

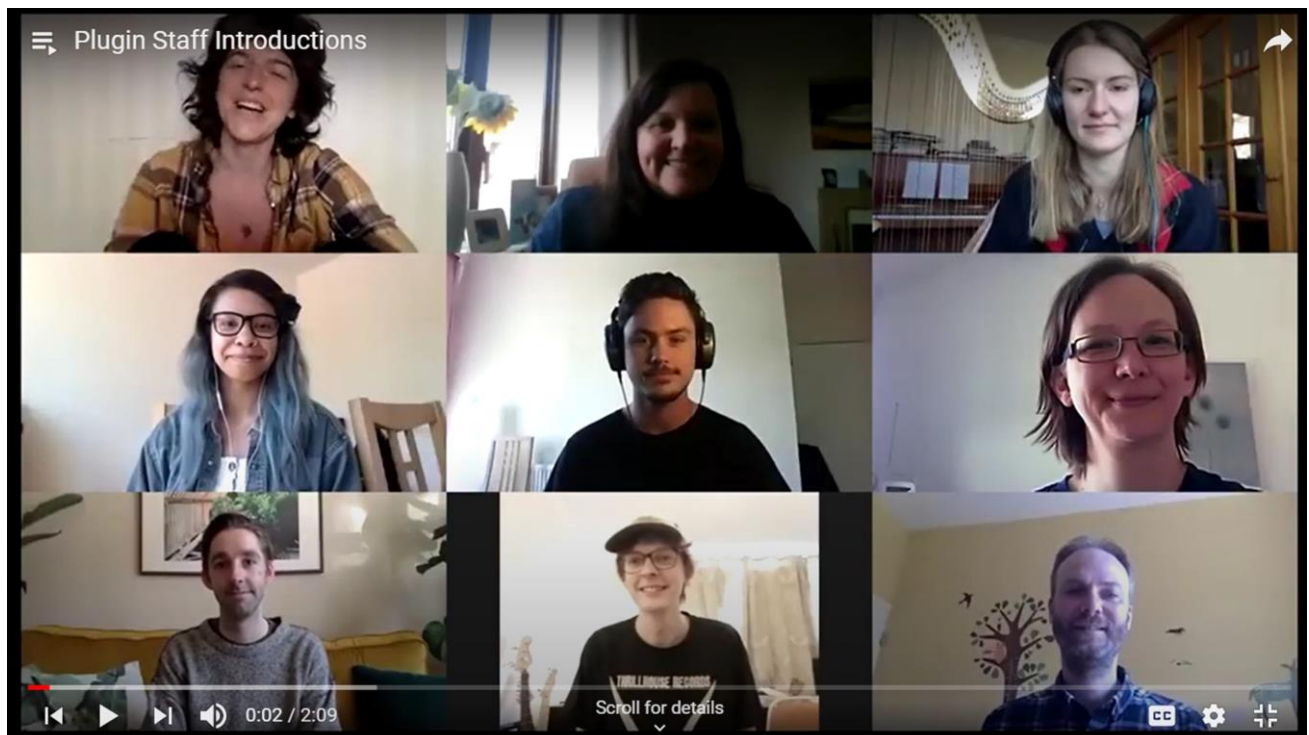
Plugin

Impact Report 2020



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Plugin 2020 Activity Summary

Project Aim - To improve the sustainability of music provision in hospital in-patient settings caring for young people with mental health conditions aged 12-25 in Birmingham.

The Plugin project provides access to musical opportunities for young people aged 12-25 who face barriers to music-making due to being mental health inpatients or being unable to access other community based provision. Using accessible music technology, Plugin develops musical skills and composition, whilst building participants' self-esteem, emotional literacy and social connectedness.

The Plugin project also offers workforce development for music leaders and setting staff focused on building skills and confidence to engage young musicians in these settings.

The project focuses on the use of accessible music technology in order to promote musical creativity, using iPads/laptops to support sampling, sequencing and composition. Young people have been encouraged to write lyrics and add vocal lines (song or rap) or to create programme notes for the music created in order to develop emotional literacy, resilience and communication skills.

Activity breakdown:

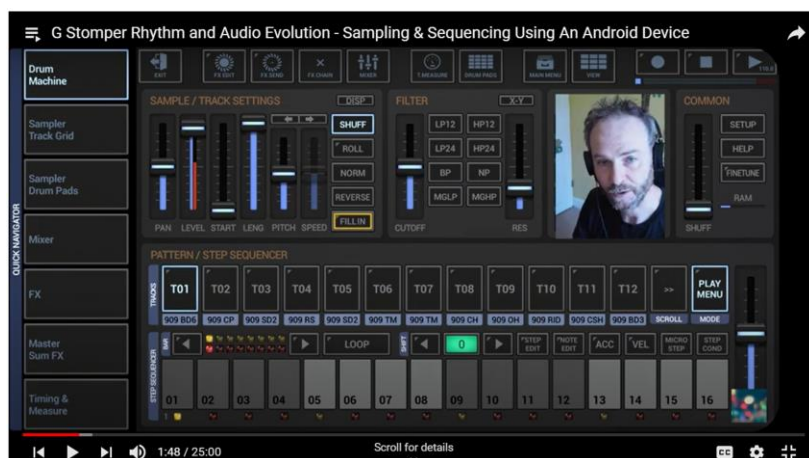
3 Young Music Leaders were recruited to year 2 of the project and undertook training to support lead artists in project settings.

1 Emerging Young Project Coordinator(YPC) was recruited for the remainder of the project, working 1 day per week, replacing the YPC from year 1, who went on maternity leave.

All 4 of the above completed Autism Awareness training. Due to Covid19, Birmingham Children's Hospital was not able to accommodate our staff within their onsite autism training, so we instead offered our team training provided by Autism West Midlands. Our YPC undertook Arts Award Advisor Bronze/Silver training and completed a Diploma in Project Management from the Centre for Excellence.

Weekly Plugin project sessions were significantly affected by the Covid19 pandemic, which hit in the 2nd/3rd week of our project schedule. Due to the risks involved in having visitors on inpatient wards, all face-to-face activity had to cease and there were significant logistics to work around in regards to engaging young people online in our medium secure and acute inpatient settings, due to Home Office permissions, safeguarding issues, staff capacity and Wi-Fi coverage. This meant that much of the year was spent developing instructional films and worksheets which were then posted out to settings to support young people's music making. Where possible, these resources were made bespoke to individual young people and their needs/interests but, with the pandemic impacting so early on in the project year, most of the resources were more general, related to the project aims. Some resources involved music leaders undertaking more in-depth research and production of resources discussing the benefits of music, social media use, self identity and music, etc., provoking wider thought. Resources created can be viewed online at www.quench-arts.co.uk/plugin-

[project-resources](#) (bespoke resources for individual participants mention names so can't be shared).



With much encouragement and liaison, all settings were eventually able to move to online Zoom provision, though for most settings this was only possible later in the project year, from September/ October onwards earliest. In total, 35 participants accessed 4 face-to-face and 36 Zoom half-day sessions and 14 were 'core' participants, attending more than 3 sessions. As each half-day session was split into a combination of one-to-one and group sessions, depending on the setting, overall there were 64 one-to-one sessions (on Zoom and face-to-face) and 23 group 'core' sessions (on Zoom).

5 settings benefitted from the project, with 30 sessions of music leader time per setting split between face-to-face sessions(FF), Zoom sessions(Z) and sessions focused on resource development(RD).

- ❖ Birmingham Children's Hospital Parkview Clinic (acute/locked CAMHS wards): 0 FF sessions; 21 RD sessions; 9 Z sessions (16 participants).
- ❖ Ardenleigh Forensic CAMHS unit. 2 FF sessions (3 participants); 21 RD sessions; 7 Z sessions (3 participants, 2 of whom also took part in the FF sessions).
- ❖ Woodbourne Priory Hospital (private CAMHS inpatient). 2 FF sessions (6 participants); 20 RD sessions; 8 Z sessions (1 participant).
- ❖ The Blakesley Centre (a Forward Thinking Birmingham mental health clinic, non-inpatient, engaging participants with additional neurological/ physical health conditions). 0 FF sessions; 18 RD sessions; 12 Z sessions (7 participants).
- ❖ Birmingham Road Centre (another Forward Thinking Birmingham mental health clinic, non-inpatient clinic, as above) This setting replaced the 2nd ward at Woodbourne Priory as they had no internet access. 0 FF sessions; 27 RD sessions; 3 Z sessions (1 participant).

The Covid19 pandemic meant that several aspects of the project couldn't be delivered this year:

- Youth Mental Health First Aid training.
- Holiday provision in each setting (which was to focus on Arts Awards).
- The end of year sharing in each setting and the collaborative sharing.
- Guest performances hosted in settings and the trip to an external performance.
- The end of year project CD (due to so few sessions taking place with young people).

On starting their roles, our 3 Young Music Leaders and Young Project Coordinator set personal aims for their development using the 'Do, Review, Improve' framework, each focusing on 3 self-selected criteria. Aims were reviewed across the project through informal mentoring, though progress in some areas was limited due to the pandemic.

Our peer review process wasn't able to take place this year, due to the pandemic and setting online safeguarding logistics but our lead music facilitators have used the 'Do, Review, Improve' framework to consider their development needs related to the pandemic, also informed by Quench Arts Director observations. They have informally shared their practice and resources with each other to gain input and feedback and have collaborated on tasks to demonstrate activities:

"Having time to get to know each other, focus on our creativity, think about new ways of putting across information in videos or written form has been so beneficial to all of us in terms of our development. Some of the collaborative work that we did together feels like a really important thing to do every so often." JS, Plugin Music Leader evaluation.

Do, Review, Improve is embedded into our organisation and activities. Staff see this as incredibly positive and useful for their development.

Sharing Practice

We have published 9 blogs on the Youth Music Network, written by our artistic team who we have given guidance on topics to write about:

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/maintaining-participant-led-approach-when-delivering-inclusive-music-online-paul-carroll-lead-music>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/importance-maintaining-provision-during-lockdowncovid19-katie-stevens-lead-music-leader-quench-arts%E2%80%99>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/engaging-participants-during-lockdown-james-stanley-lead-music-leader-quench-arts%E2%80%99plugin-project>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/covid19-opportunity-explore-new-methods-and-technology-paul-carroll-lead-music-leader-quench-arts%E2%80%99>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/how-plugin-has-helped-me-develop-professionally-and-personally-katie-stevens-lead-music-leader>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/how-technology-helps-us-cater-towards-each-participants%E2%80%99needs-dan-cippico-young-music-leader-quench>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/my-year-young-music-leader-holly-kehoe-kingsley-young-music-leader-quench-arts%E2%80%99-plugin-project>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/how-working-plugin-young-music-leader-has-helped-me-develop-professionally-and-personally-joe-clixby>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/my-first-6-months-plugin-project-madeline-kirby-youth-assistant-project-coordinator-quench-arts%E2%80%99>

Offline, our practice sharing to date has primarily been via monthly Birmingham Music Education Partnership meetings and informally within steering groups, meetings, networks and webinars that we have attended.

The Plugin project (as part of Quench Arts' wellbeing work) was mentioned in a case study in the Baring Foundation's 'Creatively Minded and Young' report in July 2020 and a presentation was also given at the September 2020 online launch event (<https://baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/creatively-minded-and-young/>)



Our Year 1 annual summary impact report was shared through our social media and online networks, and through our main partners' networks and professional groups. This has resulted in new funding (see 'partners' section below).

Partners:

Our partnerships with delivery settings have been largely positive this year, despite the challenges. Our settings have all really appreciated our patience and flexibility regarding the pausing of sessions on site and it has really helped our relationships by not needing to

press for their match funding contributions this year. For us, it has been a difficult balance between being empathetic to the staffing situation on wards/pressures on site, and trying to encourage settings to input, use and feedback on the musical resources provided and push for internet access and staff supervision for online Zoom sessions. For the majority of the year our project music leaders spent time developing resources (worksheets and videos) to support young people's music making. These were most effective in supporting progression where we had met individual participants and had an understanding of their musical interests and development needs (though with the pandemic hitting so early on in the project, we'd only been into 2 settings). All other resources created were more generic to the project outcomes, where possible gaining suggestions and feedback from setting staff regarding young people's interests. Due to the nature of our settings, all resources had to be printed and posted, with videos duplicated onto DVD. We know that staff didn't always have the capacity to use these resources to their full effect but know that the resources will be useful for participants and other young people in the future (they are downloadable from our website at <https://www.quench-arts.co.uk/plugin-project-resources> and some resources have had hundreds of listens/views).

At times the situation has been incredibly frustrating for all of us. Though we did eventually manage to get Zoom sessions happening in 5 settings by the end of the year, it would be fair to say that this relied on a lot of tenacity on our side and was often reliant on the dedication of a key member of setting staff with each partner. When that staff member was off or on a different shift, often sessions didn't happen due to other staff members' capacity, technical issues or a lack of confidence in setting up equipment. We believe that next year will be much easier, now that the settings have seen what can be achieved over Zoom and appreciate the benefit and impact, and also now staff have more experience with using the software to support other patient input (such as Occupational Therapists' sessions). We also hope that this will mean that some amount of match funding contribution from sessions will be achievable, even if we aren't visiting on site. In terms of evaluation support, it was impossible to organise Occupational Therapist MOHOST observations for the project this year but we did manage to get evaluation feedback and general observations on participant progress from settings.

Our 5 settings at the beginning of the year were;

- Birmingham Children's Hospital Parkview Clinic,
- Forward Thinking Birmingham's (FTB) Blakesley Centre (outpatient mental health hub)
- Ardenleigh Forensic CAMHS,
- Woodbourne Priory Hospital (2 different wards. 1 was a replacement for the men's forensic service who had no young people aged under 25 years old.)

With the 2nd ward at Woodbourne having no internet access and the Zoom sessions at the Blakesley Centre going well, we offered another FTB site sessions on Zoom from October until the end of the year: Birmingham Road. As a positive development, because of the effectiveness of this activity, our lead contact at the Blakesley Centre has managed to achieve separate funding to support ongoing music activity with Quench Arts at Birmingham Road and to widen this engagement into the other 2 FTB youth hubs.

Next year we aim to bring a new partner on board: Newbridge House, a CAMHS inpatient eating disorder unit and the only other youth mental health inpatient setting in Birmingham. This setting was a part of our original funding bid but had to withdraw before the project

started due to staff changes and to a site redevelopment. Involvement in Plugin had been provisionally agreed by their lead occupational therapist last year but the setting has recently been taken over by the Schoen Clinic and this staff member has now moved on, so we will need to revisit our partnership discussions and confirm if Plugin activity will be possible.

Project Outcomes & Indicators:

- **Musical: To improve participants' musical skills.**
 - Participants report an improvement in their musical skills.
 - Music leaders and occupational therapists report improvement in participants' musical skills.
 - Number of young people achieving Arts Award Accreditation
- **Social: To improve participants' social connectedness.**
 - Participants report an increase in their ability to connect with other young people on the project.
 - Music leaders report an improvement in participants' ability to connect and engage with themselves (project staff) and peers.
 - Numbers of participants engaging with Plugin project 'guests' (e.g. young BMEP guest performers visiting their hospital settings; with BMEP performers and Plugin participants from other settings at the annual external BMEP concert; with Plugin participants from other settings at the end of year collaborative sharing).
- **Personal: To increase positive self-esteem through music making.**
 - Participants report an increase in their self-esteem.
 - Music leaders report increases in participants' self-esteem and in factors which contribute to building self-esteem (e.g. self-acceptance; self-responsibility; self-assertiveness; self-purpose; personal integrity).
 - Project staff report an improvement in participants' capacity to realistically appraise their ability and recognise success.
- **Personal: To improve participants' emotional literacy.**
 - Participants report an improvement in their ability to express their feelings through music and find this intrinsically beneficial.
 - Music leaders and occupational therapists report an improvement in participants' ability to express their feelings and emotions in project sessions.
 - Participants report an improvement in being able to make sense of what other people are expressing through music.
- **Workforce: To improve the practice of music leaders and healthcare workers.**
 - Trainees/young emerging music leaders report an improvement in their knowledge and confidence in working in inpatient settings with young people with mental health conditions.
 - Setting staff report an improvement in their ability to support patients to achieve Arts Award accreditation, and in accessing musical opportunities for patients, equipping them to support musical progression in the future.
 - Plugin music leaders report changes in practice as a result of Plugin workforce development opportunities.

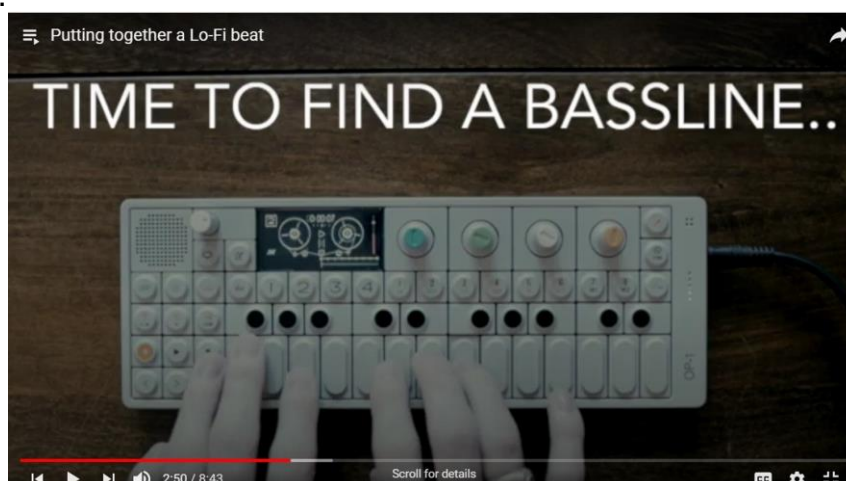
Plugin 2020 Analysis of Participant Progress

Baseline Analysis and Evaluation Material Introduction

For 2020, our data collection has primarily been through sessional monitoring forms completed by music leaders after Zoom sessions (including participant comments and staff observations against project outcomes), plus: team reflection/evaluation meeting minutes; evaluation feedback from training; setting staff evaluation forms at year-end; 'Do, Review, Improve' personal aims and reviews by the Young Music Leaders and participant case studies written by project artists and Quench Directors. All information has been analysed on a weekly basis with relevant quotes/observations recorded and dated against each participant and project outcome, to build evidence of progress.

In normal circumstances, participants complete self-assessed baselines at the beginning, mid-point and year-end, covering musical ability, self-esteem and social skills/connections, also setting aims according to the 5 Ways to Wellbeing. This year, due to the Covid19 pandemic, it was not possible to collect a sufficient amount of baseline data to produce a representative cohort dataset to analyse as evidence of progression. This is because the majority of the year was spent producing digital and paper resources for young people and, where Zoom sessions did take place, baseline conversations and activities were not always appropriate due to the context of the environment and the anxieties of the young people engaged (these conversations are much easier after a face-to-face relationship has been established). Where baselines were possible they are referenced in case studies but we often only had enough sessions to undertake 1 baseline, as the Zoom sessions started late in the year. This was still effective in order to help plan/review appropriate support and engagement with the young person but we realise that the lack of a 2nd baseline means less statistical evidence of progress. In addition, the capacity of Occupational Therapists was limited in regards to attending sessions to produce MOHOST observations, so data here is also limited, though we do have setting evaluations reflecting on participant progress which have also informed our case studies. Now that settings understand what can be achieved through Zoom sessions and online activity will be able to start at the beginning of the next project year, we will have more chance to build trust and rapport with participants and to collect initial and revisited baseline data.

Other baseline scales were able to be collected and analysed, such as those regarding Young Music Leader/Young Project Coordinator progression, with training evaluations and goals reviewed.



Outcome 1 Progress

Outcome: To improve participants' musical skills.

Indicators: Participants report an improvement in their musical skills. Music leaders and occupational therapists report improvement in participants' musical skills. Number of young people achieving Arts Award Accreditation. What music leaders say about participants' abilities to express themselves.

Evidence: Participants' revisited baseline questionnaires charting their journey, including an adapted Youth Music 'musical ability scale', at the beginning, mid-point and end of the project year. Music leaders' sessional reports and case studies (including MOHOST (Model of Human Occupation Screening Tool) baseline data charting participants' motor and processing skills in relation to project activities (posture/mobility; coordination; strength/effort; energy and knowledge) where relevant). Arts Award portfolios and certificates.

As mentioned, it wasn't possible to collect a sufficient baseline or MOHOST dataset to evidence overall cohort progression. Therefore, our progress towards this outcome has been measured through revisiting music leader session reports and evaluation feedback from setting staff and the project team.

Examples of participant progress:

Woodbourne Priory (examples from evaluation reports/meetings):

- (Participant G2) has been turning her poetry into song and using GarageBand to find chords to go with, then recording them with (setting staff) support (PC, Music Leader)
- (Participant G2) had lots of unstructured lyrics (when first attending). By the year-end she had structured them and her lyric writing came on so well from her learning in sessions (HKK, Young Music Leader)
- In the last few weeks of the project, she...went from having lyrics that she'd already written for her song to having instrumentation that she'd come up with. She also was starting to record the instrumentation for her song in Garageband (HKK, Young Music Leader)
- (Participant G2) has gained a better knowledge of how to use applications to create music. She has begun to understand how music has a structure and how this can be used to create interesting work. This is supported by session observations over a number of weeks. (Setting Staff).

Ardenleigh (examples from session reports):

- 23/11/20: A2 wrote well-articulated lyrics which revealed his artistic intent in a sophisticated way. (DC, Young Music Leader)
- 23/11/20: A2 seemed to be very engaged with the session. He enjoyed learning about beats and seemed to have a better grasp of the idea that they were a tangible element of music rather than just a concept to keep his place in a rap. (KS)
- 30/11/20: Both A2 and B2 are starting to grasp musical concepts such as beats, bars and timing A2's question also suggests that he is thinking of his own abilities and reflecting on what is genuinely needed to progress in the rap scene. He seemed to take our suggestions on board and value the feedback.(KS)

- 7/12/20: A2 and B2 have started to recognise certain musical ideas and are starting to experiment with what they are able to do. A2 tried mixing up his flow today after our chat about how to do this last week. (KS)
- 7/12/20: C2 was taught how to set up a new audio channel and set it to record. He is also continually developing his lyric-writing." (DC)
- Jan 21 evaluation: By the end of the project, (A2 and B2) had a much better understanding about the general musical concepts which they would come across in rap such as rhythm, beat, bar, song structures etc. (KS)
- Jan 21 evaluation: A2 and B2 reported good confidence in their musical skills in their last baseline review and they were very keen to understand the music that we showed them. They became particularly good at identifying different kinds of backing tracks e.g., hip-hop, grime etc and A had started to push his lyrical delivery and wanted to learn how he could vary it by taking influences from other kinds of rappers.

Parkview Clinic (session report and setting evaluation):

- 23/7/20 Group session, Heathlands: We found out that the young people had been working on the song we started lyrics for last session all week! They had changed some of the lyrics and come up with some chords. We listened and then talked about adding a couple of extra chords. We taught L2 some new chords and talked about ways to create new melodies and structure a chorus (JC, Young Music Leader).
- Setting evaluation: The online group helped improve musical skills by: providing opportunities for young people to play with others; musicians giving feedback to help them improve skills (VJ, Occupational Therapist, Parkview).

Blakesley (session reports and evaluation feedback):

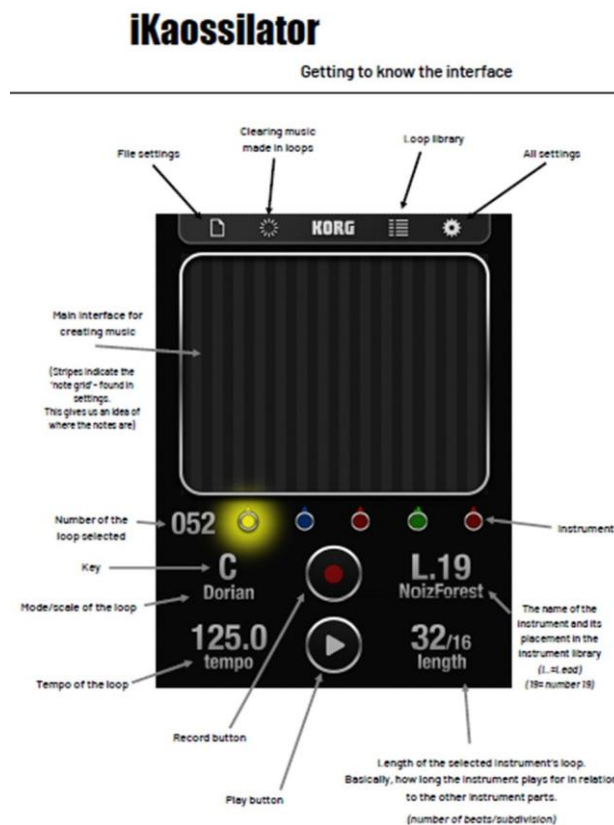
- 24/9/20: P2 has started making decisions already, both about the rap music he likes and doesn't like and the loops in Apple Logic Pro X, which is a good starting point for making music over Zoom. P2 was reserved but answered questions from adults he had just met. He was considerate about the music he liked to listen to, acknowledging that it might not be appropriate to listen to in a professional environment. (PC, Music Leader)
- 1/10/20: P2 learnt about narrowing down the enormous Apple Loops library in Logic by selecting Genres and Instruments. He chose the sounds he liked and told me where to put them in his song. P2 made strong choices about the loops he likes. P2 was reserved but engaged, making quick decisions when choosing and arranging his loops. (PC, Music Leader)
- 22/10/20: New GarageBand skills for P2 this week, which he can hopefully use on his iMac at home: P2 learnt about GarageBand this week, which he has on his iMac. We showed him the loops, instruments, how to record your own loop and Drummer. P2 had a go at his new skills on his own computer and will hopefully continue to explore between now and the next session. Good listening to learning about GarageBand. Keen to share GarageBand on his computer over Zoom. Choosing what he'd like to focus on this week and next. (PC, Music Leader)
- P2 learned a lot from what we did with him in his sessions - he became more and more involved in the creative process, and I believe went on to make his own beats at home.(JC, Young Music Leader evaluation)
- E2: got a place studying music at Access to Music (PC, Music Leader)
- Setting evaluation: M2 has done really well. She has explored different genres of music and written her own lyrics. (KT, Advanced Occupational Therapist, Blakesley)

- “F2 used the sessions to get feedback about her own vocal range, to get some confidence building about what professional musicians thought about her musical ability and validate her interest in music.” (KT, Advanced Occupational Therapist, setting evaluation)

Birmingham Road (evaluation feedback):

- D2 is a very talented guitar player and singer, with a good understanding of chords and rhythm, advanced at playing guitar and singing covers. Our sessions build up an enthusiasm for songwriting. By the end of her sessions was coming up with some pretty complex stories that she wanted to tell. In her goal setting in our last session, she expressed a desire to write songs and sing them in front of other people (Extracts from Music Leader evaluation, JS)

Due to Covid19, no participants completed a Bronze Arts Award this year, however digital resources to support this have been developed to support this in the future.



Many of the video and worksheet resources that we have created have been designed to support musical development and progression, in instrumental/vocal skills, in use of apps/DAWs and in tips for playing with others. Some of the videos and worksheets we have created have been effective in explaining some pretty complex musical skills and knowledge. They are a resource that can be used in the future too (see:

<https://www.quench-arts.co.uk/plugin-project-resources.>)

Outcome 2 Progress

Outcome: To improve participants' social connectedness.

Indicators: Participants report an increase in their ability to connect with

other young people on the project; Music leaders report an improvement in participants' ability to connect and engage with themselves (project staff) and peers; Numbers of participants engaging with Plugin project 'guests' (e.g. young BMEP guest performers visiting their hospital settings; with BMEP performers and Plugin participants from other settings at the annual external BMEP concert; with Plugin participants from other settings at the end of year collaborative sharing).

Evidence: Participants' revisited baseline questionnaires (How You Doin' section) relating to social skills and ability to connect with others on the project; Music leader session reports and participant case studies highlighting observations regarding participants' ability to connect with others (peers and staff) within sessions; participants' Arts Award portfolios, showing participants achieving the 'teaching a skill' part of Arts Award criteria; annual CD documenting collaborative musical outcomes; Registers of participant attendance (e.g., in the audience at live concerts in their setting; at the annual external concert; at the annual end of year all-setting Plugin sharing celebration); Arts Award portfolios (including participant questionnaires undertaken with guest BMEP performers, where they ask performers questions, formulated by themselves, to be included in their review of a live performance, proving interaction).

As with outcome 1 it was not possible to collect a sufficient amount of baseline or setting MOHOST data to produce a representative dataset to analyse as evidence of cohort progression. Where we do have individual responses these have been included in our participant case studies. It is important to note that, whilst many of the project activities that we had planned to help participants progress against this outcome couldn't happen due to Covid19 (such as the visiting performances to each setting and the collaborative gig), our project was one of few opportunities that our participants had to engage with people outside of their inpatient setting, with family visits and activities restricted, and therefore Plugin helped participants to feel connected with the outside world. Even when input was limited to postal resources, Plugin showed the young people that there are people who care, putting in effort to reach and engage them.

Progress has been measured through music leader session reports, attendance registers and evaluation feedback from setting staff and the project team.

Woodbourne (evaluation feedback):

"(G2) has enjoyed the social interaction with the Plugin staff; it has allowed her to express her feelings and find a positive outlet for them." Setting staff evaluation.

Ardenleigh (session reports and evaluation feedback):

23/11/20 session report: A2 was very well mannered and greeted us at the start with a smile and a wave. He was attentive in listening and communicating and thanked us for our time at the end of the delivery. He obviously has a good relationship with Ed (activity worker) as is evident through their communication and body language. DC, Young Music Leader.

7/12/20 session report: They (A2 and B2) worked well together, gave each other feedback and urged on each other's ideas as the time restrictions meant we had a deadline. KS, Music Leader

"During sessions A2 and B2 both engaged with each other well, fist bumping each other to congratulate the other on an achievement. They also communicated well with the staff in the room. They both scored themselves with top marks in their social skills, connection with others and team work by the end of the year." KS, Music Leader evaluation.

"A2 and B2 from Ardenleigh had a good rapport when we first met them and it was great to see them develop a good working relationship. They would allow time for each other to suggest lyrical ideas and were both comfortable suggesting changes to each other's work. Katie (music leader) and I built a great relationship with them alongside setting staff Ed." DC, Young Music Leader evaluation.

"A2 learns a lot from the musicians and seems to get on well with them and is willing to give ideas a try for his project. Communicates well with the musicians with no concerns." EM, Activity Worker, Ardenleigh, evaluation.

23/11/20 session report: C2 was quite non-verbal at the beginning and his body language was static. He was able to open up towards the middle of the session and smiled a few times. He also felt comfortable enough to perform at the end of the session.

"Although C2 outwardly only made slight improvements in his ability to relate to project staff, I believe this to have been actually quite considerable for him. By the end of the project, he spoke more and at times he managed to laugh at jokes with the rest of the staff." KS, Music Leader evaluation

Parkview (session reports and evaluation feedback):

23/7/20 session report, Heathlands ward: When we came into the session (L2) had a guitar and there was a happy hubbub in the room...we found out that they had been working on the song we started lyrics for last session all week! They seem to be networking really well, working together on the song and really enjoying the process!" JC, Young Music Leader

7/12/20 session report: Q2 was new on the ward but I think that he and R2 might be able to work together well. R2 was leading the responses from the young people but I could tell that he and Q2 got on well and they respected each other's ideas. They also involved S2 well who was off camera for the session. There seemed to be a good vibe on the ward today and each young person had input and listened to one another.

"They wrote songs together, supporting each others' choice of lyrics and working together to find rhymes." VJ, Occupational Therapist evaluation.

Blakesley (session reports and evaluation feedback):

- 15/10/20 session report: P2's track is sounding great and he is starting to collaborate with Joe (Young Music Leader) and I, allowing us to contribute some decisions. P2 is still reserved but engaged and still brave in his decision-making.
- *"KT (setting Occupational Therapist) said early on in the Autumn that (M2) began to attend more medical appointments after coming to the centre for her first year of Plugin."* HKK, Young Music Leader evaluation.
- *"(M2) was much more open and brighter with her music leaders than last year leading to her taking more control over her music, despite working remotely."* PC, Music Leader evaluation.
- *"With (M2) and (F2) at Blakesley I think the few sessions we had were important to them socialising and being creative – M2 especially as she was building up to going back into school, and we could really feel her opening up and becoming more comfortable with us in the sessions."* JC, Young Music Leader evaluation

- *“F2 has engaged with the music sessions more than she has with other professionals here. Her engagement in the music sessions has been better and more consistent than it has been at times with her (care) coordinator...”* KT, Advanced Occupational Therapist, setting evaluation.

Birmingham Road:

- *“The 121 sessions that I led briefly towards the end of the year created a space where D2 felt like she could share of herself and creative talents. She is now keen on joining the Wavelength community based music project”* JS, Music Leader evaluation.

Attendance Registers, Showing Collaborative Work:

8 of 14 core participants, plus 12 others worked collaboratively in project Zoom sessions. Some project resources created specifically discuss the benefits of music to connect with others. See: www.quench-arts.co.uk/plugin-project-resources.

Outcome 3 Progress

Outcome: To increase positive self-esteem through music making.

Indicators: Participants report an increase in their self-esteem; Music leaders report increases in participants' self-esteem and in factors which contribute to building self-esteem (e.g. self acceptance; self-responsibility; self-assertiveness; self-purpose; personal integrity); Project staff report an improvement in participants' capacity to realistically appraise their ability and recognise success.

Evidence: Participants' revisited baseline questionnaires related to self-esteem statements (reduced/amended Rosenberg self-esteem scale (5 questions); Music leader session reports and participant case studies, with observations regarding self-esteem and elements (above) which build self-esteem; MOHOST data, where relevant, specifically in relation to charting improvements in participants' appraisal of ability and expectation of success; participants' self-assessment, in conjunction with staff, of progress against their personal 5 Ways To Wellbeing goals set at the beginning of the project.

Some of the project resources that were created through the project discuss themes such as self-identity, culture and authenticity in music and the relationship to self-esteem, plus social media benefits/risks. See: <https://www.quench-arts.co.uk/plugin-project-resources>.

As previously, it was not possible to collect a sufficient amount of baseline or setting MOHOST data to produce a representative dataset to analyse as evidence of cohort progression. Where we do have individual responses, these have been included in our participant case studies. Progress has been measured through music leader session reports and evaluation feedback from setting staff and the project team.

Woodbourne (evaluation feedback):

“Olly (setting staff) didn't think (G2) would sing but she sang a lot, willingly, almost enthusiastically.” PC, Music Leader evaluation.

“(G2) felt comfortable to put lyrics out there and felt proud of herself. She has enjoyed the creative process; she has become comfortable enough to sing and write with the help of the

staff; this is something she has not previously felt comfortable doing.” Setting staff evaluation.

Ardenleigh (session reports and evaluation feedback):

9/11/20 session report: When Dan (Young Music Leader) said that he really liked (A2)’s rap A2 said *“that means a lot”*. I think he found it very encouraging to have positive affirmation.

KS, Music Leader

23/11/20 session report: (A2) seemed to enjoy the positive praise re-affirmed by Dan (Young Music Leader) in the session in regard to his ability to quickly generate good lines for his rap. KS, Music Leader

30/11/20 session report: Today A2 asked a question to us about the music industry. It felt like a positive step for him to be making by coming out of his comfort zone and asking us about something rather than the other way around. KS, Music Leader

“(A2) seemed to really value the time spent with him and was intent on learning as much as he could from us. He thanked us very much for any positive praise and by the end of the project was very keen on pursuing music in a serious way.” KS, Music Leader evaluation

23/11/20 session report: (C2) was quite non-verbal at the beginning and his body language was static. He was able to open up towards the middle of the session and smiled a few times. He also felt comfortable enough to perform at the end of the session.

30/11/20: (C2) was more verbal today than last session which displayed confidence and calmness. DC, Young Music Leader.

7/12/20: (C2) was very pleased with the way his lyrics sound over his backing track. DC, Young Music Leader

14/12/20: (C2) was the most vocal he has been since we first met him. DC, Young Music Leader

Parkview (evaluation):

18/8/20: (H2) has a lot of enthusiasm and seems keen to get better so was very happy to receive advice on how to improve.

“They were listening to each other sing and play and praising each other’s abilities - helping to build self-esteem. In every session different young people reported being proud of what they achieved in the group.” VJ, Occupational Therapist, setting evaluation.

Blakesley (session reports and evaluation feedback):

8/10/20 session report: (P2) still reserved but engaged and getting braver in his decision-making. We continued to think about the style of loops P2’d like to work with and he is getting more creative in how he arranges them. Joe (Young Music Leader) and I were able to compliment and encourage P2 for his creativity in using loops. PC, Music Leader.

15/10/20 session report: (Music Leaders) were able to compliment and encourage (P2) for his creativity in using loops

22/10/20 session report: (P2) was keen to share GarageBand on his computer over Zoom *“Kirsty (Occupational Therapist) observed an improvement in M2’s assertiveness in sessions as she directed the composition of her music.”*

Progress commented on in evaluations:

“The clearest increase in self-esteem was M2, who was very quiet in the sessions at the start, but over the course of the sessions, we listened to loads of music, talked about a storyline around a character she had created, and used that as a baseline for writing a piece of music” JC, Young Music Leader evaluation.

"This year (M2) invented her own characters (for her song) which massively shows her self-esteem has improved and the fact that she moved the sessions from a public space downstairs with her family around to doing them in her room, sharing that she was getting ready for Christmas and being a lot more confident in the way she was suggesting what should be done and leading the sessions and using them to do what she wanted to do and what she wanted to get out of it (shows her progress)." KT, Advanced Occupational Therapist, setting evaluation.

"(F2 showed) intense self-analysis regarding herself and her singing." Music Leader evaluation

"(F2) wanted to use the sessions to get feedback about her own vocal range, to get some confidence building about what professional musicians thought about her musical ability and validate her interest in music which fits with her diagnosis, emerging personality disorder.....(F2) was quite confident, quite feisty, quite direct and asked them (Music Leaders) to give examples of what they thought was good or bad, wanted them to be honest about their opinions and if she liked it, she'd respond well and if she didn't, she wouldn't. She also put them on the spot making them do vocal ranges, giving examples of their abilities. Joe and Paul (Music Leaders) were really relaxed and non-judgmental and responded to what she was asking." KT, Advanced Occupational Therapist, setting evaluation.

Birmingham Road (evaluation feedback):

"(D2) played guitar but was reluctant to sing. To encourage her, each of us (music leaders) learned a song and performed it and this gave D2 the confidence to sing. (D2) was visibly grateful and thanked leaders for resources."

"(D2) was initially very nervous but quickly her self-esteem was built up so she felt like she could share of herself."

JS Music Leader evaluation.

Outcome 4 Progress

Outcome: To improve participants' emotional literacy.

Indicators: Participants report an improvement in their ability to express their feelings through music and find this intrinsically beneficial; Music leaders and occupational therapists report an improvement in participants' ability to express their feelings and emotions in project sessions; Participants report an improvement in being able to make sense of what other people are expressing through music.

Evidence: Participants' revisited baseline questionnaires (Youth Music Musical Development Scale); participant lyrics and programme notes; participants' project evaluations indicating the personal benefits seen through Plugin engagement; Music leader session reports and case studies (including MOHOST data regarding communication, where relevant); Participants' revisited baseline form; Arts Award portfolios (heroes and heroine section – explaining why they can relate to that musician's music and how it makes them feel); music leader session reports regarding extended listening activities (discussing how music can evoke different feelings and emotions) and how these discussions led into participants' music making.

There has been good progress made towards this outcome with core participants engaged in the period where we were able to run Zoom sessions in settings. Unfortunately, due to the late start of Zoom sessions in most settings and the technical and safeguarding restrictions working over Zoom (particularly in regards to setting restrictions on recording over Zoom), it was not possible to create a project CD this year. However, we do have copies of lyrics created and some informal (non-sharable) recordings highlighting progress. As with other outcomes, sufficient participant baseline and MOHOST data was not able to be collected this year to produce cohort statistics, so evidence of progress is limited to music leader and setting staff observations, monitoring reports and end of year evaluations, plus the lyrics/recordings we have.

Woodbourne:

Participant G2 showed excellent progress towards this outcome:

"(G2)'s song was all about the emotional side of being let down." PC, Music Leader evaluation

"(G2) has used her song writing to express directly how she feels about life and the problems she has encountered this has allowed her the opportunity to share some of the strong feelings she has." Setting staff evaluation

Extracts of G2's lyrics:

Song 1

*She told you she was down
You let it slip by
So from now on she kept it on the inside
She told herself she was alright
But she was telling white lies
Can't you tell, look at her dull eyes*

*She wrote a letter with her shaking hands wild
Look at me now, are you proud of your precious child?
But she knew the parents weren't the ones to blame
It was the world that should bow down its head in shame*

Song 2

*I told everyone I was sick
But it felt like no one gave a s**t
Until it was too late and that's great
The world is a mess
A big disgrace
Born in the wrong time and in the wrong place
I am a misfit of this awful race*

Ardenleigh:

All 3 core participants showed significant progress in this outcome. Participant C2 is a good example:

23/11/20: (C2) was very ready to share his experiences. He wanted to focus words surrounding his life and family, faith and his future. He wrote a very uplifting set of lyrics surrounding his experiences and what he wants from his life in the future. DC (Young Music Leader)

30/11/20: (C2) was open to making changes on his lyrics which were quite personal. He has also kept his copy of his lyrics safe since last week which showed he valued the engagement and the work he had produced. KS (Music Leader)

30/11/20: (C2) is able to talk about his feelings well and expressed a lot of joy through verbal and non-verbal communication today. DC (Young Music Leader)

7/12/20: (C2) shared some positive personal experiences in his lyrics again today. (C2) is able to express his feelings through his music very well – particularly when writing lyrics about himself and his future." DC (Young Music Leader)

Jan 21 evaluation: *"(C2) wrote some brilliant lyrics in the sessions and became quite open when talking about the subject matter of his song which was about childhood and his future."* DC (Young Music Leader)

Extracts of C2's lyrics:

I wanna focus on my mental health

I'm learning to look after myself

I need help to stack my wealth

Depending on friends for their help

I wanna find out all about being me

So that I can be

I'm the only one that holds the key

"Ed (setting activity worker) was very pleased that C2 had managed to make some positive lyrics as he had recently been banned from listening to certain music because it was making him angry. Apparently (C2) had never really expressed his emotions in the way that he was able to on the project." KS, Music Leader evaluation.

"(C2) has a good ability to express his thoughts through music and shown this when making lyrics with Katie and Dan (Music Leaders)." Setting staff evaluation.

Parkview:

All core participants engaged individually and in group sessions showed good progress in emotional literacy.

23/7/20: The lyrics they're writing are pretty positive- *'Now is the time to just be free.'* JC (Young Music Leader)

18/8/20: Participants reflected on what kind of mood they wanted their song to be thoughtfully. KS (Music Leader)

18/8/20: I was very surprised that (H2) was so keen and confident to just get going. She was also very happy to contribute words and they just seemed to pour out of her! KS (Music Leader)

"VJ (Occupational Therapist) said that the young people had all really enjoyed the sessions and that it had really made a difference to their moods." KS, Music Leader

"During the mind-map exercises young people talked about themes and subjects which were important to them, this often brought out a deeper discussion and provided a chance to use music to express emotions." VJ, Occupational Therapist, Parkview setting evaluation.

Blakesley:

2 core participants show good evidence of progress:

Participant M2:

1/10/20 session report: M2's drawing gave her something she could share and was something we could talk about becoming the starting point for a song. PC, Music Leader.

22/10/20 session report: M2 is starting to relate in more detail her drawing to lyrical description, e.g., the synth is the sound of Neo's brain (the character in her song) PC, Music Leader.

"M2 has done really well. She explored different genres of music, she's written her own lyrics; there's been a lot of openness about the stuff that she was writing, it wasn't judgemental. A lot of what she was writing was fiction based, alternative reality, bits of dreams she's had....Because she'd already had a set of face to face lessons and then continued virtually she already had a bit of a rapport with Paul (Music Leader). She bought bits of equipment and has now gone on to start at a new school. Because she has the rapport with Paul she was able to tell him how things were going." KT, Advanced Occupational Therapist, setting evaluation.

Participant F2:

"... we talked a lot in sessions and she (F2) told us about her insecurities about her singing and a negative experience she'd had with her previous singing teacher." PC, Music Leader
"(F2) was very good at explaining to me and Paul (Music Leader) exactly how she was feeling - she even asked us for our impressions of her, and then very eloquently gave her impressions of us. I think she started out thinking she was just a bad singer, but through our sessions we helped her realise it's more about her confidence, and how much of an effect that can have on you physically, which of course impacts your singing. After this, she would often tell us when she was feeling very nervous, and we had lots of very open conversations with her about her feelings and her singing." JC, Young Music Leader evaluation.

"Her engagement in the music sessions has been better and more consistent than it has been at times with her (care) coordinator, whether that's about the topic not being directly related with her symptoms and her illness. Plugin gave her (F2) time to feel validated and explore things outside of her illness." KT, Advanced Occupational Therapist, setting evaluation.

Birmingham Road:

"(D2) was good at understanding the content of the music she liked and was very good at expanding ideas for lyrics based on the theme of 'bittersweet' which is a strong and complicated feeling." DC, Young Music Leader evaluation.

"We created some lyric writing exercises, helped her write some chord patterns that we then recorded and turned into a song...She..changed her mind about songwriting and was coming up with some pretty complex stories that she wanted to tell. In her goal setting in our last session she expressed a desire to write songs and sing them in front of other people." JS, Music Leader case study

"Thank you so much for the help you've given me in writing this song - you didn't need to do that. I'm definitely going to be using what you've given me to work on something over the next few weeks." Participant D2 feedback

"It's great to see (D2) so happy and engaged. She's been so poorly - it's so great to have her involved in this. Music is so powerful!" Occupational Therapist feedback.

Some of the project resources created have focused on this outcome in relation to songwriting, music and emotions and also some of the self-identity themed input, helping young people know how much to share and understand the implications of their decisions.

See: www.quench-arts.co.uk/plugin-project-resources

Outcome 5 Progress

- Outcome:** To improve the practice of music leaders and healthcare workers.
- Indicators:** Trainees/young emerging music leaders report an improvement in their knowledge and confidence in working in inpatient settings with young people with mental health conditions; Setting staff report an improvement in their ability to support patients to achieve Arts Award accreditation, and in accessing musical opportunities for patients, equipping them to support musical progression in the future; Plugin music leaders report changes in practice as a result of Plugin workforce development opportunities.
- Evidence:** Training evaluations and baseline materials from Youth Mental Health First Aid and Autism Awareness courses; young emerging music leaders' baselines and personal development aims and reviews; Annual setting evaluation questionnaires; number of setting staff trained as Arts Award advisers; number of participants achieving Arts Award accreditation; Music leaders' evaluation reports on their Plugin role and delivery practice; observation reports from Quench Arts Directors and Peer Review observation programme, using 'Do, Review, Improve' criteria.

All 3 Young Music Leaders(YMLs) completed baselines, revisited at year-end.
-100% improved against 'I feel confident in undertaking planning, monitoring and evaluation for project sessions'; 'I feel able to provide appropriate, suitable and engaging activities that will enable all young people to take part in my sessions, whatever their ability or specific needs' and 'I have the appropriate resources/skills to be able to adapt and react to changing circumstances during sessions'.
-2/3 improved against, 'I feel I've the appropriate knowledge and confidence to work in inpatient settings with young people with MH conditions'.

Out of 8 goals set: 2 were exceeded, 4 met, and 2 were in progress (due to an inability to deliver activity on site/in person because of Covid19).

Our Young Project Coordinator improved in most areas of her baseline related to non face-to-face aspects of project management and administration, with particular progress in understanding project budgets/finances, contributing to and chairing project meetings and understanding and identifying equipment used on the project. Most progress was made in having the knowledge and resources to support participants to achieve an Arts Award and we hope this will be useful for year 3.

Setting staff feedback:

-75% stated their knowledge of the benefits of music had increased.
-100% stated they felt more confident in accessing musical opportunities/supporting musical progression.

Arts Award training was unable to take place this year, due to Covid19 (other than for our Young Project Coordinator who was trained prior to the initial lockdown). Youth Mental Health Training wasn't able to be offered for the same reason, though an online version will be offered for year 3. 4 staff attended Autism Awareness training.

Quotes from artist feedback and reflection sessions included:

"I have had to work hard this year to think creatively about how to get participants involved on Zoom. It is harder to let a session proceed organically when you are not face to face. At Ardenleigh I think that this planning paid off...At Parkview however, due to the participants being different every time, it meant that my planning was often redundant, and I then had to think very quickly about how to engage the new participants...I feel that the time spent putting together resources has been very rewarding. I learned a lot about music production, video editing and new genres of music. Everything I learned/taught myself will be applicable in the job going forward so it was a valuable use of time." KS, Music Leader

"I have improved and feel more confident at planning, presenting and editing interactive video and at planning and leading creative online sessions, both things I had never done before. I am particularly excited about what has been achieved artistically working in this way. My main concern is always will the young people feel like it is their music and I do believe that (M2, P2 and G2) did. This has made me feel more optimistic about working in this way if necessary in the future and that, in fact, it is something I can offer even when we are not socially restricted as a society but still work to meet the needs of individuals who are isolated due to their mental health." PC, Music Leader

"I have loved the online sessions, creating videos and worksheets and the way it's enabled us as music leaders to be more creative personally too. On a personal level, I've felt energised to get involved and do things creatively and I think that's because this year has forced a much better work/life balance - particularly in relation to travel time etc. For example - in a normal year I'd never have been able to find the time outside of sessions to create a specific piece of music just because I knew one participant would benefit from it and appreciate that I'd put in some time to help her. I've realised I can be so much better/happier/creative if things are more balanced - so my future plans are to try and make sure this still happens moving forwards. I'm not sure how yet!" JS, Music Leader.

"I've been able to learn a lot from Paul and Katie (Music Leaders), and was able to build my confidence in planning and helping lead sessions appropriate for our participants. The positive attitude and flexibility the leaders had during the sessions taught me a lot about how I could lead sessions and projects in the future... I learned...that it's okay to have to throw most of the plan out of the window if it's necessary, as the most important thing is to get the young people engaged. Also, I learned how to read the young people's energy, and really focus and tailor the session content to suit the young people's interests and abilities...I learned a lot about how my own playing skills, and musical knowledge, can be a useful tool to help young people engage with songwriting, whilst not coming across as intimidating or big-headed. ...Next year I'll be working with a musical after school club, and I've been offered a lead on one of their sessions, something I would have been much more daunted by if not for the experience I've gained with Quench and the Plugin project! It's also helped me in my personal creative pursuits, as I've used skills I've learned over the course of the project to record and edit my own short videos, and have used Zoom as a songwriting tool with several of my musical friends, something I wouldn't have really thought to do otherwise....Whilst I've not got work lined up that is directly related to the mental health sector, this experience has not only made me more confident and comfortable with this group, but I think has given me valuable experience and skills for working with young people across the board....Next year I'll be working with (the) after school club ... I'll also be working with two companies as a musician/facilitator, one with young people from a large range of backgrounds, one with a neuro-diverse theatre company...I've gained so much

experience in how to run/help run sessions over Zoom, and feel much more capable at working with vulnerable young people, and will take many of the skills I've learned here forward into my future work." JC, Young Music Leader evaluation

"I definitely improved on my musical abilities and skills throughout the project. The role allowed me to take on more responsibilities when it came to planning sessions, creating content and getting involved as a music leader. One area that I improved in greatly was feeling like I had enough experience to lead some aspects of the project on my own. The lead artists gave me opportunities throughout the project to lead music-based tasks on my own. These opportunities made me feel confident and allowed me to experiment and plan out how I wanted to go about leading and now feel like I can confidently lead parts of the sessions on my own.

By working with the lead artists, I was able to see how they'd go about leading a session and pick up ideas on how I could do the same in future. The way they adapted to situations quickly and think on their feet, especially when sessions didn't go exactly to plan, was great for me to see and is something I now do when I lead on other projects. In some sessions, the lead artists have used songwriting and tech-based techniques that I didn't know before like certain features of GarageBand, using books to come up with lyrics. Now in my future practice I'll be able to use these techniques or similar ones as well.

In a year that's been a struggle for the music world as a whole, it was great to work alongside other people who love playing music and want to help others in the same way that I do. Some weeks the Plugin sessions really made me smile and reminded me that even through tough situations, making music unites us all.

By working as a Young Music Leader on the Plugin project, I've become more confident leading sessions...Before this year, I wasn't sure if I would be able to lead a full session and felt like I needed more experience. Plugin pushed me slightly out of my comfort zone and gave me the tools and experience I needed to try leading sessions and now I lead one to one sessions with looked after children for Make Some Noise. My desire to work on community music projects has only grown and I'm excited to see where my path takes me... By working alongside the lead artists, I was able to learn new skills and gain tools that I can use in other community music settings going forward."
HKK, Young Music Leader evaluation

"There has been a significant change in my confidence to plan my delivery and re-evaluate my work. I think this is because I understand what is required for this kind of delivery after the experience I have had within the role. This has been a particularly helpful development for me...The role worked very well, despite the pandemic! Obviously, it was unfortunate that I was unable to fulfil all the delivery but the tasks that were given to me were challenging and pushed me to learn new skills in presenting and resource-making. The delivery that I managed to do towards the end of the year was incredibly valuable...The role has had a huge impact in developing my confidence in delivering sessions in non-mainstream educational settings which has further ignited my pursuit in to continue this kind of work in the future...The creating of resources was a valuable process for me as it was an area in which I had little confidence. I think we are at a turning point in education where the demand for interactive, high-quality video lessons are increasing and being involved in how Quench has met this challenge in the settings in which it operates has been incredibly valuable. Adapting has been really important and it has made me re-evaluate my teaching

methods, resources, video and audio equipment.

I felt like I had built a really good relationship with A2, B2 and C2 from Ardenleigh and I found myself really enjoying the delivery rather than worrying about my performance which often led to a better outcome from the participants. I am now confident walking into a session not knowing what to expect and thus changing how and what I deliver to the participants in the moment. It has forced me to not be precious over my session plans and expectations. I realise I quite like the thrill of being caught off-guard and finding different ways to engage the participants in the session! I've also learnt to make my spoken and body language more concise and slower which was something that I consciously tried to practice after my Autism Awareness training. I had lots of practice when creating the video resources and with delivering the sessions. This transferrable skill has unexpectedly helped me to manage my stammer and general confidence in day-to-day life as well as other similar lines of work.

I very much valued the ability to work alongside two Lead Artists, Katie and James, as they were incredibly supportive in my role. I felt I could ask advice from them at any point and they gave me great opportunities to develop my skills and push me which I really valued. I was particularly inspired by the way James spoke with the participants as he had a very calm and natural tone which made instructions clear and concise. He always addressed the participants by name and was incredibly good at forming relationships very quickly. Katie was particularly good at understanding the context of the music we were using (Grime, Drill) with the young people at Ardenleigh and I found our thorough discussions about our approach very insightful. The role has hugely benefitted my work within Pupil Referral Units (PRU), which the delivery is similar to Plugin. I am looking to progress to other work with vulnerable young people as the project has fuelled my desire to continue in this line of work... This project has been incredibly beneficial to me and has solidified my passion to work with vulnerable young people in the future. It has greatly increased my confidence in being able to deliver this kind of work as I was very nervous about making mistakes at the start of the project.” DC, Young Music Leader evaluation.

Feedback from the whole Plugin project team also commented on how grateful staff were to Quench Arts and Youth Music for honouring contracts and providing ongoing work, support and security throughout the pandemic. Without this, our 3 Young Music Leaders, who all have huge potential, would perhaps not have continued to see the sector as a viable career option. Instead, they have all gained further work locally as music leaders and are highly committed to music facilitation and engaging disadvantaged young people through music.

“Quench Arts worked so hard and very quickly to continue activity for our participants without break. I am heartened that they recognise the necessity of what we are doing, more so at this time of stress and isolation. As a self-employed artist I have little contractual security in external circumstances when projects cannot take place. (Quench Arts) worked hard...to continue activity and (provide) added security (for staff). I am truly grateful.” PC, Music Leader

“I'm just so appreciative of how adaptable Quench Arts have been and how understanding they have been towards me. This year would have been a lot more stressful without the continued support of (Quench Arts Directors).” JS, Music Leader.

Reflections on Year Two Outcomes

This year has been extremely challenging due to the Covid19 pandemic and much of the activity that we had planned for the project couldn't take place in the way that we had hoped. Due to the nature of our project settings, most being acute or forensic inpatient settings, the impact of the pandemic on participants has been exacerbated. For significant periods of the year, our young people have been limited in regards to having visitors on site, even family or friends, and when patients have been able to go on home visits they have then had to isolate in their rooms. This has naturally limited opportunities for progression in regards to outcome 2

We are incredibly disappointed to have such limited baseline data this year. Many of our settings have restrictions on internet usage and, as such, Wi-Fi was not readily available to run Zoom sessions; where it was, there were often Home Office and/or safeguarding issues related to participant engagement. Whilst all settings did eventually allow Zoom engagement to take place, this was largely not until near the end of the project year and so our team had limited time to build relationships and rapport with participants. With all our participants having diagnosed mental health conditions, issues with self-esteem and self-confidence are common and body dysmorphia has been a significant barrier to engagement online. For this reason, we have had to be incredibly sensitive in regards to supporting and encouraging participant engagement and our normal baseline activities and conversations were not able to take place in the time we had as we felt that they would risk withdrawal. With more time we do feel that this data can be sensitively collected so hope that our Year 3 monitoring and evaluation will be back to our normal standard.

Whilst we hope some level of face-to-face delivery might be possible later in 2021, as a team we have already planned for the continuation of online delivery for Year 3 and discussed how we might better meet our Plugin project outcomes and outputs over Zoom, particularly in relation to outcomes 2 (social connectedness) and 3 (self-esteem). Now setting staff have an understanding of what can be achieved online we believe that they will be more willing to encourage and support regular engagement, which will aid our planning. We have discussed: ways to improve collaboration between participants, potentially even across settings; ideas for creation of 'streamable resources' to improve ensemble skills development online; the potential for pre-recorded and streamed performances for settings, to improve social connectedness. We have discussed how we might better share and celebrate work created within settings with listening parties for invited (pre-approved) guests, and how we might be able to ensure participants complete their tracks by supporting a project 'marketplace' of skills and track wishes. We will build monthly music leader reflections into the project this year to ensure that potential collaborations are identified and progressed.

Case Studies

Below are case studies detailing the work completed over this challenging year. These are not as in depth as year one due to the nature of how we have had to work throughout the Covid19 pandemic. Participant names have been coded to maintain anonymity.

Case Study 1

Participants A2 and B2, inpatients at Ardenleigh Forensic CAMHS (Written by Plugin Music Leader Katie Stevens with additional input from Quench Arts Directors)

All of the young people that took part in the project this year were males from black British backgrounds interested primarily in rapping. Participants A2 and B2 wanted to come to sessions together and Participant C2 came on his own. At Ardenleigh, all of the young people that we worked with did not seem fazed particularly by the pandemic or the limitations of the technology but rather, they seemed to take the sessions for what they were and very much got as engaged as they could. The staff were excellent at supporting as best as they could during the sessions but due to the level of security and time constraints on them, sometimes it was very difficult for them to pass on material. During the sessions themselves, we found that incorporating some listening worked very well. As patients are not permitted access to the internet outside of sessions, introducing them to new music and helping them listen out for certain musical features proved to be very rewarding. It also helped us give the sessions direction and energy. For all 3 young people, the sessions focused on words and their delivery rather than music production techniques. With this in mind, Zoom sessions worked as well as if we were face-to-face in the room together.

Musically, Participants A2 and B2 were very good at rapping and had excellent rhythm and feel. Through Plugin they became aware of musical concepts such as rhythm, beats, bars, song structures and timing. They can now identify different styles e.g. hip-hop, grime, etc., and are starting to experiment with their work and lyrical delivery, taking influences from other kinds of rappers. A2 began reflecting on his abilities and what is needed to progress in the rap scene.

Both participants engaged with each other well, fist bumping each other to congratulate the other on an achievement. They communicated well with the staff in the room. They allowed time for each other to suggest ideas and were both comfortable suggesting changes to each other's work. A2 was definitely more dominant though and it was difficult to encourage this whilst trying to promote B2's voice; B2 sometimes struggled to contribute and needed encouragement and I think he may have been worried to show himself up. Both responded well to constructive feedback, taking on board comments and accepting praise. A2 really valued the time spent with him was keen on pursuing music in a serious way at the end of the sessions. Both made excellent progress in expressing their thoughts and feelings through music. E.g., B2's lyrics relate to his life, family and friends.

Both Participants A2 and B2 reported good confidence in their musical skills in their year-end baseline and scored themselves top marks in their social skills, connection with others and teamwork. However, it was difficult to take any meaningful baselines without working

individually, as they were both entirely influenced by the other. I think if we continue working with them next year, I will suggest that sometimes we can see them separately as well.

“The young people look forward to the sessions every week and these are a great way for them to express themselves through music. It’s great to see the musicians get the best out of them.(Plugin) has helped A2 explore his lyrical skills and ideas on how to get started on lyric making. A2 learns a lot from the musicians and seems to get on well with them and is willing to give ideas a try for his project. (He) communicates well with the musicians with no concerns. A2 responds to appraisals from Katie and Dan (music leaders) and appears to work well when given guidance. He has always been a person who expresses his emotions throughout music and does this really well.

(Plugin) has helped B2 to explore his lyrical making ability with help from Katie and Dan (music leaders). This has given him structure in his day and always appeared to brighten his presentation after the sessions. (B2) takes information well with the musicians and accepts to try new things. (B2) is always coming up with ideas for his next music track as he constantly has ideas and appears to be pleased with himself when praised from staff and musicians. (B2) is very good at expressing his emotions as his lyrics relate to his life, i.e. family, friends and home life. (B2) is keen to listen to others and gives positive feedback to other service users. Music helps with their cognitive functioning, reduces stress and helps them manage their thoughts.” EM, Activity Worker, Ardenleigh

Case Study 2

Participant C2, an inpatient at Ardenleigh Forensic CAMHS

Written by Plugin Music Leader Katie Stevens with additional input from Quench Arts Directors.

When I first started running Plugin Zoom sessions at Ardenleigh, the Occupational Therapists kept trying to get Participant C to come to sessions but he was often asleep. After his first session, I wondered if Participant C would come back if the option to keep sleeping was still there, but he continued to come to every session from then on. For some weeks, he needed two Occupational Therapists with him because an incident had happened on the ward and he was considered volatile and potentially dangerous. We were also told that he liked to listen to very aggressive music and had been banned from listening to anything at present as they believed this to have a damaging effect on his behaviour.

Participant C was not very vocal so it could be quite difficult to know what he was enjoying and we often had to help guide him with yes or no questions. However, by the end of the project year, he began to open up with us; at times he would laugh or enjoy some banter with the Occupational Therapists and ourselves. I think that with more time spent with the project leaders, he would become more accustomed to chatting and would continue to open up and this is an area which he himself reflected upon in our last session together.

Participant C managed to write some very thoughtful and sensitive lyrics. Getting him to express gentler feelings in this way was something he was not accustomed to however, he seemed to enjoy doing this and had no inhibitions in sharing. Musically, he struggled to keep time and does not have a natural sense of rhythm but this did not deter him from enjoying the process and he seemed happy with the result. His baselines show that he

considered that his understanding of music to have improved, with his initial self-assessment changing from a 4 to a 6 (on a scale of 1-7) over the course of our engagement for the statement, 'I have a good understanding of the different elements of music (pitch, rhythm, melody, timbre, dynamics, texture, harmony, structure, etc.)'. All other scores stayed the same throughout our engagement and most were around midpoint. Of note, he scored himself negatively in regard to being able to do things as well as other people but at the top of the scale in regards to having a number of good qualities and having much to be proud of. We discussed how it might be good for him to have a go at collaborating with someone else next year. It would have also been helpful for him to take part in the kind of sharing gig that we put on last year, so that he could feel a sense of community through music and enjoy feeling proud of what he had made.

I think that the project gave him a sense of belief in himself; that he can write gentler lyrics than he is used to hearing and that he can make a track that he is happy with. I believe that he will now have the confidence and self-belief to continue making music and writing raps outside of the project.

Extracts of C2's lyrics:

*I wanna focus on my mental health
I'm learning to look after myself
I need help to stack my wealth
Depending on friends for their help
I wanna find out all about being me
So that I can be
I'm the only one that holds the key*

At Ardenleigh, due to Covid19, when starting Zoom sessions, Ed, Activity Worker stated, "Face-to-face meetings such as family, professional visits had been temporally banned due to risks." The setting evaluation stated that "Zoom sessions have gone really well and the young people have gained a lot from it (Plugin)" with the positives being that Zoom, "kept the sessions going, keeping the structure with the young people."

In evaluating Participant C2's progress, Ed stated, "Plugin has made C2 open to suggestions from the musicians. (C2) appears distant at times but does appear to listen to the musicians via Zoom. (C2)'s interest is making lyrics and did this well with help from the musicians. (C2) is given praise for any work he has done and seems to respond well to this. (C2) has a good ability to express his thoughts through music and (has) shown this when making lyrics with Katie and Dan (music leaders). Music helps (participants) with their mood and keeps them occupied as it is limited with activities they can do due to Covid." EM, Activity Worker, Ardenleigh

Case Study 3

Participant D2, a Forward Thinking Birmingham mental health outpatient at Birmingham Road

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

Participant D2 was referred to the Plugin project very last minute in the project year from a new partner. D2 was age 16, had anxiety and low mood and had been restricting her diet.

We were told that she was shy but willing to engage. One of the Occupational Therapists at the setting was working remotely with D2 already and was able to support her online in sessions. D2 was out of hospital and living at home but not willing to engage in any community-based activity. D2 was on a very limited school/college timetable - only going in for a few hours a week, so this was a good opportunity for her to have some more activity.

D2 is a very talented guitarist and singer. In her first session she was happy to play for us and has a good understanding of chords and rhythm. She didn't feel comfortable singing right away and she wasn't particularly interested in songwriting before the project began. Myself and Dan (Young Music Leader) felt that one way we could help her was by initially building her confidence. We asked if she would be happy to prepare a song to sing if we did the same. She agreed and so in the second session we all sang different songs that D2 had requested. This broke the tension and from that point on D2 was much happier to be involved. It also showed us how talented she was - she has a really beautiful and controlled voice. We discussed the fact that, over Zoom, there might be a limited amount we could help her with in terms of playing guitar and singing covers because of how advanced she already was. So, our next goal was to help build up an enthusiasm for songwriting as that could be something we could assist her with. We created some lyric writing exercises, helped her write some chord patterns that we then recorded and turned into a song.

Our sessions were cut short by the end of the project year but we were making excellent progress. She had changed her mind about songwriting and was coming up with some pretty complex stories that she wanted to tell. In her goal setting in our last session she expressed a desire to write songs and sing them in front of other people. Her confidence, self-esteem and interest in songwriting has clearly grown massively in just a few weeks. As a result, she wanted to self-refer herself to Wavelength - another (community based) music project run by Quench Arts. At the end of our sessions D2 marked herself at the top of the scale, 7 (on a scale of 1-7) for 'I have a good understanding of the different elements of music (pitch, rhythm, melody, timbre, dynamics, texture, harmony, structure, etc.)' and as a 6 for 'I can express my thoughts, feelings and emotions through my own music making'. However, she felt that she was only a 2 for 'I find it easy to sing/play in front of others'. The fact that D2 is really keen to join the Wavelength project goes some way to proving what she's gained from the Plugin project in just a short space of time.

Case Study 4

Participant G2, inpatient at Woodbourne Priory CAMHS Hospital

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

Participant G2 was an inpatient at Woodbourne Priory Hospital. The ward teacher (OR) was unsure about her musical background but asked her if she would like to take part in Plugin sessions and she came along to try it out. After that, G2 did miss one or two weeks but came to most sessions. She stayed for a good length of time each week too but tended to leave suddenly when she had had enough. This was partly due to her attention span but also to do with the flow of verbal communication over Zoom, which was unusual and a little challenging due to a significant delay of around 5 seconds (due to poor Wi-Fi on site as they were still using dial-up internet, not broadband).

Participant G2 wrote poetry about her feelings of being let down. She was a little hesitant to share at first but did so in her first session by typing into the 'chat' in Zoom. We showed her - as best we could with the slow connection - the GarageBand on iPad, which they had on the ward (having been loaned one by Quench Arts). G2 explored the functionality of creating chords alongside her poem but was clearly a beginner musician. At the end of the first session OR was impressed with how much perseverance G2 had shown, sticking with the activities we encouraged when there was a technical delay in communication. He didn't think that she would sing though.

In the following sessions, G2 surprised us all by singing her poetry and with a fair amount of conviction too. I recorded her and after the session, Young Music Leader Holly and I were able to come up with some chords on guitar which worked with G2's melodies. Quench Arts sent a mix of the chords and G2's singing by email to OR for G2 to listen to.

G2 must have seen this more of an experiment than working towards a finished piece of music because the next time we saw her she came with a lot of new lyrics, which again she sang to us. Over the next few sessions, with some tuition over Zoom and support from OR, G2 was able to use the GarageBand app on iPad to create and record a chord progression she liked with her lyrics and then record herself singing over the top.

Extracts of G2's lyrics:

Song 1

*She told you she was down
You let it slip by
So from now on she kept it on the inside
She told herself she was alright
But she was telling white lies
Can't you tell, look at her dull eyes*

*She wrote a letter with her shaking hands wild
Look at me now, are you proud of your precious child?
But she knew the parents weren't the ones to blame
It was the world that should bow down its head in shame*

Song 2

*I told everyone I was sick
But it felt like no one gave a s**t
Until it was too late and that's great
The world is a mess
A big disgrace
Born in the wrong time and in the wrong place
I am a misfit of this awful race*

Unfortunately, G2 left before feeding back about her experience of the project and completing baselines was not possible. OR said that, given her typical engagement and the fact she was a beginner musician, he was very pleased with how she did in the Plugin sessions.

The Woodbourne Priory setting evaluation noted the following progress in relation to G2's Plugin engagement. "(G2) has gained a better knowledge of how to use applications to

create music. (She) has begun to understand how music has a structure and how this can be used to create interesting work. This is supported by session observations over a number of weeks. (G2) has enjoyed the social interaction with the Plugin staff; it has allowed her to express her feelings and find a positive outlet for them. (G2) has enjoyed the creative process. She has become comfortable enough to sing and write with the help of the staff; this is something she has not previously felt comfortable doing. (G2) has used her song writing to express directly how she feels about life and the problems she has encountered this has allowed her the opportunity to share some of the strong feelings she has. This has been a positive process for (G2) and she has shown great patience to overcome the technical issues that online learning has."

In Woodbourne Priory's setting evaluation we were given the following contextual information:

"Covid19 has affected the ability of the young people to meet and get involved in activities; due to the restrictions some of the other activities have been put on hold, this has the dual affect that the young people have less to do and the ward staff have to work hard to engage them in different activities. Due to Covid19 we had to stop Plugin coming to the site and they have switched the sessions to Zoom, allowing the young people to continue to engage with the sessions. Zoom has worked well in giving the young people the opportunities to engage in the sessions; it has presented some challenges but having the loan of an iPad has also helped. Our setting does not have IT on site and this slowed down the process of setting up the preferences on the computers; once in place it has been difficult to form an effective and fast enough link via Zoom; this has created some problems in the sessions. The need to safeguard our young people online also had an impact on establishing this mode of communication. We mostly used the iPad provided but I feel that the other resources would have been used more with a different cohort of young people. They will be useful in the future. The (worksheet/video) resources were well structured and would have worked with some of our young people who have a greater involvement with music. It would have been good to personalise the resources to each particular young person and (make them) more person centred; I feel this would have helped with engagement."

To add some context from Quench Arts here, personalised resources were created at the beginning of the year for Woodbourne participants as our music leaders had managed to have a face-to-face session before the lockdown and had met participants. This meant that it was possible to give personalised individual resources and ideas to develop their tracks and music making. Without any ongoing feedback it was difficult to follow up on the effectiveness of these resources and develop the activities further and we were aware that some of the participants that we initially engaged with had been discharged. We did ask for further feedback and suggestions regarding the resources from Woodbourne (and other settings) during this time but were, understandably, informed that there wasn't the staff capacity to support young people in using the resources due to Covid19 challenges, staff sickness and isolation. Where settings undertook consultation with young people on their resource needs and interests, we did our best to meet these, hence the musical theatre resources which were designed for Parkview participants. Once settings were having Zooms, their timeslots were being used and therefore the resources that they continued to be sent were produced within the time slots that other music leaders had spare from other settings. We still however sent all settings copies of all the resources created, so it is natural that some were less bespoke to their participants' interests.

On further discussing the benefits of Plugin over the year, the Woodbourne setting evaluation stated, *“(Plugin) has allowed the young people the opportunity to engage in different activities and to interact with other adults off site...It allows an outlet for expression of ideas, thoughts and feeling of achievement. Music gives the young people the opportunity to engage with adults that are not directly involved in their care; these are all beneficial to people as they progress out of the care system. Young people gained enjoyment and knowledge from the sessions and engage well with the tutors”.*

Case Study 5

Participant M2, Forward Thinking Birmingham Blakesley Centre (a mental health outpatient clinic) Written by Plugin Music Leader Paul Carroll with additional input from Quench Arts Directors.

Participant M2 continued attending Plugin sessions after her success the previous year, when she wrote lyrics, made production decisions and vocalised to create an original song based on her interests. She had not been attending school for a year but KT (Advanced Occupational Therapist) said that M2 had recently received news that she had a place at the school her mum had been trying to get her into. M2 had also not been going to her mental health appointments at the Blakesley Centre but KT was pleased to report that since coming to Plugin there, M2 was now also attending her mental health appointments.

Sessions took place over Zoom with M2, Joe the Young Music Leader and myself at our respective homes. At first M2 was quiet and reluctant to turn her camera on but by the time we had re-established a routine to the sessions, in the third session she was much more present and engaged. The routine was that M2 shared a song she liked at the beginning of each session, which we played from YouTube and then we worked creatively. M2 also showed us a picture she'd drawn recently of a character she had created. When suggested, M2 was interested in writing a song for her character. To do this she gave her drawing a name, a special power, a backstory of where it's power came from and a situation of struggle for her to overcome. Using a random chord generation game we came up with some chords and, based on some of the music M2 played us at the beginning of each session, we found some sounds she liked. Joe tried the chords on various stringed instruments, recorded them and sent them to me and I layered the chords with keyboard playing different sampled and synth sounds in my Logic Pro X software.

M2's Lyrics:

The friends of Neo were fighting the corrupted dragon boss
The heroes were dying in a gruesome battle
And through trust and friendship they helped awake a power in Neo
The power to turn into a dragon
Neo as a dragon defeated the boss with her dragon breath
And so her friends' lives were saved - for now!
But it's hard to be dragon
Dragons outlive their human friends
And their power can be excessive

Throughout the process of making her song, M2 was more thoughtful and earnest than last year, less ironic, telling us what she liked and what she didn't, showing more confidence. KT (Occupational Therapist) remarked how assertive M2 was when telling us her ideas. She also seemed more relaxed than last year, often making jokes, possibly a combination of increased general confidence, sessions taking place in the comfort of her own home and optimism at going back to school.

Once we had a story and a collection of sounds we listened to them all together as well as on their own and in pairs. M2 finished the year by making strong decisions about where different combinations of sounds could be placed in her song and based on this we arranged them into a full-length piece of music. We didn't have time before the end of the year to incorporate M2's lyrics so that is something we can continue with if M2 takes part in the third year of Plugin.

In regards to Participant M2's progress, Kirsty Taylor, Advanced Occupational Therapist stated:

"(M2) has done really well. She explored different genres of music, she's written her own lyrics, there's been a lot of openness about the stuff that she was writing, it wasn't judgemental. A lot of what she was writing was fiction based, alternative reality, bits of dreams she's had. If it (the project) had continued to be face to face I think she might have struggled more to engage in some of the sessions, but because she'd already had a set of face to face lessons and then continued virtually she already had a bit of a rapport with Paul (Music Leader). She bought bits of equipment and has now gone on to start at a new school. Because she has the rapport with Paul, she was able to tell him how things were going. This year she invented her own characters which massively shows her self-esteem has improved and the fact that she moved the sessions from a public space downstairs with her family around to doing them in her room, sharing that she was getting ready for Christmas and being a lot more confident in the way she was suggesting what should be done and leading the sessions and using them to do what she wanted to do and what she wanted to get out of it. She got a lot out of the sessions." Kirsty Taylor, Advanced Occupational Therapist.

In regards to the context of the Blakesley Centre in relation to Covid19 and Plugin, the setting evaluation stated,

"The pandemic has affected Blakesley in terms of increasing the number of new referrals that we've received via the access centre. Initially young people were more anxious to go out, engage in therapy appointments, and struggled to adjust to having appointments changed to virtual or telephone reviews with a range of mental health professionals. People struggled with isolation that's resulted in restrictions in terms of movement and ability to engage in education where they were getting additional support which wasn't purely from mental health facilities. People managed to start with as it was a new thing - the weather was fairly nice, so most people had an outdoor space to use. People were aware of pressure on mental health services and that we were changing things over, using new systems and finding best way to work with people. As time has gone on, people have become fed up with the limitations put on everyone's lives. The mental health problems that they were managing initially have become unmanageable or carers have become burnt out because of having to manage this or had their own pressures (services axed, people losing jobs, etc). There were a lot of young people who had a good understanding and use of technology but have struggled with having their face on a video and talking to someone in a virtual way rather than in a room.

Around September people started to get involved in Plugin (Zooms). However, at that time there was the pressure to get back into education which made things difficult because young peoples' anxiety soared and some people were managing the transitions that would usually be happening anyway (junior to secondary school). People were exhausted, tired, fed up of services, fed up of what their life looked like, and we were getting a lot more

anxiety, low mood and a lot more risk. Young people were occupationally deprived of everything that they enjoy and restrictions on things that they could do. As practitioners, we were feeling exhausted and had a lot on our plates managing the extra need and extra support that people were requiring, whether that was with family members not coping with the behaviours they would usually be able to manage or with people adjusting to what they could or couldn't do and it not necessarily making sense (e.g. being able to go to school but not being able to see family for Sunday lunch), lots of different factors that made engaging in another virtual activity difficult, even though the provision was to support and help them. The capacity wasn't always available in house to phone and remind participants of sessions, and some people do need a prompt to remind them about sessions.

A positive of the Zoom sessions is the fact that people can access them from home, people who have difficulty going out into community. These sessions have been open to the whole multi-disciplinary team, so staff have referred other young people that we wouldn't necessarily have known about, rather than them just coming from the Occupational Therapists' case load. Young people have got a choice of whether to engage or not and got the opportunity to do an activity that they wouldn't normally be able to do. As the Plugin sessions were supported by the Occupational Therapist team there is some consideration needed internally; some young people interested in music weren't referred because that young person then might feel that they had reverted to needing Occupational Therapy support again, so we at Blakesley need to think how we promote it not as an OT thing but as open to anyone keen on music. The gap of a week between Zoom sessions might also have been too much for some people preferring intensive engagement.

Some of the resources created were good but because they were paper copies, we weren't necessarily able to then deliver them to people's houses, and because some of young people who initially took part in the sessions weren't our patients, we didn't have a rapport with them. The project could consider using Pebble Pad (or something similar) in future so that our young people have their own sign in and music leaders can see what they do in between sessions. Pebble Pad is like a portfolio. Supervision notes go on there. It's online. Resources that included performances would be popular – less formal and more visual would make the resources seem more 'cool' and less like homework/schoolwork.

Plugin has been good to engage our young people in meaningful activity. There's masses of evidence that playing an instrument, or writing lyrics has a huge impact on people's confidence, self-esteem and self-worth. There is also loads of evidence that engaging in a meaningful activity has an impact on people's mental health and wellbeing, and if young people have something that they've produced and are proud of that's productive. It gives them a focus, an opportunity to share the experiences they've had (being unwell and going through services), so the good and bad, getting them down on paper and expressed. To be able to learn new programmes, packages that they can get that are free/low cost has been great. People are being motivated to learn an instrument or get feedback on their abilities and what they need to do to work on those skills."

Kirsty Taylor, Advanced Occupational Therapist, Blakesley Centre.

Case Study 6

Parkview Clinic *Written by Plugin Music Leader Katie Stevens with additional input from Quench Arts Directors.*

It has not been possible to produce a case study for an individual participant engaging from the Parkview Clinic. At Parkview, the Plugin team worked on the Ashfield and Heathlands inpatient CAMHS wards. They led live Zoom sessions during the summer holidays and then again in the winter. The summer sessions started out very well with a large group of young people interested and very motivated. The group seemed to have a good bond and they were enthusiastic enough about the project to work on the song without us. After a few weeks however, there were sometimes incidents on the ward which were undisclosed to us which meant that participants didn't feel up to coming and then members of the group started being discharged and the dynamic fell apart. Aside from this group, we would sometimes see participants who would come for one session and then not again. Partly this may have been due to the staff member supporting sessions and encouraging engagement across the wards being relocated off site and other staff changes in regards to the Occupational Therapist team which meant that no-one was on hand or confident to set up the IT for Zoom sessions on each ward. Engagement at Parkview across previous years has traditionally relied on our project team consistently attending and gently build trust and confidence, and also encouraging engagement by making music on site to develop interest – obviously on Zoom this wasn't possible.

When the sessions started up again in November, the new Occupational Therapist, VJ, made the process much easier. She was familiar with setting up Zoom calls and she would spend time before calls encouraging the young people, which made a huge difference. She was also very proactive in sessions and would help to keep the activity moving from her side. Again, however, we seemed to see participants for one session but then they wouldn't come back; sometimes their moods were not conducive to taking part, they had university interviews or were out on leave. Whilst this was somewhat frustrating for the project team there was some positive engagement in the sessions and the young people, when they attended, enjoyed the sessions and found them useful for their mood.

In Year 1 the Plugin sessions ran in the evening but were changed this year to accommodate the Zoom sessions in order to have Occupational Therapist support. We do wonder if having project sessions straight after the ward hospital schooling was too much for the young people online and will liaise with Parkview staff to gain feedback on the scheduling. In Year 1 the engagement from Irwin ward was really good but in Year 2 it wasn't possible to engage young people from this ward on Zoom. Hopefully in Year 3 this may change. In positive news, at the time of writing this report our contact from the Parkview Clinic has been in touch to say that she has a group of new patients keen to engage in activity and wanting to start sessions as soon as possible, so we are hopeful to have more consistent attendance and engagement in year 3 and this should be greatly improved now that the staffing issues seem to be resolved.

In regards to the Parkview Clinic's engagement in Plugin sessions, Verity Jones, Occupational Therapist stated: *Given Covid19 and visitor restrictions, "Sessions were conducted online via Zoom rather than in person. This could make it more difficult to engage the young people in the session. Several participants did not wish to be visible on camera - the facilitators were really helpful and accommodating to the needs of the participants given the restrictions."*

I have only seen the project run during Covid19 restrictions. The project enabled young people to perform, write and learn music in a group with support from professional musicians. The sessions were really engaging and interactive. The facilitators / professional musicians had a warm and encouraging approach and the young people engaged well in the activities. 6 young people participated across 3 sessions (since I was in post) and did a range of activities including: sharing musical interests, performing, writing lyrics for songs/ raps and sharing with others how important music is for their mental health recovery. I think it would be better if we could display (the sessions) on one of the TV screens rather than the iPad - this is something we could improve in-house. The facilitators did a fantastic job of running the sessions online. At times there were some connectivity issues which caused a delay or poor sound (but) engaging in valued occupations is an important part of recovery. Playing, listening to and collaborating in music is intrinsically therapeutic for many young people.

Participants wrote songs together, supporting each others' choice of lyrics and working together to find rhymes; also listening to each other sing and play and praising each others' abilities - helping to build self-esteem. In every session different young people reported being proud of what they achieved in the group. During the mind-map exercises young people talked about themes and subjects which were important to them, this often brought out a deeper discussion and provided a chance to use music to express emotions! The benefit to the young people was really clear during the sessions, a huge thank you to all the musicians!" Verity Jones, Occupational Therapist

Challenges and lessons learned

The main challenges this year (which are ongoing) have related to the pandemic which hit in the 2nd/3rd week of our schedule and had a significant impact on participants, settings and partners. This has significantly affected our ability to deliver our intended programme and meet the expected project aims and outputs. Our inpatient settings stopped access to visitors on site to minimise the risk of introducing the virus; the capacity of setting staff to support our activities (and in/out, disseminate and use the resources we provided) was significantly reduced due to staff shortages as a result of illness and/or the need to self isolate; and the nature of settings meant that online provision wasn't initially supported due to the security and safeguarding implications of allowing participants/sites internet access. Reduced onsite activities also impacted the match funding that we received.

Despite these challenges, the Plugin project is making good progress towards its 5 outcomes, as evidenced through this report. As an organisation and an artistic team, Quench Arts and our settings have learned a huge amount regarding effective online delivery and what is possible which will strengthen our offer in the future. We have all become much more skilled in video editing and we have developed a large range of resources (videos, worksheets, backing tracks) that will be incredibly useful in year 3 of Plugin and for our other youth programmes.

Fully achieving our main project aim in the context of the pandemic ('to improve the sustainability of music provision in hospital in-patient settings caring for young people with mental health conditions aged 12-25 in Birmingham') might be challenging. This year the 'profile' project activities and sharings haven't taken place which normally showcase impact

to partners' senior staff and budget holders. We very much believe in the Plugin project and what it can achieve and are disappointed that circumstances have hindered our ability to be able to build on our Yr1 successes and evaluation evidence (naturally stronger without Covid19). We know also that our final year of delivery is also going to be compromised, which is incredibly frustrating. However, now that the initial panic of the pandemic is over and we've all learned to live with Covid19 to an extent, we do feel that progress can be made. All 5 settings are now able to accommodate Zoom sessions moving forwards and communication channels and staffing levels have improved, hopefully with consistent lead contacts per setting now in place. With more actual delivery in Yr3 we aim for better impact data to support sustainability and are confident that year 3 will be an improvement on Year 2, with lessons learned informing future delivery.

Clear partnership expectations will be established with settings at the beginning of the year regarding online working, supervision of participants and maximum numbers attending. Should partners have concerns that this support will be unable to be provided for the majority of the year then a replacement setting will be sought. Of course, occasional and short-term staffing issues will be understandable, given the nature of the current situation and pressures with staff off self-isolating or sick. When last minute or short-term issues do appear with running any project Zoom sessions, our music leader team will be briefed to create bespoke resources to support participants' musical development outside of project sessions, with consultation and input from project settings and their young people.

We have not been able to significantly progress our sustainability plans this year. Project delivery restrictions and the Covid19 pandemic have provided limited opportunities to showcase our work and project outcomes and the increased coordination work across our whole programme in respect of the pandemic has reduced our capacity for strategic work and fundraising. However, some progress has been made:

- ❖ We are developing our relationship with the Baring Foundation: the Plugin project was mentioned in a case study on Quench Arts in their 'Creatively Minded and Young' report in July 2020, with a presentation also given at their September 2020 online launch event. It is positive that the Baring Foundation now have arts and mental health as a focus moving forwards (though we weren't eligible for round 1). Due to the pandemic's impact on mental health, there are likely to be other funding opportunities which might help to sustain the Plugin project, should ongoing Youth Music funding not be an option.
- ❖ On a local level, due to the effectiveness of Plugin activity with mental health outpatients with additional needs at Forward Thinking Birmingham's Blakesley Centre, our lead contact has achieved additional funding to expand our outpatient provision to 3 other FTB hubs across Birmingham (though this funding also ends in Dec 2021).

Organisationally, we have also learnt a lot about Covid19 secure working and have constantly revised our risk assessments and procedures to accommodate safe face-to-face provision at our venue for our community-based projects. This learning will be useful throughout 2021 and beyond, and will be transferable to setting-based inpatient provision when our Plugin sites can accommodate in-person activity.

We enter the 3rd year of Plugin much better prepared for online working but are optimistic that some sessions in settings will be possible when more of the UK's population are

vaccinated. We very much hope to sustain Plugin post 2021 and will aim to look into ways in which to do this over the course of the year.

Links

As part of our resource development, Plugin music leaders put together numerous backing tracks for young people to write lyrics over, based on styles of music requested by participants. Due to internet restrictions placed on our participants/sites, tracks were sent to our settings on CDs but were also uploaded onto the Quench Arts SoundCloud account. Some of these tracks on SoundCloud have been listened to hundreds of times, showing the wider impact of the resources produced on the Plugin project. The backing tracks can be heard at:

https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/sets/backing-tracks.

Our Plugin music leader team based at the Parkview Clinic used some non-contact time to develop and write a song collaboratively and then used this to explain the process to setting participants. Participants were then given individual instructions to support the songwriting process. This link is the song developed by the music leader team as a demonstration (there is an acoustic and band version):

https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/sets/plugin-2020.

Two videos were created by Plugin music leaders to show how tracks can be built up and musical collaborations achieved through multiple recorded contributions from participants. Video 1 focused on building a track using things participants might find around their ward/room, plus instruments (see: tinyurl.com/JewelsPluginCollab1) and video 2 focused on using music software and apps (see: tinyurl.com/LockdownPluginCollab2). We shared Video 1 on our social media and asked for followers to send in contributions. Sounds submitted can be heard on track 1 and the final piece created in track 3 here:

https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/sets/social-media-collaborative.

Many video tutorials and worksheets were produced by Plugin music leaders to support young people's musical development in the period when neither face-to-face nor Zoom sessions could run. These were sent to settings on DVD but can be found on our YouTube here: tinyurl.com/PluginOnlineResources. All sharable Plugin videos and worksheets have been collated on our website at: <https://www.quench-arts.co.uk/plugin-project-resources>.

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/>

The Baring Foundation's 'Creatively Minded and Young' report in July 2020 including Plugin: <https://baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/creatively-minded-and-young/>

We have published 9 blogs on the Youth Music Network, written by our artistic team who we have given guidance on topics to write about:

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/maintaining-participant-led-approach-when-delivering-inclusive-music-online-paul-carroll-lead-music>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/importance-maintaining-provision-during-lockdowncovid19-katie-stevens-lead-music-leader-quench-arts%E2%80%99>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/engaging-participants-during-lockdown-james-stanley-lead-music-leader-quench-arts%E2%80%99-plugin-project>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/covid19-opportunity-explore-new-methods-and-technology-paul-carroll-lead-music-leader-quench-arts%E2%80%99>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/how-plugin-has-helped-me-develop-professionally-and-personally-katie-stevens-lead-music-leader>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/how-technology-helps-us-cater-towards-each-participants%E2%80%99-needs-dan-cippico-young-music-leader-quench>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/my-year-young-music-leader-holly-kehoe-kingsley-young-music-leader-quench-arts%E2%80%99-plugin-project>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/how-working-plugin-young-music-leader-has-helped-me-develop-professionally-and-personally-joe-clixby>

<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/my-first-6-months-plugin-project-madeline-kirby-youth-assistant-project-coordinator-quench-arts%E2%80%99>

Plugin Thanks

We would like to give huge thanks to all of the occupational therapists, support workers, nurses and other setting staff who have supported our participants to access project resources and Zoom sessions, often going above and beyond to make them happen. We would also like to thank our Plugin project team for their creativity, flexibility, hard work and tenacity this year.

Plugin Settings:

Birmingham Children's Hospital Parkview Clinic (Keeley Newton, Verity Jones, Rohesia Darkin);

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, Ardenleigh Forensic CAMHS (Lucy Papp, Ed Morelos)

Woodbourne Priory Hospital (Jilly McCarrick, Oliver Rees)

Forward Thinking Birmingham's Blakesley Centre (Kirsty Taylor, Maxine McLaney)

Forward Thinking Birmingham's Birmingham Road Mental Health Hub (Vicky Thomas)

Lead Artists:

Paul Carroll, James Stanley, Katie Stevens

Young Music Leaders:

Dan Cippico, Joseph Clixby, Holly Kehoe-Kingsley

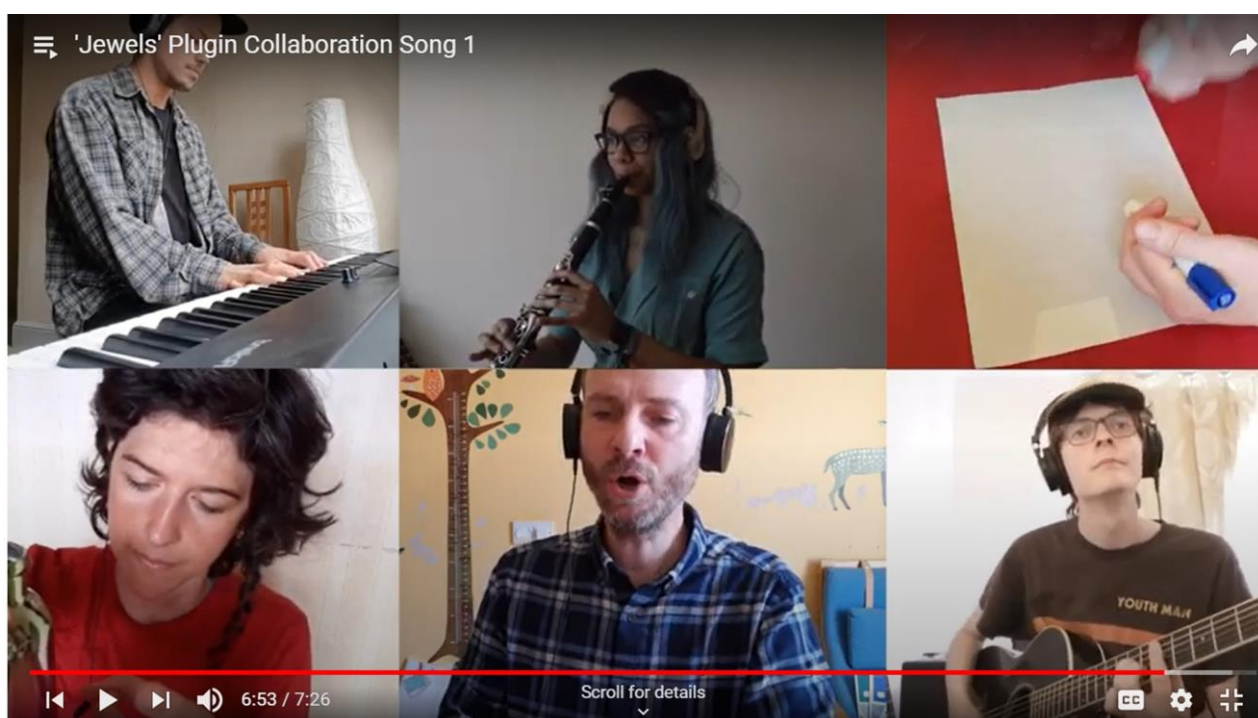
Young Assistant Coordinator:

Madeline Kirby

In addition, we would like to thank our project funders and partners who have made this project possible: Youth Music, Birmingham Music Education Partnership and project settings. Without this support, the project wouldn't be able to run and achieve the impact that it does, so we are hugely grateful for this.

We are especially grateful to Youth Music for the flexibility, understanding and support shown through incredibly difficult circumstances situation this year. Communications have been prompt, clear and relevant with genuine concern for organisations and staff in the sector.

Feedback from the whole Plugin project team mentioned how grateful staff are that Quench Arts, with funders' support, have been able to honour contracts and provide ongoing work, support and security throughout the pandemic. Without this support and understanding, the situation would have been considerably more stressful for all involved and, most likely, untenable.



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