



WAVELENGTH

Impact Report 2019-20

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Wavelength 2019-20 Activity Summary

Wavelength is a creative music making project for young people aged 12-18 living in Birmingham and Solihull with diagnosed mental health conditions and those with other conditions and/or disabilities which affect their mental health. This report relates to the 5th year of project delivery, from Jan 2019 to December 2020 and it has most definitely been the most challenging year to date, with the Covid19 pandemic affecting the delivery from early on in the project year.

Wavelength benefitted 24 young people with diagnosed mental health conditions across the year. The project has provided one-to-one and group creative songwriting sessions, online via Zoom, through bespoke digital video resources and through face-to-face individual and small group sessions as appropriate to individual participants' Covid19 risk assessments, needs and wishes. Sessions have helped young people to manage and express their thoughts and feelings, kept them connected with peers and supported them to develop their musical skills whilst encouraging personal development based on the 5 Ways to Wellbeing. Unfortunately, due to the Covid19 pandemic, our 2 bespoke mini projects at Birmingham Children's Hospital Parkview Clinic and at Ardenleigh (Forensic Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service unit) were unable to go ahead, though we did manage to run a taster session with 8 young people in the Parkview Clinic (some of whom were discharged and then joined our community activity).

From last year, we have had a rolling recruitment process for the project, which helps ensure that support is available for young people when they need it, rather than them having to wait until the start of the next project year to take part. However, our recruitment was significantly affected by the pandemic and this is further discussed under the lessons learned section. Due to the ongoing challenges of the pandemic and its significant impact on our project participants, we have made the decision to offer ongoing 1-to-1 support across the next year for 6 current participants who we feel would really benefit, as well as to recruit our full allocation of new participants for 2021.

Across the 2019-20 programme we delivered: 140 one-to-one music sessions, working with young people to develop their own musical skills and confidence. These sessions have included supporting participants to complete and review wellbeing baseline data and set their own goals for the project. 17 of these individual sessions were delivered face-to-face, 43 via Zoom and 80 via bespoke digital content (videos and worksheets), due to the Covid19 pandemic. In addition, we ran 8 group songwriting sessions focused on lyric writing and song structure; 11 group music making sessions, putting these lyrics to music; and 8 group recording/production sessions, documenting the music created. Of all the group sessions above, 7 were delivered face-to-face; 16 via Zoom; 4 through a blended approach (some participants on Zoom; some in our venue) from 14/10/20, thanks to extra support from the Clive and Sylvia Richards Charity to help make our venue Covid-secure. Due to Covid19, our 2 project socials, live concert and setting specific (acute/forensic unit) holiday activity could not run. However, an extremely successful online 'listening party' was held on 3rd December, where participants and their invited guests shared their music and celebrated their achievements. Also, a CD and a music video was made of the original material created. These can be accessed here:

CD: https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/sets/wavelength-cd-2019-20-lockdown

Music Video: https://youtu.be/D_c_xFMW_AI

Participants involved in Wavelength this year have a range of mental health conditions which have had the potential to be exacerbated by the pandemic, constant media/social media coverage and social isolation. Specific diagnoses include: anxiety, low mood, eating disorders (anorexia and pervasive arousal withdrawal syndrome), sensory processing disorders, depression, psychosis, OCD, ADHD and gender identity issues resulting in low self-esteem, low confidence, self-harm, suicidal ideations, drug use/self-medication and panic attacks. Some young people have co-morbidities such as autism/Asperger's syndrome/neurodiversity, Cerebral Palsy/hemiplegia, dyspraxia, contact allergies, epilepsy and joint hypermobility syndrome which also impact on their mental health. Several participants have siblings or parents with a mental health diagnosis or long-term medical condition. Prior to Covid19, 8 participants were not attending formal education due to their challenges.

Participants face a range of barriers in accessing mainstream provision including psychological barriers (low confidence/self-esteem); physical barriers (access, transport, available support) and barriers related to their condition (e.g., reduced concentration due to medication; body dysmorphia affecting online access). They may be confused about their identity, be coming to terms with their diagnosis (and associated stigma) and feel a lack of agency/control. Without targeted support these barriers result in young people withdrawing and not progressing hobbies and interests and, sometimes, education. This results in a further lack of opportunities to build resilience through developing emotional, personal and social skills, causing further social exclusion.

In this report we highlight the progression that project participants have made through cohort statistics collected through participant self-assessed baselines. We also highlight the individual impact through a sample collection of case studies on new participants recruited this year, giving further context.

Wavelength 2018-19 Analysis of Participant Progress

Baseline Analysis

The following is a summary impact analysis of evaluation material collected from this year of the Wavelength project via a creative baseline activity with 'core' attending the main community project. 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.

Working in mental health, self-assessed monitoring and evaluation data can be greatly affected by how the participant is feeling at the time of baseline completion if, for example, they are having a really good/bad day, so we triangulate data to ensure multiple evidence

sources and also produce contextual case studies. It should be noted that most initial participant baselines taken this year were completed before the Covid19 pandemic hit and so it is natural that the revisited baseline scores may have declined when young people's opportunities to interact with peers and build their self-esteem will have been impacted by the restrictions on their lives and the significant changes, challenged and lack of control that Covid19 brought. In addition, due to changes to the project schedule because of the necessary cancellation of the final live concert, participant final baselines were collected in the session prior to the end of year listening party. It is likely that some revisited baseline scores may have been slightly higher, had they been collected after this event due to the success and self-esteem it provided participants.

Project case studies are important to add context to baseline data, for example, sometimes a lower mark for the 2nd 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. 11 case studies, as examples, are provided at the end of this document, with each project artist having written case studies on a selection of the participants they have worked with.

Two highlights in terms of profiling the project during the past year were that we were asked by BBC Radio WM to share details about our Wavelength project on BBC Children In Need day, which also featured a lengthy interview with Participant/Peer Mentor 21, illustrating the journey she has had through being supported on Wavelength. Additionally, we were asked by The Baring Foundation to provide a case study about Wavelength in their Creatively Minded and Young National Report, (https://cdn.baringfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/BF_Creatively-minded-and-young_WEB_LR-1.pdf) providing a great opportunity to share our work to a wider audience.

Your Music Section:

This section of the baseline related to BBC Children In Need Difference 1.

Outcome: Project participants show an improved ability to express themselves in a constructive and positive way.

Indicators: Participants' self-assessed level of ability to express themselves through their own music-making.

What music leaders say about participants' abilities to express themselves.

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

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

75% showed improvement in, 'I can express my thoughts, feelings and emotions through my own music making'. 25% stayed the same. The most improvement was 4 points, on a scale of 1-7. 67% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

63% showed improvement in, 'I am good of making sense of what other people are expressing though music (e.g., thoughts, feelings and emotions)'. 25% stayed the same (some participants gave a high score at project start). The most improvement was 2 points, on a scale of 1-7. 19% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

50% showed improvement in, 'I am pleased with my current level of musical ability'. 50% stayed the same. The most improvement was 5 points, on a scale of 1-7. 58% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

75% showed improvement in, 'I have a good understanding of the different elements of music (pitch, rhythm, melody, timbre, dynamics, texture, harmony, structure, etc.)'. 25% stayed the same. The most improvement was 3 points, on a scale of 1-7. 43% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

38% showed improvement in, 'I feel like music making allows me to be creative'. 62% stayed the same. The most improvement was 3 points, on a scale of 1-7. 100% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved (several participants having marked themselves at the top of the scale at the beginning of the year).

57% showed improvement in, 'I find it easy to sing/play in front of others'. 43% stayed the same. The most improvement was 2 points, on a scale of 1-7. 25% of the collective potential progression points available were achieved.

Music Leader monitoring reports/case studies document participant progress. Examples include:

Participant2T:

1-1 Session 3/2/2020: Participant2T told me about his behavioural problems in the past. He chose the song he wanted to work on today and played me recordings of him singing but didn't sing himself. He also talked a lot about the music he was into.

1-1 Session 7/10/2020: Participant2T played with confidence, happy to share and towards the end of the session he sang...which he would not do previously.

Music Leader Evaluation: "(Participant2T) wouldn't sing in front of me for the first three sessions (to March) but by November he could do it so much so that he made a great microphone recording, for the first time."

Participant2E:

Music Leader Evaluation: "From the beginning, Participant2E wasn't very confident writing lyrics...and focused more on covers. He had issues expressing himself...at the end of this year's project he attended his first group sessions (in person and on Zoom). Him being there and talking to the group was such a big milestone! Discussing how he felt, things he liked and suggestions for the songs...He was so excited to hear other participants music, making some lovely comments about how much he enjoyed specific tracks, showing he was able to make sense of other people's expressions...He's starting to realise how he can express emotions in his own creative output."

ParticipantU2's mum's evaluation explains how music can help: "Wavelength gave him a focus as he learnt the guitar in hospital during visits. He could express himself in a constructive/positive way with his music rather than self-harming."

General Group session example, 9/9/20: We focused on a theme of change. We created a spider diagram with associations, rhymes and ideas coming to mind about the concept of change...Participants then linked separate words together, creating lyrical ideas... Young people shared their rhymes and phrases and offered each other suggestions for improvement. Some decisions were made about the key topics emerging related to change (e.g., change in relationships; circumstances; perception/emotional state; can be scary or good). At the session-end young people shared song/musical ideas to convey the message they hope to express through this song (this became 'Rose Tinted Reality').

Audio/photographic documentation of participants' music/lyrics & audio recordings of group plenaries have evidenced progression.

The CD highlights participants' creative expression:

https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/sets/wavelength-cd-2019-20-lockdown

Extra information

Most participants made some progress in their ability to express themselves in a constructive and positive way with some making good progress, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

Most participants joining Wavelength had low self-confidence/self-esteem and lacked group experience. Two participants had missed lots of education, having recently been discharged from hospital, and several others were home-schooled due to not coping with formal education. On joining, participants tend to struggle to express opinions, fear making decisions, and may even be elective mute. Within sessions, this may manifest as shyness or a perceived lack of willingness to engage, particularly initially and in group situations. In rarer cases, discomfort is masked by dominant behaviours easily misinterpreted as being over-confident and uncompromising.

To improve participants' ability to express themselves, we build confidence and skills through one-to-one sessions initially, leading to group sessions when ready. Participants steer their sessions in terms of content/style/structure/form and the music/topics of focus, offering their ideas and lyrics and hearing the ideas/opinions of others. In group sessions, they learn to work collaboratively alongside their own devised guidelines, valuing everyone's contribution as part of the ensemble and understanding that different views and opinions are healthy and interesting. They connect with music and discuss different emotions/states it can evoke. We find that lyric-writing is a great way to discuss issues/feelings that they'd otherwise struggle to talk about.

With Covid19 hitting early in the project year, sessions largely moved to online Zoom provision. Initially the change was challenging and required a change of delivery approach, mainly due to latency issues with ensemble work. However, the team adapted well, quickly took on board the new etiquette for online communication and responded well to tasks, recording their ideas, using the interactive chat to write lyrics and structure songs, and developing arranging and production skills with shared screen work. With Zoom, if you share something, everyone is going to hear it and this has been very positive, giving everyone a voice and space to be heard. Wavelength has provided a consistent time and 'safety blanket' for participants to come together to talk about how they feel.

The original music created illustrates participants' expression. There was much discussion about lockdown which led to apocalyptic and dystopian themes (Once Upon; Trapped in My Memory). Several tracks reflect how the project has needed to work through sampling and production (Time Capsule, Are We? IDK), some are about mental health and/or how music can help (Music Is.., Whisper in the Wind), some are about change and relationships (Rose Tinted Reality, Lonely, Avocado Toast).

Some participants didn't progress as much as others, largely due to restrictions in accessing face-to-face group activity. Where Zoom provision wasn't possible due to the participant's mental health condition or the home support available, phone calls, bespoke videos and worksheets were provided. However, for participants not able/willing to access Zoom, this naturally limited opportunities for communication and progression, which is why not all participants developed to the same level. These participants were moved to face-to-face provision when possible.

It's All About You Section:

This section of the baseline related to BBC Children In Need Difference 2.

Outcome: Project participants show an increased sense of self-esteem.

Indicators: Participants' self-assessed level of self-esteem.

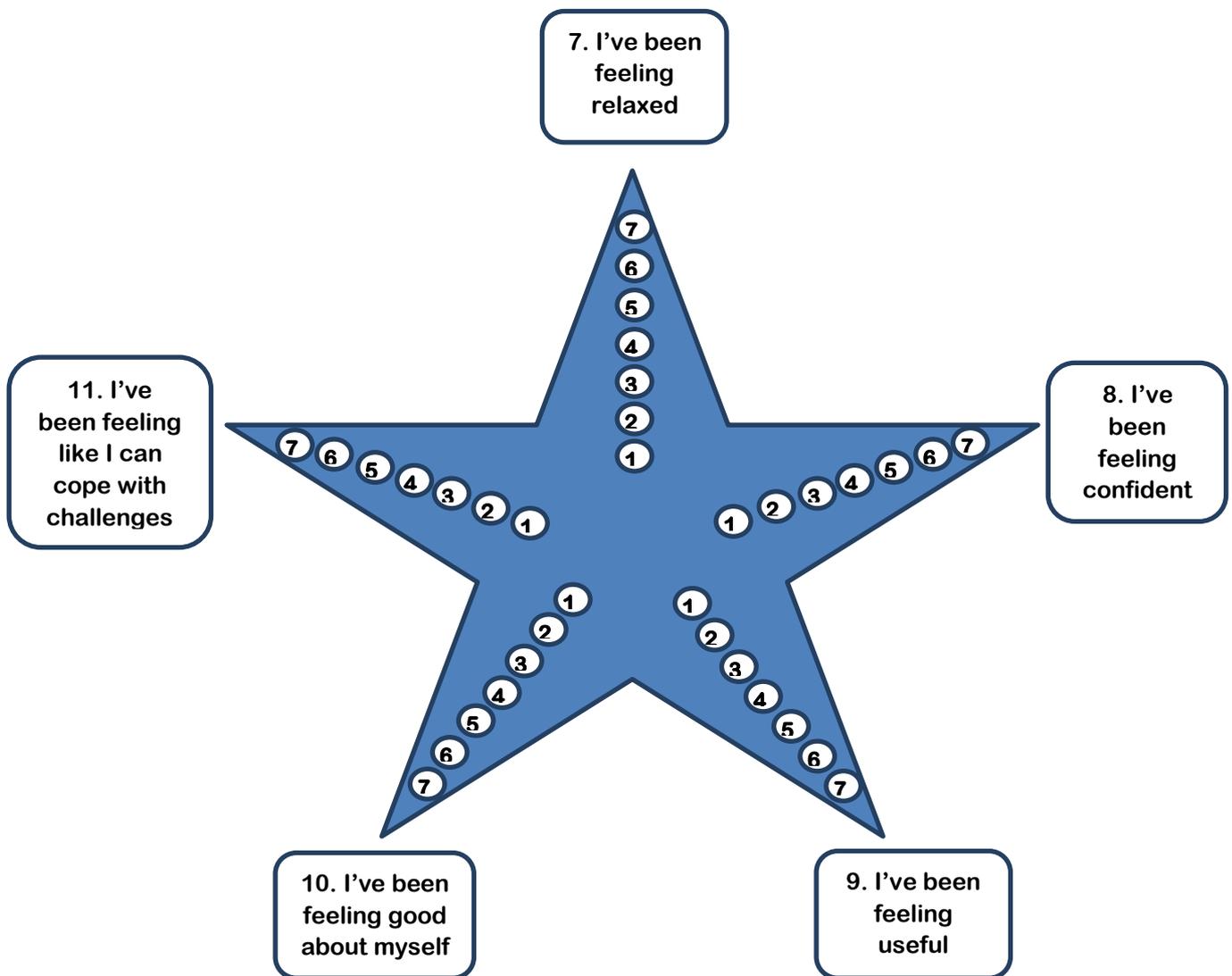
Whether or not participants share their musical outcomes with others.

Evidence: Participant revisited baseline questionnaires.

Music leader sessional reports and case studies on each participant.

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.



Participant self-assessed baselines taken with core participants at the beginning/end of the project year show individual and cohort self-esteem improvements against set statements. Our participants have been significantly affected by the pandemic which is reflected through this baseline data with less progress than previous years, though other evidence highlights some progress made. All participant feedback, when noting declines against baseline statements, referred to the challenges of Covid19 and finding the lack of control over the situation and their lives difficult.

25% showed improvement in, 'I've been feeling relaxed'. 38% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. The most progression was 3 points, on a scale of 1-7.

38% showed improvement in, 'I've been feeling confident'. 63% stayed the same. The most progression was 3 points, on a scale of 1-7.

50% showed improvement in, 'I've been feeling useful'. 25% stayed the same. The most progression was 3 points, on a scale of 1-7.

25% showed improvement in, 'I've been feeling good about myself'. 38% stayed the same. The most progression was 4 points, on a scale of 1-7.

13% showed improvement in, 'I've been feeling like I can cope with challenges'. 17% stayed as they were at the beginning of the year. The most progression 2 points, on a scale of 1-7. Most participants felt that they had declined in this area, due to the pandemic.

Despite the baseline feedback above, of participant year-end evaluations submitted, 100% thought the project had improved their self-esteem . Quotes included:

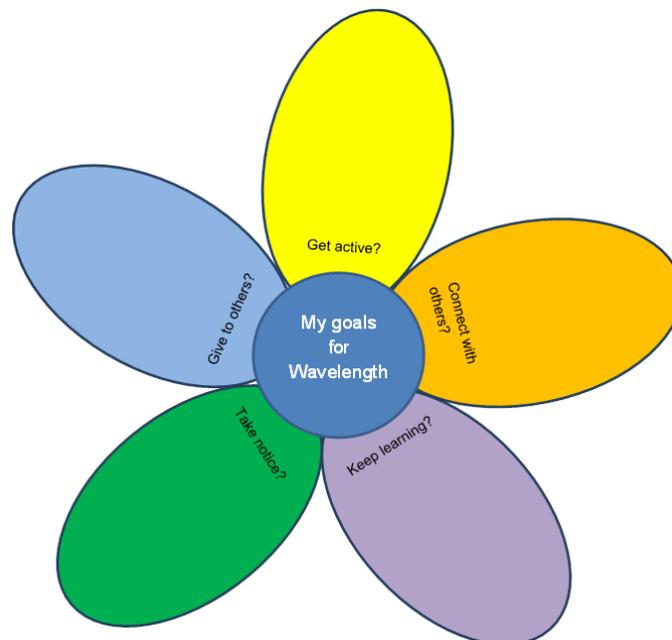
"It taught me to be more comfortable with singing. But I want to be even better."

"Wavelength has assured me that I am heard in a group of people."

"Coming to the sessions and speaking to people has made me feel more confident"

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>)



On joining Wavelength, core participants set personal aims related to the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' to work on throughout the year and review, building pride and self-belief (detailed in Five Ways to Learning Section). Of 25 goals set, 21 were achieved, 2 exceeded and 2 are still in progress. An example:

Participant2T's goal review for 'Keep Learning':

Goal: to guitar playing as well as social skills and self-confidence; looking for help with writing lyrics and recording

Review: "I finished a song and got it recorded. I had to find confidence in myself to sing and (explain) ...what I wanted the song to sound like. It went perfectly to plan in my opinion. The whole process...was even better than I expected."

Assessment: Exceeded

Participant2T's baseline scores improved by 3 points (on a scale of 1-7) for feeling useful and confident and by 4 points for feeling good about himself, even before the sharing and feedback from family/friends.

Evidence of young people's increased self-esteem and sense of pride has been measured by numbers of participants:

A) Giving permission to publicly share/recognise:

-Their original tracks (16 participants contributed and agreed to share this online, 13 had recordings on the CD and to date there has been 812 listens on Soundcloud).

-Arts Award accreditations/certificates (no participants completed an Awards Award due to Covid19. 16 participants accepted a certificate of achievement).

B) Involved in:

-sharing their musical work created at the year-end listening party (13 participants).

-9 participants invited guests.

Other evidence includes parent/carer evaluation quotes:

Participant2S's mum: *"(Her) self-esteem is improving slowly but surely and this is helped by the praise she receives for her music. Music gives them something they can immerse themselves into and a distraction from any other issues. It also is a great leveller that gives the ability to achieve..."*

Participant2I's mum: *"(Her) self-esteem is fragile and was hugely increased as she took on the peer mentor role...She is adapting to allow knocks in self-esteem to not cause a knock-on effect in her overall confidence. She also feels immense pride in seeing the other participants develop and grow in confidence too and that adds to her own self-esteem."*

Extra Information

Most participants joining Wavelength face low self-esteem and low confidence. They're often coming to terms with a diagnosis, potential associated stigma and the impact that such a label might have on their self-identity/future. In sessions, low confidence inhibits their willingness to give things a go in fear of failure, though they've made the first step of joining Wavelength.

Our Wavelength team are trained Mental Health First Aiders, experienced in supporting progression. We work on low self-esteem initially with 'quick win' activities where the participant gains immediate success. Participants set targets (related to the Five Ways to Wellbeing), building motivation through regular reviews and valid praise. This helps build trust and rapport with their one-to-one music leader. Participants work towards creating an original track for the CD, building their self-identity by establishing their musical style, influences, likes and dislikes. Within group sessions, participants build confidence through ice-breakers and teamwork, with plenary reflections highlighting their contributions. The

CD/music video showcase participants' achievements, providing something positive from a challenging period & something tangible to share. Although the pandemic meant that a gig couldn't take place, the online listening event was incredibly successful and less pressurised for participants. All participants were able to invite friends, family and keyworkers and live audience feedback gave instant recognition and praise.

Our peer mentors have been fantastic at motivating and inspiring younger participants as role models, showing the progression possible. Peers give extra support, settling new participants into sessions, helping with technology or specific instrumental skills and offering encouragement/ideas to keep sessions moving.

Most participants have shown some progress in this project difference but the distance travelled has been significantly less than previous years and hasn't been linear. Progress hasn't always been reflected in individual self-assessed baseline data but seen through other evidence/feedback. Covid19 has hugely affected our participants, exacerbating the anxiety many face anyway. Participants have found the changes and lack of control over their lives and interactions difficult. All young people have had less opportunity to mix with others, build skills and gain success, with exams/other benchmarks cancelled. Wavelength has provided consistency, giving participants roles/tasks/responsibilities, something to commit to and achieve. It has been much appreciated; most parent/carer feedback stated that, without Wavelength, their child wouldn't have coped nearly as well.

Participant2E, shows clear progress: *"Initially he had incredibly low self-esteem. Little milestones of him being proud of his keyboard playing...creating his own piece of music on GarageBand that he was happy to share and then ultimately coming into group sessions and sharing these skills with others-all of these things have been a great journey. He ended up having a song featured on the CD ...and the fact that...he was happy to put that forward, attend an evening where he knew it would be played in front of other people and speak up to accept some of the praise he was receiving was real proof of his increased self-esteem."* Music Leader evaluation.

Participant2U:*"It's helped me be more confident with music...it's helped me be more confident generally."*

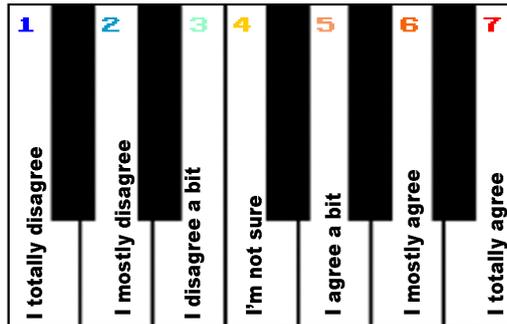
'How You Doin'?' Section

This section of the baseline related to BBC Children In Need Difference 3.

Outcome: Project participants show improved relationships with peers.

Indicators: What participants say about their relationships with peers.
Number of musical collaborations between peers.

Evidence: Participant revisited baseline questionnaires.
Music leader sessional reports and case studies on each participant.
Number of collaborations between participants



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.

Core participant self-assessed baselines, taken at the beginning and end of year have measured progress in social connections/engagement against set statements. Progress has been limited by Covid19 hitting after initial baselines.

50% showed improvement for, 'I have good social skills'.
 25% showed improvement for, 'I'm good at working in a team'.
 (For both, 38% remained the same)

29% showed improvement for, 'I'm able to connect with other people on the project'. 57% stayed the same.

57% showed improvement in, 'I find it easy to sing/play in front of others'. 43% stayed the same.

The above baseline feedback is disappointing, but it is not entirely unexpected given the situation with the pandemic and the nature of our participant's needs and challenges. A significant number of participants involved this year did not feel comfortable accessing online group provision and thus did not have the same opportunities to interact or develop their social skills as in previous years. Where possible, young people unable to access online sessions were prioritised for face-to-face sessions, but not all those offered this were able to attend in person, due to their anxiety or because of living with a parent/sibling clinically vulnerable from Covid19. For those who were able to attend in person sessions, the project has had a huge impact.

Despite the above baseline feedback, in 60% of year-end participant evaluations received participants thought Wavelength had improved their relationships with peers (another 20% 'a little'), evidencing better progress than baseline data.

75% of personal aims related to the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' for 'Connect with' and 'Give to Others' were met. One example is:

Participant 2U' goal review for 'Connect with Others':

Goal: I enjoy writing songs and would like to work with others.

Review: I've been coming to group sessions and speaking to people in sessions about music.

Assessment: Met

Participant 2S' goal review for 'Give to Others':

Goal: I would love to have a song on the CD (to share)

Assessment: Met (had an individual song on the CD and was involved in most of the group tracks).

Year-end evaluations from music leaders/parents/carers/key workers have captured progress. For example:

"(Participant2I) is developing her social skills as a peer mentor...She is growing in confidence and is in particular learning to read participants and the room..." Parent feedback

"He is naturally a sociable child and Wavelength brought this back... It has helped him (now) socialise with his cousins who play guitar and friends from his previous school, who he has rekindled his relationship with having been isolated from them in hospital due to his illness." Participant 2U's mum

12 core participants attended online group sessions to collaborate. 13 shared their music at the online listening party. 10 attended an in-person group session before Covid19; 3 attended Oct-Dec blended group sessions in-person. 8 others engaged in one inpatient group session. The number of collaborations on the project CD and sharings evidence team-working: 13 participants collaborated on pieces for the CD (12 were on group track recordings).

Music leader session reports have documented observations related to this difference. Examples include:

"(Participant2X) and (Participant2I) have been collaborating. Although (Participant2X) joined the project slightly later, it was of a high importance to help her feel like a part of the existing team as her struggle with mental health has been fierce over the last year. (Participant2X) recorded vocals for one of the group songs and that allowed her to become more acquainted with the rest of the group...She also attended face to face sessions and became good friends with (Participant2U)." ML evaluation.

"The fact that Participant2I encouraged Participant2X to record over the vocals she had previously recorded herself shows she had a real empathy for a new participant and wanted her to feel part not only part of what had previously been created, but also have an opportunity to shine as the lead singer." Quench Arts Director.

"(Participant2T) didn't come to any group sessions and on his baseline forms did not rate himself well on social skills, connecting with other people or working in a team. Therefore, it was very impressive that he came along to the online sharing...He made a point of being there for the entire event to hear everyone else's music and comment positively..." ML evaluation.

“It’s still early days (for Participant2E) and he recognises that. His goal was to engage in the groups with others which he did in the last few sessions of the year...He’s seen the benefits of building relationships with peers in just a few sessions though so now he has the motivation.” ML evaluation.

Extra information

Most young people referred to Wavelength are socially isolated. Due to their mental health impacting on confidence and behaviours, they generally haven’t taken opportunities to interact with others. Many have had time off school and therefore haven’t been able to build/maintain relationships with peers. Wavelength supports the development of social confidence, encouraging progression from one-to-one to small group work, larger groups and then performance (this year an online ‘listening party’). Group sessions start with ice-breakers to build confidence, teamwork and communication. Wavelength works at a pace that supports participants’ needs whilst gently encouraging progression.

Due to Covid19, overall progression for difference 3 has been significantly lower than previous years, despite some individual successes. It has been harder for everyone to maintain pre-existing relationships, let alone build new ones, and our Wavelength social trips and live concert weren’t able to go ahead. When Covid19 hit, our activity moved online and this has really suited some participants. It has helped them get to know each other, with lots of group activity based around conversation. However, some participants only wanted to engage online for individual sessions and for 7 participants, online working hasn’t been suitable, either because of a lack of support/supervision/resources at home or because of their specific mental health condition/triggers (e.g., body dysmorphia). For these participants we provided regular bespoke videos/worksheets and when our venue was Covid-secure and government guidance allowed, they were prioritised for in-person activities. Only 4 participants accessed face-to-face provision after the pandemic hit, due to anxieties with the virus and/or having clinically vulnerable people at home—everyone else worked online. However, for these 4 Wavelength made a huge difference.

For those working online, Wavelength has successfully and consistently brought people together, providing a chance for participants to connect, talk, get to know each other and work together on something creative and positive. Zoom etiquette means you can’t hide behind others online – if you share something, everyone hears! This has been positive pressure and established trust between participants. They have collaborated remotely and recorded their different parts for 8 group songs, fuelling further teamwork and friendships. From Oct, ‘blended’ group sessions have run, helping engage those online with those meeting in-person. The online ‘listening party’ was hugely successful in connecting participants, especially benefiting those who hadn’t accessed group sessions.

“My child had been in hospital for 9 months with anorexia...He was discharged in March because of Covid 19...He became so ill he couldn’t talk to people and couldn’t even hold his head up. Wavelength brought back his cheeky personality and helped with his interaction with his peers...It has enabled him to work within a team and build skills... a constant connection with the outside world during lockdown. As a single parent, all we saw and spoke to were Wavelength people... It was vital in integrating him back into society with young people he has something in common with, who he fitted in with, supporting his ongoing recovery, with adults who understood his needs...” Mum of Participant2U.

Other key outcomes

Progression to Further Education/Training

As last year, this remains a positive, unexpected outcome. 5 participants who weren't previously accessing formal education have returned to education (1 doing GCSEs at school, 1 to a special school, 1 to study music at college, 2 other subjects at college, e.g., multimedia). 1 participant has progressed to study maths at university. 1 peer mentor has progressed to study music therapy (masters); our other peer mentor (a long-term participant) is developing as an emerging freelance music leader, gaining a trainee position locally. An older peer mentor from a previous year has joined our adult Musical Connections project and released his 1st album (about his mental health journey): <https://soundcloud.com/musicliamfitz/sets>.

More audience reach/engagement:

The online 'listening party' was a huge success, enabling us to reach a wider audience to celebrate participants' achievements. We had school teachers, keyworkers, family members and friends attend and the format enabled participants to receive immediate praise, impacting their lives beyond the project. The event was less pressure for participants than a live concert and we aim to offer a similar event next year, even if a live gig is possible.

Increased flexibility in delivery model:

Those engaging in our online activity (young people and staff) have significantly developed their technical skills and confidence, including in music production. The online offer has enabled us to reach some very poorly young people who wouldn't otherwise engage. Our 'blended delivery' approach (some participants online; some face-to-face) will be offered as an option for future engagement.

Participant Case Studies

The following pages are sample case studies detailing the progress of 11 participants involved with the Wavelength project this year. These case studies have been written by the music leader 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. Some of these sample case studies are stronger than others in regards to evidencing project impact but they have all been included here for project learning. Participant names have been coded to maintain anonymity.

Example Case Studies From Sample Group Of Participants

Participant 2T Case Study

Written by Paul Carroll, Music Leader with additional input from Quench Arts.

Referral Context: depression; anxiety; undergoing a diagnosis of ASD; not in education; mum is a carer; unlikely to access group provision.

Participant 2T joined the Wavelength project as he was struggling with his mental health. He was not in school as he didn't cope well with the structure of formal education and this, with his poor mental health, had caused behavioural issues. Participant 2T's family are very supportive but his mum is a carer for family members (as well as working), so was very stretched in regards to time. They were keen for Participant 2T to get involved in the project so that he had time to focus on himself and a space where he didn't have to worry about others. His only interests were music and football. Participant 2T was nervous about taking part in any group activity because of his experience of school and not fitting in. His support worker said that he occasionally became very overwhelmed in group situations, so it was very much a longer term aim to gain the confidence to access any group provision and it was felt that he needed one-to-one support to build up these skills. Participant 2T himself stated that he was keen to develop his guitar playing as well as his social skills and self-confidence and was looking for help with writing lyrics and recording. Participant 2T preferred to have a parent in the session with him, which was always his Dad.

In the first session Participant 2T's Dad said that he was just really pleased that Participant 2T had attended at all. He said that it was a huge achievement because Participant 2T didn't usually leave the house and sometimes didn't even come down from his bedroom.

Participant 2T and I managed to have two sessions in February and March before switching to online project delivery due to the Covid19 global pandemic. In these initial face-to-face sessions, it emerged that Participant 2T was a very enthusiastic beginner on guitar and he had some songs that he had written already. He seemed wary to start off with but, although he wouldn't sing, he was happy to play a recording of himself singing. He was very driven to succeed at making music, showing how music can be a great motivator for people to step outside of their comfort zone whilst at other times they can be very isolated due to mental illness. Participant 2T saw his bravery then paying off as he used his time with me to develop one of his partial songs, adding simple guitar chords and a second verse. This then inspired him to consider attending a group session with other young people. However, face-to-face sessions temporarily halted after that and Participant 2T wasn't interested in attending online sessions. It was great to hear that he would consider coming to group sessions in future though, despite his difficulty with social situations.

In his second session, Participant 2T's sister came along (for childcare reasons) and both her and their Dad got involved in writing lyrics. Participant 2T gave his sister advice and encouragement about writing her own songs.

During the national lockdown I created some video tutorials for Participant 2 instead of having sessions online with him. We at Quench Arts could see that the videos had been viewed a number of times and had positive feedback from his Dad about the content. One video reminded Participant 2T how to play the chords for his song. There were also some

videos about how to play selected songs by one his favourite commercial artists, Gerry Cinnamon.

Six months later, once the Quench Arts venue was Covid19 secure and government guidance allowed face-to-face provision (even through lockdown 2), we met up again for an actual session. Participant 2T said that he was really pleased that face-to-face sessions were back on and that “due to lockdown I’ve lost football so it’s good that I have Wavelength to go out of the house for.” At the end of the first session back his Dad said he could tell Participant 2T was really happy. Participant 2T played some guitar and showed me some more songs he’d written at home. I was very impressed with how much his guitar playing had improved and really pleased that he was now confident enough to sing with me. After the session, Quench Arts received a very encouraging message from Participant 2T’s mum, saying, “I haven’t seen Participant 2T smile for months. I could of cried last night he was so happy and said he hasn’t felt so good in ages.”

With his new-found inspiration, Participant 2T was able to push the quality of the song we’d worked on back in March, using me as a guitar player and music software to add drums and bass guitar. We spent two sessions playing together and recording. Participant 2T made decisions about how he would like the song to sound in different parts. Whereas before we had to kept two chords for Participant 2T’s song so that it was within his guitar playing ability, now I was happy to add in some extra chords, confident that he would be able to play them himself eventually. In one session Participant 2T recorded a practise version of his singing and the next session he achieved an improved version in time for the end of project sharing. We had to work quickly but Participant 2T performed very well under a pressured studio environment, asserting creative decisions.

In his final evaluation of Wavelength, Participant 2T maintained that he was an individual who didn’t work well in a team. He didn’t make it to a group session but I reminded him that if he didn’t have any team-working skills, he wouldn’t have been able to collaborate with me so successfully, gently directing me how to play the guitar and arrange the structure of his song. It was also apparent that he had some potential of group working when I looked back to Participant 2T’s second session, when he allowed space in his for his sister and Dad to get involved in some lyric writing.

At the end of the year, Wavelength held a celebration event (an online listening party, due to the pandemic restrictions) where we shared the songs that had been produced this year and presented the participants’ achievements to their friends, family, support workers and teachers. Because Participant 2T hadn’t been to any group sessions we gave him the option just to drop in to hear his song. I was really impressed, however, that he was determined to be there for the whole event to support the other young people’s music. This, I believe is another good indication of Participant 2T’s potential to improve his team working in the future.

The sharing event overall proved to be a great success and Participant 2T was indeed there with his family, commenting positively on everyone else’s tracks, both on the event chat board and on Facebook. His song was received very warmly by his young peers, staff and family and friends alike. His Aunt said, “Very proud Auntie. That’s absolutely brilliant, Participant 2T. Auntie Jo and Grandad loved it. Very proud of my nephew, he has come on in leaps and bounds.” His cousin said, “Massively proud of my cousin, Participant 2T. Need this song on my phone please. So proud I could burst.” In return, Participant 2T

acknowledged everyone's comments with a "Thank you" and said "I genuinely could cry. It means everything to me," adding at the end, "I'm so proud to have participated in this and hope I get to do it next year!...I am extremely thankful to Paul, who has helped me so much and is a great mentor and musician."

In his feedback Participant 2T rated everything about Wavelength that he took part in as 'Excellent.' He said he had achieved his goals of getting out of the house and socialising and getting some help with his music. He also said that the project has helped him become more expressive and confident with playing the guitar and singing. He would recommend the project to anyone who is struggling and has an interest in singing and making music.

Baseline Evidence

Participant 2T's baseline data shows that his self-perception of his music making and understanding of musical elements has improved significantly. His self-assessed ratings against the statement, 'I am pleased with my current level of musical ability' changed from a 1 at the beginning of the project to a 5 at the end of the year, based on a scale of 1-7. For the statement, 'I have a good understanding of the different elements of music' his self-assessed ratings changed from a 2 to a 5 on the same scale of 1-7.

For all the statements related to his wellbeing, Participant 2T marked himself at the very bottom of the scale at the start of the year. For the statements 'I've been feeling relaxed', 'I've been feeling confident', 'I've been feeling useful' and 'My health and wellbeing are good' he felt that he'd progressed 3 points by the end of the year, marking himself as a 4 each time (on a scale of 1-7). For the statement, 'I've been feeling good about myself' he progressed from a 1 to a 5 across the year. Despite the pandemic, he felt that he'd also improved his ability to cope with challenges, from 1 to 3 on the baseline scale. This shows positive change in his self-esteem and confidence that was definitely reflected through his increased engagement and demeanour as the year progressed.

Participant 2T acknowledges that his social skills have improved a little (by 1 out of 7) but still doesn't recognise himself as being good in a team. As he wasn't keen to engage in any activity online throughout the year and only attended in-person individual sessions when these were allowed, it is unsurprising that he progressed less in this area. However, it was extremely positive that he chose to attend the online listening party at the end of the project, inviting a large number of his wider family. He interacted with other participants on the chat and commented positively on their music and was happy to appear on screen. This gave him a positive experience with other participants (and online).

Participant 2T has exceeded two of his goals for the project, saying "the whole process from finishing off the lyrics with Paul (Wavelength Music Leader) to constructing the instruments was even better than I expected. I had to find confidence in myself to sing and to help Paul get an understanding of what I wanted the song to sound like." He goes on to say, "I've learnt a lot more than I thought I would about finger positioning for chords, changing from chord to chord, strumming patterns, timing and getting a song right on guitar."

It is clear that Participant 2T has come on from wary to excited and optimistic about collaborating more on Wavelength next year. He has shown he has the skills to negotiate sensitively in a musical situation and I am hopeful he will come to group sessions and begin

to create successfully with more people. He has now enrolled in college and hopefully these two big steps in Participant 2T's life will work nicely together.

Participant 2U Case Study

Written by Paul Carroll, Music Leader with additional input from Quench Arts.

Referral Context: Being discharged after a 9 month stay in an acute mental health inpatient unit (admitted for anorexia); Asperger's ASD; dyspraxia.

Participant 2U joined Wavelength after taking part in Quench Arts' Plugin project as an inpatient in psychiatric hospital. He had recently started playing the guitar, which it emerged was his main interest. On his initial baseline form, he marked himself highly for the personal and social statements (7s or 6s on a scale of 1-7), as well as overall satisfaction with his musical ability. He wasn't so sure about the emotionally expressive side of music making though (scoring himself a 5 for being able to express this thoughts, feelings and emotions through his music and a 4 for making sense of what others are expressing through music). He also marked himself very low for understanding the different elements of music such as pitch, timbre and dynamics.

Through his initial one-to-one sessions Participant 2U's musical tastes were established and he created a song structure on the computer consisting of rock riffs on bass and drums. He was not keen on lyric writing or writing songs but felt his music could nevertheless help him express himself. Participant 2U had a very short concentration span but it was clear that he was a huge Nirvana fan and he could play some of the guitar riffs from the band's songs.

After these initial sessions, Wavelength moved to online activity due to the Covid19 global pandemic. With support from his mum, he reliably attended group sessions using Zoom conferencing software. However, they struggled with limited technology and Wi-Fi connection and needed additional support (loan of an iPad was offered). Sometimes Participant 2U left early due to his attention and connection issues but he showed perseverance and kept coming back. Though he only really contributed creatively when asked directly, he did engage in discussions. Part of the group sessions involved recording yourself playing at home using a phone or tablet and then sending the audio in to Quench Arts. Participant 2U and his mum found this difficult but with support he did contribute guitar ideas for 3 of the group songs and then really came into his own once we were able to meet face-to-face again, months later. He had been prioritised for face-to-face sessions because of his needs and fulfilled Quench Arts threshold criteria to continue face-to-face support throughout Lockdown 2.

Though they did find the online sessions challenging, Mum said, "He was discharged (from hospital) in March because of Covid19. It was really hard not to be able to see our family and have their support with a recovering ill child. Wavelength has been brilliant in adapting to Covid and how you have enabled young people to carry on with the project. It has given my child and family a constant connection with the outside world during lockdown where, as a single parent; all we saw and spoke to were Wavelength people and he saw his (project) friends regularly through Zoom. It was vital in integrating him back into normal society with young people he has something in common with, who he fitted in with, supporting his ongoing recovery, with adults who understood his needs at Wavelength."

In the face-to-face sessions, Participant 2U enjoyed playing with other people in the same room and was able to communicate more effectively with the staff and participants there. In group sessions he re-recorded his guitar parts and in one-to-one sessions he added live guitars to his track. In person, Participant 2U was able to come up with so many more great ideas. He worked well with another participant while they were creating two layered guitar parts. It also turned out that he played the drums so we recorded some drums to go with one of the group songs. Being a beginner on guitar and drums, the timing of his playing often needed correcting on computer. However, he has shown improvement in this area across the year.

In his final one-to-one session, we finished Participant 2U's first track (called 'Don't See, Don't Know') with time to spare, so began to play together for fun. We added some drums using the computer and, inspired, Participant 2U asked if we could record his ideas. This time, he showed an improved ability to play in time and he also added a second layer of guitars. It surprised me when he asked if this track could also be completed for this year's Wavelength CD. Participant 2U made the creative decisions to arrange his guitar parts into a great instrumental. He was clearly really pleased with what he had achieved and showed some really good guitar playing. He called the track 'Lightspeed'.

At the end of the year, Wavelength held a celebration event where we shared the songs that had been produced this year and presented the participants' achievements to their friends, family, support workers and teachers. Participant 2U had a good amount of support from all these parts of his life and received some great feedback when we played his two songs. One of his peers said, "Your guitar playing is so clean and on point" and another could hear that it was "Groovy and Nirvana like." Katie, the Quench Arts Music Leader that he had worked with in hospital said, "Loved that - so good to hear what you've been writing! You write very cool riffs." And a teacher said, "please bring your guitar in again and play this in school one day." Participant 2U saw these comments and responded with a "Thank you." He also supported his fellow participants with positive comments on their music.

Participant 2U's final self-assessed baseline scores showed an increase in how he felt he could express his thoughts, feelings and emotions through making his own music, progressing from a 5 to the top score of 7 (on a scale of 1-7). All of his other self-assessed baseline scores stayed similar to where he felt he was at the beginning of the year. There was a drop of 2 points on the scale related to the statements 'I've been feeling relaxed' and 'I've been feeling like I can cope with challenges') and a drop of 1 point for 'I've been feeling good about myself'. When asked why he put this down to the general mood of the pandemic currently and it is worth noting that this feedback was collected in the session before the online listening party, so he may have reflected slightly differently having had that experience beforehand. I also feel like perhaps Participant 2U scored himself so highly at the beginning of the project due to an initial guardedness so these scores were always going to be hard to maintain.

Though his baseline scores don't necessarily reflect his progress, his mum stated, "Wavelength gave him a focus as he learnt the guitar. Having Wavelength each week at a set time, he knew it was coming and made him concentrate on his music. It has helped with his ASD and through structure in his life. He turns to his guitar when he has anxiety now rather than self-harming. It has enabled him to work within a team and build skills by making and contributing to the CD album, even through Zoom and working remotely. His

self-esteem was zero and Wavelength made him feel he had self-worth and was able to achieve, especially when people enjoyed his guitar/ drums.”

When talking about Participant 2U’s wellbeing and what he felt he had achieved in coming to the project he said the project had helped him get out to do music (Getting Active) and he could speak to people in sessions about music (Connecting With Others). He said he had learnt how to put a song together and how to speak to people about songs (Learning), adding, “It helps you focus on one thing for a while - music - and put your mind to something useful” (Taking Notice).

Although not reflected in his final baseline scores, Participant 2U did have a lot to say about his confidence when he completed his evaluation form, saying that Wavelength “has helped me be more confident with music and I’d say it’s helped me be more confident generally. Coming to the sessions and speaking to people has made me feel more confident.” Socially, he said, “I have made friends on the project and spoken to them and listened to their ideas.”

His mum stated, “He became so ill he couldn’t talk to people and couldn’t even hold his head up. Wavelength brought back his cheeky personality and helped with his interaction with his peers. He even introduced his good friend from hospital to Wavelength in the community. He is naturally a sociable child and Wavelength brought this back. It has helped him (now) socialise with his cousins who play guitar and friends from his previous school, who he has rekindled his relationship with having been isolated from them in hospital due to his illness.”

In his feedback Participant 2U rated all the sessions that he took part in as ‘Excellent’ or ‘Good’, with a preference for the individual sessions being face-to-face rather than online. He indicated that he thought the music created was ‘Excellent’, noting in particular that he liked being able to make his own music. This is encouraging, considering that previously he’d mainly played guitar riffs from commercial songs.

Participant 2U and his mum said they were keen to come to more Wavelength sessions, so we expect to see him at group sessions next year. At the end of the online sharing, Participant 2U said, “this was the best thing about this year when all this sadness is around with Covid.”

In her evaluation, Participant 2U’s mum commented, “Music gives young people with mental health issues a positive outlet, a reason to carry on with their lives. My child would cut himself but as he was introduced to Wavelength, when his anxiety was high, he would grab his guitar and play it instead. I want to say thank you to Wavelength - you threw my child a lifeline.”

Participant 2S

Written by Meldra Guza, Music Leader with additional input from Quench Arts.

Referral Context: eating disorder, anxiety and depression; discharged in January from hospital after being an inpatient for nearly a year; had been involved in Plugin and developed her guitar skills but had missed a lot of education due to being in hospital.

Participant 2S initially came into contact with Quench Arts through their Plugin project where activities were taking place at the Parkview Clinic as she was an inpatient at the time. She took part in weekly music making sessions and even became part of a small band that performed at a sharing event. Once Participant 2S was discharged, she received information on how she could access the Wavelength project as she was keen to continue her music-making, and she joined the project in May 2020, giving her some continuity as most of the Wavelength music leaders also worked on Plugin.

Participant 2S developed her musical and social skills significantly over the past year. To start with, we focused on developing her guitar skills to improve her self-esteem. Participant 2S was very excited to do this as she was always very enthusiastic about learning new things on the guitar. Throughout her one-to-one sessions she developed her knowledge of a variety of chords, scales, soloing skills, compositional techniques and recording. Furthermore, she developed a strong understanding and skill base for achieving different tones on the guitar (acoustic, electric, clean, distorted sounds, etc.), and developed taste for what is appropriate in different musical contexts. This increased confidence and skill-set led to her being a key person to offer ideas and solutions to other young people when writing and arranging group songs.

On a personal level, she has developed self-belief that she can overcome difficulties. This has been achieved through different musical tasks, but these have also helped to transfer that self-reliance into other areas of her life, as noted by her mum. This newfound confidence has allowed Participant 2S to feel secure enough to take on a leading role. *“Participant 2S has continued to gain in confidence where her music ability is concerned and is happy to discuss and talk openly. Participant 2S interacts great with people who share her enthusiasm for music. She enjoys being part of projects and will happily take leading positions”* Participant 2S’ mum.

On social level, interacting with her peers has been of key importance as Participant 2S has learned to discuss music and non-music related topics with other people. She has been able to offer positive feedback to others, encourage those that have felt low and contributed to numerous creative collaborations during her time on Wavelength. Her self-assessed baseline results reflect her progress. Participant 2S showed an increase against statements around ‘I am good of making sense of what other people are expressing though music (e.g., thoughts, feelings and emotions)’; ‘I find it easy to sing/play in front of others’; ‘I feel that I have good social skills’; ‘I feel that I am able to connect with other people on the project’. A couple of her baseline scores did reduce, however, and these were around the statements, ‘I’ve been feeling good about myself’; ‘I’ve been feeling useful’; and ‘I’ve been feeling like I can cope with challenges’. When questioned about this, Participant 2S stated that she was feeling the strain of the pandemic.

Her mum noted that receiving positive feedback during the one-to-one and group sessions has significantly helped Participant 2S’s recovery and that she has become a more resilient and determined person as a result of it, *“Her self-esteem is improving slowly but surely and this is helped by the praise she receives for her music. Music gives them something they can immerse themselves into and a distraction from any other issues. It also is a great leveller that gives the ability to achieve and gain praise.”*

Overall, the project has had a continued positive impact on Participant 2S and has offered her an opportunity to express herself, develop musically and personally as well as allow her

to set some future goals. Participant 2S is very keen to develop her playing skills further. She is also interested in learning banjo and saxophone in the future. In the song that she wrote for the project CD, she also discussed that she would like to be able to perform live, be brave enough to go to an open mic event and perform in front of other people.

Participant 2S' mum stated that she *“is studying music now at college and the experience of performing music and interacting with the Quench group has helped her settle in very well. I think it's been a very important part of Participant 2S's recovery process and has had a positive impact – please keep up the great work.”*

Participant 2W

Written by Paul Carroll, Music Leader with additional input from Quench Arts.

Referral Context: Anxiety; Asperger's Syndrome; removed from school.

Participant 2W joined the Wavelength project with the aim of getting better at playing the instruments she already played - guitar, drums and piano. She also wanted to increase her confidence with singing and to enjoy writing songs. Her mum felt like Participant 2W was quite gifted musically and that the Wavelength project would be great for her confidence. Participant 2W had recently run away from home which was a catalyst for removal from school as she was struggling and not coping. We were told that she doesn't cope well with new situations and needed to develop her social skills. Participant 2W's sister had been involved in the project in a previous year, so Participant 2W had seen the impact, understood the project and wanted to get involved.

In her initial baseline form, Participant 2W assessed herself fairly strongly in most of the musical and wellbeing statements but clearly marked herself lower for group-related statements such as social and team working skills, as well as for feeling relaxed.

In our first two sessions Participant 2W was very willing to talk about her musical interests and her curiosity about science and wanted to get stuck in with creating a chord progression, which she played on both piano and guitar. She began to write some lyrics but did not want to sing.

After her second session, activity was moved online due to the Covid19 global pandemic. Participant 2W continued to attend sessions all the way through the year until she started to get busy with college in October (having gained confidence to return to education in the autumn to complete her GCSEs). Fortunately, the sessions she did have online were productive and Participant 2W managed to complete her own track before she stopped attending. She chose a drum beat she liked for the feel of her song and came up with chords and melodies using a keyboard and acoustic guitar she had at home. She played me her keyboard ideas over Zoom conferencing software and these were recorded onto computer. The guitar part, which runs through much of Participant 2W's song was recorded by her on her phone and then emailed to Quench Arts for them to pass on to me to add to the keyboard. Participant 2W worked on the song structure, came up with all the lyrics and played the melody to be sung but she did not want to sing; instead, she wanted me to do this. With Participant 2W's song's clever word-play, jazzy groove, quirky melody and classic instrumentation, I think that the piece has turned out somewhere along the lines of what she

was aiming for and you can hear the influences of her two of her favourite bands: Panic! at the Disco and Queen in the track.

While attending, Participant 2W came to most of the Wavelength group sessions and, despite how she felt about her teamworking skills, took part fully, contributing ideas and in the early face-to-face sessions and playing confidently in front of other young people. Because she stopped attending, we did not receive any feedback from her about her experience of the project but I do think Participant 2W did well in the group work, despite scoring herself weakly initially in the baseline activities.

At the end of the year Wavelength held a celebration event where we shared the songs that had been produced this year and presented the participants' achievements to their friends and family. I was pleased to see Participant 2W attending. She gave everyone a wave as I introduced her song, which got positive comments from the listeners, particularly to do with how creative and interesting they thought it was. It was good that she got to hear what everyone else had recorded too.

Wavelength will run for at least another year. This year Participant 2W showed that she has developed enough confidence, has plenty of musical skill and has got to know enough of the staff and participants that she could easily start coming to future group sessions again if she wishes. It is extremely positive that she is now back in education and able to interact more fully with other young people.

Participant 2V

Written by Meldra Guza, Music Leader with additional input from Quench Arts.

Referral Context: post-traumatic stress disorder; PAWS (Pervasive Arousal Withdrawal Syndrome); depression and anxiety.

Participant 2V joined Wavelength at the very start of the year. She had previously been in hospital for her mental health but had been discharged for about a year and had not returned to school. Her referral information mentioned that she could become very overwhelmed in groups and that this could cause her to have meltdowns. She was, however, very excited about music making, played guitar, piano and drums and had expressed interest in writing her own songs. Participant 2V also played/sung at her Church when she felt well enough to do so.

Participant 2V mainly struggled with anxiety related issues which resulted in difficulty joining the group sessions. Participant 2V did join in 2 group sessions in February, but unfortunately her anxiety was quite crushing at the time and she decided to not come to more group sessions but build up her confidence step by step through one-to-one sessions. On reflection, when Participant 2V attended sessions, she enjoyed herself and added a lot to the dynamic of the development of new ideas in the group sessions she came to.

In her one-to-one sessions, Participant 2V came up with many fantastic musical ideas and worked on her own songwriting. She was always very interested in learning more about extended chords (as she already had a base knowledge of open chords) and so we continued her development musically. She also developed the courage to sing (very quietly

to start with) together with me, and later was brave enough to sing by herself. She showed so much potential!

After 1 session, her dad stated, *“Wow, this is fantastic, (Participant 2V), you have done such a great job at writing this song”* (referring to a lovely chord sequence that Participant 2V created and started to write lyrics for).

Participant 2V added, *“I am enjoying writing my own song. I didn't think that my own experience could become part of the song.”*

After a couple of one-to-one sessions, however, the pandemic set in and lockdown meant that face to face activity had to cease for quite some time. The Wavelength project quickly adapted to offer online provision and Participant 2V decided to give this a go. However, Participant 2V struggled with this way of working, so each session we put together musical tasks that she was able to do in her own time (delivered to her in a video format with associated worksheets). Her dad would feedback after each session about what she was enjoying and would like to develop further, which helped us to meet her needs and interests.

In September, we heard from her dad that Participant 2V was going to go back to college as she was feeling much stronger but, due to this, she would be unable to continue to participate in Wavelength as she felt it would be too many commitments after having been absent from formal education for so long. Her dad stated, *“Thank you for everything you have done for Participant 2V. She has really enjoyed being part of the project and it has spurred her on to go back to college and continue her musical journey there.”*

The key issue that Participant 2V experienced was to be brave enough to turn up to the sessions due to her anxiety. This has been a struggle for many participants over the years, but eventually they manage to overcome that to some extent. This year, this issue was exacerbated for Participant 2V because of the pandemic and the fact that all face-to-face activity had to stop for a number of months due to restrictions in place. When it was safe to do so and when our venue was made Covid-secure, we could offer face to face activity, but this was at the same time the Participant 2V withdrew from the project due to college commitments. Had this been a 'normal' year, we believe Participant 2V's journey would have been much better as she would have engaged more fully in the project on a face-to-face basis. However, the fact that she felt well enough to go back into education after a long gap is a success.

Participant 2E Case Study

Written by James Stanley, Music Leader with additional input from Quench Arts.

Referral Context: anxiety; depression; OCD; body dysmorphia; self-harm; suicidal ideations.

Participant 2E joined Wavelength part-way through last year's project. He was very timid, nervous and had a limited musical experience. He liked listening to music and singing but hadn't ever engaged in creating music himself. It took me three sessions of gentle encouragement to get him to sing anything in front of me. He was attending school but was feeling overwhelmed and this was challenging his OCD. He was also very under confident in accessing group sessions, having been bullied at school due to his sexual orientation.

His mental health seriously affects the way he views himself and impacts on how he interacts socially with others. He has an interest in music but is at the early stages of that development. He sings and has begun to learn to play the piano.

From the beginning of the project Participant 2E wasn't very confident writing lyrics and focused more on covers. He had issues expressing himself in general and found expressing himself in that way (with lyrics) a little bit heavy. However, one of his goals initially was to attend group sessions and be part of making music with others.

Though this year has been quite a slow process, Participant 2E has built up a lot of new skills. We had a few one-to-one sessions in person, a few online and a few sessions where I put together bespoke videos and tasks to encourage him to continue making music. Not only has he grown in confidence with his voice and piano through continued practise, he's learnt how to record his own music using GarageBand on his iPad. The first time he came to me and explained that he'd recorded something he was proud of and that he wanted to share, it was a really big moment! He told me that he found it 'relaxing' and that it had a certain emotion of how he'd been feeling – "not too happy but also not sad. Something in the middle." This shows a nice development for Participant 2E as he is starting to realise how he can express emotions in his own creative output and building up his own self-esteem and ability to communicate using creativity. This progress is evidenced in his baseline reflections. On a scale of 1-7 he improved from a self-assessed 2 at the beginning of the project year for the statement, 'I am pleased with my current level of musical ability', to a maximum 7 at the end. He also felt that he'd moved from a 1 to a 5 for the statement, 'I can express my thoughts, feelings and emotions through my own music making', though was less confident in understanding what others were expressing through their music.

As well as the musical goals he'd set himself, Participant 2E made it clear that he wanted to build his confidence up to a point where he could engage with others and share his skills in the group sessions. It took all year but at the very end he attended a group session in person and on Zoom and then the online listening celebration. As soon as he built up the confidence to get there, he was able to get involved, contributing a piano recording to one of the collaborative group tracks. Him being there and talking to the group was such a big milestone! Discussing how he felt, things he liked and suggestions for the songs was exactly the kind of thing he wanted to be doing when setting out his initial goal. He came to the listening party and was so excited to hear other participants' music, making some lovely comments about how much he enjoyed specific tracks, showing he was able to make sense of other people's expressions. This meant so much to him and others looking in and seeing his progress. He said, "I feel like I've been active. Attending group sessions more than I used to. I used to be scared but now I'm not. Hearing other people's talents is great. I've learnt how to make music in a good way. Learnt how to be more creative. Independently and also in the group."

In summary, Participant 2E had incredibly low self-esteem at the beginning of the year and this was the thing holding him back. So to see the little milestones of him being proud of his keyboard playing, remembering the chord shapes for E Major for the first time and liking the sound of it, creating his own piece of music on GarageBand that he was happy to share without any prompting from me and then ultimately coming into a group session and sharing these skills with others, recording a piano part for a group song etc... All of these things have been a great journey to watch. He ended up having a song featured on the CD. Honestly, the majority of his track came from work he'd done the previous year (he joined

the project right at the end of the last year so his one-to-one sessions had been split over two years) but wasn't happy to share so the fact that this year he was happy to put that forward, attend an evening where he knew it would be played in front of other people and speak up to accept some of the praise he was receiving was real proof to me of his increased self-esteem.

Participant 2E still has a way to go with this journey. He recognises this. On his evaluation he puts himself quite low on the scale (3 out of 7) for being able to recognise what other people are communicating through their music and his confidence in singing in front of others (a progression of just 1 point). He recognises that he has struggled this year with the pandemic and that this has affected how relaxed he has felt and his ability to cope with challenges, but overall feels like his confidence has improved (by 2 points). He has clearly progressed musically and the fact that he met all 3 of his personal project goals has helped build his self-esteem.

For next year he has set a goal to continue this process, go to more group sessions and share more of himself with others. He says he will "try and help others confidence by using my voice more" and is going to make an effort to be at more group sessions. He's seen the benefits of building relationships with peers and now has the motivation to continue.

Participant 2A Case Study

Written by Paul Carroll, Music Leader with additional input from Quench Arts.

Referral Context: Social Anxiety; Asperger's Syndrome; Sensory Processing Disorder; Dyspraxia.

Note: please refer to Participant 2A's 2018-19 case study for further context.

This was Participant 2A's second year on Wavelength as well as her first year in formal education, which proved challenging as she adjusted from being home schooled to working with other people. Like everyone, Participant 2A had the additional the challenges of college closing and re-opening due to the Covid19 global pandemic. Participant 2A's mum said that after her first year on Wavelength Participant 2A was starting to express herself in a creative way, using music and lyrics as a creative tool, adding that she "now feels more able to communicate her thoughts and opinions and know they have value." Due to her Asperger's Syndrome, Participant 2A had found group sessions in her first year challenging at times, finding it difficult to compromise and appreciate other viewpoints held by peers. However, at the end of year, Participant 2A's mum stated that she "still struggles with new situations" but her team working "has greatly improved and she is now more willing to accept others' opinions."

In her baseline at the end of her first year Participant 2A scored herself medium to good for everything: her musical abilities and her feelings and social skills. She scored herself down a little in the areas of expressing thoughts and feelings through music, playing in front of others and coping with challenges but still mid-scale.

Participant 2A attended most group sessions and a special monthly band session, which was just for participants who had taken part in the project previously (and who thus weren't having individual sessions). I could tell that Participant 2A felt more comfortable with the creative process and trying out ideas than she had the previous year. Whilst she mostly played bass and a bit of drums in her first year, she branched out to playing piano this year.

This showed consideration for another participant, who specialised in bass, allowing him to take responsibility for that. Participant 2A also continued to contribute lyrics to group and band tracks and in one session Participant 2A used Logic software to help the rest of the group choose and record synth sounds.

When sessions were moved online we started working together in a different way and Participant 2A adapted well, responding to tasks that were sometimes quite experimental. Despite previously struggling with new situations, Participant 2A said in her feedback form that making music over Zoom conferencing software was her favourite thing about Wavelength so far. She recorded sounds at home and sent them in to Quench Arts to be incorporated with other participants' sounds. She confidently presented lyrical ideas and concepts in a group situation using Zoom.

Participant 2A had strong influence over the band collaboration with Participant 2I. They wrote the lyrics together and then Participant 2A took responsibility for creative direction and Participant 2I took responsibility for interpreting her ideas and technically making them happen. Participant 2A recorded some bass at home and this was forwarded to Participant 2I and that formed the starting chord progression. From there Participant 2A made suggestions about layers of sound and song structure. She even came up with a really creative band name – 'Profound Kids Work at BuzzFeed'.

At the end of the year, Wavelength held a celebration event where we shared the songs that had been produced this year and presented the participants' achievements to their friends, family, support workers and teachers. There was a lot of positive feedback about the Profound Kids Work at BuzzFeed's song, including "Complex greatness", "Amazing. Love the melodic bass line" and "Great band name." Participant 2A saw the comments and said, "Thank you."

Looking at Participant 2A's baseline scores at the end of the project you can tell she was pleased with herself as a songwriter with self-assessed scores notably increasing for her ability to express thoughts, feelings and emotions through music making (a 7) as well as making sense of what other people are expressing through music (a 6), on a scale of 1-7. She also felt more that music allows her to be creative. In her evaluation Participant 2A said that "I'm not 100% confident in my general life yet though Wavelength has helped me become confident with my music." I happily note the use of the word "yet" here, indicating that Participant 2A is optimistic about her general confidence in the future.

Participant 2A also rated all the different sessions she attended as 'Excellent', saying, "Wavelength has assured me that I am heard in a group of people" and "Wavelength has helped me channel my creativity into something I find to be productive." It's great to see that this year Participant 2A has continued as she started whilst adapting to new situations. She has found confidence in her voice and a creative outlet she enjoys and which allows her to express herself. She has coped well with the year and the challenges that this has brought, and adapted well in her return to formal education, studying multimedia.

Participant 2D Case Study

Written by James Stanley, Music Leader with additional input from Quench Arts.

Referral Context: anxiety; depression; Asperger's Syndrome; hemiplegia; cerebral palsy; epilepsy.

Participant 2D is a guitar and bass player with both mental and physical health issues. Despite limited movement and control in his left hand, he continues to persevere with his creative activities, showing the kind of dedication that he has. Participant 2D had been a part of the project last year and his case study last year showed the good progress that he'd made at that point. In summary, he started the project really struggling to even make it into the room, his anxiety being so severe. He left in tears on more than one occasion. By the end of the last project year, he was a regular part of the group, his guitar playing featured on multiple group tracks and he had an individual contribution on the CD. He smiled in group sessions. Whilst he still wasn't the most communicative member of the project, he was involved and engaged.

Participant 2D still struggles with confidence when with others, particularly those his own age. This year was tough on him. We did some one-to-one sessions over Zoom but he struggled with engaging in this way and so I made him a few bespoke videos to keep in touch and help him with his guitar playing. Whenever I saw Participant 2D, he was clearly finding some comfort in music. He talked to me about songs he was listening to and subsequently learning on the guitar. He was clearly still focused on playing the guitar. It was his 'thing' and he was definitely proud of himself for it - it brought him a lot of comfort I think. This in itself was proof that he hadn't 'regressed' too much during the difficult period. He didn't engage much in the group sessions online but was able to contribute material towards the final CD this year. When Quench Arts were able to offer face-to-face sessions, it was quite a shock when he told us that he would no longer be attending Wavelength at all. It felt like a really big step backwards from my point of view and I couldn't help but feel like I'd failed to reach him a little. However, sometimes we have the context all wrong. Quench Arts Directors were keen to gather some feedback from Participant 2D and his parents and had the following communication: "Participant 2D has decided he wants to stop coming to Wavelength. He can't really tell me why, I think he is quite single minded about what he has decided. I have tried to get him to rethink but he has made up his mind. I would like add that Wavelength was certainly one of the things that helped him when he was really low, just coming along gave him something to look forward to and focus on. Participant 2D's mood has changed dramatically. He is much happier in himself these days. So, I would just like to say thank you for your support."

It's heart-warming to know that what Wavelength did impact so positively on Participant 2D. As quoted, he's very single minded and doesn't share everything he's thinking and feeling but the fact that some of the confidence issues he was having and how he feels about himself have been helped to the point where he's confident enough to step up and say, "I don't need this anymore - I'm ok on my own" is actually really positive! Without that context, Participant 2D leaving the project felt like a failure, with it we realise the progress and success. His decision to leave shows an improvement in self-esteem.

Participant/Peer Mentor 2I

Written by Meldra Guza, Music Leader with additional input from Quench Arts.

Referral Context: depression; anxiety; joint hypermobility syndrome (wheelchair user); neurodiverse.

Participant 21's journey with Wavelength started 4 years ago when she joined as a new participant. Initially Participant 21 was extremely timid and often spoke through her mum who is her primary carer and who she relies upon due to being a wheelchair user. Eventually, she started to engage more, such as writing down her answers rather than talking out loud with the other participants to being much more confident to share ideas vocally and to not need the support of her mum in the room. Her transformation over the last four years has been phenomenal. Today, she is a holder of college diploma in music, she has been peer mentor on Wavelength this year and has started to work as a young music leader with Mac Makes Music (a local arts organisation).

There is no doubt that Wavelength has played a key role in allowing Participant 21 to find her voice and become secure in who she is. Through conversations with Participant 21's mum, it has become clear that prior joining Wavelength, many opportunities were not accessible to Participant 21 as a wheelchair user. Wavelength was the first place where Participant 21 felt just like everyone else. All that mattered was music and participation. Over the last few years there have been ups and downs for Participant 21 - personal, family, health matters – however, Participant 21 has been building her resilience throughout all of it. At one point she had applied to study at a music college only to be let down last minute due to the college's inability to provide appropriate access. Having built her strength on Wavelength, she didn't give up and went ahead to apply to a newly opened music college (BIMM) where she studied for 2 years and achieved mostly distinctions (I was also one of her lecturers).

Over the past few years, I have had the chance to observe Participant 21's development in numerous social contexts - as a participant on Wavelength, then carrying that newfound confidence in college environment, facing numerous struggles when meeting young people that were at times less mature, maybe lacking the same dedication or time management skills. These experiences allowed Participant 21 to accept differences and work on managing her perfectionism related behaviours in the context of teamwork. Learning to accept other people's manner and work ethics then allowed Participant 21 to develop her own leadership without judgment, which further fuelled her enthusiasm for working with other young people. It is no surprise that she is heading into a direction of being an independent music leader.

As a peer mentor on Wavelength, Participant 21 has been an incredible, resourceful and useful colleague. The skills that she has developed are far beyond what her peers might have at the same age (she's now 18). Participant 21 has a wealth of music knowledge (music theory, compositional understanding, familiarity with numerous genres of music), music industry understanding and is developing her personal and social skills. She behaves in an emotionally intelligent manner and empowers the participants to do their best in a non-pressurised environment. Participant 21 is also highly academic and can contextualise her place in different environments. Over the last 2-3 years she has developed a high level of music production skills that sets her apart from many other young emerging music leaders. It is not just her skillset that makes her highly employable, it is also the soft skill development that she has experienced as part of her journey on the Wavelength project.

Her mum commented, "*Participant 21 has had a few struggles during the current pandemic. Her father had a heart attack just as it all started in March and her uncle unfortunately was taken from us due to COVID-19 in April. She turned 18 and also began to work freelance*

so, as well as the pandemic, she's had a lot to contend with. Her mental health as a whole has been generally stable but she has had a few major dips. Working online and reducing the stress of in-setting sessions has been interesting and in some respects positive although has its frustrations. She has thrown herself into it and now finds it a really valuable tool. Being able to continue to work, in particular online at this unprecedented time, has been vital to her self-esteem and value."

In her baseline, many scores stayed the same (around such things like her satisfaction with her musical skills) but all were relatively highly marked on the scale of 1-7. She scored herself down a little in the areas of coping with challenges and around feeling relaxed. She noted that this was due to the challenges of the Covid19 pandemic and because she has had to shield over many months. Where Participant 21 has noted an increase, this can be directly related to the confidence she has gained through supporting others as a peer mentor (such as making sense of what other people are expressing through music; around feeling useful; and around working in a team). Participant 21 had 2 goals at the beginning of the year: to lead more and to gain confidence in leading and assisting and to be better at reading the room. She stated that she has met goal one but recognised that she still has a lot to learn (showing her maturity) and that she is still working on the second goal around reading the room. In our opinion, she is very good at 'reading the room', so there may be an element of self-deprecation in this statement.

Participant 21's mum stated, "Participant 21 has taken all her experience with Wavelength and Quench Arts and run with it. Over the past 4 years she has grown musically, learned new skills, made friends, begun to develop a music career, attended college and gained an extended diploma in songwriting. More recently, and as a direct result of her becoming a peer mentor with the project, she has become an assistant music leader with Mac Makes Music and taken numerous online courses to not just develop her musicianship but also further her development into a career as a music leader in similar projects. Additional opportunities have been passed her way by Quench Arts and she has been involved in the Creative Entrepreneurship Programme with Music Ally from which she has formed a relationship with Youth Music and has undertaken 2 commissions for them. She is now actively seeking more assistant music leader roles and broadening her horizons."

As one of Participant 21's mentors over the last few years, I couldn't be prouder to see her development and I am incredibly excited where she will go next!

Participant 21 stated, "I began Wavelength in late 2016. At the time, I was medically signed off school and I was having a mental health breakdown. I found Wavelength at a therapy clinic, where there was a card with the information on it. Attending Wavelength reminded me of my love for music while in a dark time. It gave me the creative outlet of songwriting and music making that I didn't know I could do. Music for me is a therapy; I struggle to voice, express and even feel my own feelings and music allows me to access that part of myself and express it in the best way I can. I never knew I had this ability before Wavelength. Being on the project has improved my confidence in numerous ways; in my musical ability, in my people skills and in myself. It was a slow process and I'm still attempting to improve my confidence even more, yet I believe Wavelength was the outlet I needed to kick-start the process. I have progressed from a participant to a peer mentor in the project, which I have loved."

Participant 2X Case Study

Written by Paul Carroll, Music Leader with additional input from Quench Arts.

Referral Context: anxiety; low confidence; self-harm; depression; previously home-schooled as not coping with education; has a disabled mum; history of poor MH in family. Referred from another project and plays guitar and sings.

Participant 2X joined the Wavelength project towards the end of the year, when we were finishing off music recordings for a CD and preparing for the end-of-project online sharing and celebration. She was referred from another project which was finishing and it was felt that, due to her immediate needs, it would be better to engage her now rather than wait until the start of the next project year. Participant 2X already played bass in a band and also played guitar. She had taken part in an external songwriting project with another Wavelength Music Leader (working for a different organisation) the previous year and had seen her brother taking part in a Quench Arts band development project three years before. Participant 2X mentioned in her first session that she was finding being back in college difficult.

Participant 2X started with a face-to-face one-to-one session in October and showed a very good ability on guitar and bass. She already had an idea for a piece of music too so it looked possible that we might be able to record something before the end of the year. Thinking realistically, Participant 2X decided her track should be an instrumental so we could work quickly. She said that she didn't like online sessions because she felt self-conscious so was pleased we were able to work face-to-face, Quench Arts having recently made their venue Covid-secure and gained permission to run activities for vulnerable participants.

After her first one-to-one session, Participant 2X showed great stamina and stayed on for a small group session that same evening. We were joined by one other participant face-to-face and the rest of the participants and music leaders dialled in with the Zoom conferencing software. In this session, because Wavelength Music Leader Meldra had worked with Participant 2X before, she was able to challenge her with writing some lyrics and recording herself singing so that she could be included in the group track 'Rose Tinted Reality'. This song and another group track also needed guitar and Participant 2X worked well with the other young person present to come up with some different ideas and record them together.

Unfortunately, due to a family mental health crisis, Participant 2X wasn't able to attend Wavelength one-to-one sessions for a few weeks, not wishing to leave the house. In the last session, given the option of getting something recorded in a hurry to present the following week, Participant 2X decided just to take her time and finish off the track next year so she could do a good job of it.

Meanwhile, despite saying that she didn't enjoy online sessions, Participant 2X did attend group sessions (these being easier to access, given her family situation). Here she helped the other participants in making the final creative decisions needed to finish off the group tracks. She also eventually got some singing recorded for 'Rose Tinted Reality' with the help of her brother and with encouragement from Peer Mentor 2I. She said she had enjoyed this process because her brother had told her that her ideas were really good, which she was really pleased about because he is someone she looks up to.

At the end of the year, Wavelength held a celebration event where we shared the songs that had been produced this year and presented the participants' achievements to their friends, family, support workers and teachers. Unfortunately, Participant 2X didn't make this event but her singing got some very good comments: "Participant 2X's voice is amazing", "Very characterful. Love it", "What an amazing singing voice."

We didn't get any feedback from Participant 2X at the end of the project year, it being so close to her recruitment. However, she did say in a session that she was pleased with herself for being able to explain what she would like her song to sound like and for that to be understood. She also said she liked having someone to run ideas by and to get constructive comments to help her move forward with her music. Finally, I was pleased to hear that Participant 2X said that college had been okay recently.

This year has been a good opportunity for Participant 2X to get a sense of what is on offer on the Wavelength project so she can join us again next year and get started with the music making straight away. She is keen to engage further and should benefit from the opportunity to build her confidence and friendship groups.

Participant/ Peer Mentor 2Z Case Study

Written by James Stanley, Music Leader with input from Quench Arts.

Participant 2Z has been a great support on this project as a peer mentor. He is an accomplished pianist who has been involved on a few other Quench Arts projects. Wanting to do more in education, he joined Wavelength to help build his confidence with other groups of participants.

Participant 2Z was very quiet when I first met him and rarely engaged the group unless he was put on the spot to do so. He tended to find it quite difficult to pitch the right level of musicality at participants. This is a lesson that everyone has to learn which I think only gets harder the more educated you are.

On Wavelength, Participant 2Z has found a balance with this. For example - on the song 'Are We?' he helped to write a piano part. Whilst he gave thought to how he could personally play it in a more 'interesting and complex' way, he also made sure that the basic structure was simple and easy to follow by the rest of the musicians on the project. He has developed into the Peer Mentor role very well, recognising how important it is to just come forward and talk to participants. He has built good relationships up with specific individuals which has, in turn, helped them feel more comfortable and included.

Participant 2Z is now at University again, pursuing an interest in Music Therapy at masters level. I think this is a great path for him. He is an excellent musician but also a very kind and caring person. Wavelength as a project has helped him learn how to balance those two qualities when working with young people.

Reflections and Lessons Learned

Technology/Online Working

Covid19 meant that we quickly had to adapt our provision to online delivery. This has been a huge learning curve for staff and participants, particularly due to technical/latency issues with music-making which means that playing together is difficult. We have learned together, experimented with new activities and software and continue to adapt to ensure that our new blended delivery approach (with some participants in the room and some on Zoom) works for everyone. There remain some frustrations with actually playing instruments together, but we are learning to work around these and continue to improve.

The online listening party this year was hugely successful and incredibly positive for participants, being less pressure than a live concert and this is something that we'll offer in future years.

Participant Recruitment

Due to the pandemic we are generally finding recruitment harder, despite Covid19's impact on mental health. This is because it is much harder to reach young people when they aren't being supported and encouraged in face-to-face sessions by other providers/referral agencies. We are also aware that young people can have screen fatigue if they've been accessing education online in the day, so might not want to join online evening sessions. Now that we are Covid-secure and allowed to continue face-to-face working for vulnerable young people, we are able to offer face-to-face provision as an option. Many organisations have recently improved their social media/online communications and we have started to promote our opportunities through targeted local Covid support and family networks.

Safeguarding and Risk Assessment

The situation this year with the pandemic enforced a review of our safeguarding and health and safety policies and guidance in relation to the Covid19 pandemic and new online ways of working. A Covid19 Risk Assessment was developed by the organisation for our activity and venue and staff, participant and parent/carer Covid19 guidance was created to keep activities safe. Our guidance included safeguarding criteria for accessing Wavelength online and telephone provision as well as participant/family bespoke risk assessments which needed to be completed before face-to-face provision could be offered. This helped us and families decide which delivery approach would be best and safest for them and meet their engagement needs. At all times we remained flexible and offered a range of ways for participants to engage: either online, in person, or where needed through bespoke video/worksheet support.

All policies have been regularly reviewed and updated according to the changing situation across the year, and to Government and sector guidance and restrictions. It has been a significant challenge and incredibly time-consuming to stay on top of all the different and changing Government guidance that relates to the work of Quench Arts (being an arts organisation, an out of school provider, an organisation working with vulnerable groups and an organisation based in a community venue) but we think we've managed the situation relatively well and have not had any incidents. It was incredibly helpful to have direct permission from the Director of Public Health in Birmingham to continue our face-to-face activities with vulnerable groups through lockdown 2 and beyond, under the support category guidance, and this has been hugely beneficial for the mental health and wellbeing

of participants unable or unwilling to access online provision. We are incredibly grateful to the Clive and Sylvia Richards Charity for the extra support that they have gave to Quench Arts to enable us to make our rooms Covid-secure, and to the Arts Council for their Emergency Response Fund support early on in the pandemic.

Coordination Time

The new online working and safeguarding considerations have meant a much increased coordination workload for the project, with every Zoom session needing to be supervised and every individual and group face-to-face session needing a coordinator present to undertake temperature checks and clean between participants. With our 'blended approach', one coordinator is needed to supervise and record the online sessions, whilst another is needed at the venue for those attending in person. Again, support from the Arts Council for the first 6 months of the pandemic helped to cover a shortfall in contributions towards salary costs as a result of cancelled and/or postponed projects as a result of the pandemic. In addition, from the end of September 2020, some additional support from the Clive and Sylvia Richards Charity has provided an extra day of coordination time for the organisation each week to support across the organisation, and this has been much appreciated. However, for a small organisation like Quench Arts, capacity remains a real challenge, with coordination and risk assessments taking away capacity strategic development and fundraising to sustain the project.

Artistic Team and Project Delivery Model

We are incredibly lucky to have a strong team of music leaders working on the project, all who bring their own musical strengths and personalities to the role, as well as their vast experience in working with young people and the mental health sector. They cover a wide range of styles and instrumentation and they work incredibly well together. The impact seen and the progress that individual participants have made has been a testament to the hard work and dedication to the team and the inspiration, enthusiasm and motivation they provide.

Up until this year, we had been very lucky to be able to continue to work with a consistent team for the duration of the Wavelength project's existence however, this year, we have had 1 music leader move on from the project due to a relocation and we are aware that, next year, 1 music leader will be having some time off due to maternity leave. With this in mind, we intend to offer a development opportunity to 2 emerging music leaders who were trainees on our inpatient Plugin project this year. Both these young music leaders have proven their skills and commitment over the last year but, because of the pandemic, had very little opportunity to lead any face-to-face sessions in inpatient settings. They will both join the Wavelength team as emerging practitioners, with mentoring from the existing team and funding support from Youth Music, to build up their skills and confidence with a view to further progression and employment on the project in the future.

Links:

Online links to this year's Wavelength album and music video:

CD: https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/sets/wavelength-cd-2019-20-lockdown

Music Video: https://youtu.be/D_c_xFMW_AI

Creatively Minded and Young National Report featuring Wavelength:
https://cdn.baringfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/BF_Creatively-minded-and-young_WEB_LR-1.pdf

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 keyworkers 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

Peer Mentors: Liz Birch, Daniel Scott

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We have a strong, committed group of project partners on our project steering group and would like to take this opportunity to thank all involved for their support, time and advice.

Thanks also to our other referral organisations and settings who have taken the time to answer correspondence, attend meetings, and encourage young people to access our opportunities.