

Music in Hospitals & Care

Report to The Beer-Harris Memorial Trust

September 2023

History

Music in Hospitals & Care is charity that improves the health and wellbeing of children and adults through the healing power of live music. For 75 years, we have been sharing bespoke live music with people in hospitals, care homes, hospices and community settings across the UK.

These live music sessions are delivered by professional musicians chosen not only for their musical talent, but for their ability to make connections with people through music. The live music experiences they share are shaped by the people taking part, meaning no two look exactly alike.

We believe live music should be part of everyone's health and social care. Why? Because live music heals. It reduces stress and anxiety and provides a positive distraction in clinical environments. It improves communication and memory, and provides a creative outlet. Live music has also been shown to reduce the perception of pain and improve physical health outcomes. Crucially, it transforms relationships between patients and health and care staff, leading to more personalised care.

"To me, music is really good for the healing. It can move mountains, can't it? And it can move people's souls."

Jacqueline, patient at Manchester Royal Infirmary

Everyone deserves to experience the joy of live music – you are helping to make that happen.

The Project

Background

Through a consultation process in 2019, we identified the three groups of people who benefit most from our work. One of these groups is people with mental illness. Our specially-created live music experiences provide a creative and emotional outlet for people living with mental health issues. They support emotional regulation and help to restore a sense of identity.

“One patient was very unwell, uncommunicative, and not taking care of her personal hygiene. She had written a song and took the lyrics to Bob (Music in Hospitals & Care musician). He improvised and accompanied her despite not knowing the tune. It worked out perfectly. She got to perform her song, her way, for a big crowd. Later that day, with the help of her Activities Coordinator, she washed her hair and put on a face mask. Her dream of performing had come true.”

Redwoods Centre for Mental Health

We subsequently secured funding for a year-long pilot project in mental health settings across the UK. The purpose of this project was to further explore the impact of bespoke live music on people with mental health issues, and to hone our delivery in these settings to bring about the best possible improvements in health and wellbeing.

Today, incorporating what we learned through this project, we continue to work with mental health partners across the UK to bring the healing power of live music to people living with a range of complex mental health issues.

Beer-Harris Memorial Trust

The Beer-Harris Memorial Trust has been a wonderful supporter of our work in recent years. Thanks to you, we have shared personalised live music with hundreds of people living with mental health issues.

In April 2023, the Trustees made an incredibly generous donation of **£1,655**. This funding enabled us to share **five hours** of live music with people in four different mental health inpatient settings across the UK.

Setting name	Location	Description
Willow View, St Nicholas Hospital	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	Rehabilitation and recovery ward for adults with serious and complex mental illness
Ty Cyfannol ward, Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr Hospital (2 sessions)	Hengoed, Wales	Acute mental health ward supporting adults with a range of mental health needs
Southleigh Community Hospital	South Croydon	25-bed rehabilitation unit for adults with complex mental health needs
IPCU, Gartnavel Royal Hospital	Glasgow	Intensive Psychiatric Care Unit

Sessions took place after a period of consultation during which our Music Delivery Team worked with setting staff to understand the needs of the people who would be taking part. They used this knowledge to select the most appropriate musicians for the audience, and adapt our delivery to their needs and tastes.

Music was shared in communal areas, as well as on the wards. Our musicians played a range of instruments and encouraged (but never demanded) participation throughout, taking requests for everything from The Everly Brothers to David Bowie, Tina Turner to Abba!

Areas of mental health addressed

Your grant enabled us to reach people living with a wide range of complex mental health problems. Staff at Willow View advised that most of their patients have longstanding psychosis and schizophrenia, and tend to stay on the ward for anywhere between three and 18 months.

Southleigh Community Hospital and Ty Cyfannol support people with a range of mental illnesses, while the IPCU at Gartnavel Royal provides intensive assessment and care for people in the most acute stages of serious mental illness.

Impact and stories

We know that live music can have a profound impact on the physical and emotional health of people living with mental illness. It provides a positive distraction and a healthy emotional outlet. It helps patients to develop confidence and build relationships with others. It has also been proven to improve sleep, and help people to tolerate clinical treatments. All these outcomes combine to support recovery and general wellbeing.

The feedback we received from the programme of live music made possible by your grant really attests to this.

After the session at **Gartnavel Royal Hospital IPCU**, the Senior Charge Nurse recalled:

"The patients thoroughly enjoyed the performance, the social interaction, and the stimulation the concert provided. Several of the patients started singing along with Charlie and said they really enjoyed him coming into the ward. They look forward to when comes in [again]."

Of the same session, our musician, Charlie Gorman, said:

"The patients' brilliant participation made this more like a house party than a hospital ward. The patient requests ranged from Bob Marley and Billy Joel to Bob Dylan and Don MacLean. A great session which I thoroughly enjoyed."

Of course, the impact of live music is unique to every individual – and this project highlighted the importance of adaptability in meeting the needs of individuals:

The sessions at **Ty Cyfannol** took place in view of the corridor so that patients who lacked the confidence to come into the room were still able to enjoy the experience. A member of staff remarked:

“One patient who came out of his room to listen almost never comes out.”

At this same session, our musician recalls that there were only two patients in the room when she started playing, but *“As I was playing, more people came in and sat down. I played Daydream Believer and the room joined in with the chorus together, which lifted the atmosphere with a sense of group participation.”*

The feedback we received from **Willow View** ward captures the impact of these live music experiences on patients and staff alike:

“There was a good choice of music, and audience participation was really enjoyed, prompting lots of laughter. Service users were observed singing along to the music and the most challenging of patients appeared relaxed and engaged in the session -some dancing in their chairs.

Comments were very positive:

“He’s a good player,” “Wish I could play like that,” “I really enjoyed that,” “Loved the Abba section!”

Some service users thanked the musician personally.

Staff showed a sense of wellbeing and it was nice for everyone to come together and enjoy the session. We also had snacks and drinks available, which made for a pleasurable time.

Please thank the sponsors on behalf of Willow View staff and service users.”

Conclusion

We hope this report gives you an insight into the difference you have made to the lives of people across the UK living with mental illness. Your support has enabled us to reach people at an incredibly difficult period of their lives with the healing power of live music.

As we celebrate 75 years of live music, we are more aware than ever that we would not be here without supporters like The Beer-Harris Memorial Trust.

Thank you for the music.

Contact Details

If you would like to speak to us directly about this project, or our work in general, please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Lear at jennifer@mihc.org.uk, or on 07939 933865.

"Never underestimate the power of music – wonderful."

Patient, Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust

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