

The logo for Wavelength, consisting of a large orange and yellow circle containing two white vertical bars, followed by the word 'WAVELENGTH' in a bold, orange-to-yellow gradient font.

# WAVELENGTH

# Full Impact Report (Year 1)



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## **Wavelength Year 1 (2015-16) Activity Summary**

We have worked with 62 young people with diagnosed mental health conditions over this project year through the main community programme and through 2 bespoke mini projects at Birmingham Children's Hospital Parkview Clinic and at Ardenleigh (a Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service unit). Overall, we worked with 40 young people in the mini projects, running 10 small group sessions at the Parkview Clinic and 30 one-to-one sessions at Ardenleigh, significantly over-achieving on our target numbers engaged in these mini projects. We engaged 22 different young people in the main community programme, though obtaining regular attendance and retention here was challenging. Of the 62 participants, 31 were 'core' participants.

Across the main programme we delivered: 197 one-to-one music sessions, 10 group music-making sessions (ensemble skills), 10 songwriting sessions, 16 half-day recording sessions (equivalent to 8 days), 2 project social opportunities (taking members to see the Musical Connections 20th anniversary concert, mac, for vulnerable adults (which older Wavelength members may progress onto) and the MFY National Festival Rock & Pop performances, Town Hall) and 8 family support sessions. We held a successful end-of-year sharing with a signposting marketplace session on 26th June at mac.

We recruited and trained 5 shadow music leaders, having gained Youth Music approval to take on 3 more trainees than originally planned due to the strength of applications. We trained 6 music leaders in the national recognised 2 day Mental Health First Aid course, and have uploaded blogs regularly to the Youth Music Network to share learning. We are planning for our training for parents and mental health professionals to take place across the summer in partnership with Birmingham Children's Hospital.

We held 4 steering group meetings with our partners and referral agencies and are pleased to have obtained a good level of strategic support and commitment from Forward Thinking Birmingham (recently awarded the contract for 0-25 mental health provision in Birmingham) and Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (BSMHFT, who were awarded the Solihull tender), despite changes and challenges with such a significant transition of provider and services in mental health provision delivery locally during the project year.

Due to these changes in the youth mental health sector in Birmingham and Solihull, there has been a period of uncertainty for local mental health professionals in regards to the handover of young people to the new service team, their own job security, and the new model of provision. As such, initial recruitment for the community element of the Wavelength programme took longer than expected. Therefore, we had a rolling start to the programme and a slight slippage to the project delivery, as the end of year concert was held at the end of June.

One surprise was the number of referrals from young people with quite significant and serious mental health conditions onto the community programme, particularly at the older age of our target group, as we had expected more of a balance towards early intervention work. Though this was not a problem in regards to providing appropriate provision, due to the challenges many of the participants were facing, not all of the community participants managed their full quota of 10 one-to-one sessions as some were re-admitted into hospital or had community leave revoked. In addition, there were sometimes staffing issues in supervising young people to attend sessions at our venue, where participants' risk assessments stated this was necessary.

Where it became too late in the project year to take on a new project participant, remaining 1-to-1 sessions were offered to the 2 mini project settings (Parkview and Ardenleigh) to sustain activity in these clinics.

## Wavelength Year 1 (2015-16) Analysis of Participant Progress

### Baseline Analysis

The following is a summary impact analysis of evaluation material collected from the first year of the Wavelength project via a creative baseline activity. Our baseline evaluation tools were devised to use creative and practical activities to engage participants in the process and to enable us to collect data to help us monitor progress and project impact. Participants have reflected on a range of musical, social and wellbeing indicator statements collated from sources such as Youth Music's evaluation questionnaires and from the adult wellbeing projects that we run, which include questions from the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), outcomes/mental health recovery star and Five Ways to Wellbeing nationally recognised tools. The same baseline activities were completed by participants, with the support of their project artist, at the beginning and end of the project to measure distance travelled. This data has been analysed on a cohort basis to give statistical results.

Please note, particularly when working within the mental health sector, this data can be greatly affected by how the participant is feeling at the time of completing the baseline activities and their understanding of the questions. In addition, sometimes a lower mark for the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseline, which might look negative, could mean that the participant now recognises that there is room for improvement through meeting more experienced musicians and has actually gained higher aspirations. For this reason, we always produce case studies about the impact of the project for each participant, which include contextual information from discussions in relation to the baselines and also triangulated monitoring and evaluation material to evidence any progression. Eight case studies, as examples, are provided at the end of this document, with each project artist having written case studies on two of the participants they have worked with.

### Your Music Section:

This section of the baseline related to Youth Music Outcome 1.

**Outcome:** To develop the musical skills, understanding and communication of young people with mental health conditions.

**Indicators:** Participants' own assessment of their musical ability, understanding and communication.

Music leaders' assessment of participants' musical ability, understanding and communication.

Musical recordings showing participant progression and development.

**Evidence:** Participant revisited baseline questionnaires. Music leaders' sessional reports. Project recordings of participants' work, and end of year project CD.



Participants were shown a mixing desk. Each fader was marked 1 – 7. Number 1 (the bottom) meant they strongly disagreed, number 7 (the top) meant they strongly agreed. Fader 1 responded to question 1 below, fader 2 to question 2, etc. Participants were asked to move each fader to show how strongly they agreed with each question. This activity was done at the beginning and end of the project year, to measure distance travelled.

### **Of members completing baseline documents at the beginning and then end of the project:**

75% showed improvement in the statement, **'I am pleased with my current level of musical ability'**. 12.5% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. The most improvement was 4 points, on a scale of 1 to 7. The average movement was 1.4 points. 29% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

88% showed improvement in the statement, **'I can express my thoughts, feelings and emotions through my own music making'**. The most improvement was 4 points, on a scale of 1 to 7. The average movement was 1.5 points. 48% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

43% showed improvement in the statement, **'I am good of making sense of what other people are expressing though music (e.g., thoughts, feelings and emotions)'**. The most improvement was 2 points, on a scale of 1 to 7. The average movement was 0.6 points. 43% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. 22% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

57% showed improvement in the statement, **'I have a good understanding of the different elements of music (pitch, rhythm, melody, timbre, dynamics, texture, harmony, structure, etc.)'**. The most improvement was 3 points, on a scale of 1 to 7. The average movement was 1.4 points. 43% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. 38% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

71% showed improvement in the statement, **'I feel like music making allows me to be creative'**. The most improvement was 6 points, on a scale of 1 to 7. The average movement was 1.7 points. 14% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. 63% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

63% showed improvement in the statement, **'I find it easy to sing/play in front of others'**. The most improvement was 4.2 points, on a scale of 1 to 7. The average movement was 1.5 points. 25% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. 43% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

### **Extra Information**

Wavelength participants were at the heart of the songwriting process throughout the year and made palpable improvements in the proficiency of their musical skills. They increased their understanding of musical form and structure, chord sequences, tonality, texture, rhythm and feel and also lyric writing and setting music to lyrics. Within our end of year evaluation meeting our project music leaders discussed each core participant and noted specific examples of progress against outcome 1. Some examples include:

Participants' names have been coded in order to maintain anonymity.

- Participant O had never played guitar before but bought one in December 2015. Using her ukulele skills, she was able to learn quickly and put it to practise in Wavelength group and recording sessions. By the end of the project, she had learned lots of chords which were more complicated than she was used to on the ukelele and was playing complex barre chords, changing chords competently by the end of the year. She became more sure of what she wanted musically and often insisted certain chords be included in a song. She was almost non-vocal in October 2015 but by May 2015 she was singing expressively and contributing to lyric-writing.
- Participant A improved on a variety of music performance elements: dynamics, timing, expression. She has now taken grade 8 piano, which is a significant achievement and progression from her starting point.
- The physical range of participant B's voice increased and he learnt to understand 'pitching', hearing when he was in or out of tune. In addition, B began the project as a beginner keyboardist, using stickers/markers to find the right chord shapes. He was incredibly proud of himself when he no longer needed the notes on the keyboard to be marked and, on occasion, he was able to play and sing at the same time. By the end of the year he was beginning to look at different chord inversions and different ways of playing chords.
- Having 1-2-1 sessions has developed participant E's rhythmical skills. He has further applied them in creating tracks in GarageBand and recording rap.
- Participant Q, involved in sessions at Parkview, stated that the best thing about the project was, *"Being able to sing without feeling uncomfortable. Learning new skills and instruments."*

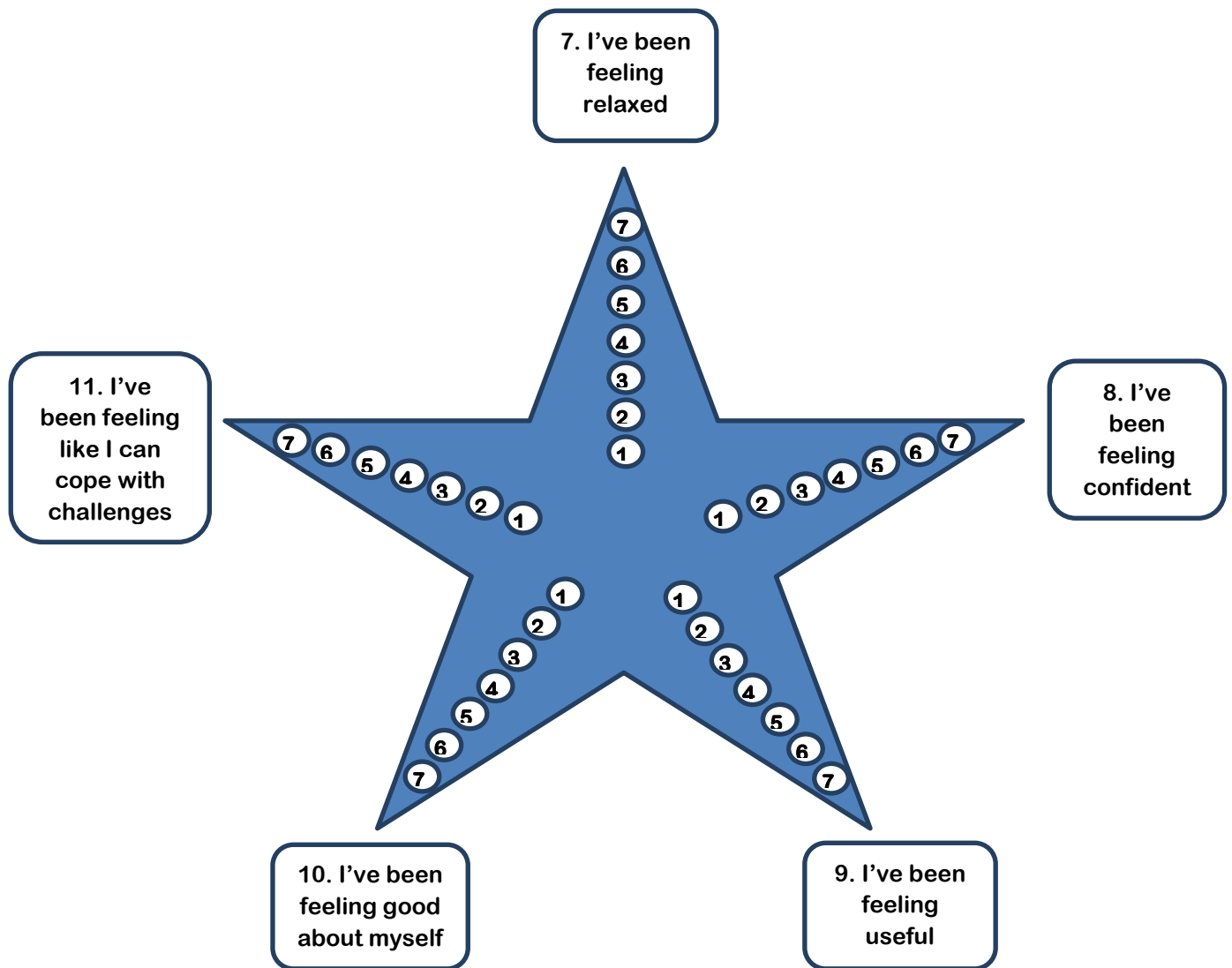
Please see our Soundcloud account to listen to the project CD, which shows the musical outcomes of sessions ([https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/sets/wavelength-year-1-cd-2016](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/sets/wavelength-year-1-cd-2016)). Recordings were taken at the end of every session, not only as an aide memoir, but to chart the musical progress of participants. Informal recordings from group sessions were then used as a basis for development and refinement in the recording sessions, focused on creating tracks to be included on the CD, alongside tracks written by individuals in their 1-2-1 sessions.

In summary, our indicators and evidence (from monitoring, sessional recordings and/or evaluation) show that all young people engaged, even those not retained for the whole programme, showed some development of musical skill, understanding and communication. Some young people showed a significant improvement in specific areas (e.g., rhythmically or with using a specific software programme) over a short period, but the most impact shown was where young people engaged for a longer duration and were also able to access group activities.

### **It's All About You Section:**

This section of the baseline related to Youth Music Outcome 2.

- Outcome:** To develop the resilience, confidence and self-worth of young people with mental health conditions.
- Indicators:** Participants' own assessment of their resilience, confidence and self-worth.  
Music leaders' (and other professionals', where relevant) assessment of participants' resilience, confidence and self-worth.  
Participants' involvement in project performance, recording and accreditation opportunities.
- Evidence:** Participant revisited baseline questionnaires.  
Music leader sessional reports and case studies on each participant.  
Registers and documentation from performance/recording/arts award opportunities.



Participants were shown a picture of a star and asked to imagine that they were the star. Each point of the star was marked 1 -7. Number 1 (the inside) meant they strongly **disagreed**, number 7 (the end of each point) means they strongly **agreed**. Participants were asked to colour in each point of the star to show how strongly they agreed with each question. This activity was done at the beginning and end of the project year, to measure distance travelled.

71% showed improvement in the statement, '**I've been feeling relaxed**'. The most improvement was 4 points, on a scale of 1 to 7. The average movement was 1.14 points. 29% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. 38% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

71% showed improvement in the statement, '**I've been feeling confident**'. The most improvement was 4 points, on a scale of 1 to 7. The average movement was 1.29 points. 29% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. 36% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

57% showed improvement in the statement, '**I've been feeling useful**'. The most improvement was 3 points, on a scale of 1 to 7. The average movement was 0.86 points. 29% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. 29% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

71% showed improvement in the statement, **'I've been feeling good about myself'**. The most improvement was 2 points, on a scale of 1 to 7. The average movement was 0.78 points. 29% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. 24% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

71% showed improvement in the statement, **'I've been feeling like I can cope with challenges'**. The most improvement was 3 points, on a scale of 1 to 7. The average movement was 0.86 points. 14% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. 35% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

## Extra Information

Particular examples of participant progress towards this outcome include:

- Through the medium of songwriting participant C has expressed and explored her thoughts and feelings on some family issues for the first time (as evidenced on the project CD). This has opened up a coping mechanism and a way for her to be more resilient to difficult situations in the future. Participant C had struggled to attend group sessions during the project, leaving half way through a recording session and seeming very timid. However, she committed to attending the final project sharing and overwhelmed the team with how confidently she sang on the night. She was also happy to be involved with the group songs at the sharing too, having gained confidence from initially watching others in the dress rehearsal and then joining in. The team saw a very big change in her confidence level when working with others and she seemed really proud of herself on the night. In her evaluation, participant C stated,  
*"I'd never thought to release my thoughts and feelings by writing songs before, that's really helped and I wouldn't have been able to do it on my own before. Now I can though, and I'm writing all the time!"*
- Participant B was in a clinical CAMHS unit when the project began but continued engagement in the project when he was discharged. Initially he was unable to engage with the rest of the group and was extremely quiet and shy. However, as his confidence grew, he began to contribute ideas and became a staple contributor to group songwriting. By the end of the project he was fronting a performance of his own song and performing animatedly in front of an audience and was able to show confidence and project his personality on stage.
- Participant I, a rapper based at the Tamarind medium secure mental health clinic, was incredibly unconfident about his own material at the beginning of the project, unpicking everything he'd done, deleting everything and saying it was bad. He has learnt to trust his work more and allow things to flow and develop. He was able to perform live in an informal sharing event at his clinic to other residents and significant numbers of staff, including some spontaneous MCing with other young people, and focus on the positive aspects of his work.
- As stated for outcome 1, participant O was barely verbal for the first few months. By the end of the sessions she shared ideas confidently/verbally and started to sing with confidence, e.g., for the recording of one of the group songs, 'Hope', she created her own middle 8 harmony.
- Participant O began the project relying quite heavily on her dad to communicate for her. By the end of the project she was talking freely for herself and her speech had become much clearer.
- Both participants O and B (above) showed a huge improvement in their self-confidence., especially highlighted on the day of the showcase when participant C joined in their group numbers. C hadn't stayed at any group session due to anxiety and needed a lot of extra support on the day. This support was able to happen because both participant O and participant B had increased their own confidence so much over the project that they didn't need constant reassurance. They felt strong enough to know what they were supposed to be doing, when and why, and didn't need constant accompaniment. Because of this, we were able to give C more



attention. This clearly demonstrates a huge improvement in participant O and participant B's confidence.

- Participant N development the confidence to access another opportunity offered at The Rep, as signposting and progression evidence.
- Participant Q, involved in sessions at Parkview, stated, *"Individual sessions have been really fun and good as a distraction technique"*.
- Participant R, involved in sessions at Parkview, stated, *"(I) Enjoy being creative, expressing feelings."*

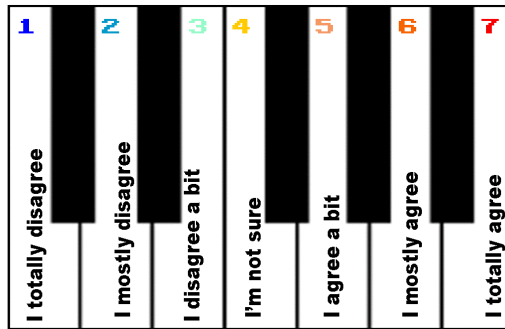
Over this first year of Wavelength, 12 young people regularly attended (with additional one-offs) the main community-based project group/recording/performance opportunities. Unfortunately this year we have had no participants wanting to work towards an accreditation (Arts Award). We are hopeful of achieving this with an identified 4 participants from Year 1 as they continue to engage in the project group activities in Year 2. Partly this was because, as stated, we underestimated the amount of interest in the project from young people with quite significant mental health conditions this year and, as such, have had to be cautious around not adding too much pressure on the young people. Now that the project is established and a full year of activities has been completed, we feel that a level of trust and assurance has been built with these participants and that Arts Award will be an achievable progression for them in year 2.

For the reasons mentioned previously, we kept the end of year concert as an informal sharing, predominantly for parents, families and keyworkers, as well as a few invited guests, whilst also ensuring that the event was a significant celebration and marker of participants' achievements. We held the informal sharing at the MAC Foyle studio, a professional venue set up in cabaret style, with excellent sound and lighting. Though we were disappointed with the number of young people able to perform in the evening due to issues with some participants gaining leave or having staff supervision from locked wards/forensic CAMHS, the concert was a full 2 hours full of one-to-one songs created by participants and included 5 performances of songs created in group sessions. We also played tracks from the project CD, launched on the evening, and recorded audience feedback to play to the young people who couldn't be there so they could hear the positive recognition of their work. All participants received a CD of the original tracks created in the project from their one-to-one and group sessions, and a certificate was presented to all performers at the sharing.

### **'How You Doin'?' Section**

This section of the baseline related to Youth Music Outcome 3.

- Outcome:** To develop the social skills and team working of young people with mental health conditions.
- Indicators:** Participants' own assessment of their social skills and team working.  
Music leaders' (and other professionals', where relevant) assessment of participants' social skills and team working.  
Participant reps' focus group interviews/reflection about participants' social skills and teamworking.
- Evidence:** Participant revisited baseline questionnaires.  
Music leader sessional reports and case studies on each participant; project manager observation reports on sessions visited.  
Notes from participant representative discussions at Steering Group Meetings.



In this section the music leader showed their participant a scale of 7 notes from low to high. Participants were asked to play a **low** sound on the keyboard in front of them if you **disagreed**, raising up to a **high** sound on the keyboard if they totally **agreed**, with all the notes in between if they thought they didn't quite agree or didn't quite disagree. If were totally unsure, they could press note 4.

40% showed improvement in the statement, '**I feel that I have good social skills**'. The most improvement was 1 points, on a scale of 1 to 7. The average movement was 0.4 points. 40% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. 22% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

33% showed improvement in the statement, '**I feel that I am good at working in a team**'. The most improvement was 2.8 points, on a scale of 1 to 7. The average movement was 0.63 points. 50% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. 34% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

### Extra Information

In many cases, it was a significant achievement for participants to gain the confidence to attend group sessions, and a huge step for the young people. Through ice breaker activities, warmups and songwriting the participants got to know each other better and slowly lost some of the inhibitions and anxieties that they may have had at the beginning of the project. Particular examples of participant progress towards this outcome include:

- Participant C struggled in group settings, often leaving before the session began. However, she was really keen to overcome this and finally found her confidence to take part in the dress rehearsal before the gig, when she could see the positive group dynamics. She joined in with every group song and also performed a duet of a cover song, collaborating with participant B. Her experience was highly positive and in her evaluation she states that this has been a real turning point for her and that she'd do it again.
- Participants O and Q are patients in a locked ward and have supported each other tremendously. They have encouraged each other to come to sessions and also supported other in their songwriting and music making in-between project sessions.
- R is a participant based at Ardenleigh forensic CAMHS. She has brought other participants into her sessions to support in areas that she felt they were good at. "I've brought participant S 'cos she's good at lyric writing." Our music sessions have given her a reason to increase her communication with other residents and a focus to build relationships in the setting.
- Participant B was hesitant to suggest melodies in early sessions but became more confident at putting ideas forward, pacing thoughts between listening to others. He has started to compliment other participants' work, encouraging others in group discussions, ice-breakers and team games. An evaluation comment from participant B, stated,
 

*"If I'm stressed out, music helps me to relax so I've done covers, written loads of songs and recorded them. I've been proactive - I'm going to carry on singing to my family over the*

*summer and writing songs for the start of the project in September. I've been able to talk to other people more but I still struggle giving compliments so this is my next step."*

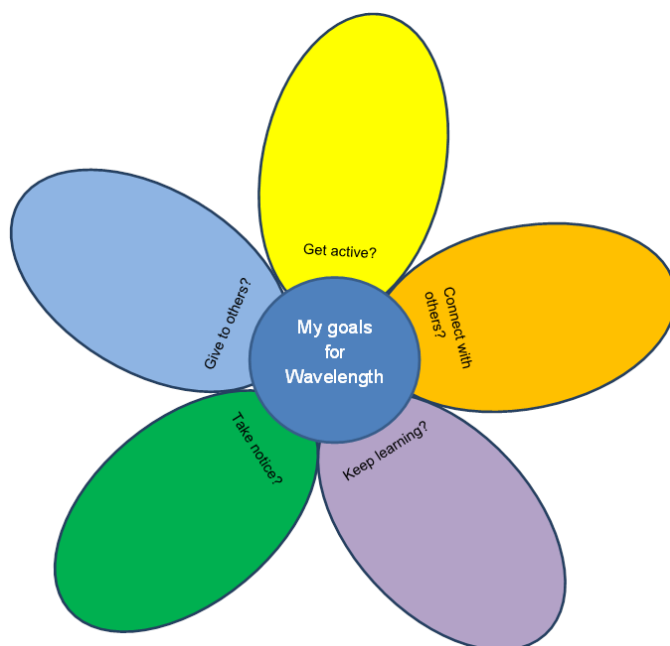
- During the year participant P, extremely quiet and under-confident at the beginning of the project, became brave enough to take part in group discussions, having eye contact and a slightly louder voice.
- Both participants O and B started quite shy and with little communication with others. As the project progressed, both came out of their shells and interacted more. Participant B became far more talkative, and participant O used more words and didn't always rely on her Dad to speak for her. This, in turn, helped them to work better as part of a team. As Katie Stevens, shadow artist stated, *"One of my favourite moments on the project was the day when (participant O) taught the other participants how to play the ukulele chord patterns. I was pleased that both (participant O) was happy to teach and that the others responded well to being taught."*

We have run 36 group, songwriting and recording sessions, all focused on building the team working skills of young people in a musical environment. In addition, through the project we provided 2 social opportunities for project participants and their families: attending our adult Musical Connections 20th anniversary concert (a project they can progress onto when they get too old for Wavelength) and a trip to the Music For Youth National Festival. Both of these opportunities, plus our ice breaker activities, participant reflection sessions and opportunities to mingle in project breaks, have enabled participants to mingle and get to know each other outside of project activities.

In year 1 we have not had a participant representative at Steering Group meetings, though we have taken participant feedback to take to meetings. The decision was taken not to have a rep in the first year of activity because of the context and confidence levels of the young people recruited to the programme and because we did not want to put additional pressure on the young people involved in the when they were new to us and the project. We will review this in year 2 to see whether there is a participant(s) we can ask to attend meetings who we think would cope with this responsibility.

### Five Ways to Wellbeing Section

This section was added in order to help participants set their own personal goals for taking part in the project, related to the New Economics Foundation, 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' (<http://www.neweconomics.org/projects/entry/five-ways-to-well-being>)



Participants were encouraged to set personal goals for their engagement in the project related to 'connect with others', 'keep learning', 'be mindful', 'give to others', 'get active'.

Out of 30 personal wellbeing goals set at the beginning of the year goals, 29 goals were met and 1 goal was identified by a participant as still working towards meeting. The goal that was partly achieved (for 'connecting with others') was set by participant B who stated, as mentioned above,

*"I've been able to talk to other people more but I still struggle giving compliments so this is my next step."*

## **Participant Case Studies**

Below are completed case studies detailing the progress of 8 participants recruited onto the Wavelength project this year, with each project artist writing 2 case studies. Some of these case studies are stronger than others in regards to the positive impact of the project but they are all included to share learning.

These case studies have been written by the artist working with each participant in 1-to-1 sessions and refer back to sessional monitoring forms from one-to-one and group sessions (with participant comments), participant feedback (such as graffiti walls and plenary reflection recordings) from group sessions, informal audio recordings of work in progress, participant/trainee evaluation forms for each project element and participant baselines/evaluations as evidence for any observations made. In addition, where possible, contextual information and feedback about the impact of the project for each participant has been obtained from health professionals/ carers/ family with permission, in order to gain a wider context. Participant names have been coded to maintain anonymity.

### **Case Study 1 – Participant B**

**Written by James Stanley (Project Artist)**

**July 2016**

I first came into contact with participant B during taster sessions for our first mini project at the Parkview Clinic, Birmingham Children's Hospital, where he was a patient. I've since learnt that his mental health had reached a low point and he'd had to be admitted to the hospital for several months due to psychosis and depression. He walked into a busy group session and sat, detached from everyone else, at the back. It was only after the session that he nervously approached us and talked about his interest in learning to play the keyboard because of his love of pop music. I saw him once more at Parkview Clinic. This time, I was able to encourage him to play a few notes on the piano. He didn't engage with or play along with the rest of the group, as he was too much in his own world discovering playing music for the first time.

Fast forward to the end of the project and participant B was playing or singing (or both!) on every single song at the Wavelength Showcase! He sang original music by himself that he'd written, he did duets with other members of the group and he really performed and entertained the audience! This has been an enormous journey and an incredibly positive transformation for him when we look back at day one.

Once the tasters had finished at Parkview, participant B was contacted to continue with the Wavelength project, as he lived locally and had been discharged from hospital. He took full

advantage of the opportunity, attending one to one sessions, group sessions, recording sessions and songwriting sessions. I think the project became part of his stability, something that he could really rely and focus on. He barely missed a session. Even when he was admitted back into hospital because of issues with his medication, he was back as soon as he possibly could be.

In our one-to-one sessions Participant B has made so much musical development. He was still very interested in playing the keyboard so I showed him a few chord shapes and we learnt one or two of his favourite songs. This is something he'd not done before and clearly brought him a lot of enjoyment week by week, so much so that his family saw the need to purchase him a keyboard to practise at home, such was his enthusiasm. He'd always come back in and say to me; *"I've written a list of all the songs I've listened to this week that I'd like to try and learn!"* He really excelled and picked up a lot very quickly because of this. I taught him the songs he wanted to learn, the songs he was already listening to, which is so important. We both viewed the session as a chance to talk about the latest songs we'd heard on the radio and it quickly became a very relaxed environment.

As soon as he arrived at ACMC (Wavelength Project Venue) he discovered another interest - singing. He saw a studio condenser microphone and was inspired! He couldn't wait to use it, so he started singing as well as playing the keyboard. He had a clear character to his voice from the start but little or no control over his pitching. He was determined to improve! We did vocal warmups together, relentlessly practised scales and intervals to help participant B recognise when his singing was sharp or flat and we sang many, many different songs of his choice together. He gradually improved and picked up a lot of power and control in his voice. He started taking vocal lessons at his school but sometimes turned up to our sessions discouraged by comments his tutor had made which played on his mind saying, *"I can do that, can't I?"* He recognised the Wavelength project as somewhere he'd be supported and encouraged.

This knowledge, coupled with the musical skills he was gradually building up, put him in an amazing position to benefit from group sessions. He says himself that he struggles in group settings with others. His goals at the beginning of the project were about 'connecting with others by making music with them' and also 'recognising what other people are good at.' In the first few sessions he found this very difficult. He was quiet and subdued, not adding much to the conversations. But gradually, participant B started to become more and more confident. There was a particular session where a song called 'Disco Fox' (track 4 on the project CD) was written that seemed to be a bit of a turning point. Some of his lyrical and musical ideas were taken on by the group and everyone fell in love with the track. In fact, it went on to be a firm favourite throughout the project! I think that moments like this, where other people recognised participant B's talents for the first time, kept adding together and multiplying inside of him to really buoy him up and increase his confidence. He really became part of the 'core' of this project.

Participant B showed progress in nearly every element of his baseline activities in regards to his music-making and inter-personal skills. He achieved all his personal aims for the project except in relation to connecting with others, which was partially achieved. He says,

*"I've been able to talk to other people more but I still struggle giving compliments so this is my next step."*

By the time the performance had come round, participant B's ability to work alongside others and his confidence had improved astronomically. He was so excited to invite about 20 members of his family and friends along to the performance where he and others would be showcasing what they'd learnt. He was obviously proud and loved the opportunity to show off his talent!

At the end of the project he remains very keen to continue making music however he can. He says,

*“If I’m stressed out, music helps me to relax. I’ve done covers, written and recorded songs. I’ve been proactive and I think that’s helped, so I know I need to carry on singing and writing!”*

## **Case Study 2 – Participant C**

**Written by James Stanley (Project Artist)**

**July 2016**

Participant C was slightly younger than our target age when she applied to the project (12 instead of 14 years of age). Her application came into Quench Arts with strong support from her key worker who gave a convincing argument and additional risk assessment for her involvement. On meeting with participant C and her mother the Quench Directors could see that she was mature for her age and her mother agreed to support her as required to access the project, so her application was accepted.

Participant C had recently been discharged from the Home Treatment service to the community CAMHS team following a short admission on an inpatient ward at Birmingham Children’s Hospital due to an overdose, a result of suffering from an adjustment disorder. It was felt that she lacked the emotional resilience and coping strategies to deal with events that had happened in her past. We were informed that Participant C was a keen singer and mum and school had both praised her for this and highlighted it as a passion. It was felt that the project would be beneficial for her as she was vulnerable in her current social circle and require more positive activities to fill her free time.

Initially participant C wouldn’t sing to me, so I sang one of her favourite songs to her in our first one-to-one session. She looked at me like I was crazy, likely thinking that she would never ever do that! Within a few minutes, though, she sang, with the tiniest voice I’ve ever heard. This is what she wanted to do. At the outset of the project she explained she wanted to focus on singing and wasn’t really interested in playing an instrument. Her journey to singing confidently in front of me was very much linked to her mum. Participant C started off needing her in the room, by her side. Next she asked her to stand outside the door. It was only when participant C left her mum downstairs in reception that I heard her real voice! All that time she’d been building up her confidence both musically and socially - both important steps to make.

Participant C’s vocal talent was outstanding already. She had a beautiful tone, great control and a huge range but we gradually worked on things she was less confident with, like her timing. We did this through a series of cover songs that she chose for herself. A really important step for her was recording these cover versions so she could listen back to them, analyse them, play them to family and friends and use them as an anchor to her own self-belief and self-worth. These recordings were proof that she was talented and exceptionally good at something, which is important to a young girl who is struggling at school, struggling with family issues and ultimately, struggling with mental health.

*“It helps to get what they are feeling out of their heads and to express their thoughts and feelings out loud.” Participant C’s Mother.*

I kept asking Participant C about songwriting, trying to create our own material. The time was never right and I didn’t want to force the issue. Eventually, she arrived and said, *“I’ve written some lyrics!”* In the sessions that followed we ended up writing a beautifully touching song about her relationship with her father, an open and honest discussion of how she felt. She said at the end of the project,

*“I’d never thought to release my thoughts and feelings by writing songs before, that’s really helped and I wouldn’t have been able to do it on my own before. Now I can though, and I’m writing all the time!”*

Her family were blown away by her song ‘Escaped’ and it became a real touching moment to hear participant C’s mother and sister talking about how much it meant to them too. Listen to track 2 from the Wavelength CD here: [https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/tracks](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/tracks)

Participant C showed huge improvements across the board for her self-assessed baseline scores through the project. In relation to her music making, the most significant improvement, on a scale of 1-7, was from a ‘2’ to a ‘6’ for the statement, ‘I am pleased with my current level of musical ability’. Her scores for, ‘I can express thoughts, feelings and emotions through my own music making’ rose from ‘5’ to ‘7’, the top of the scale. In relation to her health and wellbeing, her scores advanced from a ‘2’ to a ‘6’ (out of 7) for ‘I’ve been feeling relaxed’, from a ‘1’ to a ‘5’ for ‘I’ve been feeling confident’ and from a ‘3’ to a ‘6’ for ‘I’ve been feeling like I can cope with challenges’. Participant C also achieved all her personal aims for the project in relation to the Five Ways of Wellbeing.

One of my goals was always to get Participant C along to a group session where she could really start to build a new set of skills. Unfortunately, this proved very difficult as working with others was a big trigger point for her own negative feelings and mental health. There were times when she had arrived before a group session but left as soon as it started. However, building her confidence was a gradual process and we were certainly not going to give up. The showcase came around and I’d discussed the prospect of performing her original song with me. She seemed keen but adamant that she wouldn’t be doing any group work. At this point, I was unsure if she would make it to the performance or if it’d be too difficult for her...but she arrived!

Participant C sang her song in the soundcheck and blew everyone away. I’m not sure whether it was the huge applause that followed or the kind words in the ear from all the participants, musicians and directors but something flicked a switch in her head. From that moment, she came up onto stage for every group song! Bearing in mind that she didn’t know any of the songs or the people before the dress rehearsal, and had previously spent nearly a year of the project unable to work alongside other members of the project, this was a huge step forward. Again, this was evidenced through her baseline scores, which rose from a ‘2’ to a ‘6’ out of 7 for the statement, ‘I find it easy to sing and play in front of others’. How thankful we were after so long hoping she would build up the confidence to do this! Sometimes it takes time, but it’s always worth that investment. Participant C will now be an integral part of Wavelength year 2.

### **Case Study 3 – Participant I**

**Written by Sarah Wilson (Project Artist)**

**July 2016**

Participant I is resident at Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust’s medium secure Tamarind Clinic and has paranoid schizophrenia. He has been there for a number of years and has only recently been granted limited leave by the Ministry of Justice to attend activities in the community, always with professional support and supervision from the staff at the centre. This is part of his rehabilitation into society for when he is released (potentially in 2017).

Participant I came into his first double session with a folder full of lyrics and loads of ideas. He seemed very confident and friendly. He was obviously worried about my skill level and started asking me questions about the software and what I could make with him. He auditioned drum

sounds for a track idea that he said had been “*going around in my head*”. At first nothing was right and I could feel him starting to feel that this was indicative of our working relationship. His voice got flatter and his shoulders dropped and he kept saying things like, “*never mind then, it don’t matter.*” Then he found something he liked and I helped him with a rhythm and he visibly started to feel more positive. His voice started to get more engaged and he started moving faster and with purpose.

Participant I had obviously done a bit of this before but frustrated himself sometimes with his lack of knowledge of the program we were using. As he realised I could answer his questions, he decided I was good enough and our relationship gelled at that point. His ideas were wonderful but at this stage he still needed a lot of reassurance or he would delete things and or edit them into oblivion.

Participant I perceives himself as super confident and will tell you he is brilliant but then take apart anything he creates with huge doses of negativity. This was hard to navigate and I saw that with his super confident exterior he probably fools a lot of people, including himself. His baseline data confirms this, as he rated himself at the highest level for all statements at the beginning of the project so appeared to have nowhere to progress to. In reality, his scores would have been much lower if he had had the confidence to admit to any insecurities.

As our sessions progressed he began to realise that taking everything apart all the time disrupts the musical flow and he started to be more positive about the music he was creating. The results were much more cohesive and he was obviously really pleased. He channelled his self-doubt into a drive towards the best version of whatever he was doing so we would redo the vocal 30 or 40 times but he became positive and challenging instead of negative and destroying. He seemed to learn to be concerned with quality so that instead of changing details all the time, he polished what was already good. This was a great step forward in his musical development.

Participant I’s motivation had always been good but as the sessions progressed he was practising whole raps and vocal parts, writing pages of lyrics in between sessions, coming with clear ideas and a passion for the direction in which he wanted his music to take.

By the end of the project, he was much more authentically self-assured. He likes what he is creating now and is trying to get his music played on local radio stations. He has given himself a stage name and has started booking himself studio sessions independently (with Tamarind staff supervision still) so he can create more and more.

His musicality is brilliant. His lyrics are superb and I think his skill level in production is starting to catch up. Sometimes he tried to get me to do a lot of the production for him but I think this was because he was so passionate about his lyrics and, in his opinion, he currently feels that he works too slowly on the computer. He’s now determined to become more skilled on Logic.

Participant I was disappointed that his unit would not allow him to perform live at the Wavelength sharing as they have strict guidelines on the hours that anyone can have leave, having to gain permission from the Home Office each time. Unfortunately, the performance was scheduled in the evening and this was outside of curfew hours, something which had not been communicated to Quench Arts by the Tamarind Centre until the week of the performance. It was a low point for participant I and I believe it would have been great for him to be involved as he’s a wonderful performer and works really hard on his delivery. I hope he gets the chance to perform as he thoroughly deserves to and his music is brilliant.



*Note: as a follow-up to this case study, participant I did get to perform with other residents at Tamarind through a separate project sharing event Quench were running at the unit, and he was visibly delighted to receive his CD and recognition of the quality of his work.*

## **Case Study 4 – Participant M**

**Written by Sarah Wilson (Project Artist)**

**July 2016**

Participant M is an inpatient at Birmingham Children’s Hospital’s Parkview Clinic. She has been resident there for a few months and has taken advantage of extra one-to-one sessions offered to the clinic over the last few months of this project year.

I first met participant M in a one to one session at the Parkview clinic. She was kind and polite and socially aware. The only negative things she said were directed at herself. Her body language was a little shy and worried.

She had been given a guitar for Christmas five months earlier and had attempted to teach herself a bit but had given up, feeling that she was talentless. It came to light that her parents and her sister are very musical and play various instruments and sing. Participant M said it was almost “a family joke” that she was unable to play anything or sing. I picked up her guitar to tune it and realised that one of the strings was not sitting right so I pointed this out to her and told her that I would get some new strings and try to restring it in the next session. In the meantime, she played my guitar and I played hers, avoiding the dud string. Immediately her confidence started to rise as she realised that she had failed over the past few months due to her guitar and not her efforts. She loved playing my guitar and learnt three chords really quickly. We learnt a cover version of a Demi Lovato song that she loves singing and by the end of the session she was starting to be able to play it well. Her joy was evident and she went away with a tab sheet and her wonky guitar to practise the shapes of the chords.

During the next session we restrung her guitar and got it sounding really good. Another moment of joy was that participant M was obviously beginning to trust me at this stage and talked about how some people have promised her things and let her down. Her body language began to change and she told me that she has been practising the chord shapes. We decide to use those chords and some others to try and write a song.

She chose a sequence for the chords and we started to develop her strumming and chord changes. I think it was at this stage that she began to realise that this was a skill that she would be able to pick up quite quickly and she started to really like her guitar.

She started talking a lot about how her family had told her that she was “useless at music” and cited their skill level as something she would never be capable of attaining. We talked about there being different musical styles and tastes and approaches and that some of the best musicians can’t read music and some of the best music readers can’t compose, etc. This didn’t help much at this stage but I saw her playing confidence beginning to grow.

As she developed the tune for the song, I tried to get her to be brave enough to sing me her melodic ideas. She was very reluctant but said that she really wanted to, she was just really scared. So we sat for almost 20 minutes with me playing through the chords and her obviously trying to break down the barriers of fear. There were several false starts where her mouth opened and she made no noise and gave a little embarrassed smile. Then, she started to sing and when nobody laughed she was reassured. I picked up the tune she was singing and we began to sing

the melody together and her face lit up. We wrote some words down and I talked to her about beginning to record it next time.

We recorded the guitar, playing in sections, and she was obviously really pleased when she heard it back, saying that, *“It is difficult to listen to it properly when you’re trying to concentrate on getting it right.”* I talked to her about whether she was brave enough to record a vocal. The fear came back on to her face but not as strong as previously. She agreed to do so when I offered to leave the room. I taught her how to set up her vocal recording and left her to do several vocal takes.

She was really pleased with the third version she recorded but wanted reverb on it so that her voice was less recognisable (still showing insecurities). I felt that she had been so brave and I talked to her about how she now felt about her skill level. We talked about her pop folk style and how that is probably very different from her family’s classical style but no less valid. She was more upright and very proud of her own achievement as she left.

Participant M was discharged from Parkview two weeks before the final sharing and could not come and perform as she lives in Hereford. We played her track and recorded the audience reaction so that she could hear their reaction.

### **Case Study 5 – Participant O**

**Written by Paul Carroll (Project Artist)**

**July 2016**

Participant O joined the project to put her existing musical talents into practise in a creative and group situation. Quench Arts were unsure whether to take her onto Wavelength because it was not structured to accommodate participants with a learning disability and because Participant O didn’t have an officially diagnosed mental health condition. Participant O herself was hesitant initially, possibly as a defence mechanism, but her parents were very keen for her to take part because they recognised that it would be something that she would enjoy and that would help her improve in confidence and musically, and they put forward a strong case stating that they felt the project would be a good early intervention for her mental health, as she was quite isolated because of her learning disability. They were also confident about Participant O’s ability in playing the ukulele and committed to support her to take part.

Participant O was accepted onto the project and allocated for one-to-ones to myself because I had the most experience working with people with a broad range of abilities. Despite any concerns, participant O wowed us in the first group session with her ukulele skills and knowledge of classic rock songs. She enjoyed the session as well as her first one-to-one so it was good that her parents supported her in making the initial step onto the project.

Participant O is a classic case of successful engagement. She attended most sessions and only missed them when there was good reason that she couldn’t make the longish journey from north of Birmingham. Participant O’s feedback at the end of the project was that Wavelength for her was *“good fun,”* she *“learned instruments,”* *“enjoyed it all”* and *“wouldn’t change a thing”*. In my time that I’ve spent working with participant O, I feel I can qualify that these statements are genuine, that she is not one who sees joy in everything and sometimes turned up for sessions frustrated with something that happened in the day.

Participant O met all her personal aims set for the project. I think that her regard for herself and her musicality is fairly even. Her baselines around wellbeing and engagement with other people support this with, if anything, a slight drop in scores but still good (though for her baseline scores

for 'I've been feeling relaxed' and 'I've been feeling like I can cope with challenges', she marked herself as improving from a '6' to a '7' on a scale of 1 to 7). However, her feelings around her musicality show more of a dip from start to finish of the project. Participant O, her dad and I discussed this and we came to the conclusion that, after working with professional musicians, participant O now has more of a reference point, a more realistic view and higher aspirations (and she'd placed herself quite high on the scales initially). Her drop in scoring we agreed therefore shows a desire to continue improving her music; participant O has reset her own baseline to allow for continued upward movement towards her potential.

Below I address participant O's progress towards achieving the project outcomes:

### **To develop the musical skills, understanding and communication of young people**

- During her one-to-one sessions, participant O wrote three songs of her own with the support of myself and her Dad, who is a drummer and singer. The first song took two sessions to write, then we moved on to another song but decided the first one was the better of the two. So we then spent a number of sessions recording participant O playing various instruments, with contributions from both her Mum and Dad and then finally recorded participant O and her dad recording vocals. This is the song 'It's a Beautiful Day', which is on the CD and was performed live at the final performance in June 2016. In the meantime, participant O helped write a number of songs in group sessions, contributing more and more to lyrics in particular as the project progressed. Finally, it's worth noting that the third song participant O wrote in a one-to-one was written and roughly recorded in a single session, showing great developments in her pace of work, her understanding of the process and communication of ideas.
- Participant O took an interest in learning the guitar during the project. Shadow musician Adam Moffatt supported her in this and let her play his left-handed guitar until her parents bought her one for Christmas. She had plenty of opportunity to play her guitar in Wavelength group sessions and applied her ukulele technique and knowledge of chords to help her progress at the guitar at a good pace. Her third song in her last one-to-one session was written on guitar.
- Participant O's parents agree about the guitar and state that she has also improved at the ukulele. I noticed that her chord changes have improved and she follows song structures better.

### **To develop the resilience, confidence and self-worth of young people with mental health conditions**

- Participant O's parents acknowledge that she has gained in confidence on her evaluation form, saying, "*It has encouraged (participant O) to talk. She has lots of ideas but finds it very hard to speak to people, so it's helped.*"
- Participant O is not diagnosed with a mental illness but she was considered at risk because of her potential isolation due to a learning disability. In earlier sessions she spoke very little and didn't appear to enjoy much interaction. By the end of the project she was expressing herself much more verbally, contributing to creative ideas and giving opinions. After the performance she gave all the staff a hug.
- Participant O couldn't be heard singing much in earlier sessions either, focusing more on playing the ukulele. As we began to record, we discovered a beautiful and tuneful singing voice in participant O. She grew more and more expressive in later sessions. I gather from her parents that she always sings at home so I attribute her finding her voice on Wavelength to an increase in confidence in sessions.

### **To develop the social skills and team working**

- It is clear from participant O's baselines that she feels she has met her initial aim to enjoy herself with other people, with a great emphasis of teamwork and group music-making in

her final baseline. She is a fan of Classic Rock but has contributed fully to music of varying genres such as Pop, Disco and Garage Rock, showing great flexibility at the same time as respect for other people's creativity.

- Participant O's parents say, *"She has enjoyed the group sessions."*

**To develop families' and mental health professionals' understanding and knowledge of the therapeutic value of music making for early intervention and create an evidence base for this work**

- Participant O's parents were very supportive and open to the processes delivered by Wavelength artists. Participant O's Dad took part in all the sessions that participant O attended and said he always looked forward to them and that he had never been part of anything like it. Whilst they didn't know what to expect at the beginning of the project, at the end they said, *"[Music] helps to get how [participants] are feeling out of their heads and to express their thoughts and feelings out loud."*

I enjoyed working with participant O and am confident that she too has enjoyed Wavelength so much so far that she will continue to attend and grow.

**Case Study 6 – Participant L**

**Written by Paul Carroll (Project Artist)**

**July 2016**

Participant L was referred to Wavelength through his keyworker at the Early Intervention Team at Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust. Participant L has psychosis and schizophrenia and had attempted suicide at 17 but now regretted that part of his life. His risk assessment stated that he could be chaotic and untidy and that there was a risk of harm to himself due to potential vulnerability, including walking round the streets at night in unknown areas when unwell and being easily led. He'd had a past history of illegal substance use which had affected his behaviour and had previously been an inpatient at the Oleaster Centre, Tazetta Ward.

Participant L was a drummer with bass and guitar skills. He also owned and used GarageBand on a Mac at home. He was interested in developing his production skills in GarageBand and having the opportunity to meet new people and play music with them. He attended five one-to-one sessions between November and January as well as some of the group sessions that were on offer during that period.

For the earlier sessions, participant L was dropped off by a parent. He was unsure he'd be able to find the Afro Caribbean Millennium Centre on his own at first so to prepare him at his second session, we walked up the road and down his bus route so he could see both the stop he would get off and the one before it. In later sessions he came by bus on his own, showing an improvement in independence.

In one-to-one sessions, I found that by playing with another musician and recording to a metronome participant L developed as a drummer, particularly regarding his time-keeping. I played bass guitar, trying out different riffs and giving participant L the choice of which bass lines he preferred. As sessions progressed, he grew in confidence and starting taking more control of the music, making choices about details in both the drums and the bass parts. By the last session, participant L was also putting existing guitar and keyboard skills into practise to complete his recorded instrumental piece of music.

This same development in participant L's confidence and collaboration was seen in group sessions. He was much more forthcoming with lyrical ideas, and tried instruments other than drums in his later sessions. Lyric-writing in particular was something that was out of his comfort zone but through spending time seeing how it could be done in group sessions he built up the confidence to start suggesting lyrical ideas himself.

We recorded participant L's drumming via MIDI from Wavelength's electronic drum kit into the MacBook using GarageBand. This is something that participant L had tried at home, along with using GarageBand's sequencer, to make beats. He said, however, that he struggled getting the timing right so, as well as playing, we made sure we spent some time using GarageBand and participant L learnt some technical skills which he straight away started using at home between sessions.

Participant L left the project at the half-way point, after five sessions, because he'd managed to get a job and perhaps the growth in confidence and team working skills he developed on Wavelength contributed to that fact.

His baseline form at the beginning of the project does show lower scores for using music to express thoughts and feelings and for confidence, particularly playing in front of others (all initially marked as 4/7). As he left the project early we do not have his final baseline ratings but I would say he was starting to improve in these areas with more lyric-writing and playing drums and guitar in group sessions. Certainly his 'level of musical ability' improved as he played more with others. Also, the fact that he got a job shows an improvement in social and team-working skills.

### **Case Study 7 – Participant A**

**Written by Meldra Guza (Project Artist)**

**July 2016**

Participant A was referred on to the project via her GP as she had been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic a few years previously. Originally from Latvia, English was her second language and she was currently studying business studies at University. She joined the project already as a skilled pianist.

The Wavelength project has been very beneficial for participant A for many reasons, such as her emotional, musical and social development. As mentioned, participant A originally comes from Latvia and, at the time of applying, had not explored many opportunities to engage with other people and use her English language skills. Her manner of communication was very timid and passive both due to her nature and language barrier.

Participant A's main passion was classical music. She was always very keen to work on her music skills but would understand better if an example from classical music was given to her. This included her timing. At the beginning of the project her timing was very poor, even though physically she could play many notes, she did not have the feel for what time signature the piece was in and how it should sound. For example, a 3/4 time signature could be easily mistaken for 4/4 time signature. That is not surprising as 4/4 is very common in popular music, so learning to feel and count and perform in 3/4 and other time signatures was a whole new chapter in participant A's development.

Participant A also struggled with showing emotion - both in her personal expression and also in the expression of music. She was too shy to speak up and too shy to play louder. To avoid the monotonous dynamic, we had to work extensively on her skills to differentiate between '*pp*' and '*ff*',

between assertiveness and a gentle approach in music. Her main reason for failing music exams previously had been noted to be the lack of dynamics. She felt very self-conscious about that.

Even though Participant A's passion was not for creating new work, giving it a try gave her a great boost in confidence as she was very surprised that she could create something new. To make it more interesting for her, we looked at various chord patterns, various ways of starting, ending phrases, melodies, etc. Participant A always took notes and asked new questions in the following sessions. She says,

*“I enjoyed writing my own song as I never thought I could create something myself.”*

Participant A also took part in group sessions and enjoyed working in a band building situation. This was something new as she has always played by herself. Playing in a band helped her engage with other participants as together they had to decide on chord patterns, lyrics ideas, etc. Soon enough, participant A was talking to others and sharing her ideas, offering solutions to composition problems.

Prior to coming to Wavelength participant A had failed her Grade 8 piano exam twice and felt very anxious about performing. During the sessions at the Wavelength, participant A gained confidence and was working on her performance skills (originally a 2.5/7 on her baseline), even to the point of walking in the room with head held high, having eye contact. These skills are transferable and, as a result, her appearance is now more confident. She has been able to overcome her fears of failing. She has secured a job, she has passed her music exam and she is continuing onto studying at university. Of the project, she states,

*“Thank you for helping me become better at music. I feel less worried about performing in front of others now”*

### **Case Study 8 – Participant P**

**Written by Meldra Guza (Project Artist)**

**July 2016**

Participant P was referred to Wavelength through her care coordinator. She was residing at a supported unit called Mannifold House where staff provide 24/7 support. Participant P had had a very troubled past, suffering abuse, and had attempted suicide a number of times. She had been diagnosed with psychosis and depression. She was interested in singing and had been referred to build her confidence.

At first, participant P just came to a group session with her care worker to have a look around the rooms and have an introduction. That alone was a massive step for her as she was very nervous and slightly shaky. We had a short conversation about her favourite artists and she appeared to be calmer and more confident to start her 1-2-1 sessions the following week.

Participant P gave herself low scores in her initial baselines activities, marking '3/7' for 'I am pleased with my current level of musical ability' and 'I have a good understanding of the different elements of music' and 1/7 for 'I find it easy to sing/play in front of others. However, she did give herself full marks, 7/7 for 'I feel like music making allows me to be creative'. In relation to her wellbeing, she self-assessed herself as a 2/7 for 'I've been feeling confident' and 'I've been feeling good about myself' and 3/7 for 'I've been feeling like I can cope with challenges.'

Participant P was fully aware that there were a lot of changes happening in her life and these

became her main inspiration for songwriting. The song “Transitions” was the very first song she wrote in January 2016, during her very first session:

Participant P: *“I’m struggling to talk to people around, thinking they are judging me, but I need to open up to somebody. It’s been hard, it’s been a rollercoaster.”*

During this time she also had a chance to think what her goals might be (she was looking forward to become more independent) and this also was appearing in her songs:

Participant P: *“See the goal ahead of me, find the strength to follow my dream, with power that’s inside during the transitions of my life.”*

Participant P was very productive in her sessions; she almost always came with an idea of what she would like to write the song about. She created 3 songs in her time on the Wavelength project: “For the Better,” “Transitions,” and “With All My Heart.” Her overall outlook was positive and she wanted to get better. She wanted to work hard to leave the past behind and look ahead. Her positive attitude was also making her feel more confident.

Similarly to other young people, participant P's vocal/musical performance was practically always depending on her emotional wellbeing on the day; the more nervous she was the more difficult it was for her to stay in time/tune. It was great to see that throughout the sessions she became more secure in her abilities and, as a result, she was singing and not hiding her voice. We did several singing workshops and participant P was introduced to a variety of vocal exercises, singing intervals, fragments of scales, etc. This all helped her to gain confidence and step by step Participant P became more comfortable and could sing her songs out loud.

I noted in a session report: *“Nice to see (Participant P) smiling and singing. Progress with tuning - sometimes she also sings a 3<sup>rd</sup> above the melody which creates a nice harmony. This might be due to lack of concentration at the time, however it good that it is in harmony with the rest of the musical piece”.*

The next step that participant P achieved was the ability to share her work with others. At the end of the sessions she would ask her care workers to listen to her singing. The praise and enthusiastic feedback that she received made participant P very happy with her achievements.

In terms of emotional development, in the early sessions participant P would always want to talk about herself and her own journey. It was very difficult for her to think in a more abstract or universal way. It appeared that she just really needed someone to listen to her story which she turned into songs. However, soon enough, we saw new nuances in her emotions - she was grateful to her sister for the continuous support and as a result she wrote a song called, “With All My Heart.” It was great to see that participant P had reached a stage in her emotional development where she was able to take the focus away from herself and express gratitude to her family members.

Fragment of lyrics ‘With All My Heart’:

*“You always make me smile, you always make me laugh, even when I’m down you lift me up and I can trust you with my heart.”* Participant P

With regards social development, participant P really experienced a substantial development as to start with she was very timid and would rarely speak up. She often would sit quietly and just absorb the atmosphere before taking part in any activity. By the time of her last few sessions, she was able to engage in conversation with other music leaders and other participants, she was happy to share her ideas and was enthusiastic about working in different teams. She even started

to learn to play bass guitar.

Unfortunately, despite this progress, we then heard that participant P's overall health levels had decreased and therefore she was not able to continue with the Wavelength sessions.

Glynis Oscan - BSMHFT Care Co-ordinator, also stated,  
*"(Participant P) was so positive and smiling about that song she had written about her sister and what she'd achieved on the project. I can tell you that she is very unwell in hospital at the moment and not in fit state to come out at this point. I think she will be in hospital for long time."*

Jemma Sherwell, Deputy Manager, Care Through the Millennium based at Manniford House, where participant P was residing before being re-admitted to hospital, stated,  
*"(Participant P) really enjoyed the sessions and gradually became much more confident. She always looked forward to sessions and was very proud of the music she produced, playing it to all staff. It is a shame that she became too unwell to attend as it was a meaningful activity to do."*

We really hope that participant P will become well enough to attend sessions in Y2.

### **Wavelength Year 1 (2015-16) Analysis of Workforce Development/Sharing Practice Progress**

The final sections of the report relate to our Youth Music outcomes 4 and 5.

As with measuring participant progress, we used similar baseline scales for shadow artists to monitor their progression/confidence as music leaders, together with training evaluations and personal aims and observation notes from our peer reviews based on the 'Do, Review, Improve' framework.

#### **This section is related to Youth Music Outcome 4.**

- Outcome:** To develop the current practice, confidence and standards of the local music and mental health workforce in providing music making activities in youth mental health settings.
- Indicators:** Trainees' and shadows' self-assessment of their practice, confidence and standards in providing music-making activities in youth mental health settings.  
Local workforce numbers attending training.  
Numbers of the workforce accessing online blog and annual impact report.  
Numbers of project team observing and reflecting upon another professional's delivery, and being observed themselves.
- Evidence:** Trainees' and shadows' evaluation reports.  
Registers/bookings for training opportunities.  
Data on number of blog visits/annual impact report link 'likes' and 'shares'.  
Project team observation/reflection reports.

#### **Background**

We recruited 5 shadow artists onto the project this year, following an application and interview process. This was a greater number than the initial 2 roles originally proposed for the project because of the quality of the applications received and due to the fact that it would be a long time for any unsuccessful applicants to have to wait for the next intake. We were very grateful to Youth Music for agreeing to our proposal to offer 5 strong applicants a reduced role in shadowing just one aspect of the project but with the opportunity to extend their roles for 2 years duration, subject



to appraisal. This way we could offer each shadow the same level of experience, and in year 2 we will vary the aspect of the programme that each is shadowing.

All 5 shadows performed well in their roles and 4 have agreed to continue the role in year 2 (one is relocating for further study). All shadows attended an initial training session on our project approach and on how to support young people in sessions. In addition, they were also invited to attend a 2 day Mental Health First Aid course, funded by the project, which 3 shadows took up (2 other shadows are planning to book onto the course but couldn't make the dates offered this year).

We undertook a shadow evaluation of the initial training course which found:

- 3/5 (60%) rated the shadow artist initial training as excellent; 2/5 (40%) stated that it was good. The same results were achieved for the relevance of the training to their needs and interests.
- 4/5 (80%) shadow artists felt that they felt more confident after the initial training in support young mental health service users in music making. All 5 felt that they felt more confident in setting up appropriate equipment after the training.

Also, at the beginning of the course we asked the shadows to underline a baseline activity in regards to their skills and confidence, and then revisited this at the end of the first year. In summary, results showed that:

- 100% shadow artists felt that they increased their confidence in feeling able to provide appropriate, suitable and engaging activities that will enable all young people to take part in my sessions, whatever their ability or specific needs (e.g., differentiation)
- 80% shadow artists felt more confident about working with young people with mental health conditions. 20% already marked themselves at the top of the scale at the beginning of the project.
- The most progress was a collective 67% of potential progression points available for the statement, 'I feel confident about developing positive relationships with young people in music sessions'. In addition, 55% of potential progression points was achieved for the statements 'I feel confident about working with young people with mental health conditions' and 'I feel I have a good awareness of the mental health sector'.

In addition to the shadow training mentioned above, a further 3 artists were taken through the MHFA course and 2 community project managers will be attending over the summer, reaching our target of 8 trained.

### **Peer Observations**

A peer observation programme, using Youth Music's 'Do, Review, Improve' framework, has been fully and effectively embedded into the programme.

In their initial training, our 5 shadow artists set personal aims for their development using the 'Do, Review, Improve' framework, each focusing on 3 self-selected criteria. These were reviewed through informal mentoring after every session by the lead artists.

In addition, each of our 4 lead music facilitators has been observed by another team member, focusing on specific criteria that they identified themselves from the 'Do, Review, Improve' framework. Feedback discussions together after each observation have been used to reflect on their learning as joint development. As this process was embedded right from the beginning of the project as a constructive and useful opportunity for staff development, the team has responded extremely positively to the opportunity and has been open and responsive to feedback, recognising each other's individual strengths and development areas. Our artists state that it is an

easy document to use and believe it has helped them to focus on specific elements of their own practice.

Quench Arts is embedding the framework across all of our programmes as a tool for reflection and to help identify training needs. In Year 2, we will look at the SEND version to see how this differs and if it is applicable within Wavelength.

Artist quotes include,

- *"Working with other artists supporting and observing practice has been brilliant for my own confidence building. I have, up to this point, worked alone on this kind of project. This has provided opportunities for me to see that my practice overlaps with others and has highlighted that I am already doing a lot right, pointed out weaknesses and developed my work practice."*
- *"Through the project role I've improved my playing of my secondary instruments (mainly bass) by contributing in group sessions. I've also developed my practice in creating electronic music by self-research and talking to young people about their tastes. My confidence has grown in planning and leading group sessions through peer feedback and self-reflection, and observing others"*
- *"I've found inspiration in other practitioners' ways of leading sessions."*
- *"I've improved my ability at delivery sessions sharply and with good focus through observing other artists."*

Each shadow was asked to create a series of personal development aims for their role on the project, based on the criteria from 'Do, Review, Improve.' Aims ranged from:

- I would like to assist at recording a session with Logic by the end of the second year of the project (this will make sure that I have appropriate musical competence and can be an able teacher/facilitator, M1)
- I would like to help on giving feedback to one or more young musicians to help them improve in a specific area where they would like to get better (Y4). Also supporting and encouraging them in this area in musical activities
- After the group session has broken up into smaller groups for songwriting tasks, I would like to lead one of these groups by session 7 and try out my own approach with it, such as a lyrical brainstorm (this would be an engaging and inspiring activity and help young people to achieve their full potential , S1)

Of the total 15 personal aims set by the shadows, 7 were fully achieved, 5 were partly achieved and 3 were not achieved by the end of the project year. Please note that, as seen above, some of these aims were to be achieved over 2 years, hence some only being partly achieved.

Shadows were also given the opportunity to reflect on their progress towards these outcomes after every session, which they found valuable. Some quotes about the opportunity include,

- *"I had the opportunity to try out many new activities such as ice breaker activities and different methods for writing lyrics, in a supportive environment. As a result my delivery of activities is a lot sharper and more focused. I got to lead a lyric writing session which was very successful and led to a number of original songs being composed by the participants. This really helped my confidence for working on projects in the future. The Mental Health First Aid training course was really useful and gave me practical advice on how to talk to people who are in distress due to a mental health condition."* AMo
- *"Through the Mental Health First Aid training I have learnt to relax my mind and stop being so hyper aware of my own thoughts. I judge myself less harshly and I value my own opinion*

more. This has increased my self-esteem at work and in social situations. This has led to me becoming more assertive.” AMo

- *“On one occasion I was working with a young person who suffered from schizophrenia and had been showing signs of being quite distressed during the session. I remembered from my Mental Health First Aid training an exercise where we simulated having competing voices talking at us and I could empathise with how distressing this must be. The young person said he hoped I couldn't hear the voices in his head because they were saying very dark things. I knew not to challenge these thoughts or to play down their impact. Instead I told him that must be very worrying and scary but reassured him that he was in a safe place and that I couldn't hear the voices in his head. I told him I had really enjoyed working with him and if he needed to have a break then this would be fine. We did have a short break and I continued to talk in a relaxed way to him. He managed to re-join the session and commented at the end that it was a wonderful way to join together with other people.” AMo*
- *“It was great to have automatic feedback straight after a session. Each music leader's approach is different and has been eye-opening for different ideas in songwriting. The opportunity to do MHFA has been useful in improving my understanding of mental health and its impact on music groups. I've learnt that it's ok to have flaws/ vulnerabilities as a musician, it gives participants licence to feel vulnerable or nervous.” Anonymous*
- *“The project allowed me to observe a number of alternate approaches to this kind of work in areas that I had previously never had any experience in. Due to the wide and variant experiences of the lead artists, I was able to have a very good over view of many different styles of working. I had also never composed using technology before and this was extremely useful for my own development. I feel as this would now be something I could consider using in the future, instead of it being an area of practice that I veer away from.” KS*
- *“The project has improved my understanding of working in a pop-music environment. It has given me a chance to learn about working in a band set up with standard band instruments, having only ever worked with orchestras and keyboards before. It has also helped my confidence in leading song writing activities and provided me with examples of several different approaches to creating a song.” DB*
- *“The diverse and practical approach that the Wavelength project offers has helped me develop my skills and confidence in a group setting. With an ever changing and exciting approach to engage, every session has taught me about the way music can help students with mental health issues, be it in developing their skills as a musician or as a person. This project has helped me build on my own desires to continue in this line of work, by offering me the opportunity to hone my own skills.” ND*

We give informal monthly updates on the project at the Birmingham Music Education Partnership meetings, to share learning and our impact summary report will be disseminated to arts and health networks after it is completed and presented to our project steering group in September.

To date, according to the Youth Music Network, we have had 532 reads of our blog posts related to Wavelength. We have shared 6 worksheets relating to Wavelength to share practice on the Quench Arts Resources Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/QuenchArtsResources/files/> . These have been accessed by 125 members. These members are a mixture of music leaders, parents and other professionals, such as mental health service workers and teachers.

Our Wavelength slideshow, which provides a snapshot report around the first year of activity, has been shared on our Facebook (394 friends) and Twitter (739 followers) accounts. This will be updated with final statistics and quotes and will be shared with our partners.

### **This section is related to Youth Music Outcome 5:**

**Outcome:** To develop families' and mental health professionals' understanding and knowledge of the therapeutic value of music making for early intervention and create an evidence base for this work.

**Indicators:** Parent and mental health trainees' self-assessment of their own understanding/knowledge of the therapeutic value of music-making for early intervention.  
Numbers of parents/mental health professionals attending training opportunities.  
Numbers of parents/mental health professional's accessing online blog, impact reports, learning seminar.  
Number of testimonials/quotes about the project impact in participant case studies.

**Evidence:** Training evaluations from parents/ mental health professionals.  
Registers/booking forms for training opportunities.  
Data on number of blog visits/annual impact report link 'likes' and 'shares' by parent/mental health professional trainees.  
Register for learning seminar.  
Case studies and annual impact reports (and data/quotes within these).

Our training for parents and mental health service staff has been slightly delayed and is planned to take place over the summer of 2016, so we are unable to fully report on this outcome at this stage. Due to the local changes in mental health provision mentioned previously, we decided to delay this training until the end of year 1 in order to confirm mental health staff attendance. We are aiming for the training to be delivered in partnership with Birmingham Children's Hospital Parkview Clinic over the summer, with staff and also parents of children and young people based there, as well as with parents of participants engaged in Year 1 of Wavelength.

In Year 1, three parents have been directly engaged within the project sessions, taking part and supporting as appropriate for participants, so have seen first-hand the impact that music making can have. Parental feedback includes:

*"It has encouraged (participant O) to talk. She has lots of ideas but finds it very hard to speak to people, so it's helped."*

*"It helps to get what they are feeling out of their heads and to express their thoughts and feelings out loud."*

*"We thought the end of year gig was excellent; well put together; nice room, just the right size; excellent lighting and sound. And each artist having the chance to talk to the audience made it very interesting."*

In addition, Ed Morelos, Activity Worker at Ardenleigh Forensic CAMHS, states, *"(The project) gets them away from their ward environment. Builds their confidence and (helps them) feel more comfortable in the community. (It) helps bring out their potential and express themselves musically."*

We have built a strong partnership with Home Group who have been running our family support sessions at group sessions. 4 parents benefitted from regular support and advice from Home

Group and 2 parents have been signposted to further support networks and help as a result of this input.

We have shared all blogs on our social media and with partners on the steering group. Most parents of core participants have joined our social media accounts to access the information that we share. BSMHFT's Community Engagement Team are sharing blogs on their intranet across the trust.

Currently our data on numbers viewing our resources and blogs does not record whether those accessing materials are parents or mental health professionals. As an action we need to consider how we might collect this information to analyse our wider impact.

## **Reflections and Lessons Learned**

There are no significant changes to make to the programme delivery in year 2.

We feel that we're making good progress towards achieving our project outcomes and milestones and building strong evidence around the impact of our programme. The music leaders are happy with the monitoring tools we have produced and we will continue to use these in year 2.

Regarding embedding of 'Do Review Improve,' we will continue to use this in peer reviews between lead artists, and for shadow artists in setting aims for their experience on the project.

The metaphor reflection activity that we trialled within group sessions in year 1 will not be used in year 2. We've found that this activity is too abstract for the young people to grasp and, therefore, was not producing useful evaluation material. We will continue to use graffiti walls, comments boxes and audio recordings of circle feedback at the end of group activity to capture information from participants.

Our main target for year 2 is to have all core participants recruited at the same time so we do not have a staggered start as per year 1. Retention of young people will always be something that we need to be mindful of when working within the mental health sector as the young person's health can quickly deteriorate and, therefore, can impact upon their commitment. However, we will make sure that the project commitment is clear on recruitment, particularly in regards to staffing support for participant engagement in group activity from anyone applying to the main community based activity from Forensic CAMHS settings. We will also ensure that information regarding the impact the project has had upon participants is reviewed more regularly to ensure that we have a richer source of evaluative information on our core participants if they leave the project early.

We will look at ways in which we can determine who is accessing the information that we are sharing online (e.g. whether it is artists, mental health service workers or parents) so that we can track this more effectively, rather than just obtaining numbers of viewings.

Feedback from participants showed that, particularly for the consistent young people involved, they felt an over-emphasis on the writing of new material through the project. In year 1 a new song was written virtually every songwriting and group session and our core participants thus felt a little burnt out of ideas by the end of the year (particularly as this was also the focus of 1-to-1 sessions). Whilst we did try and fulfil their desire to include a few covers in the sharing, it would be fair to say that these weren't rehearsed or performed to the same standard as the original material. As the project grows, there will be more performers each year and thus more material, and every participant will not be involved in every group track, so this will also help. However, we are taking

this feedback into account for next year in our programme. As always, we are happy for artists to use cover material appropriate for the young person within their 1-to-1 sessions initially, to help build confidence and technique, before moving onto original material. Also, for year 2 we will now use the songwriting sessions to focus on lyrics, structure and choral ideas for one song and then use the following group session to develop this same song as an ensemble. This will give us more time within the group session to record the piece and make sure that everyone involved in composing and learning the song is on the recording (rather than recording it in a separate session and potentially having different people present). As a result of this change, we will then be able to use the planned recording sessions to focus on recording material from the 1-to-1 sessions and perhaps bring in other participants to contribute to these recordings, and also involve all participants in the final production and mastering of their tracks. Rather than having 8 recording days across the year, we will thus split these into 16 half-day sessions, 4 per artist, which allows 2 hours per participant and a final 2 hours per artist of mastering all the 1-to-1 tracks.

We will also look at the programming of the end of year 2 concert to ensure that we have good participant attendance and contributions from those in secure units/settings. This may include running the concert in the daytime, which would potentially help gain leave approval for attendances from young people in forensic CAMHS units, as their orders often mean that there is an evening curfew.

## Links:

Photographs from the End of Year Sharing:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.607880002711725.1073741880.100004691913615&type=1&l=bb8a232a42>

Monthly blog posts on the Youth Music Network, written by our artistic team who were given guidance on topics to write about:

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/near-you/projects/wavelength>

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/learning/blogs/nicbriggs/group-music-making-young-people-mental-health-conditions-sarah-wilson-quenc>

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/learning/blogs/nicbriggs/benefits-one-one-sessions-mental-health-settings-james-stanley-quench-arts->

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/learning/blogs/nicbriggs/putting-people-ease-their-first-group-session-paul-carroll-quench-arts%E2%80%99-wav>

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/learning/blogs/nicbriggs/tackling-sensitive-topics-lyric-writing-young-mental-health-service-users-m>

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/learning/blogs/nicbriggs/embedding-arts-award-sessions-without-disrupting-creative-flow-sarah-wilson>

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/posts/ways-which-using-technology-can-break-down-barriers-unconfident-young-people-james-stanley>

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/posts/getting-young-people-through-creative-block-meldra-guza-wavelength-project-music-leader>

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/posts/ensuring-parents-and-carers-understand-benefits-music-making-young-mental-health-service-users>

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/posts/getting-young-people-recording-ready-sarah-wilson-quench-arts-wavelength-project-music-leader>

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/posts/using-presets-aid-creativity-and-workflow-session-james-stanley-quench-arts%E2%80%99-wavelength-music>

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/posts/celebrating-success-paul-carroll-quench-arts-wavelength-project-music-leader>

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/posts/my-first-year-wavelength-project-meldra-guza-quench-arts-wavelength-project-lead-artist>

Practice-sharing and resources on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/QuenchArtsResources/>

(click on the files section to see 6 documents on Wavelength approaches to song/lyric writing).

Soundcloud link to the first Wavelength album

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/sets/wavelength-year-1-cd-2016](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/sets/wavelength-year-1-cd-2016)

Further information about Mental Health First Aid training:

<http://mhfaengland.org/>

Further information about the Five Ways to Wellbeing and Outcomes Star:

<http://www.neweconomics.org/projects/entry/five-ways-to-well-being>

<http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/mental-health/>

## **Wavelength Thanks**

We would like to give huge thanks to all of the parents, support workers and setting staff who have supported our participants to attend sessions, and to our project artistic team for their hard work and tenacity:

**Lead Artists:** Paul Carroll, Meldra Guza, James Stanley, Sarah Wilson

**Shadow Artists:** Davina Brownrigg, Nathen Durasamy, Michelle Holloway, Adam Moffatt, Katie Stevens

**Parent Support Worker (Home Group):** Helen Dale

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- Director of Community Engagement, BSMHFT
- Family and Carer Engagement Lead, BSMHFT
- Partnership Development Lead, Forward Thinking Birmingham
- Recovery Team representative, BSMHFT
- Ward Manager and Lead Occupational Therapists, Parkview Clinic

- Occupational Therapist and Activity Workers, Ardenleigh Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Solihull Early Intervention team representative
- Head of Birmingham Music Service, Services for Education, representing Birmingham Music Education Partnership
- Deputy Head of Solihull Music Service
- Producer, Mac Makes Music

Thanks also to our other referral organisations/settings who have taken the time to answer correspondence, attend meetings, allow us to presenting project opportunities to their young people and forwarded material for us to display at our marketplace session (Creative Support, CraftSpace, Spurgeons Young Carers, Home Group, Musical Connections/Brainstorm, Forward Thinking Birmingham and BSMHFT).



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