



Evaluation Report: *Sing and Play*, April '18-March '19 (year 3)



Background

Open Strings Music (OSM) is Brighton's specialist community music service for adults of all abilities. ***Sing and Play*** (SaP) is an OSM project initially commissioned by **NHS Brighton & Hove CCG** for three years from April 2016, providing **participatory music sessions** for people living with **dementia and their carers**. We deliver **60 two-hour sessions per year** in various community-based locations throughout Brighton and Hove, facilitated by two community musicians, two sessional volunteers and two peer volunteers.

This is a report on our year three (April 18-March '19), in which we delivered sessions in four new locations:

- 40 sessions at **BHCC Brooke Mead Extra Care Scheme** (St Peters)
- 10 sessions at the **Somerset Centre** (East Brighton)
- 5 sessions at **South Portslade Community Centre**
- 5 sessions at **Tower House** (Preston Village)

This work builds upon and follows our work in years 1 & 2. In brief:

- year 1 (April '16-March '17): we created a **dementia-friendly community** at BHCC **Lavender House**, East Brighton, which has become sustainably peer-led, continuing to the present day, and delivered 30 sessions at **Hop 50+** (Hove)
- year 2 (April 17-March '18): three new locations: **New Larchwood** (Coldean), **Patching Lodge** (East Brighton) and **Maycroft Manor** (Patcham). We also developed and delivered a new strand of work: **training sessions for carers**.

Throughout the three-year commission, we have also delivered fortnightly sessions through an in-kind arrangement at respite setting **Ireland Lodge**.

Year 4 (contract extension): 46 sessions at Brooke Mead (**matchfunded by BHCC**), plus 30 sessions at the Bevy / Coldean / Somerset Centre. Our **training for carers** (designed in year 2) is to be delivered throughout year 4, thanks to **Big Lottery funding**.

Open Strings Music CIC
Community Base, 113 Queens Road, Brighton, BN1 3XG
info@openstrings.co.uk
www.openstrings.co.uk



Monitoring: a) Quantitative Data

Attendance: music sessions (60 two-hour sessions in total)

<i>location</i>	<i>term</i>	<i>numbers of participants</i>	<i>how many attending five or more sessions (out of ten in total per term)</i>
Brooke Mead	Summer '18 (two sessions per week), Autumn '18, Spring '19	21 in total (12 PWD)	for each of the three terms, over half of the participants attended at least five or more sessions
South Portslade Community Centre	Summer '18	2 (1 PWD), plus attendees from My First Word nursery: intergenerational pilot	n/a – five sessions overall
Tower House	Autumn '18	12 (6 PWD)	n/a – five sessions overall
Somerset Centre	Spring '19	16 (7 PWD)	11/16

Wellbeing

133 of 155 (85.8%) completed simple image-based scales showed **an improvement in mood from the start to the finish of each session**. (NB: several tenants' late arrival each week at Brooke Mead sessions limited the number of scales completed in this setting.)

Monitoring: b) Qualitative Data

a) Increase in wellbeing / mental health

“I can't believe how much she's come alive. It's so good to see my friend like this” – Brooke Mead tenant



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Observations:

- C (female, early 70s) and J (female, late 60s): C and J often arrived agitated, disoriented and depressed at the start of sessions at Brooke Mead. But as they became absorbed in the music-making process they began to **engage, smile, play and laugh** as their wellbeing increased. After session #7 C commented, *we're all experts! I love this! I wish we had it every single day!* J said, *I didn't want to get out of bed. Now I'm here it's made my day.* They both performed at the launch of our Brooke Mead dementia-friendly community band, **confident, poised, and waving at the audience** while they sang and danced. Service manager R commented, *they all really love this group. You know that don't you?*

b) Improvement in cognition and dexterity

"I don't remember things but I remember the words of the songs. They come back. It was all coming back. It was lovely to feel young again. I love this!" – Brooke Mead tenant, W



Observations:

- J (female, late 60s): in session #6, J was confused and anxious about whether her family was visiting that day. She became calm when she joined the group's drumming circle. The rhythm and the physical co-ordination of the drumming movements seemed to **focus her attention** and help her to feel connected to the rest of the group: *'Drumming is like a language isn't it? Different sounds mean different things.'*
- Je (female, late 60s) and Jo (female, late 70s): Je, Jo and many of the other Brooke Mead residents with dementia and mild cognitive impairments, are aware of each others' cognitive abilities. During sessions, they often build peer support by helping each other to co-ordinate songs and movements, swapping instruments, **using music as a communication tool** to explore vocalising and sound making together. When Je got anxious because she couldn't remember the words, Jo commented, *don't worry it will all come back*, and W said, *I don't always remember the words. I make it up and nobody notices. It's got better and better!*



c) Social isolation to inclusion

“They’re more cheerful at lunchtime afterwards, more talkative with each other. It’s a nice atmosphere” – staff member G



Observations:

- S (female, early-70s): S came to our first taster session, encouraged by Brooke Mead staff. She sat silently without interacting. In the early sessions she seemed anxious and withdrawn and left early. As the sessions progressed, S began to communicate with her graceful movements, conducting with the boomwhackers, swaying while she sang, and making eye contact, sharing that she used to be a ballet dancer. In the last ten sessions, S’s mood and involvement changed, seeming **less closed in**, more absorbed in the instruments, including the luna drum, lyre and ipad, and **stayed for the whole session**: *‘This is magical and heavenly. I’m definitely coming next time.’*
- A (male, late 60s): When we met A at Tower House, we saw that he loved to improve vocally and enjoyed exploring the merlin. As the sessions progressed, A began to make up song lyrics and **take more of a leadership role**. He sat up straighter, his confidence growing. He said, *I could do this forever. I should have done it when I was young. Music keeps you going.* A staff member commented, *he gets a massive boost of confidence when he feels he can direct it.*

d) Staying active in the community for longer

“These sessions give the participants more opportunity to be physical. It helps them to move their bodies” – staff member



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Observations:

- J (female, late 70s): In the first session of block #2 at Brooke Mead, J brought in photocopies of a **song that she'd written to share with and teach the group**. She stood up to perform it, and teach us the melody. She told us that she used to perform on the stage. One of our volunteers created sheet music from her song, which delighted J; she directed the song arrangement and beamed as cello accompaniment came in. **J performed her song as part of the Christmas show** and seemed to get great joy in inhabiting her old performance role, her arms outstretched as she greeted the audience.
- K (female, early 80s) and R (male, late 70s): K, R and several other service users at the Somerset Centre enjoyed exploring with rhythm and sound on the ukulele. Staff member R also decided to **begin ukulele lessons** so that he could play more confidently with the service users, many of whom were keen to learn the ukulele. A student on placement commented, *'Trying things out helps them to learn more and have fun. Staff are more able to contribute musically to sessions by dancing, playing and singing.'*

Data collection methods:

- We were asked by our commissioner to collect data based on careful observation and reflection by staff and carers, as well as self-reporting by participants with dementia. The qualitative data on outcomes was collected using these methods, over a period of several weeks – in some cases, throughout the whole year.