



LIVE MUSIC IN CARE

THE IMPACT OF MUSIC INTERVENTIONS FOR PEOPLE LIVING AND WORKING IN CARE HOME SETTINGS

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Introduction

Throughout the world, improvements in medicine, hygiene and nutrition have led to much longer life expectancies. This is a huge achievement for our species. However, it has placed greater strains than ever before on the social systems that support older people, particularly those living with dementia. On top of this, a career in adult social care can be very challenging, and staff 'churn' adds significantly to the difficulties placed on care home management. Under such circumstances, many care home managers might reasonably resist the suggestion that they prioritise introducing a new music programme. However, those care homes that have embraced music have seen significant returns on their investment, leading to better living and working conditions for everyone.

LIVE MUSIC IN CARE is a research enquiry that emerged from the campaign 'A Choir in Every Care Home', supported by 35 national organisations in the social care and arts sectors. We are united in our vision to inspire and support care homes throughout the UK to introduce more and better music engagement for older people.

From 2015-17, we surveyed the many creative ways that older people engage with music, and explored why the majority of care homes do not regularly offer this opportunity. We found a wealth of evidence supporting the use of music for older people, particularly for those living with dementia. However, we also found there was limited evidence available about how music programmes can impact on a whole care home.

So, from June 2017 to August 2018, Live Music Now and the University of Winchester worked in partnership with MHA (Methodist Homes) and The Orders of St John Care Trust to investigate the impact of music on residents, staff and the whole care home environment. This short report summarises our findings and recommendations.

We are very grateful to the project partners: The Baring Foundation, The Utley Foundation, The Royal British Legion, the UK Treasury's LIBOR funds, Sound Sense and Canterbury Christchurch University.

The full report can be downloaded from:
www.livemusicincare.org.uk

Evaluation Summary

This project sought to evaluate an intervention comprising an 11-session interactive weekly music programme, including training for staff, in five care homes in the UK. The programme was delivered by Live Music Now. The programme focussed on singing and the use of voice, led by pairs of trained professional musicians for 45 minutes each week. A mixed methods approach was used, with favourable ethical approval for the study received from the University of Winchester Ethics Committee.

Data were drawn from 15 observations of the music sessions in the care homes guided by the Arts Observation Scale (a tool for the evaluation of performing arts activities in healthcare settings). Five reflective interviews were also undertaken with members of the care teams involved, also conducted by a member of the ACIECH team. Both data sets were gathered by a member of the Live Music Now team, and in addition, data were gathered using staff questionnaires, and online questionnaires for those musicians taking part. Personal identifiers have not been included with participants and care homes allocated pseudonyms where necessary to ensure anonymity.

Thematic analysis identified six themes:

Theme 1: Strategies and approaches involved in delivery of the music session intervention

Care home managers, musicians and care staff need to collaborate in creating practice models that recognise advanced planning and strategies as equal in importance to the delivery of music sessions themselves. They were observed to address these priorities in several ways, including:

- The care staffs' heightened awareness of the residents' needs and their enthusiasm to promote and celebrate music beyond the residency. The aspiration to use their knowledge and experience to influence practice and create a cooperative and collaborative union with the musicians that aided the music intervention.
- Advanced planning of sessions where daily programmes were decided, facilitating role identity. Reflective sessions post music sessions where achievements were celebrated and experience converted to practice.

Theme 2: The differing responses to the intervention

Differing responses included those to the instruments, genres, and repertoire. These were enacted and observed in various ways to include:

- Responses to the music intervention ranged from enthusiastic to anxious, and physically alert to passive
- Whilst percussion instruments were observed to stimulate the residents, some residents were confused and anxious about their use.
- Whilst some residents were enlivened by more challenging rhythms and beats, others withdrew from such complexity, preferring familiar repertoires.
- Care staff responded to these various needs by assisting residents in the use of their instruments and through building supportive relationships with them.

Theme 3: Empowering the residents and nurturing their identity

The findings revealed skilful approaches to enabling inclusion, integration and a sense of identity. Key points were:

- The musicians included all residents in the music sessions by walking amongst them whilst playing songs, through eye contact and physical proximity.
 - When residents sang their own words to songs, the musicians receded, encouraging the residents to take ownership over the music and celebrate their identity.
 - Residents were supported and encouraged to express their musical creativity.
 - Technological resources were used to ensure that the residents' music requests could be searched for and included in the repertoire.
 - Committed support from care staff, evident through their strengthening relationships with residents that developed as the sessions progressed.
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Theme 4: The role of the staff, musicians and researcher

From the findings, the role of the staff, musicians and the researcher were integral to the success of the intervention and its evaluation. This related not only to their contribution, but to their personal gain as well. These outcomes were evident through the responsiveness and commitment of the care staff towards the residents, modelled through receptivity and a genuine desire to better the residents' wellbeing. For example:

- Realising such objectives was achieved through cooperation, with care staff meeting, often after work, to collectively discuss the residents' needs.
- Care staff taking active roles and thinking about resident engagement in person-centred ways.
- The developing awareness and heightened powers of observation of care staff, then converting experience to practice.
- Musicians who both lead and facilitated leadership.
- The enthusiasm and support of managers who modelled a genuine desire for the programme to continue into the future.

Theme 5: Effect of the intervention on wellbeing

These themes were observed as:

- Resident gratification because of their contribution to the music sessions and by their sense of achievement.
- An enhanced mood that moved some residents from withdrawal to expression.
- A physical response to the beat of the music that encouraged physical exercise.
- A pleasurable ambience that touched family and visitors, some of whom prolonged their visit.
- A changing atmosphere that lifted the mood of the residents and care staff alike.

Theme 6: Sustainability

There were themes identified in the findings of on-going enthusiasm for the music sessions and a desire to continue the sessions in the future. The residents, care staff and managers had a genuine desire to sustain the enjoyment that the music had introduced to the care home environment and the people. This was evident through:

- Their continued enthusiasm and application in practice.
- A sense of connectedness resulting from the music sessions that had modified the cultural climate of the care home and the behaviour of the residents.
- Promoting the mobilisation of knowledge and sustainable development, communicating to interested parties, and promoting inclusive wellbeing by disseminating the experiences of the participants at public events.

Conclusions

1. Participating and delivering a music intervention to residents in care homes can provide positive social experiences as well as creative engagement, fun and a sense of achievement.
2. Musicians can play an important role in nurturing the wellbeing of elderly people in care.
3. Regular music making can enhance the working and living environment for care home residents and staff.
4. Music interventions can play a crucial role in awakening a sense of identity and empowerment for care home residents, facilitated by musicians and care teams working together.
5. Strategic planning at the outset establishes an essential structure and definition of tasks that provides a framework for the music programme.

Please download the full report at:
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Recommendations

Carefully delivered music can provide significant benefits for older people, care staff and care settings, contributing to person-centred care. We recommend that regular participatory music programmes be considered essential for all UK care homes.

We also make the following practice recommendations:

1. For Care Homes and ASC Sector/Providers

- Time for planning and reflection should be built in to all music projects and programmes – involving musicians and staff, and residents where possible.
- The care home manager must openly support the programme. This gives staff permission to step out of their transactional relationship with residents, and gives them new tools for their daily caring activities.
- Joint music making can be a vehicle for expression of staff concern for the wellbeing of residents.

- Professional musicians can provide practical support and validation for care staff, supporting sustainability in the longer term.

2. For Evaluation Practice

- Evaluation frameworks should be established at the start of initiatives such as this, through a process of co-creation with all stakeholders.
- There were clear benefits of having this process facilitated and guided by an independent and experienced academic institution.

3. For Music Practice

- Percussion instruments can be highly effective, but are not always appropriate. Their use requires careful planning and sensitivity to participants.
- Choice of music repertoire should be a balance of familiar with new, and complex with the simple.

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