



# B SHARP'S IMPACT: MUSIC FOR ALL PROGRAMME EVALUATION 2018-2021

B Sharp's Music For All Programme aimed to engage children and young people in West Dorset and East Devon, including those in challenging circumstances, in music making activities, delivered by a supportive and high quality established and emerging workforce of music leaders, so everyone develops personally, socially and as musicians.

The Music for All Programme had 5 activity strands:

- Weekly inclusive creative music sessions for children and young people aged 8 - 18. Young people are facilitated to work together to create their own tracks and songs. Groups are open - access, mixed age, and open to all musical abilities including beginners. Groups include young people who are rurally isolated and economically disadvantaged, as well as those who are disabled or have additional needs or vulnerabilities (SEMH, SEN/D, ASD).
- On- to-one music production sessions for young people who are unable to attend group sessions. Young people attending these sessions were Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET), mostly due to ASD, SEMH or Social Anxiety.
- Music-making sessions with children aged 2 -5 in local rural pre-schools and schools, to encourage children's inherent musicality, and supported leadership training for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Staff
- Workforce development and training programme for music leaders and young trainees (age 16 - 25), to increase B Sharp's capacity to support young people experiencing challenging circumstances to access high quality, developmental music making
- Training and mentoring programme for young trainees (age 15 -25) with mentoring and practical work experience opportunities to further personal development and leadership skills



The programme was funded by Youth Music with additional funding provided by Lyme Regis Town Council, Dorset Council and Bridport Town Council. B Sharp is also grateful for support from Dorset and Devon Music Education Hubs, local schools and pre-schools.



Dorset  
Council

**YOUTH  
MUSIC**



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

## Evaluation Methodology

To evaluate this project we have collected feedback from:

### **Young people:**

- feedback form or voting system plus open comments (in-person or online), 3 times per year
- one-on-one interviews with Pastoral Support Worker, 3 times per year

### **Music Leaders:**

- observations on young people's progress regularly (brief observations weekly, and more intensive observations 3 times per year)

### **Parents:**

- formally once per year, plus informal feedback recorded regularly (comments/requests/feedback/suggestions/ideas).

For Early Years work we carry out an interview to collect Music Leader and Setting Staff observations of children's progress at the end of 6 week block of sessions

## Strengths and Limitations of our data collection methods

Our participants tend to stay with us for a long time, so they get to know us well and are open and honest in one-to-one conversations.

Music Leaders also have time to get to know the young people and track progression. The young people's response to feedback forms can be formulaic, and we find it gives more of a snapshot of general enjoyment, engagement and progression than in-depth feedback.

Parent's feedback is very useful, but the percentage of parents that respond to our formal requests for feedback is low. However, we regularly receive informal feedback from parents in person/by text/email and this is recorded. During covid we worked much more intensively with families, speaking to all our participants and their parents to try and ensure we were meeting participants needs. This meant that we received more feedback from parents, carers and families through conversation.



# PARTICIPATION

- 1385 children and young people took part
- 759 engaged regularly over several sessions
- 545 music sessions delivered
- 18 music leaders employed
- 11 young trainees took part in training, mentoring and practical work experience

B Sharp is always brilliant -- and it's so  
hugely appreciated how you find a way to  
meet everyone's particular  
needs/personalities. (N's Mum)







# MUSICAL PROGRESSION

## Intended Outcome:

To develop young people's musical skills: instrumental, singing, composition, improvisation, performance and technology

In order to assess our progress against this outcome we looked at young people's own self-assessment of their musical skills and confidence, and compared this with Music Leader's and Parent's observations on young people's changes in musical skill and musical confidence.

We collected feedback from 81 young people. 91% had improved against this outcome

Interviews with young people and their written feedback show that young people feel they have improved their musical skills across a range of areas including:

- Singing, including harmonising and pitching
- Instrumental skills, including drums, guitar, bass and ipad
- Musical understanding including rhythms and chords
- Song-writing and composition and coming up with musical ideas
- Singing confidence, on their own and with a group
- Playing, singing and performing in public
- Ability to play with others, as part of a group
- Exposure to new musical styles and genres
- Exposure to and links into musical networks and activities
- Trying new instruments

Nearly all the young people were able to identify that their musical skills have improved, and at least one specific area or skill they feel they have got better at. They also say their musical confidence has improved. Music Leaders observations and parents' feedback corroborate this.



## Watch Young People's Stories



**Young people who attend B Sharp's inclusive, creative music-making sessions and one-to-one sessions improve their musical skills and confidence in their own music making abilities.**

*J has found her rhythm - she is tapping and drumming things around the house. She has also been singing aloud (J's Mum)*

*I like best the freedom to play freely. (C, age 11)*



It was interesting that children and young people found it much more difficult to identify their musical progress while working online in the digital space, even when progress was evident to Music Leaders.

We concluded that this was because they were working in new ways, and with unfamiliar tools (DAWs) such that they couldn't benchmark their own journeys. We held an 'award ceremony' to ensure the children were aware of areas they had progressed, and to provide feedback on their work.

Children definitely have more musical understanding, they move hands fast and slow to the music and this is also having an impact outside of the sessions — children playing on bikes for example going fast and slow. Children are using instruments, a lot more now. There is a musical wall outside and the children are now using it much more than before — it wasn't really being used previously. (EYFS Lead, Musbury Moles Preschool. )



In our work with children aged 2-5- Music Leader and Setting Staff observations show children have opportunities to develop their innate musicality in B Sharp sessions - with improvements noticed in:

- listening skills
- keeping a pulse
- moving to music, and dancing
- singing and vocalising - including spontaneous singing, and child-initiated singing
- moving rhythmically
- talking about music and songs on the radio
- understanding tempo - fast and slow
- playing instruments, and engaging with musical resources



L's attention span has improved and he'll sit with his guitar and amp at home and play along to backing tracks — he uses his initiative more — and he's generally happier. (Mum of L with ASD)







# CONFIDENCE

## Intended Outcome:

To increase young people's personal confidence through our skill cascade and Young Music Leader Programme

In order to assess our progress against this outcome we looked at young people's own assessment of their personal confidence, and compared this with Music Leader's and Parent's observations on young people's gains in confidence.

We collected feedback from 81 young people. 93 % had improved against this outcome.

Young people's feedback (forms and interviews) shows that young people feel that attending sessions improves their confidence.

The specific areas of improved confidence that young people mentioned include:

- Joining in
- Taking part
- Trying new things
- Speaking up, suggesting things, putting forward ideas
- Doing things they didn't think they could do before (sing in public, perform, go and talk to people)

Music Leaders' observations and parent's feedback also shows evidence of these gains in confidence. Music Leaders saw significant changes for some young people in their ability to participate, interact with the group, and input their own creative ideas into group compositions. Parents tell us these gains in confidence in B Sharp sessions transfer to other parts of the young people's lives - this is crucial for the young people's development.



**Young people who attend B Sharp's inclusive, creative music-making sessions and one-to-one sessions improve their personal confidence (self-confidence).**

Parents tell us that children and young people have been more able to join in other activities, and put themselves forward to try new things, and make new friends.

It has given R more confidence to join in other things — to sing at school in choir and in plays (Parent of R with SEMH)

## Read T's Story





Young people also specifically mention the confidence boost they get from performing to their community.

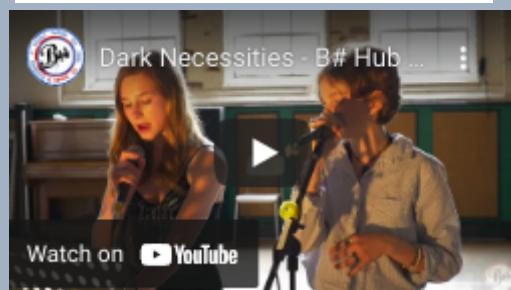
They regularly mention that they were anxious before the event, and 'didn't think they could do it', but feel a sense of improved self-esteem having achieved it.

We organise regular performance opportunities to help meet this outcome (including online, radio and pre-recorded performances during covid lockdowns). We ensure that these opportunities feel supportive and safe, to encourage those who lack confidence to participate such that they can benefit from meeting this challenge.

### Read E's Story



### Watch our Performance



I feel that a lot of people feel like this but I find I can now talk to people without getting shy. (M, age 12)

I have become a confident person in general. I am better in games (A, age 13)

### Watch Issy's Story



These changes in confidence are particularly significant for our Young Trainees (age 15-25) where they tell us that the confidence gained has improved their life-chances –in that they are more able to put themselves forward for opportunities, and take the next steps in their education or career.

### **100% of Young Trainees report improvements in confidence.**

They tell us that their confidence is improved through the opportunities they have at B Sharp to take on leadership roles, in a supportive environment, and to be able to contribute and do something they feel is useful. They also find the mentoring allows them to feel confident to take the next steps.



previously E might have said 'I can't' play x..', but whether she 'can' or 'can't' doesn't feature now - she is much more interested in enjoying herself and trying out new things. (Parent)

The spirit that [Music Leaders] have created in the group is very accepting and she was not nervous at all going to the following week's session which really says a lot for how her confidence has improved. (Mum of J, age 10)







# SOCIAL SKILLS

## Intended Outcome:-

To increase young people's social skills through participating in music making workshops of mixed ages, abilities and circumstances

In order to assess our progress against this outcome we looked at young people's own assessment of their social skills, and compared this with Music Leader's and Parent's observations on young people's improvement in social skills. We collected feedback from 81 young people. 94 % had improved against this outcome.

Young people's feedback (forms and interviews) shows that young people feel that attending sessions has helped them make friends and feel more socially confident. They enjoy the fact that they are meeting people of different ages, and from different schools. They are aware of and appreciate the friendly, open ethos of the sessions and that the Music Leaders, and Pastoral Support Workers are approachable, informal and actively inclusive. Some also comment that it is the collaborative music making - the 'working together' - that breaks down barriers, and improves social skills.

*L has definitely benefited from B Sharp ...I think most importantly for him, working together in group learning to be generous and patient, working with the different dynamics. (Parent of L with ADHD)*



**Young people who attend B Sharp's mixed age, inclusive, music making sessions and one-to-one sessions improve their social skills.**

We have learned that social factors are an extremely important element for participation - most young people who stop attending sessions tell us they do so for a social reason - for example, their friend leaves and they don't want to come without them, or the group changes and it no longer works for them socially. The more socially confident the young people are the more they are able to continue to make music, and participate in sessions, despite social changes.

Many of the NEET young people who have taken part in our one-to-one sessions are extremely socially isolated. They have found that their social confidence has improved, through regular supportive interaction with a Music Leader.

*I've made new friends and B Sharp makes you work together (F)*

## Read B's Story





In our work with Early Years, children's improvement in social skills through participation in music making is noted by all Early Years Staff in their feedback. They comment that children's communication with adults, and with other children is improved, as a result of the shared musical experience.

One boy T the sessions have had a huge life changing impact on — before he would be kicking and screaming — he has now started drumming and smiling. He came to the instruments in his own time, but B Sharp's open and inclusive style meant he was able to access the music. (Teacher, St Mary's Bridport)

There was a lovely interaction between the class teacher and H in the last session where H was vocalising and copying Jacques and there was lots of smiling between them and the teacher was encouraging H. H does not give much eye contact so this exchange was really important and you could see her glowing from the positive feedback. (Support worker for Child H, age 3, with SEN/D)



Helping young people develop their social skills was more difficult while sessions were online due to covid lockdowns. Young people were telling us they felt lonely, and increasingly anxious about social interaction. It felt very important to still provide an informal social space for young people to connect to Music Leaders and each other, but it was significantly more difficult to provide the collaborative working online that improves social interaction.

Despite their difficulties young people and their families told us that they enjoyed the social interaction of zoom sessions throughout the lockdowns, and that the connection was important to maintain social skills.

[Through lockdown] It has been really good being connected to B Sharp through online sessions, and meeting and planning that has been really good. Anything that opens up opportunity is good. Helping people my age is a really complicated thing, because everyone has been affected in different ways. But I think it is engagement in lots of different ways that is needed — which is what B Sharp is doing for me. (T, age 17)

L is absolutely loving your zoom sessions, it keeps him connected with you, helps with his social skills and being part of it is so important.

(L's Mum)

