills	Essential Criteria	Excellent interpersonal skills, including the ability to initiate, develop and maintain good working relationships
	Desirable Criteria	
Other Factors	Essential Criteria	
	Desirable Criteria	