

# Plugin

## Impact Report 2022-23



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## **Plugin Project Outline**

### **Project Aim**

To embed sustained music provision in the mental health support offer for young people in acute/forensic settings in Birmingham and Coventry and to share our learning and project impact across the West Midlands.

### **Project Outcomes & Indicators:**

#### **Musical: To improve participants' skills on instruments/voice/production software (as appropriate).**

- Participants report an improvement in their instrumental/vocal/production software skills.
- Music leaders report improvement in participants' instrumental/ vocal/ production software skills.
- Musical collaborations, evidencing participants have the musical skills to engage in duos/ensemble activity.

#### **Personal: To improve participants' emotional literacy.**

- Participants report an improvement in their ability to express their feelings through songwriting/music production.
- Music leaders report an improvement in participants' ability to express their feelings and emotions in project sessions.
- Occupational therapists and/or ward staff report an improvement in participants' ability to express their feelings and emotions through music.

#### **Workforce: To embed in setting staff and our emerging music leader workforce the skills and confidence to provide creative music making opportunities for young people with mental health conditions in inpatient settings.**

- Young music leaders' self-assessment of their skills and confidence in working in inpatient settings with young people with mental health conditions.
- Setting staff self-assessment of their skills and confidence in supporting music activities in their settings.
- 'Why Music?' trainees' self-assessment of their understanding of the value of music making in supporting wellbeing and recovery.

### **Project Background:**

2022-23 was the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Plugin project delivery but the 1<sup>st</sup> year of our new 'Fund B' grant from Youth Music, which will run until December 2024. The Plugin project provides access to music opportunities for young people aged 12-25 who face barriers to creative music-making due to being mental health inpatients. Using accessible music technology, Plugin develops musical skills and composition, whilst building participants' self-esteem, emotional literacy and social connectedness. Settings engaged in the Plugin project this year have included:

- Birmingham Children's Hospital acute and locked wards at the Parkview Clinic (Irwin – eating disorders ward; Heathlands – general adolescent mental health ward; Ashfield – locked, acute ward)
- Ardenleigh Forensic CAMHS unit (forensic child and adolescent mental health service hospital, medium secure) and Adriatic Ward (female adolescent low secure ward)
- Woodbourne Priory Hospital, Edgbaston (private CAMHS inpatient)
- Cygnet Joyce Parker CAMHS Hospital, Coventry (a new setting for this grant)

The project has focused on using creative music making to help develop participants' emotional literacy, to build self-esteem and support young people to connect with their peers. The musical focus/genre is steered by participants but initially, where appropriate for 'quick wins', accessible music technology has been used to support 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 express themselves and develop their communication skills. As participants gain confidence, they progress to using either industry standard music/production software, or to acoustic instruments and ensemble activities as appropriate to their interests.

Each of the 4 settings was scheduled to have a half-day session of 3 hours per week, over 34 weeks of the year, led by a Lead Music Leader (the musician in residence) and supported by a Young Music Leader. The plan was that settings would initially identify 4 patients to benefit from 45 minute individual creative music sessions each, with the potential to introduce pairs and small group activity where appropriate. However, at the Parkview Clinic and Cygnet Joyce Parker Hospital, which have higher numbers of patients and high demand for the project, additional group sessions have run alongside some individual sessions.

One-to-one and small group creative composition sessions developed to recording tracks for a CD and SoundCloud playlist and also to informal sharings in each hospital sharing the original work, providing participants with a sense of achievement and something tangible and positive from their stay in hospital. Weekly sessions have also supported participants interested in achieving a Bronze Arts Award to develop their portfolios.

In addition, to support musical inclusion, participants and their settings were provided with opportunities to be inspired by other young musicians. Each setting hosted 4 performances from visiting young musicians aged 18-25, giving them access to a live concert to review and also enabling them to connect and with young people outside of their settings. Provision has also been made to support ongoing musical engagement beyond hospital stays once the young people are discharged, by signposting participants to other musical opportunities, including Quench Arts' Wavelength project, if they are based locally, or to other music organisations funded by Youth Music if their homes are based outside of the area.

As well as engaging young people in Plugin activities on site, the project has also offered workforce development for music leaders and setting staff focused on building skills and confidence to engage young musicians in these settings.

### **Background Information Regarding Participants:**

Our participants are young inpatients in mental health hospitals. As such they have a variety of mental health conditions including: anxiety/PTSD/depression, other mood/psychotic/personality disorders (bipolar/mania/psychosis/schizophrenia/OCD), development disorders (Autism/ADHD) and eating disorders (anorexia/bulimia/binging). These conditions have often resulted in incidents of self-harm, addiction, suicide attempts and, in our forensic setting criminal/risk taking activities. This year, as well as having poor mental health, we have had young people with the following additional barriers take part: English as an additional language, looked after children, ill health, physically disabled, SEN, LGBTQIA+, NEET & young offenders.

Barriers to participation in Plugin mainly include confidence and motivation to engage, and often reduced concentration due to their condition and/or adapting to medication. Many of our participants have also missed a lot of education as a result and thus had reduced opportunities to interact with other young people and to develop their musical interests, and few opportunities to experience success. Whilst in hospital, young people can only generally interact with other poorly young people, limiting their development of social skills. Due to appropriate bed availability, young

people often find themselves initially placed 'out of area' for observation and treatment, miles from families/friends, causing further isolation and disruption of relationships and development of hobbies/interests. Young people may be confused about their identity, be coming to terms with a life-long condition and associated stigma, and feel a lack of agency.

Plugin has been designed to address these barriers: to offer shorter term engagement opportunities using technology for 'quick wins', to provide consistent staffing each week to build trust and rapport, to enable participants to engage with other young people through Young Music Leader roles and through young guest performer visits.

### **Project Delivery Summary for 2022-23:**

- 4 Young Music Leaders (YMLS) were recruited for Year 1 of this grant and undertook training to support lead artists in Plugin settings at:
  - Ardenleigh Forensic CAMHS
  - Birmingham Children's Hospital Parkview Clinic
  - Woodbourne Priory Hospital
  - Cygnet Joyce Parker Hospital in Coventry (a new setting for this grant).

All 4 settings signed partnership agreements for the project.

- All YMLs completed Autism Awareness training provided by Birmingham Children's Hospital, plus NSPCC safeguarding training, Quench Arts and hospital setting inductions. 3/4 completed Youth Mental Health First Aid Training by MHFAEngland.org (+1 lead artist).
- Our Plugin lead artists largely remained consistent from our previous grant but we appointed a new music leader for our Coventry setting, Chris Mapp, who has since gained the Head of Music role at Warwick University (based in Coventry)
- In total, 81 participants accessed 114 face-to-face & sharing sessions (1 session = 1 half-day split between participants/1-1s/groups). 16 sessions were focused on resource development/materials preparation for participants (due to Covid-19 restrictions). 43 were 'core' participants, attending more than 3 sessions. 16 guest visiting young musician performances/Q&As took place. 3 Arts Awards have been achieved (currently awaiting moderation).

A summary of sessions and young people engaged in each setting follows:

- Ardenleigh: 10 young people engaged (5 core), 28 face-to-face sessions, 4 guest performances, 1 sharing, 4 resource development sessions. Face-to-face session time was split into 66 x 1-1s & 3 group sessions)
  - Parkview: 20 young people engaged (13 core), 30 face-to-face sessions, 4 guest performances, 1 sharing, 2 resource development sessions. Face-to-face session time was split into 43 x 1-1s & 11 group sessions)
  - Woodbourne: 17 young people engaged (11 core), 30 face-to-face sessions, 4 guest performances, 1 sharing, 2 resource development sessions. Face-to-face session time was split into 110 x 1-1s & 4 group sessions)
  - Cygnet: 34 young people engaged (14 core), 22 face-to-face sessions, 4 guest performances, 1 sharing, 8 resource development sessions. Face-to-face session time was split into 25 x 1-1s & 25 group sessions)
- Covid-19 outbreaks have occasionally meant that delivery has been restricted to specific wards, or that our team haven't been able to attend in person. However, largely we've been able to

work around restrictions. Hospital staffing support has also been affected because of infections, and most are currently under-resourced, with high staff turnover.

- Data collection this year has been strong regarding attendance and observations against project outcomes. Our recording systems here are working well, with all comments per setting and individuals tracked against each outcome over time, which has helped inform case studies. Due to the numbers of young people engaged this year, which has meant more group activity, and also young people's hospital stays generally being much shorter, our participant self-assessed baseline tools haven't always been appropriate or possible to use, which has affected our impact measurement to an extent. However, data provided from hospital settings from their own tools for 4 young people per setting (e.g. Model of Human Occupation Screening Tools; Pupil Progress Data, Creative Participants tools) have helped show impact.
- Wider workforce development has been achieved (see partnerships section) and development support for our Plugin staff team has been strong. However, workforce development with hospital staff has been slightly delayed, due to staffing issues and turnover. All activity is planned for April, however:
  - Ardenleigh: we'll be running a session on using music tech hardware.
  - Parkview: we're running a general musical skills session multiple times so that staff on different shifts can access this. This will include how staff can support YP musically outside of sessions.
  - Cygnet: A Why Music? resource document will be given to all staff as part of their hospital induction; a session on general musical skills is planned for new staff.
  - Woodbourne: we'll be running a session on delivering Arts Award to staff not trained as advisors.

## **Plugin 2022-23 Analysis of Outcome Progress**

### **Baseline Analysis and Evaluation Material**

Our evaluation data has included sessional monitoring forms by music leaders (including participant comments and relevant staff observations documented against project outcomes); informal audio recordings of work in progress; team reflection and evaluation meeting minutes; evaluation feedback from training opportunities and performance visits offered; participant and setting staff evaluation forms at project year-end; Music Leader 'Do, Review, Improve' personal aims and participant case studies written by project artists and Quench Directors.

The following is a summary impact analysis of evaluation material collected from this year of the Plugin project, including via a creative baseline activity with 'core' participants taken, where possible, at the beginning, mid-point and year-end (or on discharge). Our baseline evaluation tools are devised to use creative and practical activities to engage participants in the process and to enable us to collect data to help us monitor progress and project impact. Participants have reflected on a range of musical, social and wellbeing indicator statements collated from sources such as Youth Music's evaluation questionnaires, the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), outcomes/mental health recovery star and Five Ways to Wellbeing nationally recognised tools. Data has been analysed on a cohort basis to give statistical results and has informed individual participant case studies. An example template for recording of participant responses to baseline activities is given below.

## Plugin: The Quiz!!

Your Name:

Date:

### Part 1: Your Music



**Qns 1 - 8:** In front of you is a mixing desk. Each fader is marked 1 – 7. Number 1 (the bottom) means you strongly disagree, number 7 (the top) means you strongly agree.

Fader 1 responds to question 1 below, fader 2 to question 2, etc. Please move each fader to show how strongly you agree with each question.

Your music leader will take a picture of you with your completed mixing desk for our evaluation records, or will write your answers for you on the sheet below.

Your Music	Disagree						Agree
1. I am pleased with my current level of musical ability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I have strong instrumental/vocal/ production software skills and technique (as relevant to your main musical interest)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I have the musical skills to collaborate with others (e.g. in a duo/ band/ensemble)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I have a good understanding of the different elements of music (pitch, rhythm, melody, timbre, dynamics, texture, harmony, structure, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I am good at making sense of what other people are expressing through music (e.g., thoughts, feelings and emotions)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I can express my thoughts, feelings and emotions through my own music making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I understand how music can affect my mood and/or motivation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I feel like music making allows me to be creative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Part 2: It's All About You! (You are the star here :-))

**Qns 9 - 13:** Below is a picture of a star. Imagine that you are the star. Each point of the star is marked 1-7. Number 1 (the inside) means you strongly **disagree**, number 7 (the end of each point) means you strongly **agree**. Please colour in each point of the star to show how strongly you agree with each question. Your music leader may ask you to explain your colouring to understand your answers a bit more.

Over the last month:

### Part 3: How you doin'?

**Qns 14-17:** We want to know a bit more about how you feel about your life to see if your involvement in the Plugin project changes this. Your Music Leader will show you a scale of 7 notes from low to high. Please play a **low** sound on the keyboard in front of you if you **disagree**, raising up to a **high** sound on the keyboard if you totally **agree**. There are all the notes in between if you think you don't quite agree or don't quite disagree. If you are totally unsure, you can press note 4. Your Music Leader may record your response or write your answers on the form below.

How you doin'?	No.
14) I feel that I have good social skills	
15) I feel that I am able to connect with other people on the project	
16) I feel that I am good at working in a team	
17) I feel motivated to progress musically	



### Part 4: Tell Us What You Want, What You Really, Really, Want!

#### Your goals for the project:

Looking at the headings on the petals, please have a think about how involvement in the project might help you. On each petal you can write a personal goal. Please fill in as many petals as you can (but you don't have to do all of them if you don't think they apply to you). Make sure your goal is specific so that at the end of the project we can see if it is met or still in progress!

How could my involvement in the project help me to...

Phew! Well done :-)

We'll revisit this quiz at the end of the project to see if things have changed.



Other baseline scales have monitored young music leader progression, with training evaluations and goal-setting reviews.

Unfortunately we only had 14 full participant baseline dataset responses for the year. Full sets of participant baselines have been difficult to obtain across 2022-23 due to the increased number of group sessions, quicker discharges (and often a lack of notice about these) and Covid19 disruptions. One of the key reasons for undertaking these baselines and endlines is in order to initiate conversations with young people and to gather contextual information, helping build rapport and trust with participants. For this reason, the activities work best when undertaken individually and face-to-face, so that non-verbal cues can be monitored and triggers identified. Though having only 14 full responses has impacted the statistical quality of our data evidencing progress, significant additional evidence confirms progression.

Working in mental health, Likert scale data can be greatly affected by how the participant is feeling at the time of baseline completion if, for example, they are having a really good/bad day, so we triangulate data to ensure multiple evidence sources (such as staff feedback, music leader observations, parental feedback) and also produce contextual case studies. Our staff discuss and document participants' thought processes when undertaking baseline activities as this conversation is incredibly insightful to contextualise unexpected changes. For example, sometimes a lower self-assessed score for the 2<sup>nd</sup> baseline, which might look negative, could mean that the participant now recognises that there is room for improvement through meeting and being inspired by more experienced musicians and has actually gained higher aspirations. Several case studies, as examples, are provided at the end of this document, with each project artist having written case studies on a selection of the core participants worked with. Participants' names have been coded in order to maintain anonymity.

Setting partners have also shared their young people's MOHOST assessments and/or patient progress profiles. This data has been used to triangulate other evidence of progression and also to inform participant case studies. Setting staff have completed evaluations about the project impact and this has also fed into case studies.

## Outcome 1

### Musical:

**Outcome:** To improve participants' skills on instruments/voice/production software (as appropriate).

**Indicators:** Participants report an improvement in their instrumental/vocal/production software skills.

Music leaders report improvement in participants' instrumental/ vocal/ production software skills.

Musical collaborations, evidencing participants have the musical skills to engage in duos/ensemble activity.

**Evidence:** Participant self-assessed baselines.

Music leader sessional reports.

Audio recordings, evidencing progress.

### Outcome 1 Progress:

Plugin has engaged more young people than originally expected this year (88 as opposed to 69), largely due to the high 'turnover' of patients at Parkview and Cygnet, with 43 being 'core' participants attending 3+ sessions (which is Youth Music's definition). Participant outcome progress has been strong.



Out of 14 full participant self-assessed baselines (before and after 'scores'):

71% showed improvement against 'I'm pleased with my current level of musical ability'. 47% of potential participant progression points were achieved (2 participants marked themselves at the top of the scale on joining)

79% showed improvement against 'I have strong instrumental/vocal/production software skills and technique'. 48% of potential participant progression points were achieved (2 participants marked themselves at the top of the scale on joining).

243 musical progression observations relating to 55 participants were documented by music leaders in sessional reports.

Performances from guest young musicians in each hospital have been incredibly powerful regarding the musical and social impact on participants.

Progress from each setting for Outcome 1:

### **Ardenleigh FCAMHS**

*"We had great successes in the acquisition of Logic X skills and digital music production by the participants, most of whom had very little to no experience to begin with. Participants who were less inclined to the technical side developed significantly in their lyric writing abilities and musical timing with their rapping. We also had some moments of instrument-teaching, with guitar and cajon.*

*Participant A1 was particularly invested in improving his music technology skills, which he outlined in his initial baseline with us at the start of the year. His scoring improved by 1-2 points in his musical, production and technical (terminology) knowledge over the year.*

*Session report from 14.06.2022: (A1) was keen to include a Spanish-style melody into his piece. Instead of using Apple loops, he wanted to add his own via the midi keyboard. He improvised over a loop that he set up and composed an interesting melody which had good shape and direction. He needed a bit of help with the technical aspect of the keyboard-playing, but he wasn't afraid to fail multiple times until he found something he liked. He not only showed an aptitude for rhythm and timing too, which we haven't really seen before from him, but a willingness to play in front of others.*

*Session report from 19.07.2022: (A2) was trying to communicate with us how he wanted his track to sound, so showed us a video on Ed's (Activity Worker) computer of an Afrobeat song. (A2) pointed out that the musical textures were quite minimal, so we went back to his track and removed some of the percussion parts where the vocal part would be. We added a 'build up' and a 'drop', which (A2) got really excited about. He said it was the best the track had sounded so far. He is becoming quicker and more confident in navigating Logic, which he has said previously he struggles with."*

Observations and examples regarding musical progression from Dan Cippico, Plugin Music Leader at Ardenleigh.

*"(Participant A1) became very fluent using Logic; we would show him a technique such as automation and then quickly he was using it in his own creative way."*

*"(Participant A5) often wanted to practice his bars with beats on (this was when we didn't have any tech so we couldn't record him but he was happy coming in writing lyrics and practicing to a beat). Over the sessions we could see him developing a better flow and being more inquisitive about his*

lyrics, trying to make sure they make sense and asking if people will understand the bars.”  
Observations and examples regarding musical progression from Kai Chareunsi, Plugin Young Music Leader at Ardenleigh.

### **Woodbourne Priory CAMHS**

*“The project was very successful for (Participant D3) at Woodbourne, who would like to continue learning music after leaving the hospital. They did have some basic musical experience already but tried playing guitar, electric bass, upright bass and keyboard. They focused on keyboard, where they learnt the chords and riffs to several of their favourite commercial Pop songs. Throughout the project they developed an ear for learning keyboard by ear and this was useful for independence and self-correction when practicing new material. Another participant (D1) was able to maintain their high level musical ability by practising flute, clarinet and bass accompanied by the Plugin music leaders.”*

*“I can play harder pieces and with less pressure.”* Participant D1

*“I really liked how you began with (D7)’s interests and played music he liked to find an ‘in’ when he was initially very reluctant to even come into the room! You engaged with him really well and let him lead whilst guiding in the right direction [smiley face].”* Phoebe, teacher at Woodbourne.

Observations, quotes and examples regarding musical progression from Paul Carroll, Plugin Music Leader at Woodbourne.

### **Cygnet Joyce Parker Hospital**

Due to the slightly sporadic attendance of participants at Cygnet it is difficult to make any real assessment about the development of musical skills in general. Of the long-term engagers:

Encouraging Participant B3 to set her poetry to music and take a role in arranging/producing was a big development in her musical skills. She had not previously considered herself a composer/creator.

Finally getting Participant B2 away from singing covers (see session report: 4th July) to develop a piece of his own (‘spooky piece’) was a significant development (see session report: 3rd October). He used music tech skills which we had shown him to create the piece and would not have been able to do this before the project.

Observations regarding musical progression from Chris Mapp, Plugin Music Leader at Cygnet.

*“Young people (such as Participants B2 & B1) learned how to use Cubase to create original work. They also learned to record and play samples into the DAW. They hadn’t done either of those things before.”*

Evaluation comment regarding musical progression from Shenâi Holgate, Plugin Young Music Leader at Cygnet.

Evaluation from the Head Occupational Therapist at regarding musical progress:

*“I think some young people have felt that their skills have improved, I think as a first year we have been finding our way in terms of this and would hope to see this embedded more in the second year.”*

### **Parkview Clinic, Birmingham Children’s Hospital**

Young people have definitely progressed musically as well as made their own reflections on this matter. For example:

Participant C1 has improved on the guitar, bass and vocals. He has also developed a better

balance in spending time for each discipline. Throughout the project it felt that guitar was not the focus and bass and vocals took the centre stage. (C1) was literally finding his voice musically as well as metaphorically speaking.

Participant C2 made a fantastic improvement in rhythmic development and musical memory through the work if using cajon. This contributed to obvious signs in increased wellbeing (gaining weight smiling, engaging in conversation, contributing to idea generation processes).

*"I did not think that I would be any good at playing cajon"* Participant C2

This quote was strengthened by a staff member saying, *"(C2) has really improved over the last few weeks and music session is something that really motivates him and puts him in a good mood"*.

Evaluation comments regarding musical progression from Meldra Guza, Plugin Music Leader at Parkview.

"Participant C2 at Parkview began the project as a relative musical novice and learned to play cajon from scratch. He is now able to create his own rhythm patterns, play in time with other musicians, improvise, and perform in front of others." Evaluation comment from Sam Strachan, Young Music Leader at Parkview

## Outcome 2

### Personal:

**Outcome:** To improve participants' emotional literacy.

**Indicators:** Participants report an improvement in their ability to express their feelings through songwriting/music production.

Music leaders report an improvement in participants' ability to express their feelings and emotions in project sessions.

Occupational therapists and/or ward staff report an improvement in participants' ability to express their feelings and emotions through music.

**Evidence:** Participant self- assessed baselines.

Music leader sessional reports.

Participant case studies, including occupational therapist/ward staff observations and assessment tool data.

### Outcome 2 Progress:

Out of 14 full participant self-assessed baselines (before and after 'scores'):

79% showed improvement against 'I can express my thoughts, feelings and emotions through my own music-making'. 67% potential progression points were achieved (2 participants marked themselves at the top of the scale on joining)

200 observations related to personal progress for 50 YP have been documented in sessional reports.

Progress from each setting for Outcome 2:

### Ardenleigh FCAMHS

Lyrics were often written about profound and inward-looking topics, and the participants we had were increasingly open to us about their experiences. They were all keen to find ways to communicate their personal experiences through music.

Session report from 11.10.22: Whilst engaged in a discussion around emotions in song writing, Participant A5 mentioned that he feels that with each new song he writes, he can talk more about his story and express himself in more depth. When asked why, he didn't know, but then suggested it was because he felt more confident in his ability and can see improvement in his work from before. Participant(s) response (post-session): *"I love just writing music here."*

Session report from 11.10.22: Participant A6 was very honest with us about how he feels when he creates music. When we were going through the baseline with him, he said that *"my medication stops excess dopamine coming into my brain, so for me, music brings me into an ascended state of mind."*

Session report from 31.05.22: Participant A3 became very animated when he began rapping, suddenly standing up and moving about a lot more. He began writing down his lyrics and talked about how he wanted to tell a story in his lyrics. He spoke a bit about how he wanted to create an anti-drug message and focus on something orientated in the ethics of his Christian faith. He became quite emotional when talking about this.

Session report from 31.05.22: Participant A4 had written some lyrics before the session, and also wrote some more in the moment, which I'd never seen him do last year. His English has improved, meaning he can explain to me a bit more about what he is trying to say. These lyrics are generally describing how he is searching for happiness, and trying to appreciate the things he has around him.

Evaluation observations and examples regarding personal progression from Dan Cippico, Plugin Music Leader at Ardenleigh.

*"(Participant A3) had big ups and downs in terms of his confidence in his ability as a rapper. There was one particular session in which he arrived rock bottom and by the end was feeling good about himself. His lyrics spoke a lot about his life and he was always very keen to make music that was truthful and honest. One song was about a guy called 'Ed' which I think was likely a pseudonym for himself."*

Observation and example regarding musical progression from Kai Chareunsky, Plugin Young Music Leader at Ardenleigh.

### **Woodbourne Priory CAMHS**

*"There was some success with outcome this at Woodbourne. In the first instance all young people chose how they would like to use their time in Plugin sessions. Whilst some participants enjoyed learning instruments and working with commercial material, both (Participant D6) and (Participant D2) wrote original tracks with powerful lyrics contemplating their current and future situations. Participant D2 in particular was very independent with this, continuing working on her track between sessions and using her own laptop to do so. Another participant (D1), after experiencing a more informal approach to playing music in Plugin sessions (as opposed to the intense instrumental training he had received to date) has developed a more pleasurable attitude towards music-making and even engaged with some composition, something they had rejected outright at the beginning of the project."*

*In their baseline self-assessment forms (D1) and (D6) both noted improvements in expressing thoughts and emotions through music."*

*"Music is a therapy for me so it has really helped my mental health overall."* Participant D3

Evaluation observations and examples regarding musical progression from Paul Carroll, Plugin Music Leader at Woodbourne.

## **Cygnnet Joyce Parker Hospital**

It is difficult to point to any general trends due to the way the participants accessed the sessions at Cygnnet. Two examples where I did witness this are:

Participant B3 going from not really wanting to participate/talk to us at all (session report on 3rd Oct), to actively bringing work along to the sessions and having conversations with us throughout (session report on 11th Nov)

Early in the project we worked with Participant B4. One of the first meetings I had with (B4) she appeared quite distressed and not able to engage with me/us. During the sessions she became more involved and joined in with singing. After a few weeks she started to be excited when we arrived on the ward.

Evaluation feedback regarding outcome 2 progression from Chris Mapp, Plugin Music Leader at Cygnnet.

*“Participant B3 wrote her first poem, which was about her experiences dealing with depression and suicidal thoughts. She made a comment on how it actually helped her to get everything down on paper and she had a clearer mind following.”*

Evaluation comment regarding outcome 2 progression from Shenâi Holgate, Plugin Young Music Leader at Cygnnet.

Evaluation from the Head Occupational Therapist at regarding musical progress:

*“I think that this (progress) is especially true for one young person who found their voice through the sessions we offered. We started to see this more with individual sessions but this was more difficult through the group sessions we offered.”*

## **Parkview Clinic, Birmingham Children’s Hospital**

Participant C1 showcased great development in expressing his feelings.

Participant C4 also developed a more balanced and relaxed manner in sharing her feeling/concerns related to food and eating (this was driven mainly by OCD based thoughts and worries around hygiene). She was able to discuss her sense of loneliness and isolation in comparison to others on the ward as she was in eating disorder unit, though the core of the problem was not food itself.

*“This session is the best part of my week. I feel that I am understood and I can express myself freely.”* Participant C1

*“Having the weekly chat with you guys has given (C4) a real boost and she is very much looking forward to every Monday evening.”* Comment from Participant C4’s parents

Evaluation comments regarding improvements in emotional literacy from Meldra Guza, Plugin Music Leader at Parkview.

*“Participant C1 from Parkview began the project with very little self-confidence and found it difficult to share feelings. By the end, he was able to express thoughts and feelings through songwriting, and reflect on these feelings. His confidence has increased dramatically, as has his resilience. For example, when rehearsing and recording songs, he was progressively more able to make mistakes without having a strong emotional reaction, and instead try again.”* Evaluation comment from Sam Strachan, Young Music Leader.

## Outcome 3

### Workforce:

- Outcome:** To embed in setting staff and our emerging music leader workforce the skills and confidence to provide creative music making opportunities for young people with mental health conditions in inpatient settings.
- Indicators:** Young music leaders' self-assessment of their skills and confidence in working in inpatient settings with young people with mental health conditions.  
Setting staff self-assessment of their skills and confidence in supporting music activities in their settings.  
'Why Music?' trainees' self-assessment of their understanding of the value of music making in supporting wellbeing and recovery.
- Evidence:** Young music leader music practitioner self-assessed baselines.  
Setting staff evaluation surveys.  
'Why Music?' trainee evaluation questionnaires.

### Outcome 3 Progress:

All 4 Young Music Leaders showed improvement in revisited baselines against: 'I feel I have the appropriate skills and confidence to work in inpatient settings with YP with mental health conditions'. 75% of potential progression points were achieved.

All 4 showed improvement in their before/after practitioner baselines against the statement: '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 (e.g., differentiation)'. 67% of potential progression points were achieved.

Music leader sessional reports noted 75 observations regarding workforce development progression (30 related to setting staff).

Setting evaluations have identified good progress towards this outcome:

2 of 3 settings\* stated that our aim, 'to embed sustained music provision in the mental health support offer for young people in acute/forensic settings...', had been completely met. Cygnet Joyce Parker Hospital felt it was 'somewhat met' (options: completely met/ somewhat met/ not sure/ not met/ not addressed at all). \*Please note: our Parkview Occupational Therapist is currently on extended sick leave and has been unable to respond to date.

100% said their knowledge of the benefits of music had increased due to Plugin (from options: yes/not sure/no).

2 hospital staff have complete Arts Award Bronze/Silver Advisor training.

Wider workforce development has been achieved (see partnerships sections below) and development support for our Plugin staff team has been strong. However, workforce development with hospital staff has been slightly delayed, due to staffing issues and turnover. All activity is planned for April, however:

- Ardenleigh: we'll be running a session on using music tech hardware.
- Parkview: we're running a general musical skills session multiple times so that staff on different shifts can access this. It'll include how staff can support young people musically outside of sessions.
- Cygnet: A Why Music? resource document will be given to all staff as part of their hospital induction; a session on general musical skills is planned for new staff.

- Woodbourne: we'll be running a session on delivering Arts Award to staff not trained as advisors.

Our learning and model has been shared via organisations/networks:

- Birmingham & Coventry Music Education Hubs (including 2 conferences: 29/4/22 & 15/2/23)
- Midland Metropolitan Hospital 'A Culture Sector Ideas Exchange' (this is a new hospital being built locally, 16.12.22)
- Birmingham Social Prescribing Provider Network (10/11/22 & 11/01/23)
- At a Sound Sense 'Community Music Connected' event (our presentation included Why Music?, our theory of change & supporting transition, whole life engagement, 17/10/22)
- At a training session with Wolverhampton University students (15/3/23)
- 8 blog posts have been shared on the Youth Music Network this year, written by our artistic team who we have given guidance on topics to write about (see links section at the end of this report)

Progress from each setting for Outcome 3:

### **Ardenleigh FCAMHS**

Our success with the Launchpad prompted the staff to purchase this piece of equipment for the young people:

Session report from 05.07.22: Ed (Activity Worker) was interested in how the sample pad connected to Logic and how we were able to create drum beats with it. He said he might consider getting one for the young people and wanted to know the cost. (Dec 22 - they have purchased one)

*"Ed (Activity Worker) was really great at carrying on work between sessions and in letting young people use the computer. Also a staff member, Tamika, was great at working with young people on their lyrics between sessions. She was very helpful with (Participant A3) particularly when he was feeling down on himself."*

Observation and example regarding musical progression from Kai Chareunsky, Plugin Young Music Leader at Ardenleigh.

### **Cygnets Joyce Parker Hospital**

This outcome been tricky at Cygnets. There have been the odd moments of staff joining in and singing/taking part or saying that they would like to be involved. However, there appears to have been a reasonably high turnover of staff in the time we were there which, when coupled with shift patterns, meant that the majority of the staff we saw were different each week. Katie (Head OT) and Kelvin (Activity Worker) were the most engaged in terms of facilitating the project but also in musical attitude/ability. They were often engaged with other things while the sessions were taking place due to their workload. However, some positive comments and reflections were given:

*"We need to go on Britain's Got Talent!"* was a comment made by staff, reflective of the fact that the project revealed to the staff the hidden talents of some young people

*"(Participant B2) can dominate the group a bit"* was a comment made by setting staff realising that the group-first approach might not be as effective as one-to-one sessions.

During the session on 27th June, one of the setting staff noted how different (in a positive way) the behaviour of the participants could be during the day time as compared to in the sessions. They were more focused, attentive and creative.



On the 14th November: when (Participant B3) brought in her lyrics for the first time and we went through them with music, one staff member was visibly moved and commented that she hadn't seen that side of (B3) before.

Feedback from Chris Mapp, Plugin Music Leader at Cygnet, regarding outcome 3.

### **Parkview Clinic, Birmingham Children's Hospital**

*"The best outcome has been seeing Sam (Young Music Leader) develop fantastic rapport with participants and being sufficient, sustainable in his practice and seeing his development in both practical skills as well as confidence and self-efficacy."*

Feedback from Meldra Guza, Plugin Music Leader at Parkview, regarding outcome 3.

"Elaine (Parkview staff) joined in with percussion during many sessions and is able to play in time and encourage young people to participate. She has expressed a strong enthusiasm for music, and effectively supported (Participant C2) to engage in the sessions." Evaluation feedback from Sam Strachan, Plugin Young Music Leader at Parkview

### **Quench Arts' Plugin Delivery Team Feedback Regarding Outcome 3:**

*"It has made me more keen to explore the pastoral/safeguarding route outside of music, but also has made me consider a route to getting a music therapy qualification...I have surprised myself with how smoothly I felt the integration of Ableton (in my setting) was. It has been hugely successful and my own time spent working with it has been very much worth it."* Music Leader

*"I developed my skills in Cubasis and Koala, both of which were new apps to me. I did this through using them each week in the sessions and spending time learning about them between sessions. This helped to influence the music-making as well as aiding my professional development."* Music Leader

*"I hadn't worked in a setting like this for a few years so it was good to be reminded of the benefits to the young people and to myself of doing work in a setting like this where access to creative outlets are highly restricted."* Music Leader

Regarding support for the Young Music Leader: *"Every session was concluded with a conversation discussing the success as well as the areas for potential development. Where challenging themes had been unravelled or unexpected situations arose, further MHFA style support was offered, with a mentoring element for better preparation for similar situations in the future."*

Regarding the impact of the project: *"It (the project) has continued to strengthen my belief in the power of music as a healing force. There is a lot of interesting reading on this subject but actually doing the work empowers me to keep on going and not stopping thinking of ways to support young people... Working with such a talented Young Music Leader has allowed to me really value the power of stepping back and facilitating instead of always coming up with the plan and driving the session at all times."* Music Leader

*"As much as possible, I want to work in settings that focus on facilitation of music rather than teaching. I think this style of music education suits me very well. I am now in a position where the majority of my education work is facilitation based which I'm enjoying a lot more. I am also starting to try to facilitate some outreach work myself...and will start delivering workshops soon...I think the areas I have most increased in confidence are developing positive relationships with young people, being prepared for sessions, and planning for sessions. This is largely due to being able to work with someone else more experienced and share skills; it is a great way to see how they deal with certain situations, or what types of activity they might pre-prepare and things they are able to*

*do on the fly... Going through the training provided as part of the role really helped me to develop confidence going into the setting....I feel that I have a bigger tool kit now to be able to work in a range of different settings from 1-1 to small groups...The role feels very much like it is designed to develop your skills and give experience which is exactly what I needed at the start of the project: the training was very good but also the way the project is designed with a 'lead' and 'support' system - it takes a bit of the pressure off at first and allows you to grow in an environment where you feel supported...It has given me the confidence to know that I can work with vulnerable young people, and go into settings such as a youth club and be comfortable and confident working with a range of young people. It has also made me feel confident in the others settings I'm in such as the PRU and SEMH schools where I see young people with a range of mental health conditions."*  
Young Music Leader

*"I improved my teaching ability greatly, learning about different approaches to instrumental teaching as well as composition/songwriting. I improved my tech skills, and by the end was able to confidently assist participants in recording, making beats, and adding new lines. I learnt about the importance of young people in these setting having regular contact with people outside of the hospital, both for familiarity and routine, and to be able to socialise with people outside of the small ward they are in. I improved my own communication skills, and was able to voice when I needed more support, which was greatly helped by Nic, Liz (Quench Directors) and (Music Leader)'s immense support...I still want to be a jazz bassist, although I have learnt so much about the use of music education, and particularly composition and improvisation, to help young people express themselves and aid in recovery that I would love to continue working in this field, promoting music not only as a hobby and distraction but as a valuable tool...I really feel like my confidence in running sessions has increased, which I credit to regularly reflecting on my practice and asking (setting Music Leader) or other Music Leaders frequently for feedback...The role was very clearly specified and worked very well. I felt like I had plenty to do without the pressure of always having to lead sessions, which was a great balance. There was lots of support offered to help achieve all responsibilities...I have improved my own creative practice through my experience with the young people at Woodbourne - they were inspiring in their determination to create music and reminded me that it was a joyful process rather than a stressful, arduous one...I was trusted by a number of the participants who felt comfortable enough to discuss issues of their stay in hospital, as well as other personal details, with me which was really rewarding. I feel incredibly lucky to have had the opportunity to offer a different kind of support to these young people - as someone who also has mental health issues, I could show them that it is not always going to be so bad. Many also related to me being gay, which lead them to trust me further...It was incredibly rewarding to be able to offer a different kind of support to the young people that they wouldn't usually have access to. I loved learning about the young people's interests and helping them achieve their musical goals, whilst also offering a different social aspect to their stay in hospital."* Young Music Leader

*"My awareness of the mental health sector and managing behaviour has greatly improved since the beginning of the project as Plugin was a new experience especially in these areas. I had done some teaching previously but never in the mental health sector nor with young people who have specific needs and requirements...I think that having a lead music facilitator aided my development and helped me to grow at my own pace without pressure or anxiety to be perfect. Now I feel as though I could lead a session independently as a result of having guidance. I now know how to plan lessons and create materials with efficiency which has helped in my current jobs. Additionally, dealing with behaviour management has been easier than it would've been without the experience of Plugin...I am most proud of the interpersonal relationships created with the young people and being able to have an impact on their lives and love of music. This is what created the certainty regarding my career choices. I believe that myself and (the lead music leader) worked well together. Overall, there was a good dynamic and we both brought different skill sets to the table. He always kept me in the loop regarding session plans and the young people and involved me in the whole process. He has helped in my development as a musician in*

*regards to flexibility and creative spontaneity. I have even become more confident on the bass which was an instrument I rarely touched prior. The best part of the experience was definitely how the sessions varied from week to week. Each week there was a new focus or a new young person to work with which kept things feeling fresh and exciting....My level of confidence has never been so high. This experience has made me realise I can teach and I can make a difference. In the past, I have stayed in jobs that I hated or I wasn't suited to just due to a lack in confidence regarding taking the first steps and a leap of faith.”* Young Music Leader

*“The project has created opportunities for me to develop at every turn. I feel that my skills and confidence have improved greatly. I do feel that I have more to learn about the mental health sector, with respect to its size and my regular contact with a single hospital setting; I've learned through the project that I have a lot left to learn! I felt that the role worked well. I understood what was expected of me at the outset and felt supported throughout. The late time of the session worked well with my other professional commitments...It has changed the way I facilitate throughout my practice. I feel more confident generally, and more able to navigate sensitive conversations with young people. I hope to work on further mental health sector/youth music projects throughout my career...I am most proud of the connections I formed with participants. I believe that these connections made it easier for young people to express their creativity and be more resilient when they faced challenges. For example, one young person began Plugin sessions with a very self-deprecating mindset, and apologised profusely/became anxious when they made mistakes. By the end, they were able to eloquently express themselves, take ownership of their creativity and perform comfortably in front of others. I am proud of what they achieved...I have been inspired by (Lead Music Leader) to explore my professional boundaries, and to enact effective self-care after difficult sessions. I have also learned new skills in music tuition, music production and songwriting facilitation...Seeing the participants succeed was the best part of the project for me. Observing evidence of greater resilience, trust in themselves and self-advocacy was a deeply life-affirming experience...I have already arranged further projects in the mental health sector, and am keener than ever to pursue this work. The project has inspired me to connect with more young people and to develop my practice as a creative facilitator.”* Young Music Leader

## **Additional Outcomes**

### **Improvement in Self Esteem**

#### **Ardenleigh FCAMHS (observations by Music Leader, Dan Cippico)**

Participant A3, who struggled considerably with his mental health and self-esteem regarding his musical abilities, often had days where he came in and didn't want to do any music whatsoever. However, with gentle encouragement, he would often come round to the idea and we'd practice freestyle rapping or continue writing a track together. After a particularly difficult start, we had a positive session and a comment from (A3) at the end:

Session report from 07.06.22: (A3) comments at the end of the session as he walks out the door:

*“Today's been sick lads, can't lie, thank you. I will pay you both to make music for me.”*

Dan (music leader): *“Don't worry about that, just come next week and we'll do it all again.”*

Participant A3: (Puts his hands together) *“God bless you both.”*

When Occupational Therapist Ellie was walking him back to the ward, she asked (A3) – *“What do you think of the music you're making?”* to which he replied, *“I'm super proud of it.”*

Other success in raised self-esteem can be seen with participants A1, A2 & A3:

Session report from 07.06.22: After coming away from the session, Ed (Activity Worker)

mentioned that (A1) was 'bigging up' his music to the other young people in the ward common room.

Session report from 02.08.22: After spending most of the session working on the structure and texture, (Participant A2) was getting increasingly excited about the track, dancing along as we worked on it. Finally, we played it from the start, and without prompt, (A2) started singing his lyrics over the top with the most confidence I'd ever heard him. We both danced along to the track, and it finally cemented the place in which his lyrics were to sit in the track. For him, the music finally matched the energy of the lyrics and what he had in his mind from the start.

At our sharing session, after the performances from visiting musicians Shenâi and Sam (young guest musician performers), I asked (Participant A3) whether he wanted to share any of his music. When I had asked him in the morning, he didn't want to, but this time he got up and tried an acapella freestyle in front of us, the participants and two staff members. It wasn't very long, and he got embarrassed quickly, so sat back down. I admired that he wanted to get up and perform after being so unwell in the morning session, and that he felt like it was a safe space for him and that he was inspired by the visiting musicians. When he sat back down, (Participant A5) quietly said to him "Don't worry man, that was great".

### **Woodbourne Priory CAMHS (observations by Music Leader, Paul Carroll & hospital staff)**

*"In their baseline self-assessment forms Participant D3 and Participant D6 both noted improvements in self-confidence. Participants D1, D2 and D3 also showed marked improvements in collaboration and in connecting with other people."*

*"I loved seeing how you engaged two new learners using their own music interests. Even though they were both lacking in confidence, getting them both to play along to a simple part was a great way to start and find a small success!"* Phoebe, teacher at Woodbourne.

### **Cygnets Joyce Parker Hospital (observation by Music Leader, Chris Mapp & hospital staff)**

Participants B3 and B2 are good examples of demonstrating increased self-esteem through the course of the project. They were both really pleased to get a good reception to their pieces at the sharing, whereas at the beginning of the project they both said that they weren't interested in sharing music with anyone outside of the room.

## **Main Successes**

### **Ardenleigh FCAMHS**

The quality and diversity of tracks created with the young people. Each track feels like a true representation of their individual personalities, experiences and tastes. They were all so happy with what they created, too. There was a real sense of pride from them when we finished a track.

Another success was the strong relationships we formed with the staff and participants. There was great communication between us all and it meant that our delivery was tailored to each participant to ensure they could thrive in each session.

The sharing sessions have been hugely successful, far more than I expected. Our young people were so respectful of the visiting musicians and engaged with them very well.

Ed (Activity Worker) said how grateful he is that Quench can bring in professional musicians to the setting. He said he wasn't sure how the participants were going to react, but was surprised at how well mannered, positive, and engaged they were with staff and the visiting musicians. Participant A3 after hearing visiting musician Shenâi: *"That was the best performance I've ever heard. It was like could feel the song in my heart and the voice in my soul."*

Evaluation feedback from Dan Cippico, Plugin Music Leader at Ardenleigh.

*“I think our biggest success was to continue delivering without the appropriate equipment (because of the setting restrictions); it was important for the young people that we were still there and we adapted very well. For example, all of our sessions with Participant A5 were without the correct equipment and he still got a lot out of it...For me the highlight was seeing the final tracks on the CD that we were able to make with the young people. I think having something like that to show for the work put in is a great achievement, and I have been taking this idea of making a CD into other settings, where I’ve compiled people’s songs onto CDs and given them copies.”*

Evaluation feedback from Kai Chareunsi, Plugin Young Music Leader at Ardenleigh.

### **Woodbourne Priory CAMHS**

*“The learning, practice and creative work of the Plugin project culminated in a really good sharing at the end of the year, enjoyed by the young people and staff watching as well as the young people who took part in the project, with lots of applause and positive feedback to affirm to the latter how much they had achieved on the project.”*

Evaluation feedback from Paul Carroll, Plugin Music Leader at Woodbourne.

### **Cygnets Joyce Parker Hospital**

The main successes of the project at Cygnets have been:

- Helping to develop a sense of creativity/curiosity in some of the participants: B5, B3, B2, B6 (to some extent).
- Raising the profile of music as a valuable/valued part of the treatment/experience of the young people’s time at Cygnets. This is through the weekly activity and the sharing which enabled some of the admin staff to see the young people’s development.
- Introducing a different strand of arts activities into the unit.
- Seeing the participants who were able to engage over a longer period of time be able to find an outlet for self-expression.
- Giving Katie (Head Occupational Therapist) confidence in the process of creative music making in this way as opposed to starting a band or learning an instrument in isolation.
- I think the inclusion of Young Music Leaders on this project was an excellent idea and something which benefitted the project as a whole as well as the Young Music Leaders themselves. Specifically, I think Shenâi (Young Music Leader at Cygnets) was invaluable in helping to establish a rapport with some of the young people. Equally, I think the project really helped to open Shenâi’s eyes to what working in a setting like this can be like. I think it’s been a really valuable addition to this project to have Young Music Leaders supporting. Having another person in the room can really help to stimulate ideas and keep the sessions moving when they inevitably become stuck.

Evaluation feedback from Chris Mapp, Music Leader

*“The main success of the project was definitely seeing young people who didn’t have an interest in music at the beginning, start to make music a part of their life to the point they would practice instruments outside of the project... I believe Plugin should be an ongoing project at settings across the country and a part of treatment packages in mental health facilities. Most of the young people said that there wasn’t anything else like Plugin happening during the week and seeing as though it has helped so many I believe it should last longer...”*

Evaluation feedback from Shenâi Holgate, Young Music Leader

Evaluation from the Head Occupational Therapist at Cygnets stated that the main successes were:

- Several young people engaged who had historically not engaged with other therapies offered within the hospital.
- Several of the young people wrote tracks which were featured on the CD.

- One young person discovered a passion for poetry through the project.  
*“We’ve seen some of our young people grow and blossom through accessing the Plugin project. The project has opened up opportunities to express themselves through their writing, but we have also seen their self-esteem increase through these sessions. The young people have been motivated to continue engagement with the project as they have felt they have benefitted from this.”*

### **Parkview Clinic, Birmingham Children’s Hospital**

It was great to have Verity’s (Occupational Therapist) support and general guidance on any issues happening. It was also nice to have the double sessions with performances in the summer.  
Evaluation feedback from Meldra Guza, Music Leader

### **Main Challenges**

#### **Ardenleigh FCAMHS**

The internet breach on the iMac was the biggest challenge here, alongside the instability of the participants’ mental health, which seemed considerably worse this year. Some of the participants were discharged without warning, so we didn’t get the complete revised baselines with them.  
Evaluation feedback from Dan Cippico, Music Leader

#### **Woodbourne Priory CAMHS**

The project was very popular this year, which was great but meant that weekly sessions were short for each participant and the afternoon felt rushed for the music leaders. In addition, it was difficult to gain any momentum or outcome with some young people because the turnover of patients at Woodbourne is sometimes quick, a matter of a month or two. Also, due to the young people being more interested in learning instruments and working with commercial material we were slow to get anything original created for the end of project CD.

I did suggest the young people could do longer sessions every other week but it turned out that the shorter sessions were more appropriate for the majority of participants’ energy levels and attention spans anyway. As far as creating material for the CD is concerned, we offer a participant-led approach and I do not think that imposing a more creative element on young people who did not want it would have been productive and could have impacted on attendance.

I always felt supported by (Quench Arts Directors), who were always available on the phone if necessary. The teaching staff at Woodbourne were great too - we could trust that (they) would prepare the young participants for attending in advance of each visit. It helped that Wednesday afternoons were our regular weekly slot too so the young people knew what to expect. Visits were more challenging in the holidays when the teachers were off but this year ward staff were more helpful than previous years. The one challenge was the length of time it took to complete monitoring forms on the days when four, five or six participants attended.  
Evaluation feedback from Paul Carroll, Plugin Music Leader at Woodbourne.

#### **Cygnnet Joyce Parker Hospital**

The main challenges of the project at Cygnnet have been:

- The constantly evolving number of participants. I don’t think any two weeks were the same until the very end when we just had Participant B3.
- The impact of doing the sessions in the evening. Most young people wanted to relax/go on their phones/sleep in the evening or come to the sessions because they were bored, not necessarily because they were interested in music.
- Staff not completely understanding the goals/aims of the project and trying to round up as many people to come as possible each week rather than focus on those who had the most interest/potential to get something from the project.

- The high turnover of staff meant it was quite difficult to get any consistent support.
- It often felt like we were an inconvenience being there rather than a bonus, partly due to the shifting spaces but also due to the number of times people were surprised that we were there when we turned up! I feel that Shenâi (Young Music Leader), myself and Quench did as much as we could in terms of being flexible and offering solutions. The main issues seemed to be in communication with the unit and in the unit. I'm not sure how you begin to deal with these in order to make the project run more smoothly in the future. The project has been managed brilliantly overall and I have never felt like I couldn't get support if I needed it. Quench have done a fantastic job in creating and managing a project in a very difficult environment and have done everything they can in supporting us to help to deliver it.

Evaluation feedback from Chris Mapp, Music Leader

*"The main challenge was the consistency of attendance. We wouldn't always have the same attendees each week so it would be difficult to complete work or see a clear change or development in some of the participants."*

Evaluation feedback from Shenâi Holgate, Young Music Leader

Evaluation from the Head Occupational Therapist at Cygnet stated that the main challenges were:

- Ensuring continued engagement from patients who wanted to take part in the programme, this has been mainly due to changes in their mental state.
- Making sure that there are enough (hospital) staff available to facilitate the groups/sessions – we are looking to bring the group earlier into the day so that we have more staff available to facilitate.

*"I think as a service we still have a long way to go towards embedding this into the service. Although, the Plugin project is well known and talked about with our staff members."*

### **Parkview Clinic, Birmingham Children's Hospital**

Our main challenge was around engaging the young people in group work as there were often small numbers of people present and challenges around consistency was an issue (this was very much due to the challenging circumstances each person was in). Group work really often depends on who is available to participate in sessions and sometimes it works and other times it does not. Having been in Parkview for a few years on numerous projects we have had very diverse outcomes for group work.

Evaluation feedback from Meldra Guza, Music Leader

## **Reflection**

### **Partnerships**

Our hospitals partnerships have been largely positive though at times we've all had some frustrations regarding the ongoing impact of Covid-19 which has occasionally meant that specific hospital wards have closed to visitors. Also, hospital staffing absences/departures across our settings have increased staff pressure, reducing capacity, so our team haven't always had the consistent supervision and support that we'd like. However, most partnership commitments have been fulfilled, Activity Coordinators and Occupational Therapists have been 'on board' and positive about the project, and the vast majority of sessions have been able to go ahead face-to-face. This consistent project offer and input has really benefited the participants.

Our main challenge this year has been introducing a new partner, Cygnet Joyce Parker Hospital in Coventry, to Plugin activity. Our team and their staff have been 'finding our feet' as to what delivery structure works best across their different wards. We've accommodated their wish to engage as many young people as possible which, as young people tend not to stay more than a few weeks to a month here, has created some challenges regarding participant retention/



consistency and supporting progression. Having now been through a full project year and seen the benefit and impact of longer term, 1-1/small group engagement, the hospital is now more open to a mixed approach, with some 1-1/small group support for longer-term inpatients, and some larger group session delivery.

## **Reflection on Challenges & How These Will Inform Future Delivery**

### **Participant Attendance**

Whilst it is positive that more young people than expected are benefitting from Plugin, consistent attendance has been lacking. Partly this is due to the nature of the settings and young people being too unwell to access sessions some weeks, and also because of the transient nature of the young people based on our wards. However, there has also been a tendency for our two busiest settings (Parkview and Cygnet), potentially for ease because of staffing levels, to want to engage everyone on the wards that week in group sessions which has meant different people each time, limiting progression. Next year we have altered the timing of sessions at both these hospitals to make things easier for consistent staff to support sessions and hopefully to ensure that fewer sessions are affected by participants being on home leave. We have also suggested that the 3 hours be split into 2 hours of individual or pairs sessions with participants, with only one hour of larger group sessions.

### **Challenges In Widening Our Delivery Into Coventry**

Due to bank holidays, slightly fewer sessions were delivered than originally planned. However, to fill the artist roles in Coventry, we had to pay these music leaders a higher rate to cover the additional travel time commuting from Birmingham as we were unable to recruit any Coventry-based musicians (1 young music leader was signposted from Coventry Music but actually lives in Birmingham and ended up working locally because of his availability). Therefore, the session delivery underspend was used to cover additional travel time. In 2023 we will recruit a local Young Music Leader. The lead music leader will continue to receive a higher fee, covered by underspend/cost of living grant.

### **Forensic Setting IT Challenges**

We have had an issue in our forensic setting this year in relation to the iMac that this hospital purchased some years ago to support music provision. Unfortunately, outside of our project sessions and whilst being supervised by a hospital staff member, somehow the security provisions put into place have been breached and a young person was able to access a Wi-Fi account and make contact with someone in the community, breaching their Home Office requirements. Unfortunately, the computer has been confiscated by the police for further investigations and access to IT equipment has been significantly restricted for the young people in hospital, which is looking likely to impact our delivery into next year. We may need to purchase some additional equipment to use in this setting, which will mean re-organising the project budget and using money from other planned activities.

### **Bespoke Training for Each Hospital**

Staffing shortages and staff turnover at the Plugin hospitals has meant that the annual bespoke training for each setting has been difficult to organise as the settings haven't been able to release staff to attend. However, these should be delivered in April.

We will alter our approach to training in the hospitals for next year. Instead of 1 full afternoon of training in each setting we are planning to split this into 3 shorter sessions this year, and to offer this training multiple times within the different staff meetings at each hospital, so as to benefit staff on all shift patterns. As a positive this will engage all staff in the training and ensure that the whole hospital workforce is aware of the project. The disadvantage is that the training will be shorter and

less in-depth because of the time limitations. We hope that by 2024 staffing challenges will have been addressed in order to revert to the original plan.

### Outcome Progress

Lead contacts from settings were asked to evaluate progress against our project outcomes.

Feedback showed:

Outcome 1: 2 settings felt this was somewhat met; 1 felt it was 'completely met'.\*

Outcome 2: 1 setting felt this was somewhat met; 1 felt it was 'completely met', 1 was 'not sure'.\*

Outcome 3: 2 settings felt this was somewhat met; 1 felt it was 'completely met'.\*

\*Please note that our Parkview OT is currently on extended sick leave and has been unable to complete the evaluation for our reporting deadline.

Whilst there are some exceptional examples of progress against outcomes 1 and 2 in all settings, we feel this hospital feedback reflects the challenges we've had in supporting strong progression for all with inconsistent engagement. We've made amendments to our session times and delivery structure to address this.

### Participant Case Studies

Below are selected case studies detailing the progress of 13 participants recruited onto the Plugin project this year. These case studies have been written by the lead music leader working with the participants in sessions and refer back to sessional monitoring forms (with participant comments and feedback), informal audio recordings of work in progress, participant/trainee evaluation forms for each project element and participant baselines/evaluations as evidence for any observations made. In addition, where possible, contextual information and feedback about the impact of the project for each participant has been obtained from health professionals/ carers/ family with permission, in order to gain a wider context. Some of these sample case studies are stronger than others in regards to evidencing project impact but they have all been included for project learning. Participant names have been coded to maintain anonymity.

#### Participant A1

*Written by Plugin Music Leader Dan Cippico.*

Participant A1 was a patient at Ardenleigh FCAMHS and had some musical experience already. He was initially very reserved when we first met him, but we developed a strong relationship by the end of the project.

Whilst completing his initial baselines, it became clear that (A1) was invested in improving his skills, saying *"[I want to] push myself to create music that combines all the genres I'm interested in"* alongside statements such as *"I want to keep pushing myself in my technical knowledge", "[I will] work on my music in between sessions to develop my skills independently"* and *"I know I have a lot of learn, and I want to learn more"*. A1 scored himself on all questions regarding his musical ability and mental wellbeing as an average between 4 and 7 (on a scale of 1-7).

One month into the project, (A1) was already developing his Logic Pro X skills:

*Session report extract from 10.05.22: "(A1) had a detailed look at using effect samples to accentuate the transitions in his music. His workflow is getting quicker and he is gradually learning where the tools in Logic are. He also remembered some music tech terminology he learnt from last week's session."*

Gradually, (A1) became more confident by taking ownership of the controls:

*Session report extract from 24.05.22: "For the first few sessions, if we were giving advice to (A1)*

*about how to do something in Logic, he would move back away from the mouse and keyboard, letting us take control to show him. Now, he doesn't move away, and allows us to point to the screen to show him and he follows."*

(A1) also began to not only fuse his favourite genres into his music, but develop his instrumental skills:

Session report extract from 14.06.22: *"(A1) was keen to include a Spanish-style melody into his piece. Instead of using Apple loops, he wanted to add his own via the midi keyboard. He improvised over a loop that he set up and composed an interesting melody which had good shape and direction. He needed a bit of help with the technical aspect of the keyboard-playing, but he wasn't afraid to try multiple times until he found something he liked."*

After finishing two original tracks with us, (A1)'s confidence had increased significantly and he was beginning to make music in his own time. We consequently had a conversation about exploring a more advanced music-making route:

Session report extract from 19.07.22: *"(A1) today suggested that he wanted to create a remix using stems\*. I think he is looking for a challenge to push his musical skills and technical proficiency."*

*\*a group of audio tracks that individually comprise an original recording of a single instrument or vocal take, that when played simultaneously sound the entire song. In this context, disco hits from 1980's were disassembled into stems to create a remix.*

In the final months of the project, we introduced into the sessions music hardware and a new digital workstation, which (A1) took to with confidence. We revisited (A1)'s baselines with him at the end of the project year, which revealed an upward rating in his answers, with A1 self-assessing himself between 6 to 7 (on a scale of 1-7) for all statements. (A1) noted that he had started working on music outside of sessions, in school and in his own free time, and felt like he had been able to explore new genres in his music compositions. In addition, he felt that he had developed good skills in playing keyboard and acquired advanced Logic Pro X skills such as EQ and audio editing.

## **Setting Feedback**

MOHOST (model of human occupation screening tool) observations are undertaken by the occupational therapist team at Ardenleigh FCAMHS. They assess progress in 6 key areas: motivation, pattern of occupation, communication and interaction, process skills, motor skills and environment. Each area is assessed as either 'facilitates occupational participation' (F), 'allows occupational participation' (A), 'inhibits occupational participation' (I), or 'restricts occupational participation' (R). (A1)'s engagement shows progress in his engagement over time in his music sessions, particularly looking at the written comments on his final MOHOST:

- Under 'motivation' he is assessed as mainly an 'A', with one 'I', with comments such as "keen to show staff his work",
- Under 'patterns of occupation' he is assessed as mainly an 'I', with one 'A', with comments such as "looks forward to the sessions every week and shows settled behaviour throughout the sessions";
- Under 'communication and interaction' he is assessed as 'I' but with comments such as "able to stay focussed in the session and is appropriate in his vocal expression. He listens and communicates well."
- Under process skills his assessment shows a range of scores between an 'A' to and 'R' but "utilises the equipment well and concentrates well in the sessions. He is able to problem solve but asks for help when needed."

- Under 'motor skills' his assessment has balanced feedback between 'I' and 'R' but he "moves well when needed in the sessions and works and adapts well to the task in hand. He shows to be aware of the space in the sessions."
- Under 'environment' his assessment shows that he is mainly an 'R' but in music session he "appears to be comfortable when engaging in the sessions, is able to interact well with the musicians and expresses and interest in music."

*"(Participant A1) has shown improvement in his musical abilities and has experimented with different kind of equipment such as a guitar and synthesizer. He seemed to be in good spirits after each session and gains a lot from these sessions and always looks forward to attending."* Ed Morelos, OT Activity Worker, Ardenleigh Forensic CAMHS

Participant A1's two tracks on the Plugin project CD can be heard at:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/03-3-pointer-rombert?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/03-3-pointer-rombert?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)  
[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/09-boutique-beats-rombert?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/09-boutique-beats-rombert?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)

## **Participant A2**

*Written by Plugin Music Leader Dan Cippico.*

Participant A2 was a participant at Ardenleigh FCAMHS who was involved in the project last year. We weren't made aware of any specific issues or needs that he had prior to our sessions. Last year, he began creating an Afrobeat track which was never completed. We'd also written some lyrics with him on paper and had begun learning guitar and ukulele.

(A2) was late to join the project this year, and on first session, arrived with the lyrics that we'd written together last year. Despite the paper being rumpled and folded, he had kept it safe, as he wanted to eventually use these lyrics for an original song. This greatly impressed us and we had a further look:

*Session report extract from 5.07.22: "Despite not seeing (A2) for over a year, he had specifically asked to have sessions with us again recently... (A2) had some lyrics that Kai (Young Music Leader) and I didn't understand, which (A2) explained were names of African dance moves. He showed us these moves, and how they fit in time with the music. He is incredibly keen to continue our sessions, and is very personable with us, also giving some music recommendations to listen to."*

Often (A2) would write about relationships and would describe how he wanted to embed his music with emotional lyrics related to his experiences.

We began to work on (A2)'s Afrobeat track from last year together. He knew very little musical terminology, so found it best to show us an example of what he wanted from his music:

*Session report extract from 19.07.22: "(A2) was trying to communicate with us how he wanted his track to sound, so showed us a video on Ed's (Activity Worker's) computer of an Afrobeat song. (A2) pointed out that the textures were quite minimal, so we went back to his track and removed some of the percussion parts where the vocal part would be. We added a build-up and a drop, which (A2) got really excited about. He said it was the best the track had sounded so far."*

Eventually, (A2) became more proficient in his music-making using Logic Pro X, and also more confident to try out ideas:

Session report extract from 2.8.22: “(A2) verbally described to me certain effects or textures that he wanted in his music. I showed him how to make these changes himself by using basic mixing and automation skills. This was also a good opportunity to introduce to him some musical terminology to better describe the effect he wanted in his music. He sometimes still panics when he accidentally makes a change he doesn’t mean to but is becoming far more confident in using the program. He was making lots of suggestions as we went along, with an open attitude to whether his ideas would work or not.”

As well as being a great lyricist, (A2) also had good rapping skills. These were not hugely developed, and he had no confidence in showing us whatsoever. We instead focused on the production of his track, until he was ready to add his vocals:

Session report extract, again from 2.8.22: “After spending most of the session working on the structure and texture, (A2) was getting increasingly excited about the track, dancing along as we worked on it. Finally, we played it from the start, and without prompt, (A2) started singing his lyrics over the top with the most confidence I’d ever heard him. We both danced along to the track, and it finally cemented the place in which his lyrics were to sit in the track. For him, the music finally matched the energy of the lyrics and what he had in his mind from the start.”

(A2) was suddenly discharged after a few months, so we couldn’t get a final baseline from him. I have instead suggested on a baseline where I believe (A2) was at the end of our time together:

(A2) had rated himself as a 4 (on a scale of 1-7) for both statements ‘I am pleased with my current level of musical ability’ and ‘I have strong instrumental/vocal/software skills’ at the beginning of our time together. By the end of his engagement, considering his development with his voice and him becoming more proficient in Logic X, I have rated him as a 5 for both.

Where (A2) had rated himself a 3 (on a scale of 1-7) for ‘I’ve been feeling like I can cope with challenges’, I have rated him a 5 at the end of his engagement. This is considering the way he learnt a lot of technical computer skills quite quickly during the project, even down to navigating turning on the computer, and the opening, saving, and closing of Logic Pro X. He would often panic when he couldn’t find the right option, or made a mistake, but became calmer throughout our time together and by the end had more confidence in taking control of the equipment.

Participant A2’s track on the Plugin CD can be heard at:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/06-shaku-shaku-daz?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/06-shaku-shaku-daz?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)

### **Participant A3**

*Written by Plugin Music Leader Dan Cippico.*

Participant (A3) was based at Ardenleigh FCAMHS. He was often in a very low mood and would be very open about his feelings and emotions which were often very negative, leading him to spiral downwards mentally in sessions, and sometimes disclosing details about his case which led to him being at the hospital. We identified this as a pattern of behaviour that we tried to divert each session, using our Mental Health First Aid training skills, and giving (A3) encouragement to channel his emotions into lyric-writing.

Staff would note that (A3) was comfortable in our sessions and were pleased that he was able to vocalise his feelings as he got to know us more. Staff member T also supported (A3) outside of our session time to write lyrics and poetry, which he would bring to our sessions to record. This staff support made a significant difference in (A3)’s productivity in sessions and in his general perception of his abilities. Staff member T also accompanied (A3) in sessions which also helped.

Staff member E also gave (A3) good support during sessions, encouraging him to get involved in activities and giving positive affirmations regarding his musical ability and mental wellbeing.

(A3) was quite positive at the start of the year, giving high scores on his baselines and setting goals such as being self-sufficient in setting up the recording gear and knowing how to make his vocals sound professional through production techniques. For the first month, we focused on developing (A3)'s lyric-writing with the aim to eventually record his vocals to a track. A few sessions in, after writing a few lines of lyrics about a personal experience, (A3) revealed to us some details about his life and had reflected on it:

Session report extract from 3.5.22: *“Kai (Young Music Leader) asked (A3) about what his lyrics meant, and (A3) explained that he used to smoke a lot of cannabis which made him unwell, and said he wished he'd never done it. (A3) stressed how important it was for him to be able to write lyrics that he could relate to and were relevant to his experiences.”*

(A3) would often come into sessions with a low mood and would tell us how disinterested he was in doing anything creative. We would give him support and make the session as relaxed as possible, often ending in positive results:

Session report extract from 24.5.22: *“Despite not wanting to record anything initially because of his low mood, by the end (A3) recorded a whole freestyle after being inspired by a track I showed him that was written by a previous Plugin participant at Ardenleigh. Whilst practicing his freestyle, his voice became louder and more confident the more Kai (Young Music Leader) and I encouraged him.”*

A similar situation that was recorded later in the year:

Session report extract from 25.10.22: *“Worthy of note was (A3)'s unexpected willingness to stay for as long as he could. He came in saying he was tired and didn't feel creative, promising he'd stay for half an hour maximum. He stayed with us for just under 2 hours.”*

(A3) often felt like his rapping skills fell short and he would often complain of 'losing the flow'. He would then refuse to rap for several weeks, in which we would give him encouragement, until we had a breakthrough and he would engage again. Staff member T would support (A3) in between sessions in the time he wasn't engaging with us and would write poetry with him.

In developing (A3)'s ability to channel his feelings into lyrics, we discovered that he also had a faith, which he wanted to include in his songwriting:

Session report extract from 31.05.22: *(A3) became very animated when he began rapping, suddenly standing up and moving about a lot more. He began writing down his lyrics and talked about how he wanted to tell a story in his lyrics. He spoke a bit about how he wanted to create an anti-drug message, and focus on something orientated in the ethics of his Christian faith. He became quite emotional when talking about this.”*

In the next session, we talked about how we could better focus his lyrical message:

Session report extract from 7.6.22: *(A3) is getting better at focusing what his lyrics are about and the message he wants to get across. He is keen to use Biblical references in his music to underline the Christian influence in his music.”*

This particular session prompted a positive response from (A3) whilst he was walking back to the ward accompanied by staff member E. E asked (A3) as they were walking away from the session, *“What did you think of the music you're making?”* (A3) said: *“I'm super proud of it.”*



(A3) found himself expressing very complex emotions in our sessions, and fundamentally wanted to write music that had a positive message which others could take something from.

In line with his original goal of getting proficient with technology, (A3) began learning the basics of recording:

Session report extract from 17.5.22: “(A3) learnt how to adjust the microphone stand and plug in the XLR cable to the microphone. Kai (Young Music Leader) and I are going to introduce the set up process step-by-step with (A3), so that he can be self-sufficient by the end of the project.”

(A3) also began to take an interest in production, which we explored in the middle of the project year:

Session report extract from 5.7.22: “(A3) is beginning to show an interest in mixing – what he’s calling ‘blending’. He is beginning to learn how to adjust volume of his tracks to balance his vocal and the backing track. I also introduced to him the idea of vocal doubling, and how to record it in himself.”

We sadly never got a revised baseline from (A3), as his mental health declined towards the end of the project year. He refused to complete the baseline activities despite encouragement and support from us and setting staff, so I have made some suggestions as to where I think he was at the end of our time together:

(A3)’s perception of his ability was often at odds with reality, for example, I have rated his answer to, ‘I am pleased with my musical ability’ as changing from his initial self-assessed 6 at the beginning of the project (on a scale of 1-7) to a 4, but in reality, his vocal skills improved significantly over the course of the project. (A3) was also aware of how much work he had to do to improve, which I think would have influenced his answer had he completed the final baseline himself.

## Setting Feedback

MOHOST (model of human occupation screening tool) observations are undertaken by the occupational therapist team at Ardenleigh FCAMHS. They assess progress in 6 key areas: motivation, pattern of occupation, communication and interaction, process skills, motor skills and environment. Each area is assessed as either ‘facilitates occupational participation’ (F), ‘allows occupational participation’ (A), ‘inhibits occupational participation’ (I), or ‘restricts occupational participation’ (R). (A3)’s engagement in sessions in his final MOHOST showed:

- Under ‘motivation’ he is assessed as mainly an ‘A’, with comments such as ‘he works to the best of his ability, is keen to show staff his work, is able to ask questions and concentrates well in sessions’
- Under ‘pattern of occupation’ he is assessed as mainly an ‘I’, with comments such as ‘he is willing to try new things, he looks forward to the sessions every week, he shows settled behaviour throughout the sessions’.
- Under ‘communication and interaction’ he is assessed as all ‘I’s, with comments such as, ‘he demonstrates this (non-verbal communication) well’, he is ‘appropriate in his vocal expression’ and ‘he listens and communicates well in the session’.
- Under process skills his assessment shows a balance of two ‘I’s, one ‘A’ and one ‘R’, with observations stating, ‘he utilises equipment well’, ‘adapts well to the task at hand’ and ‘is able to problem solve but asks for help when needed’.



- Under 'motor skills' his assessment has a balance of 'R's and 'I's, with observations such as 'he shows to be aware of his space in the sessions and 'moves well when needed in the sessions'.
- Under 'environment' his assessment is mainly 'R's, with comments such as, 'he works well on his own', 'he is able to interact well with the musicians', and 'he expresses interest in music.

*“(A3) was already musically minded before the sessions and has benefited a lot from the programme. (A3) uses this well (music to show his emotions) and shows to have an ability to write lyrics as it relates about his life experiences. He continues to do this outside of Quench sessions.”*  
Ed Morelos, OT Activity Worker, Ardenleigh Forensic CAMHS

Participant A3's track on the Plugin CD can be heard at:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/16-delusions-lil-hunch?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/16-delusions-lil-hunch?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)

## **Participant D1**

*Written by Plugin Music Leader Paul Carroll.*

Participant D1 was at Woodbourne hospital for the entire length of the Plugin 2023 (April - December) residency, which was unusual for patients there, who are often discharged within two months. He was very happy at the prospect of working with two professional musicians and sharing with us his existing abilities in reading music and playing classical flute and clarinet and pop songs on bass guitar. In his first session it was clear that he was well experienced and motivated to continue to improve his playing ability. He was not interested in collaborating with any of the other young people and was clear that he disliked composing new music. Over the weeks, as we got to know the setting, it emerged that (D1) was known by staff and some of the patients for challenging behaviour on the ward. However, we did not experience any such behaviour during Plugin sessions, nor when passing (D1) on the ward. (D1) responded very well to the participant-led approach that Plugin offers.

(D1) attended most weekly sessions and, if he missed any, this was usually as a consequence of negative behaviour on the ward. However, (D1) attended enough sessions to fully benefit from the project, during which he played plenty of classical and commercial pop music with the lead artists, completed work for a Bronze Arts Award qualification and did, in fact, compose some flute music of his own through improvisation within a musical scale.

In his first session, without having anyone to play with recently, (D1) hadn't had the opportunity to play his instruments for some time. Therefore playing in front of the Plugin artists, who he had only just met, was a challenge in itself. However, (D1) rose to this and did a great job. In each session (D1) chose the music that he played and brought his own musical score or bass tabs to practise his sight reading. During the project he practiced classical pieces such as Sonata by C Saint-Saens on clarinet and Tambourin by Francois-Joseph Gousse accompanied by Plugin young music leader Amy on piano. (D1) also challenged himself further on the bass by working on songs such as Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen and Sir Duke by Stevie Wonder.

The music (D1) chose was deliberately challenging and (D1) was independent with ensuring his continual learning at Plugin. With his existing music skills and experience (D1) was able to collaborate with the Plugin artists on the same intellectual level and enjoyed doing so, probably more so than if there was a teacher / pupil dynamic. (D1) was able to share and listen to many anecdotes about playing music as well as getting meaningful and positive feedback from professional musicians. Amy's (Young Music Leader) classical experience complimented (D1)'s experience and so he was able to take on board feedback from her and work on improvement. The sessions were thus rewarding for him. In his third session he remarked that he had made

progress on the bassline for Sir Duke and by session 6 he was fluent with it. From there, further development was possible and in session 12 (D1) improved the swing of the middle 8 of Sir Duke at Amy's suggestion. The following week (D1) was pleased with the "tone" of his flute playing. And as the project progressed it was clear that his stamina and accuracy on flute and clarinet were improving.

Alongside the subsequent raising of (D1)'s self-esteem through these achievements, the Plugin sessions were also a respite for (D1). Session 20 came during a bad week on the ward for (D1). However he remarked at the end of a shorter session than usual that he felt a bit better. Teacher Charlotte who hadn't seen many Plugin sessions before that day said, *"It's nice to see (D1) relaxed. He's not usually relaxed on the ward."*

(D1) was better in the following weeks as he proactively worked on the parts of music he thought needed practice and began speaking about future goals to join the junior Conservatoire ensemble and be in a pit band.

There were some sessions when Amy (Young Music Leader) brought her double bass in with her because she had a rehearsal or gig afterwards. (D1) was allowed to try the double bass for the first time. He also sometimes challenged himself to learn electric guitar. It was interesting to see (D1) asserting himself whilst out of his comfort zone and working hard on new instruments.

As part of the Bronze Arts Award, (D1) planned and delivered an introductory clarinet lesson, covering how to put the instrument together and how to play a scale. He also worked with new flute music, which Amy (Young Music Leader) brought in, further practising his sight reading skills.

In session 22, (D1)'s mum was on the ward so he got to play in front of her. By this time (D1) had become more relaxed in sessions and the musical material was becoming more like "second nature". (D1) appeared to be finding enjoyment in playing music for playing's sake, without the pressure to continually improve, which he put on himself (and I gather had been put on him).

By session 26, (D1) felt comfortable enough to have a go at creating his own music through improvisation, prompted by an accessible process, which Amy introduced. Over the next two weeks, (D1) showed that he was confident in identifying scale degrees, adjusting tuning and improvising rhythms and said that he enjoyed the process (see the session report from 9 Nov 22). He also seemed to make a new connection in his mind between improvisation and composition and will hopefully not avoid composing his own music in the future. We recorded two improvisations with Amy accompanying on keyboard, playing the sounds (D1) chose. (D1) picked his favourite piece to be included in the 2023 Plugin CD and named it 'Yellow Paper' after the pieces of paper that Amy had used to prompt the improvisation.

In session 29, (D1) had a session without Amy but was still motivated to practise flute unaccompanied, playing with a good steady tempo (see the session report from 23 Nov 22).

(D1) enjoyed meeting young guest performers Sam and Shenâi and these sessions opened up conversations about fashion, image and identity.

On reflection at the end of the project year (D1)'s baseline self-assessed scores for musicality were mostly similar because he had rated himself so highly in the earlier stages of the project. But the one area that D1 did feel they had improved in was in the ability to expressing thoughts, feelings and emotions through music making, which he increased from a 3 to a 6 (on a scale of 1-7). Scores were also similar in areas of self-confidence except for feeling able to cope with challenges, which went up from a 4 to a 6. And I was delighted to see that Participant D1 felt that he was better at connecting with people after Plugin, scoring himself from a 4 at the beginning and a 6 in the final form.

In his feedback about the project, (D1) said that he was most proud of being able to play Sir Duke on the bass. He enjoyed playing with others at Plugin, particularly Amy (the Young Music Leader) and felt less stressed, adding, “*I can play harder pieces and with less pressure.*”

Participant D1’s ‘Yellow Paper’ track on the Plugin CD can be heard at:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/14-yellow-paper-ollie?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/14-yellow-paper-ollie?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)

### **Participant D3**

*Written by Plugin Music Leader Paul Carroll.*

Participant D3 took part in most of the Plugin project in 2023 (May - December). When we met them they had some experience of making music on previous music projects and had existing keyboard, guitar, singing and production skills. They could play two or three chords on guitar and played a piano part from a song by Xxxtentacion, which they’d taught themselves using YouTube. (D3) was reluctant to sing for the entire duration of the project and wanted to focus on learning more guitar and keyboard, mostly the latter. They followed their love for Billie Eilish and learnt guitar, bass and keyboards for songs such as ‘Ocean Eyes’ and ‘Bad Guy’ and in doing so showed focus and motivation, and an impressive capability to retain new skills. Throughout the project, (D3) expressed the desire to continue with music after being discharged from hospital, intending to use it to help others whilst pursuing a career as a nurse.

It was apparent that (D3) had low self-esteem but responded well to praise from both Plugin and hospital staff and as (D3) learnt to play new music they were always keen to show it to staff members afterwards. It was good to see in session 4 how pleased they were with themselves after working hard on the keyboard, improving quickly and remembering the guitar chords and bass notes they had learnt so far. They said the session had given them a boost. The project was also a good opportunity for (D3) to play alongside other musicians and their sense of timing, internal count and listening skills improved throughout the year.

On keyboard, (D3) quickly added the left hand and after session 5 was proud to play with both hands for staff. (D3) also took on the challenge of working on their own chord progression. They said they weren’t good at decisions but at the same time it was clear that they knew which ideas they did like and which they didn’t. (D3) found two chords on the keyboard they thought sounded good in sequence and enjoyed learning how to play them as broken chords and arpeggios. They also explored melodies to add to the chords. Paul (Music Leader) and Amy (Young Music Leader) suggested some bass guitar and drum kit ideas to go with (D3)’s music and (D3) made strong decisions about which they thought worked best.

Throughout the process, (D3) was very focused and pleased with themselves and said themselves in session 8 that it was in Plugin sessions that they were at their calmest. In session 9, (D3) engaged with the young guest Plugin artists, who were performing on the ward that day. (D3) asked questions and was keen to show the visitors their own music. The resulting positive feedback further boosted (D3)’s confidence. They were very eloquent about how live music was good for young people recovering from mental illness.

Around this time, (D3) began to show more of the soft musical skills, being independent in knowing after how many bars to change chord and looping back to the first chord perfectly. When playing with Amy and Paul (Music Leaders), if (D3) struggled at all and stopped playing, they showed awareness of where the rest of the band were in a chord progression by coming back in on the right chord.

In session 11, (D3) had a go at writing some lyrics. They said they wanted the lyrics to be about their journey, and how they can inspire others to do the same. They disclosed their story to Amy (Young Music Leader) and Katie (Cover Music Leader), who was covering for Paul (the regular music leader) that day. (D3) said they didn't want to create something triggering, but instead motivational and positive. That day, (D3) came up with the following:

*I'm coming to the end of my journey  
Finally, I've made it  
It was a long road ahead to recovery*

*I want to inspire you  
Because better days are coming  
Keep fighting those battles  
for the person you're becoming*

*I can make it, so can you  
You might feel alone, but you're not*

Despite starting on music of their own, (D3) still missed learning commercial songs so the lyrics didn't get put together with instrumental work (D3) had created. Nonetheless, the lyrics were brilliantly reflective, emotional and expressive.

Instead (D3) continued to improve their keyboard skills, challenging themselves further and further. In session 13, (D3) became frustrated with not being able to play something they'd just learnt perfectly. However, they didn't give up.

Sometimes Amy (Young Music Leader) would bring her double bass in because she had a rehearsal or gig afterwards. D3 tried playing this a number of times, showing an excellent ear for pitching when playing this fretless instrument. The newness of the instrument didn't prevent (D3) from playing in time to their recordings on piano.

By session 20, D3 had the confidence and ability to work out melodies and chords by ear with a little support (see session report: 12 Oct 22). They were able to learn two of the melodic layers for a new song Mami by Sylvan Esso on piano. For a few weeks around this time, (D3) was out visiting colleges as they explored education options for after they were discharged.

In session 23, (D3) created quite a lot of original ideas by taking part in Amy's composition exercise, which Paul recorded. Here (D3) showed they had developed a good knowledge of the C major scale when talking in numerical terms (i.e. 1 is C, 2 is D, etc.) (see report from 9 Nov 22). (D3) played some double bass for their new piece, plucking and bowing. Back on keyboard, when adding a melody, (D3) showed great intuition in their writing, as well as strong rhythm when recording to a metronome.

For a second piece of music made in the same way, D3 added a bassline on electric bass and made decisions about the mix and production of the track. This was on a day when they said they were struggling with focus and attention. They named the second piece 'GoOd SoUp' and chose it to be included on the 2023 Plugin CD.

In the final reflection session, (D3) completed a baseline form where they self-assessed various aspects of their musicianship, confidence and social skills. It was good to see that they marked themselves improved in all areas, particularly in making sense of what others are expressing through music, in their ability to cope with challenges, their overall satisfaction with themselves, having much to be proud of, and having good social skills and motivation to progress musically. (D3) said

they “*learnt lots of keyboard skills*” and have “*more confidence in connecting with others*”. Their favourite thing about Plugin was having the support of Paul and Amy, adding, “*Music is a therapy for me so it has really helped my mental health overall.*”

Participant D3’s ‘GoOd SoUp’ track on the Plugin CD can be heard at:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/08-good-soup-eden?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/08-good-soup-eden?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)

## **Participant D6**

*Written by Plugin Music Leader Paul Carroll.*

Participant D6 was admitted to Woodbourne showing some very vocal and challenging behaviour, so much so that it wasn’t appropriate for him to attend Plugin sessions for the first few weeks. When he did start he came with three support staff and began to remove his clothes when we listened to a 50 Cent track. However, amongst all the initial chaos, (D6) in the first place had the motivation and confidence to come in to find the Plugin artists when they were visiting and ask if he could come and make some music.

(D6) had no experience of playing instruments, writing lyrics or singing before the project and only joined with 13 weeks of the project year left. By this time the Plugin sessions at Woodbourne were very popular so individual sessions were only about 25 minutes long. However, by the end of the year (D6) had produced his own music using a keyboard and Logic Pro X audio software, written and recorded a fully structured song of lyrics and performed it in front of his peers and hospital staff.

At the beginning of his engagement, (D6) was still distracted by mental health symptoms and needed time to respond to questions. Musically he showed some sense of rhythm when exploring drum and synth sounds on the keyboard and made decisions about what sounds he liked. (D6) used the piano roll in Logic to build up an electronic percussion beat and arranged the percussive layers so the beat built up from the start of the track. By drawing in and deleting different sounds in his percussion loops (D6) made sure his music was as good as he could get it. (D6) used the keyboard to play a bass part, finding what he liked through exploration and improvisation.

In time, (D6) continued to be hands-on with Logic and was happy with the instrumental element of his track. He then moved on to writing lyrics, something he got fully absorbed in and only needed a little support with. First, he wrote some general words and sentences to do with what he wanted to write about. From here he started to form lyrics and pick lines he felt were the strongest for the chorus. They ooze with confidence and determination:

*“Came from nothing on my way to the top,  
Pushing out rhymes cuz I’m the king of hip-hop  
Taking my time, the only option is winning,  
Losing ain’t my game, this is only the beginning”*

Participant D6 used Logic to loop and audition different sections of his track and decide what should be a verse and what should be a chorus. When it came to recording his lyrics, (D6) showed good rapping skills, transferring his lyrics well from paper to mic. Some lines were difficult to rap rhythmically but (D6) worked hard at making them work, fine-tuning the lyrics to fit with the beat and so that they said what he wanted to say. The song was an excellent positive outlet for (D6)’s emotions. Much of the it is about (D6)’s life and told us about things like living in different places when he was growing up.

By his fifth session (D6) was in the flow of sessions, despite there being a new and challenging participant who had been admitted to the ward that week. (D6) continued writing his lyrics and practicing rapping. His vocal power grew stronger throughout the following sessions (see session report: 9 Nov 22) and as he wrote more lyrics he continually found vocal rhythms to fit them into the tempo and feel of his track. Once the lyrics were in place, (D6) wanted a bit more production doing with his track and he asked Paul (Music Leader) to help. (D6)'s ideas helped improve the introduction of the track, which is called "This is It" and is included on the 2023 Plugin CD.

(D6) was committed during preparations for a live performance on the ward. He rapped standing up for the first time and sounded fantastic (see session report: 30 Nov 22). The song had been recorded in sections and pieced together but when practicing, (D6) had no problem in rapping his song all the way through, with great timing and accuracy of lyrics. The performance itself went equally well and (D6) had the presence of mind to censor out a couple of inappropriate words. His song brought a huge applause from his peers and hospital staff.

On reflection in the last session of the year, (D6) completed some self-assessment baseline activities, comparing various aspects of his musicianship, confidence and social skills before and after the project. Most of his scores improved and, if not, stayed the same. Of note was his self-assessed progress in expressing his thoughts, feelings and emotions through music and for being able to do things as well as most other people, both of which climbed from 3 to 6 (on a scale of 1-7).

(D6) was very thoughtful about what he had achieved during the Plugin project, taking his time to note that it had helped him get active by giving him the opportunity to make beats and perform music. He also said he felt he connected with Paul (Music Leader) and Amy (Young Music Leader) during the process of making his music and that he learnt a lot about lyric writing and a bit about music production. Overall he said that his Plugin sessions were enjoyable and interesting and he enjoyed both learning and doing beat making.

Participant D6's track, 'This Is It' on the Plugin CD can be heard at:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/17-this-is-it-tylerbankz?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/17-this-is-it-tylerbankz?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)

## **Participant D2**

*Written by Plugin Music Leader Paul Carroll.*

Participant D2 joined the project with some existing experience of singing, playing keyboard and music production software. She was reluctant to sing at first but keen to play the keyboard and use GarageBand to explore her own ideas. In terms of timescale, (D2) was more typical than some of the longer term Woodbourne participants, being on the ward for just 7 sessions of Plugin. However, by the time she was discharged, she had, with a little support from Paul (Music Leader), Amy (Young Music Leader) and Katie (Cover Music Leader), written and recorded a song about moving on from a painful situation.

In her first session, led by Katie because Paul was off, (D2) quickly came up with a verse and chorus structure using two chord progressions on piano. She seemed to find composing very rewarding and really liked what she had made. She'd never written a song before so this straight away was a big step for her. (D2) only needed minimal support with her writing and an accepting, encouraging space. She knew when her keyboard playing didn't sound right and corrected herself.

In the second session (D2) met Paul and, although still enthusiastic about her song so far, was uncertain about starting to write lyrics. It was once again a session where she needed to feel comfortable before expressing herself, so much of this was (D2) talking about her life, showing us



pictures of her cat and herself (see session report: 14 Sept 22). She did learn about inversions of chords and how these could make playing the chords to her song on the piano easier.

In the next session we recorded (D2)'s song into GarageBand on her own laptop and, in doing so, (D2) confidently played to a click track. Then Amy (Young Music Leader) added a bassline and Paul showed (D2) the 'Drummer' drum making tool in GarageBand. (D2) used this tool to find a drum beat she liked and at the end of the session she was happy with her progress.

(D2) still wasn't comfortable singing in front of us but instead surprised us by finishing off her lyrics and recording them on her own, before the next session. Even though she wasn't totally happy with her singing, she played her recording for us anyway. The song is very personal and emotionally expressive (possibly rejecting religion - bold subject matter given we believe (D2)'s dad is a church minister).

(D2) had used the built-in microphone on her laptop and we agreed that it would sound better if she used a proper vocal mic. In the process of re-recording the song, (D2) had the chance to perfect her vocals, as she started to feel more comfortable with the material. In quick time (D2) sang her song confidently all the way through. When we listened back, (D2) was visibly happy with herself (see session report: 12 Oct 22). The song is called 'Take Things Slow' and is on the Plugin 2023 CD. It's a short song but (D2) was firm in her decision that it is finished as it is.

In (D2)'s final session she wasn't feeling very positive, potentially because it took a longer time than (D2) expected for her to be discharged from the hospital and she was supposed to be gone already. She completed her final baseline anyway, self-assessing how she felt various aspects of her musicality, self-worth and social skills had changed over the period of taking part in Plugin sessions. She gave herself top marks (on a scale of 1-7) for all areas of musicality except for 'collaborating with others', which we were pleased to see she felt was better than when she started Plugin. (D2) didn't note any change in areas of self-worth but this was probably down to her mood that day. She did however express a marked improvement in how able she now felt able to connect with other people.

Participant D2's track, 'Take Things Slow' on the Plugin CD can be heard at:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/04-take-things-slow-holly?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/04-take-things-slow-holly?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)

### **Participant B3**

*Written by Plugin Music Leader Chris Mapp.*

During the project Participant B3 was a long term inpatient at Cygnet Joyce Parker CAMHS hospital. She transferred on to an adult unit at the end of 2022. (B3) has mental health issues which affect her ability to express herself verbally, her self-confidence and her ability to make relationships with new people. She has a history of self-harm.

(B3) joined the project about half way through, initially coming as part of a 3-4 person group where she seemed like she did not enjoy herself. I worked with her playing a bit of keyboard but she seemed fairly uninterested and did not really want to engage with me. We then didn't see her for a little while but eventually she came back on her own for a one-to-one session (3rd October - playing some keyboard chords). She was obviously curious about music making but didn't really want to admit this and didn't want to let her guard down. She mentioned an interest in trying to write lyrics but did not believe she could do it. After a few sessions of building her confidence and trust by playing guitar and keyboard she brought in a fantastic poem which drew on elements of her own life/personality but she maintained was a fictional work.



When (B3) brought her poem in she told us that she felt she was being “very brave” by doing this and that she hadn’t shared her words with anyone else apart from one support worker in the unit. It was obvious that (B3) had a talent for writing and that what she had needed was an opportunity to demonstrate that in a safe and supportive environment. I feel that we had managed to create this environment for (B3) over a number of weeks of careful and focussed work building her confidence.

The finished piece showed (B3)’s musical development as she helped to arrange and record the final version. It also shows a development in her self-confidence and self-expression (11th Nov - arranging the piece with me and Shenâi, the Young Music Leader). (B3) was proud to share her work with the staff and her peers as well as sending it to her dad to listen to. I believe that we have given (B3) the confidence (in the short term if nothing else) to keep on writing and developing material past the end of the project.

### **Poem written by Participant B3: I Became A Victim To A Season**

A victim of a season, I was going to become  
It was the night before, my pen touched the paper, and I began to write  
Words poured onto the page like the blood pouring down my arm  
Words such as I love you dad, mum this isn’t your fault and someone love the dogs  
Everyone says why, everyone says it’s selfish but, once you’re gone, everyone wants you back  
Everyone says you cause them stress, everyone says your better off dead  
But when you’re gone everyone is begging for you back, in shock that you went through with your plan  
How could a 17 year old want so badly for their life to be gone?  
A life filled with dread and fear and I’m scared of what is near  
For years I was a person of survival but now I’m a girl who is suicidal

I felt judged and pressured by things like society, and this is probably why I suffer from anxiety  
Years spent at school trying to be perfect but in reality I was just a high school reject  
They call me names like fat b\*tch, sl\*g and other sh\*t that I won’t repeat, it’s that bad  
Threats every time I logged in, no matter what device it was, here we go again  
I was alone, wishing for a friend or wishing it would end  
But it didn’t, it never did  
Constant reminders whenever I felt good, reminding me that I was just nothing  
Every time I was up they kicked me back down  
It was like a never ending merry go round  
Just hold on, they say to me, I’m begging this all becomes a past memory  
If I stumble or fall  
I will never let down my wall  
I cry until I’m numb  
Then I stumble to the gun  
The trigger against my head  
I will soon be dead  
I became a victim to a season.

With setting staff, this poem was then taken and, together with the participant, worked on to create another perspective:

Sometimes I might feel suicidal  
I’m better than that, I’ll be an image of survival  
Self-love, self-care, yes it’s vital

You get one chance in this life, one title  
Forget about the pressures of society  
I ain't about to be a victim of no anxiety  
Give love to the ones that inspire me.

Setting feedback regarding progress:

*“Prior to the beginning of the project (Participant B3) had some existing music skills, however working with the project helped her to build on the skills that already existed. (B3) created a piece of spoken word poetry that was featured on the end of project CD. Prior to creating this, (B3) had struggled to convey some of her feelings around her experience to the therapeutic team on the ward, however she proudly shared this with many members of staff to help them understand how her mental health affected her. (B3) was incredibly proud of the piece of poetry she had created and shared it with her peers and staff members; she continued to write other poems after the end of the project and found beats online that she could use as a backing track. She also proudly shared these poems with therapeutic staff on the ward.”*

(B3)'s MOHOST (Model of Human Occupancy Screening Tool completed by Occupational Therapists) assessment showed some progress from October 2022 to December 2022:

- Motivation for occupation (progressed from 10/16 to 15/16);
- Pattern of occupation (progressed from 10/16 to 15/16);
- Communication & Interaction (progressed from 9/16 to 12/16);
- Process skills (stayed consistent at 12/16);
- Motor Skills (stayed consistent at 16/16);
- Environment (stayed consistent at 12/16).

Participant B3's track, 'Victim Of A Season' on the Plugin CD can be heard at:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/07-victim-of-a-season-ellie?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/07-victim-of-a-season-ellie?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)

## **Participant B2**

*Written by Plugin Music Leader Chris Mapp.*

Participant B2 began the project on Mermaid Ward which tends to have patients in the short term, a few weeks to a couple of months. During the project he made the transition to Dragon Ward and remained there until the end of the project. (B2) is very enthusiastic and excitable and tended to dominate a group. The reasons for him being at Cygnet were never revealed to us by the staff or (B2) himself. From what I observed, he has some issues with turn-taking, behaving appropriately for a given setting and forming relationships with other people.

There were three phases to how (B2) engaged in the project. Initially he came along as part of a group on Mermaid (6th June - group singing/recording). Here he was very dominant and almost showing off his enjoyment of singing but not always in a very productive way. After he moved from Mermaid to Dragon Ward, (B2) began to come for one-to-one sessions. Here he was much more involved and concentrated on the task at hand, although he was only interested in performing and recording covers of pop songs (1st August - an extra-long session which required a lot of concentration). We tried really hard to convince him to write his own material but he flatly refused every time. In the week I wasn't there, Holly (Cover Music Leader) managed to get him to write some of his own words, but he was very dismissive of them subsequently. I recorded a song using his words to show him what this could be like but that wasn't of interest to him either. Eventually he got tired of coming to the sessions and other things took over in his life. He got a job which I think made him pretty tired in the evenings.

(B2) came along one more time near the end of the project. He said he wanted to “help us with our paperwork” for the end of the project so he came in for a chat. I set up an activity that I thought he might like and he did. The piece he made in that session was the spooky piece on the CD. After that, (B2) didn't come back and mostly seemed to avoid us when we came on to the ward.

It's hard to assess the impact the project had on (B2). I think we were important for him as he established himself on the new ward and the singing sessions provided an escape. He never had a problem talking to us and we developed a good relationship. Once he settled down on Dragon Ward, he seemed to become less interested, although I think this was partly to do with his new job. I don't know if (B2)'s musical ability improved as he was very confident in his ability from the start. We showed him new ways of making music though. He was very keen on the iPad and quick to pick up on recording and editing techniques.

Setting feedback regarding progress:

*“(B2) was able to develop skills in music production and ended the year by creating his own musical piece which was featured on the end of year CD. (B2) particularly enjoyed expressing himself through the music that he sang and took part in playing during the group. Although he often chose to sing covers of others' music, he had strong emotional connections to the music he chose and utilised the songs to express how he felt day to day. (B2) was able to share some of the music he'd recorded with other staff members and peers and overcame his reluctance to do so.”*

(B2)'s MOHOST (Model of Human Occupancy Screening Tool completed by Occupational Therapists) assessment showed some progress from June 2022 to November 2022:

Motivation for occupation (progressed from 10/16 to 12/16);

Pattern of occupation (progressed from 10/16 to 12/16);

Communication & Interaction (stayed consistent at 12/16);

Process skills (stayed consistent at 12/16);

Motor Skills (stayed consistent at 16/16);

Environment (stayed consistent at 12/16).

Participant B2's track, 'Spooky Piece' was not able to be included publicly on the Plugin CD as a work in progress but can be heard at:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/b2s-spooky-piece?in=quench\\_arts/sets/private-plugin-playlist-work-in-progressunpublished-tracks-2022-23/](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/b2s-spooky-piece?in=quench_arts/sets/private-plugin-playlist-work-in-progressunpublished-tracks-2022-23/)

An example of Participant singing a cover version of 'Quite Miss Home' by James Arthur in a session can also be heard here:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/b2-quite-miss-home?in=quench\\_arts/sets/private-plugin-playlist-work-in-progressunpublished-tracks-2022-23/](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/b2-quite-miss-home?in=quench_arts/sets/private-plugin-playlist-work-in-progressunpublished-tracks-2022-23/)

## **Participant B5**

*Written by Plugin Music Leader Chris Mapp.*

Participant B5 was on Pixie Ward for the duration of their time working with the project. (B5) had made music in the past and was quite clear about the musical direction they wanted to take. (B5) had played bass and guitar before coming onto the ward and was keen to continue, initially coming along to sessions most regularly with (B7), although it quickly became clear that (B5) was the more confident and energetic member of the group (6th May – (B5) was leading the jam session from the off).

(B5) began by wanting to play covers of some of their favourite songs. We learned some of these and then started trying to multitrack record them. (B5) really enjoyed this process as they had not

done this before. They soon got to grips with Cubasis on the iPad and were editing and recording in no time. (B5) practised between sessions; I think they were the main beneficiary of us leaving kit on the wards. Between sessions they came up with ideas for riffs, one of which became the song 'Cave of Memories'. With some encouragement (B5) wrote some lyrics and then recorded them along with their riff to create the finished piece. They also added a guitar solo! (11th July - also added an additional drum part and vocal harmonies)

(B5) was obviously musically confident and skilled before the project. I think we helped them to do some things that they hadn't done before, such as recording and lyric writing. I don't think it had occurred to them beforehand that they were good enough to do this. (B5) was very excited to share their work with other people and talked a lot about playing music outside of the unit. Although they were quite confident and chatty, this hadn't translated into their own songwriting. Of all the participants, (B5) was the most excited to have music sessions. Several staff mentioned how keen (B5) was to attend even if they had been unwilling to do other things that day. On more than one occasion (B5) got dressed up (including hair and make-up) specifically for the session. It was clear from talking to them and the staff that they didn't engage in other activities in the same way that they did with music sessions.

Setting feedback regarding progress:

*"Participant B5 created their own track during the session, wrote lyrics, played all of the instruments and worked on the piece in between sessions. As a result they had a whole track which they had written by the end of the project. They gained a significant level of confidence in writing and producing their own music. The track that B5 created helped them to express how they were feeling as a result of their mental health difficulties. They were able to express their emotions and how they had experienced being trapped in their own head as part of their difficulties."*

(B5)'s MOHOST (Model of Human Occupancy Screening Tool completed by Occupational Therapists) assessment showed some progress from May 2022 to August 2022:

Motivation for occupation (progressed from 11/16 to 15/16);  
Pattern of occupation (progressed from 10/16 to 15/16);  
Communication & Interaction (progressed from 9/16 to 12/16);  
Process skills (stayed consistent at 12/16);  
Motor Skills (stayed consistent at 16/16);  
Environment (stayed consistent at 12/16).

We were not able to share Participant B5's publicly on the Plugin CD, but a version of 'Cave of Memories' is able to be shared and heard here:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/b5-wip-cave-of-memories-27th?in=quench\\_arts/sets/private-plugin-playlist-work-in-progressunpublished-tracks-2022-23/](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/b5-wip-cave-of-memories-27th?in=quench_arts/sets/private-plugin-playlist-work-in-progressunpublished-tracks-2022-23/)

## **Participant B6**

*Written by Plugin Music Leader Chris Mapp.*

Despite not attending many sessions, Participant B6 was one of those who attended the most one-to-one sessions across the entire course of the project. (B6) was based on Dragon Ward and was a long-term patient at Cygnet. She was allowed home visits (which is part of the reason she couldn't always attend) and had the confidence to come along, talk to us and get involved at the start of the project.

(B6) developed a pattern of coming along and then missing several weeks or months before coming along again. This made it quite tricky to develop anything long-term as we were never sure when she was coming back. She clearly had an interest in music and some knowledge of guitar in

particular (6th May – (B6) had a go at all the instruments and enjoyed the sampler in particular). One member of staff commented that they thought (B6) just wanted to learn guitar and wasn't interested in songwriting. Even when we tried this approach it didn't break the pattern of attendance which (B6) had established. I don't know how much of this was down to (B6)'s choices and how much was simply an availability thing.

For me, the most important reason for including (B6) here as a case study is to highlight the benefits to participants who don't want to engage every week of being in a place over a long period of time. We were there and (B6) could access us when she needed to (14th November – (B6) came back for the last time and we played some guitar together and jammed out a chord sequence). Whenever she came along, we always had a good session and she was engaged and keen to play and learn more. Hopefully, we gave her a different outlet when she needed it across the course of the project.

Setting feedback regarding progress:

*“(B6) already had good skills in terms of ability to play a variety of instruments and they had previously had music tuition and enjoyed playing music. (B6) struggled to utilise these sessions to express emotions, and found it difficult to engage in a more structured session as she wanted to utilise the space to spend time playing instruments. She found the aim of the project difficult and did not want to create her own music/words. This is an ongoing difficulty for this young person and they struggled with this.”*

(B6)'s MOHOST (Model of Human Occupancy Screening Tool completed by Occupational Therapists) assessment stayed consistent from May to June 2022:

Motivation for occupation (9/16);

Pattern of occupation (9/16);

Communication & Interaction (10/16);

Process skills (14/16);

Motor Skills (16/16);

Environment (12/16).

## **Participant C1**

*Written by Plugin Music Leader Meldra Guza.*

Participant C1 is a young person who is transitioning, working on developing their self-identity, finding their place of belonging and also dealing with much greater issues, such as suicidal thoughts. At the start of the project (C1) was not participating and it took us a few weeks to engage with him. To start with this was in the form of discussion on his love for a variety music and artists, such as Elton John, Mitsky to name a few. Eventually he was happy to engage by playing a bit of guitar and playing a cover of their favourite songs. The most interesting era started when (C1) started to sing and was truly finding his voice; we were mindful to pick songs that would allow his voice to sound in the way that he wanted to, e.g., not picking high notes but keeping the range reasonably low. At times, it literally felt that C1 was singing his heart out – there was a lot of emotion and passion; sometimes a few tears. (C1) still struggles with sharing his ideas for songwriting and keeps his creativity close to his chest. This is possibly due to shame of the subject themes that mainly focus on either negative and sad thoughts or because he has been told not to write in that manner or maybe because when writing in that manner he then needs to discuss that in his therapy sessions.

In terms of musical progress C 1has shown a great improvement in bass playing, singing and also songwriting. To some extent with the emotional literacy outcome he has managed to express his emotions and will sometimes compartmentalise the subject matter from personal emotion.

I think that the project has created a lasting impact on C1 as he is continuing to do music in the school sessions that he attends regularly. He has developed greater belief in his skills, so even when the overall confidence in himself might be decreasing, he is still aware of his musical abilities. He has also learnt that people like him and he has had positive engagement opportunities. We have talked a lot about careers in music, artists and mental health and that mental health struggles do not remain a full definition of ones' being and that when working hard great things can be achieved.

“(C1) looks forward to these sessions and is often asking if his session is confirmed for a specific time.” Verity (Occupational Therapist):

“(C1) has been mentioning music sessions and is looking to bring some of the new people on the ward to join in for a group session”. Staff member:

“(C1) has gained more confidence in his voice and has space to practice bass. He has had support in expressing his emotions through songwriting and speaking to Sam (Young Music Leader) and Meldra (Music Leader).” Keeley Newton, Occupational Therapist.

Participant C1 wrote several tracks for the project CD:

‘Eat To Survive’ can be heard at: [https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/01-eat-to-survive-charlie?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/01-eat-to-survive-charlie?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)

‘Normal Boys’ can be heard at: [https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/11-normal-boys-live-charlie?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/11-normal-boys-live-charlie?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)

‘Falling Over’ can be heard at: [https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/13-falling-over-live-charlie?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/13-falling-over-live-charlie?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)

## **Participant C2**

*Written by Plugin Music Leader Meldra Guza.*

Participant C2 was based in the eating disorder unit at Parkview and initially was not interested in joining the music sessions. We often heard him crying and screaming, sometimes saying a few rude words to staff as he really struggled with the mealtimes and with medicine dispensing times. It was actually so challenging to hear the vocalised pain that we had to move music sessions to a different room so as to not affect other people experiences. The transformation of (C2) has actually been quite unbelievable. From being a very closed up, sad and distraught young boy, he has turned into a confident, smiling and more balanced young person. The staff have showered him with lots of kindness and attention and this has had a very positive effect. (C2) joined the music sessions in the latter part of the project, engaging in guitar, piano, production and cajon sessions. He really gravitated towards playing cajon and worked really hard on improving his skills from a rhythmical perspective as well as his musical memory as he worked towards creating a fun medley of songs being performed at the final sharing. He was more verbal in discussing his interests and love for Cobra Kai series, working on variety of songs during the sessions.

I think that for (C2) the project has been the perfect distraction and an element to focus on and to look forward to. I think that the on the ward, the team were doing some magical work to encourage (C2) to join the sessions and give him a bit of additional confidence in a very supportive manner. Musically, he has shown rhythmical improvement, repertoire development and improvement of musical vocabulary. In regards to emotional literacy, he has had a fantastic increase in his ability to showcase his emotions, discuss interests and ask questions, and in having eye contact. There has been dramatic improvement.



*“(C2) has had a wonderful time on the music sessions. He talks about these during the week and wants to continue doing music when he gets to go back home”.* Staff member, Parkview Clinic.

Participant C2’s improvisation on the Plugin CD can be heard at:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/05-improvisation-harry?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/05-improvisation-harry?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)

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Group tracks from Cygnet Joyce Parker Hospital:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/02-you-have-got-to-move-it-the-mermaid-group?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/02-you-have-got-to-move-it-the-mermaid-group?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022) (live recording in session)

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/19-intense-angry-duck-song-stay-away-from-my-eggs-live-katie?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/19-intense-angry-duck-song-stay-away-from-my-eggs-live-katie?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022) (live recording in session)

Group tracks from the Parkview Clinic:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/12-cheese-live-megan-erin?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/12-cheese-live-megan-erin?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022) (live recording in session)

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/15-our-love-was-once-so-sweet-bee-song-live-erin-megan?in=quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/15-our-love-was-once-so-sweet-bee-song-live-erin-megan?in=quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022) (live recording in session)

## **Links**

The whole Plugin CD for 2022-3 can be heard at:

[https://soundcloud.com/quench\\_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022](https://soundcloud.com/quench_arts/sets/plugin-cd-2022)

Plugin project resources:

<https://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/>

We have published 8 blog posts on the Youth Music Network this year, written by our artistic team who we have given guidance on topics to write about:

- The importance of bringing performers into hospital settings by Paul Carroll (Lead Music Leader)  
<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/importance-bringing-performers-hospital-setting-paul-carroll-music-leader-quencharts%E2%80%99-plugin>
- Working somewhere new by Chris Mapp (Lead Music Leader)  
<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/working-somewherenew-chris-mapp-music-leader-quench-arts%E2%80%99-plugin-project>
- The challenges of working with setting restrictions by Dan Cippico (Lead Music Leader)  
<https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/challenges-working-setting-restrictions-%E2%80%93-how-be-able-adapt-when-setting-increases-securityputs>



- Mentoring a young music leader by Meldra Guza (Lead Music Leader) - <https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/mentoringyoung-music-leader-%E2%80%93-responsibilities-and-joys-seeing-someone-develop-meldra-guza-music>
- Developing a holistic approach to teaching, performing and composing by Kai Chareunsy (Young Music Leader) - <https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/developing-holistic-approach-teaching-performing-and-composing-kai-chareunsy-young-music-leader>
- What I've learnt on the Plugin project by Sam Strachan (Young Music Leader) - <https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/whati%E2%80%99ve-learnt-plugin-project-sam-strachan-young-music-leader-quench-arts%E2%80%99-plugin-project>
- Encouraging creative music-making in young people by Amy Coates (Young Music Leader) - <https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/encouraging-creative-music-making-young-people-amy-coates-young-music-leader-quench-arts%E2%80%99-plugin>
- My experience as a young music leader on the Plugin project by Shenâi Holgate (Young Music Leader) - <https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/my-experience-young-music-leader-plugin-project-quench-arts-shenai-holgate>

## 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 attend sessions, and to our project artistic team for their hard work and tenacity:

<b>Lead Artists:</b>	Paul Carroll, Dan Cippico, Meldra Guza, Chris Mapp
<b>Cover Lead Artists:</b>	Holly Kehoe-Kingsley, Katie Stevens,
<b>Young Music Leaders:</b>	Kai Chareunsy, Amy Coates, Shenâi Holgate, Sam Strachan
<b>Assistant Coordinator:</b>	Maddie Kirby

## **Plugin Settings:**

Birmingham Children's Hospital Parkview Clinic; BSMHFT Ardenleigh FCAMHS & Adriatic Unit; Woodbourne Priory Hospital; Cygnet Joyce Parker Hospital.

In addition, we would like to thank our project funders and partners who have made this project possible: Youth Music, Birmingham Music Education Partnership, the Clive Richards's Foundation and our partner settings who have provided match funding for the project, sometimes via charitable grants (Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity). 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 have a strong, committed group of project partners on our Quench Arts Advisory Board and would like to take this opportunity to thank all involved for their support, time and advice.

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