



Research Impact Fund Report For Disseminating the “Songbirds” outcomes and establishing the wider impact for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

Purpose of events:

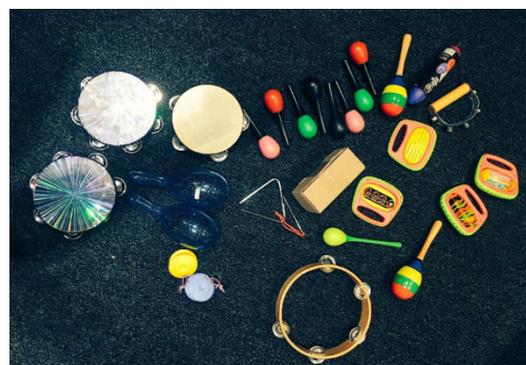
It was our intention that this piece of work would generate evidence to inform a larger research study in the future that explores the impact of music upon the health and wellbeing of children and young people in hospital with a diagnosis of ASD and how they access healthcare services.

Overview:

In order to maximise the reach and impact of the work undertaken to date we held a planning meeting and then four interagency, multi-professional workshops in different locations across Greater Manchester.

The impact of the “songbirds” projects and the outcomes taught helped multi-agency professionals to understand the importance of music in health and education, and encouraged them to adopt practices that exploit the outcomes of the projects undertaken to date. With presentations, examples through case studies, and experiencing live music as provided for the children (including active participation in music-making with small sound-makers and toys), participants were exposed to strategies that can be available to them to communicate with, pacify, and stimulate children with complex health care needs, intense anxiety, and procedural phobia. A physical and skill-based toolkit was provided to participants, the use of which could constitute change in practice and therefore impact in the real world.

Placing a particular focus on professionals caring for children in areas of high noise and stress (which are especially traumatic to children on the autism spectrum), we sought to extend the reach of the impact into the care of children with a diagnosis of ASD, raising awareness of the need for further work in this field. This was key to our plans to set up a further study to investigate this more closely. In our future study we will explore the role that live music plays in alleviating anxiety caused through disturbing experiences, working alongside healthcare staff to improve the environment for child patients and their families. In turn, this will further multiply the reach of the existing research outcomes.



This project has linked major industry partners together: health (NHS), education (HEI, Schools) and the 3rd sector (LIME, Music for Health). This was supportive of the Health and Social Wellbeing ICZ stream.

Results/Outcomes:

The Youth Music-funded Medical Notes research project at Royal Manchester Children's Hospital (2011/12) and Music-making with Hospitalised Children (Songbirds 2016) projects demonstrated how the provision of opportunities to engage in co-creative live music sessions with Music for Health practitioners improved children's and young people's (CYP) psychological and social wellbeing during hospitalisation. The findings from those projects demonstrated that both had substantially enhanced the provision of music activity, that CYP had experienced significant musical, social, personal and emotional development and that the emerging workforce had been strengthened through training and knowledge sharing.

Some of the rich feedback from the research impact funded sessions included:

"It creates a lovely relaxing environment for patients, families and staff"

"It promotes positive experience whilst being in a daunting situation, allowing parents to also interact and spend quality time with their child"

"It made me think about how important and beautiful music can be to heal and build therapeutic relationships with all children and young people, regardless of ability"

"How you can make music and communicate with the smallest of things"

"Adapt, adjust and overcome barriers"

"A different approach to reach the same goal"

"Using different approaches to communicate with children of differing abilities and being able to think outside of the box"

