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Music making and the potential impact for looked after children

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of
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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

Across the United Kingdom, numerous music projects are working with looked after children and their support networks. However, there is very little research around the impact that participating in music making has on looked after children, particularly in helping them overcome difficulties in their lives and the broader impact that this engagement has on their family.

This study examines the impact that music making has for a looked after child by exploring the following questions:

- What, if any, are the holistic benefits that engaging in music projects has for a child in looked after care?
- What impact do these holistic benefits have for the family/support unit in the child's lives?
- How are facilitators and organisations developing and running projects, in order to meet the musical needs as well as the development/care needs of the child?

Case studies of three projects contributed to the data collection: (1) SoundLINCS Fusion project, providing musical training for looked after children's support workers based in Lincolnshire, (2) Loud and Clear Foster family learning, a project based in the North East of England working with foster children (aged 0-5 years of age) in a weekly music project, and (3) Loud and Clear Adoption family learning, a project based in the North East of England working with children going through the adoption process (aged 0-5 years of age) in a weekly music project. With these organisations, focus groups, interviews and participatory observations were undertaken.

The research may provide practitioners with an understanding of the importance that music can play within participants' lives, helping them build attachments with family members, workforce staff and peers, ideally extending into the everyday life. A currently underexplored area within community music, this research aims to provide insight into how engaging in music projects can become an important and integral part of looked after children's everyday life.

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This thesis contains a series of transcriptions which are hyperlinked throughout.

CHAPTER ONE

Context of Study

Recent years have seen an increase in studies exploring the impact that participating in music making can have for children in helping them facilitate emotional, social and behavioural developments (Levitin, 2010; Williams & Barrett, 2015). Stephen Malloch and Colwyn Trevarthen's (2009) study on parent and child music making found that joint music making can play a crucial role within the first five years of a child's life in helping them to develop bonds with their parents. Parents are noted as often engaging in music making on a daily basis, through singing or making sounds with their child. Daniel Levitin suggests that the synchronisation that musical activity provides is unique from any other activity, which helps foster a sense of attachment between parents and children (2010 p.5).

Participating within a community music project can often be a place that fosters a sense of belonging for participants helping overcome any challenges they may be facing (Bartleet & Higgins, 2018; Higgins & Willingham, 2017). One study by Phil Mullen and Kathryn Deane explored the impacts of community music on young people seen to be in challenging circumstances, indicating that participating within a project provided children with a sense of empowerment, as well as assistance in developing a new self-image and providing an opportunity to have their voice heard (2018, pp.179-181).

Although there has been an increase in the knowledge of the impact that music making can have on children, these studies are often limited to focusing on children who reside with their

biological parents and are not in the looked after care system. There is little research on the benefits that partaking in music making can have for looked after children and their support networks, even though there is an increasing number of looked after children and music projects working with this group in the UK.

Context

A looked after child is classified by the UK government as being a child who is:

- Provided with accommodation continuously for more than 24 hours
- Subject to a care order
- Subject to a placement order (UK Government report on Looked after Children, 2018)

There are several reasons as to why children can often end up living in looked after care, ranging from abuse or neglect within their birth home through to unaccompanied asylum seekers entering the UK (NSPCC website, 2018). The NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty for Children) indicates that the most common reason for a child entering looked after care was due to abuse or neglect within the UK.

The UK has had a 6% increase in the number of children entering looked after care in 2017 with numbers expected to rise in the following years (DfE, 2017). Although there are several forms of looked after care, foster care is often the primary outcome for many children, involving over 74% of looked after children (DfE, 2017).

While in care, children will work with their social worker or support networks to support them through the process, developing care plans or targets for a young person to meet. The looked

after children's support network continuously monitors and evaluates these targets, aiming to provide the child with a sense of security. However, reports examining the experiences of looked after children have indicated that they often feel that they have no say regarding their care plans; thus, they can often find it difficult to form relationships with their social worker and support network (Simkiss, 2012).

Failing to establish meaningful relationships in care can impact children's ability to meet education targets and form resilience for life after care (Bazalgette et al, 2015). For instance, reports by the Department of Education (2018) have indicated that looked after children often lack literacy and numeracy skills compared to their peers. This is possibly due to looked after children having a lower attendance rates in school and feeling unmotivated by an adult to attend (Council, Manchester, 2010).

Music making and looked after children

Several music organisations within the UK have recognised the lack of opportunities that looked after children currently have to engage in music, and the benefits of providing music making opportunities may have. This has resulted in numerous music projects being set up for looked after children and their support networks in order to develop the children's musical, social and behavioural skills. Alongside, supporting carers and children to develop meaningful attachments through joint musical participation.

Youth Music, a UK music funding body, has been one of the leading organisations delivering projects working with looked after children, ranging from full band workshops to choirs that

children can attend with their carer. Their evaluation document outlining the success of these projects indicated how children have seen to have developed their confidence, self-esteem, and relationships with their support worker through attending one of the music projects (Dillon, 2010 p.25). Although these evaluation reports often provide details on the developments that were witnessed within the project, there is little focus given to the impact music making may be having at home or upon the looked after child's support network. Often, the child's carer, social worker, or adoptive parent will attend the musical project with the child. However, evaluation documents rarely indicate if the support networks have seen any impacts from attending the project and what benefits this may hold for them within their work with the child.

At a time when funding for music projects is becoming more challenging to obtain, organisations need to be able to show the impacts projects are having upon participants. The evaluation reports produced by music organisations regarding the various looked after children projects often lack firm theoretical underpinning or enough data to form comprehensive conclusions on their impact. Thus, it can be difficult for music facilitators and looked after children's support networks to articulate the implications that engaging in music making may have to secure funding or managerial support for using music in this manner.

This next section will outline the rationale behind this study being undertaken, including the questions hoped to be addressed and an outline of the following chapters.

This Study

This study aims to bridge the current gap in research regarding music making and the impact it may have for looked after children and their support network. This is to understand if music projects are effective in aiding communication between the children and their support network and whether they differ in effectiveness to the other services open to this group. In order to address these aims, several questions need to be addressed:

- What, if any, are the holistic benefits that engaging in music projects has for a child in looked after care?
- What impact do these holistic benefits have for the family and the support unit in the child's lives?
- How are facilitators and organisations developing and running projects to (a) meet the musical needs and (b) the development and care needs of the child?

To answer these questions, a qualitative study was undertaken using a case study strategy, in which three projects working with looked after children and children's workforce staff were examined. A mixed methodological approach was employed using focus groups, interviews, participatory action research, and participatory observations. Through this, narratives can be gathered regarding participant's experiences of attending the projects and the impacts they believed the project might be having on themselves and the children. In addition, it is possible to explore how facilitators and organisations develop and deliver projects that impact both the child and their support network.

Chapter outline

The next chapter (2) examines the fundamental theories surrounding looked after children including attachment theory, social pedagogy, communication and learning, and musical implications. Additionally, it focuses on the current legislation surrounding the children's support network and the current findings from previous evaluation reports on looked after children music projects. These form the background and context for this research.

Chapter three outlines the research design and methodological approach employed in this study. This involves drawing upon similar studies that have aimed to evaluate the successes of music projects for participants. Chapter three also explores the ethical considerations that were taken into account in this research, due to the vulnerability of the participants and the method of analysis that was undertaken upon the results.

Chapters four, five and six will consist of examining the three cases studies; SoundLINCS-Fusion Project, Sage Gateshead- Loud and Clear foster family learning and Sage Gateshead- Loud and Clear adoption family learning. The results from each case will be analysed before being discussed in relation to relevant literature in chapter seven.

Chapter seven is a cross-case examination between the emerging themes from the three cases, drawing upon the similarities and differences between each case, and their relation to the current discourse surrounding music making and looked after children.

Chapter eight summarises the conclusions that have been drawn from across the three cases into the impacts that music making may be having for looked after children and their support network. It also includes recommendations for future research and practical work within the field.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter will outline the current literature surrounding looked after children and children's workforce staff. There are four key themes related to looked after children: attachment theory, social pedagogy, communication and learning, and children's workforce development. Each of these areas will be given a brief overview in the next section, before being explored in relation to specific musical implications.

Attachment Theory

Looked after children need to form attachments with adults to help them overcome the challenges of being within new and strange environments. The adults in question can vary from child to child, but usually, this will be with either a foster carer, adoptive parent or social worker, who go on to become a support network for helping the child in their development.

With a focus on the importance that it plays within child development, and within individual's lives, attachment theory has been explored across numerous disciplines. John Bowlby (1935), one of the leading figures in the development of the theory, suggests that children are born with the need to form a secure attachment to an individual as a survival mechanism. The early years of a child's life constitute critical moments for establishing secure attachments to an adult. These attachments usually manifest through the child's mother as she will communicate with the child both physically (cuddling, smiling) and verbally (talking, singing) and thus enable healthy

bonding (Bretheron, 1992). A key feature of Bowlby's work (1969) is the internal working model (IWM), how the child views the self and their expectations about interactions with others. These expectations are related to the primary carer's responses to, and ability to meet, the needs of the child. For example, in a loving relationship where the carer is consistently responsive to the child, the child will feel secure, viewing themselves as loveable and worthy of the love of others. Consequently, a secure attachment will be formed. Where this is not the case, this can lead to the development of insecure attachments. These attachments are suggested by Bowlby (1969) as being a source for how a child may build future relationships with others and highlights how significant the development of secure and healthy attachments are. Acknowledging the changing composition of the modern family, the term caregiver has replaced Bowlby's focus on the mother. It is also now widely accepted that multiple attachments can bring benefit (Main, 1985).

Building on Bowlby's work, Ainsworth et al. (1979) and Main et al. (1985) identify four different types of attachments: (1) secure, (2) anxious-avoidant, (3) anxious ambivalent and (4) disorganised. Being in a secure attachment with a solid foundation results in the child being able to explore and learn about both the physical and emotional world that surrounds them. For children in the care system, whose lives may be full of inconsistencies, lack of trust and insecure or disorganised attachments, their full engagement in exploratory learning is often affected negatively. Having a social worker providing a secure base can make a difference to the children's ability to explore and thus have a positive impact on their resilience (Gilligan, 2001).

Maslow's (1943) famous hierarchy of needs is a model that breaks down the different components a person must have in their lives to be able to reach optimum fulfilment. Within this,

the need to feel belonging and love is particularly high, similar to Bowlby's (1935) suggestion of children needing to form a secure attachment to a caregiver in order to survive. Maslow's hierarchy orientates around five components; (1) the physiological needs (food, water), (2) safety needs (security and safety), (3) belongings and love needs (attachment, love, relationships), (4) esteem needs (prestige and recognition) and (5) self-actualisation (achieving full potential, creativity). Although music making is not mentioned specifically within this model, it could be utilised within four of the areas; (1) the building of belonging, (2) the building of attachment, (3) their esteem needs and (4) providing a source of creativity within the individual's life.

Attachment Theory in Relation to Looked After Children

In many of the reports that focus on working with looked after children, attachment theory is extensively drawn upon as a way of helping shape the practice of carers, social workers and adoptive parents (Hughes, 2000; Simkiss, 2012). Often these insights include focusing on the lack of attachments that looked after children can face due to not having a secure relationship with individuals in the earliest stages of life, or not having a secure placement when in care (Simkiss, 2012; Smith et al. 2017). A report by the NSPCC indicates that over 60% of the children are in care due to abuse or neglect, pointing towards unsecure attachment between the child and parent/carer (NSPCC website, 2018). Similarly, in the report 'Our children deserve better', Doug Simkiss states that 'looked after children desired love and affection, but this was often lacking in their lives' (2012 p. 5).

Mike Stein's study explores how young people in care can develop resilience, correlating this and attachment theory. Stein suggests that there are three groups of looked after children that

leave care; '(1) the *Moving On* group, (2) the *Survivors* group and (3) the *Victim* group' (2005, p. 27). The Moving On group are young people who have experienced stability and attachment, and therefore gained resilience in the looked after care system. The Survivors group have struggled to maintain these attachments and stability that the moving on group achieved, resulting in a weaker resilience. The Victim group are the group most affected from being in the care system, where they have struggled to achieve stability and attachments, leading to little to no resilience and a struggle in life after leaving the care system.

As knowledge of the importance of developing attachments within looked after children's lives has developed, the UK government have offered relevant training to the children's workforce staff. The 2014 knowledge and skills statement by the Department of Education outlines the role of social workers, foster carers, and adoptive parents as being a central role in helping children form attachments and make transitions within their life (DfE 2014, p.3).

Social Pedagogy

Another key theory associated with looked after children is social pedagogy. Social pedagogy is an approach 'where the care and educational needs of an individual meet' (Cameron & Moss, 2012). At the centre of this pedagogical approach lies the idea of the common third, a way to describe how a child and adult partake within a joint activity together and, as such, both develop stronger bonds. The types of activities do of course depend upon the situation which the child and adult find themselves in. However, a study by the Thomas Coram Research Unit suggests that when using social pedagogy, 'The pedagogue must also be creative being prepared to share in many of the children everyday lives, such as preparing meals and snacks, or making music'

(2007 p.4). Cameron and Moss place emphasis on how individuals must reflect on the activity, to develop the relationship further (2012, p. 48). Through these reflections, it is suggested that adults can help children 'empower themselves by listening to the child and involving them in the important decisions' (Cameron & Most 2012 p.47). Extending this idea, it is suggested that equal reflection should be given to the pedagogue's involvement and how the activity made them feel (ThemPra Reflective Practice, 2009). This will in turn help to develop a sense of how the child may have felt at that time and make the pedagogue look for specific moments where there may be developments being made.

Berridge's et al. study (2010) focusing on the use of social pedagogy within the UK discuss how it is commonly used within children's residential homes. The fostering network offers training for foster carers on social pedagogical practice. Following their training programme, carers were able to build 'stronger relationships around the child, prepare the child better for panels, help develop the child's resilience and support the young child through placement movement' (Fostering Network n.d p.4). Many of the outcomes, such as developing their confidence, attainment within school, and behavioural skills link with Simkiss (2012), who suggests that looked after children currently need support in making secure connections with adults who will, in turn, support them within these different areas.

Communication and Learning

Douglas Simkiss outlines that further work needs to be done to develop communication between looked after children and the adults within their lives (2012 p.6). McAuley and Davis's (2009) study on mental health of looked after children indicates within looked after children's lives the feeling of neglect was stated to have stemmed from having no opportunity for communication with an adult.

Many of the reports relating to working with looked after children describe how young people should be given the opportunity to communicate their opinions about the development of their care plans (Bazalgette, et al. 2015). Enshrined in legislation and frameworks followed by social workers, is the requirement for social workers to ascertain the views of children and to take these into account when making decisions that affect them (Unicef, 1989; Children Act, 1989; DfE, 2014). Thus, communication is of particular importance when working with looked after children to ensure that decisions made serve their best interests. However, a study by Handley and Doyle (2012) found that child protection social workers deemed the communication training they had received during initial qualification training to be inadequate, despite their reporting using several different methods to engage and communicate with children in their practice. They relied on in-service training to boost these skills, which required support from managers to ensure training opportunities were given.

The NSCPP suggests that in order to achieve emotional wellbeing for a looked after child, children should 'be enabled to define what good emotional wellbeing looks like for themselves

[and] be treated as experts of the care system' (Bazalgette et al. 2015 p.7). However, looked after children are often hindered in their ability to communicate due to a lack of communication skills (Royal College of Speech & Language therapists, n.d). Lefevre (2004) argues that children often lack the language ability or cognitive development to convey their experiences through language alone, thus requiring additional symbolic means of communication, such as play and visual images. Furthermore, she advises that social workers working directly with children can use music as a communication tool, to aid relationship development between the social worker and child and to act as a medium within which they can explore their emotions and experiences.

Many of these skills are developed through communication with a parent and attending school. Reports examining the educational attainment of looked after children found that they were often lower than their peers (Council Manchester, 2010). McAuley and Davis report that only '13% of looked after children received five or more GCSEs ranging from A-C, with 34% of looked after children leaving school with no GCSEs at all' (2009, p. 148). Several reasons are explored through the study, which also resonates with the work of Simkiss (2012) and Booth (2010), who suggest that the lower absence rate has a knock-on effect upon educational attainment, with a 'lack of encouragement and support' being a particular reason why some looked after children do not attend school (Simkiss, 2012, p. 6). Other reasons ranged from the need for more practical support to more support for continuity in placement settings, to help develop better educational outcomes (2012p. 6).

In 2014, the British government developed a number of initiatives to support looked after children within school. These ranged from helping children secure places within schools to

providing more support and training for those involved within care (C4E0, n.d). However, even with the initiatives in place the educational attainment of looked after children were still lacking compared to that of their peers (Sebeda et al., 2015 p.30). Particularly with older children in the looked after care system, challenging behaviour, attending a mainstream school, and having a large number of absences prevented them from achieving target grades (p.30-32).

The next section will explore the three areas of attachment, social pedagogy and communication and learning, in relation to music and the implications it may have for looked after children.

Musical Implications:

Music as a tool for forming attachments

Music making can be used as a tool to form attachments. The Youth Music evidence review (Dillon, 2010) and Loud and Clear evidence pack (Mooney & Young, 2012, 2013) both outline how joint participation between carer and the child helped form attachments to each other. 'Cre8tive Vocals' was one of the projects identified within the Youth Music report, where participants are encouraged to use lyrics as a way of expressing themselves (Dillon, 2010 p.20). This was of particular importance, as it is reported across numerous studies how looked after children can struggle to develop relationships due to a lacking confidence in their self-expression (Bazalgette, et al. 2015; Stein, 2005). Through having carers join in with the sessions, the music making became a 'leveller,' where there was a space for communication between both parties, helping the children to develop their voice (Dillion, 2010 p.20).

Eric Clarke, Nicola Dibbens and Stephanie Pitts (2009) study of music in everyday situations, suggests that music can provide individuals with a sense of personal fulfilment that recreational activities such as sport can often offer (2009, p. 2). Within the Youth Music evaluation report, participants from one of the case studies were seen to increase their self-esteem through receiving recognition from the facilitators of the project and developing their musical skills (Dillon, 2010 p. 23). Through developing their self-esteem, participants were seen to be more participatory within the project.

A study of conducting drumming sessions with children from a residential setting in South Africa (Fores et al., 2016) also highlighted the benefits to children, particularly the positive impact on their social and emotional functioning during and immediately after group sessions. However, the researchers noted that when the children went back to their residential setting, the benefits did not transfer and as a result, the staff did not notice the same changes. The researchers suggest that this could be counteracted by encouraging staff in residential settings and schools attended by the children to do follow-up activities with the children.

Colette Salkeld (2008) explores the impact that music therapy can have in helping looked after children develop relationships with their families, focusing on children going through the adoption procedure. She writes that 'adopted children who have had a number of attachment and loss experiences in their early lives may experience emotional problems which lead to difficulties in trusting their adoptive parents' (Salkeld & Oldfield, 2008 p.141). Within Salkeld's exploration of her practice as a music therapist, there is recognition of the importance of providing a space for parent and child to explore music together. Music is used within her

sessions as a form of non-verbal communication between parent and child, where each one joins in, often with the child taking the lead with the adult following (p. 142). Within Salkeld's past experience, this is outlined as being a place where the child can explore their past trauma, in a way where there is no pressure of having to put it into words.

Music and Social Pedagogy

There have been numerous reports that have examined social pedagogy within music practice (Mooney & Young, 2012; Dillon, 2010). Sage Gateshead, Youth Music and Sing Up have all developed projects that enable joint interactions between carers and children to take place within the musical setting. The findings from all of their evaluation reports suggest that active joint cooperation helps develop the attachment that a child felt to an adult and the child's confidence by providing an opportunity for their voice to be heard. This was suggested in the Loud and Clear project by one of the participants as being unique, and, unlike other everyday activities, they could provide for the child (Mooney & Young, 2012). Similarly, Daniel Levitin suggests that music is unique as it is one of the only art forms where there is the opportunity for synchronous activities to occur, which, when a parent and child do the activity together, helps form a bond (Levitin 2010, p. 5).

Similar findings were also found in a study undertaken by Kate Williams and Margaret Barret (2015) that explored the use of music making within the home environment between adult and child. Joint music making was seen to provide adults and children with opportunities of 'active cooperation, turn taking and immediate feedback between parent and child, that supported

child's self-regulatory system and social development' (Williams & Barret, 2015 p.112). This resembles Cameron and Moss's (2012) work exploring social pedagogy and the evidence from the different music organisations reports (Dillon, 2010; Mooney & Young, 2012).

For art practitioners who are working with children in a social pedagogical approach, Helen Chambers and Pat Petrie adapted the 'Heads, Hearts and Hands' framework as a way of supporting practitioners in developing their practice (Chambers & Petrie, 2009). The framework states that adults should work with children with their head (using the knowledge they have of the child to create sessions that work for them), heart (bringing their emotions to the work as well as taking into account that of the child's), and their hands (the actual doing of the activity). Reflection has a central role alongside having quality indicators in place, which are both suggested as being undertaken within the Loud and Clear music project (Mooney & Young, 2012) and across the various Youth Music projects (Dillon, 2010). For instance, within the Loud and Clear project, staff were expected to keep weekly reflection logs as indicators for any developments from the participants on a weekly basis (Mooney & Young, 2012 p.15).

Music as a tool for communication

Studies and reports focusing on the effects of participating in music making have developed insights into the various ways it can be used as a form of communication (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009; Ansdell & Pavlicevic, 2010). Gary Ansdell and Mercedes Pavlicevic have explored musical communication in relation to music therapy, in which they suggest playing music provides a 'way of being with others in the world' (2010, p.204). The study focused on a music therapist working with a young child in which they created music together, but similar findings

are also apparent in studies focusing on mother and child music making (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009; Williams & Barrett, 2015). When making music with a child it is suggested that a parent will be communicating their emotions to the child and thus a sense of attachment and belonging will be formed (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009 p.302).

Malloch and Trevarthen (2009) also suggest that, through music making, children can learn and develop their language, alongside developing their knowledge of the world around them. Daniel Levitin suggests that songs such as *The Wheels on the Bus* 'can communicate ideas about the social world around the child' (2010 p. 147). Within the Loud and Clear evaluation pack, alongside helping the child develop their attachment with a guardian, participants also develop their language and knowledge of the outside world through having the space to communicate their ideas into the music making (Mooney & Young, 2012). Similarly, projects with older children in care were reported by Youth Music as developing their communication with their carers whilst developing their musical skill through participating in a project (Dillon, 2010).

Various studies have focused on music as a tool for communication within individuals' everyday life (De Nora, 2011, 2014; Clarke et al. 2009). Tia DeNora and Clarke et al. suggest that music could be considered a cultural artefact that facilitates everyday emotions (De Nora, 2011 p.3; Clarke et al., 2009 p.4). De Nora finds that, in some cases, individuals use music to help them communicate their emotions as a way of helping to 'make sense of situations, as something which people may become aware when they are trying to determine or tune into an ongoing situation' (2011, p. 13).

Music has been noted as being able to facilitate emotions that individuals can feel in the every day. Eric Clarke et al. (2009) describes music as being a 'safe' environment where participants can explore their emotions, without having to be concerned about further implications. Similarly, on a more practical level Dillon's report found that looked after children involved in projects creating song lyrics, found it a useful as a way of expressing their emotions (2010 p.20).

Providing a safe space to explore emotions links to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) and the need for individuals to feel that they have a safe environment where they can express themselves.

Dave Camlin suggests that community music projects often provide a welcoming, safe environment, as often participants are welcomed into the group without having to go through an audition process (2015). Similar findings are also apparent within Lee Higgins work exploring acts of hospitality within community music. (2007;2012). Higgins suggests that within these acts of hospitality that the 'welcoming' to the group is essential as a first step for building relationships, and often the musical ability is not the sole judgement criteria, but instead it is their engagement with the project and members of the group. These ideas resonate with the findings from the Youth Music review (2010) where facilitators within the projects took participants at face value and this enabled participants to feel at ease when participating.

This next section will outline the current discourse surrounding children's workforce staff practice, including current CPD legislation, workers views on CPD training, and the potential barriers that may prevent staff from undertaken training.

Workforce Development

Given the increasing awareness of theory around music and the care of looked after children, there is a need for social workers to develop their practice. As a way of supporting social workers in their ever-changing working contexts, social care organisations have developed specific CPD training to support their staff in continuing to develop their practice. To legally practice, social workers need to document their engagement with CPD activities in accordance with HCPC standards (HCPC CPD, 2017).

Over recent years, there have been debates concerning the nature of CPD found in social work and whether there should be an outcome and a competency-based approach, where learning is based on meeting a set of targets, or a more reflective, process-based approach (Potter, 2013). Both approaches are problematic. The former has been criticised as reducing CPD to a rote learning, tick-box exercise, and the latter as failing to recognise the socio-political context of social work practice (Postle et al., 2002).

Research on child protection training for social workers found that many engaged in CPD training to maintain enthusiasm for their job, broaden their knowledge of specific aspects related to their practice and progress in their careers (Brady 2013; Beddo, 2013; Kirwan, 2012). Several factors in Kirwan's (2012) study were found to facilitate participation in CPD, including employer assistance with finances, time, and travel. Support from colleagues and supervisors was also a factor, with the former helping with workloads and the latter being a source of encouragement. This echoes the findings of other research which indicates that CPD can be

difficult where managers do not value staff training, thus staff can often find it difficult to be granted time off to attend training or have the cost of training covered (Boulet et al., 2007 cited in Halton et al., 2013, Skinner,2005). Organisational structures can also hinder participation. Kirwan (2012) identified that in some instances, structures meant social workers were marginalised from training provision, resulting in their paying for and carrying out CPD activities in their own time.

This review of existing research suggests that engaging in CPD is not easy for social workers and does not always result in the desired return for their time and energy given to it. Given the difficulties presented here, it is no surprise that social workers in Beddoe's (2013) research used the language of struggle to describe their experiences of CPD, acknowledging CPD as something they had to fight and battle for.

Summary

A lack of attachments or inability to communicate with their support network can have a detrimental effect on looked after children's ability to build reliance and form a secure placement in care. Although initiatives such as social pedagogy training and CPD are available to children's workforce staff, research has suggested that a lack of time and funding can often be detrimental in the efforts to attend training or develop their practice. Thus, it can often be difficult for support networks to find new ways of interacting with the child and building a relationship. Music making provides an opportunity to address this, as it can foster a sense of attachment

between children and their birth families, through communicating with each through the synchronisation of their voices and movements.

The next chapter will begin to outline the methodology being employed within this study and the reasoning behind these approaches. This will include outlining the overall research strategy and the sample of participants.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design for this study, including the strategic approach, sample of participants, and the methodology used. Additionally, there will be exploration of the various ethical considerations that were taken into account as well as the approach to data analysis. The data collection for this study was undertaken between November 2017- April 2018 in Lincoln and Gateshead.

With a current lack of research on the implications that music making may be having for looked after children and their support networks, this study aims to bridge this gap through collecting narratives of participants experiences of attending a music project. Through which a focus can be given as to whether attending the project had any impact upon the child and the support network and if so how this may be beneficial. Alongside, gathering insights into the way that facilitators and organisations are delivering sessions to meet the needs of the participants.

As there is a focus within the research on individuals' experiences and implications from partaking within a given context or situation, in this case music, it was deemed that a case study strategy which is defined as an 'inquiry that focuses upon a phenomenon and its impact within a real-life context' (Yin, 2003 p.13) would be most appropriate.

Case Study Strategy

Three projects were chosen to be examined, (1) working with foster children (Loud and Clear foster family learning), (2) working with children who are adopted (Loud and Clear adoption family learning) and (3) working with children's workforce staff (SoundLINCS- Fusion project). It was deemed that having three distinct cases would allow a substantial amount of data to be gathered, where conclusions could be formed that would not just be unique to one case. This following Martin Denscombe (2003) and Colin Robson (2011) suggestion that case studies require more than one case to justify that the conclusions formed are not just specific to one setting. Hence, to understand the impact music making may have for looked after children and their different support networks, it was essential to gather data from different situations of looked after care.

Case studies are a common strategy used by music organisations when evaluating the success of their projects. Evaluation documents by Youth Music (Dillon, 2010) and Sage Gateshead (Mooney & Young 2012; 2013) use case studies to outline the developments participants have made since attending a project. Sage Gateshead's case study of their project Loud and Clear (2012) captured the narratives of both the facilitator and foster carer describing the developments they had seen since attending the project. Evaluators used focus groups and one to one interviews to capture ideas of the experience of attending the project over several weeks. These narratives provide insights into the various impacts participants believed the project was having, which may have been difficult to capture otherwise. As this project shares similar intent, a similar approach was used in this work.

The sample was made up of sixty-eight participants, both adults and children, who attended one of the three projects (see Table 1.1). Forty-eight of these adults participated in a focus group, with a further twelve taking part in a follow up one to one interview. These three projects were chosen due to connections already being in place with the two organisations being responsible for the delivery, and due to the number of opportunities there were to gather data. Additionally, four facilitators delivering the projects participated in one to one interviews.

SoundLINCS Case Study	Loud and Clear Foster Group	Loud and Clear Adoption group
37 no. Social Workers	7 no. Carers 5 no. Children	9 no. Adoptive Parents 10 no. Children
	2 no. Facilitators	2 no. Facilitators

Table 1.1: Distribution of participants across the three case studies.

The next section will begin to outline the methodology undertaken within this study, alongside providing the rationale for choosing these approaches.

Methodology

Focus Groups

Focus groups were undertaken within each project with the aim of gathering narratives of participants' experiences of engaging in music making. It was hoped that by having group

conversations, participants would be more open about their experiences, drawing on similarities or differences they may have had when participating in the project. The focus group was the first step in collecting the narratives of the participants and would be used to identify potential themes that could be explored further in one to one interviews.

Focus groups are often used a starting point for collecting narratives as they are seen to help put participants at ease when facing questions, as there is a support network there to help answer questions (Robson, 2011 p.294-295). In conducting the focus groups, participants appeared to be open to answering many of the questions and using other participants conversations as a way of entering the conversation drawing on their own circumstances. It also helped participants feel at ease for the one to one interviews, as they already knew the themes spoken about and what were the questions likely to be asked.

One difficulty that can often become apparent when conducting a focus group is having people dominate the conversation (Robson, 2011). Largely across the three cases, this was not found to be an issue, however, if it was felt that participants had not had the opportunity to talk the question would be then asked again but with a signal towards the area of the room where the participant was sitting. Thus, space was provided for them to engage and have their voice heard. This was particularly more prominent within the Loud and Clear foster family case study where the majority of the group had been attending for an extended period of time, thus newer members of the group were more reserved in the responses.

The focus groups were undertaken while participants attended one of the music sessions to help participants feel at ease and open to discussion. This following Denscombe's (2003) suggestion that methodology involving interviewing participants should be based within a 'natural setting for the participants to help them feel secure' (p.31). Likewise, hosting the focus group during a music session meant that participants were not expected to make specific arrangements to attend; hence the number of participants involved would likely be larger. De Vigianni's study *Musical Pathways* (2013) aimed to undertake focus groups one week after a music project had finished. However, challenges were found when organising the participants to come and take part in a focus group, as many could not attend due to making other commitments since the projects finished. Consequently, this led to a small number of attendees and a low data collection with incomplete insights into the participant's experiences of the project. Reflecting on De Vigianni's (2013) experience led to the reason for conducting the focus groups at an opportunity where participants were not expected to make specific arrangements to attend.

One to One Interviews

Interviews provided an opportunity to focus upon individual's personal experiences of engaging in music making. As with the focus groups, these were conducted either during or before a session so that participants did not have to make specific arrangements to be involved. Yin suggests interviews are an essential aspect of a case study, often providing personal insights into one's experiences (2003, p. 92). Thus, it was deemed that interviews provided opportunities for participants to provide further details on the impact that music making has had for themselves and the child, and what they believe the longer-term impacts might be in their case.

When conducting the interviews, a semi-standardised interview approach was used to allow questions to be derived from the participants' responses. Frances Ryan, Michael Coughlan and Patricia Cronin suggest that this kind of interview allows for 'issues and unanticipated responses to emerge' (2009, p. 310). This provided a sense of freedom, where questions could be altered and adapted to explore further some of the themes emerging from the interviews. Undertaking the interviews in this style should provide an in-depth narrative of the participant's experiences of partaking in music making. This may not have been the case had a standardised interview been used, where the responses and questions already had some pre-determination.

Interviews have been used in several studies exploring participant's experience of participating in a music project. Ailbhe Kenny's study (2016) on communities of musical practice undertook several interviews with members from three music projects exploring their experiences of engaging within a community project. The interviews provided insights into the participant's reason for joining the group, their own experiences and what impact the project was having. This was deemed useful as a way of helping to provide conclusions into the importance that musical communities can play in individuals lives. The aims within Kenny's study of being able to hear participants experiences and impacts of engaging within music are similar to the aims of this study, in trying to understand the impact music making may be having for looked after children. Thus, the reasoning for following a similar approach that involved using one to one interviews to capture in-depth narratives of participants experiences.

Participatory Observations

Several participatory observations were undertaken across all of the projects, with field notes documenting key moments within each session including the activities undertaken, participants' engagement, and how facilitators ran the activities.

To understand how facilitators were developing the projects on a weekly basis to meet the needs of the participants, it was deemed that observing and participating within a project over several weeks would provide first hand insights into how the sessions were being delivered. Martyn Denscombe suggests that participatory observations allow evidence to be gathered first hand and that 'in certain purposes, it is best to observe what actually happens' (2003, p. 192). Similarly, Yin indicates that it allows direct insights into the behaviours of the participants within the setting that is being studied (2003, p. 92). As part of the research aims to understand what activities are being used and how they are developed to help children build relationships with their support networks. These observations could be used to then underpin the collected narratives to understand how the projects were supporting the developments of the participants.

Yin (2003) suggests that researchers must understand the potential bias that must be taken into account when conducting participatory observations, due to their being a reliance on descriptions based on the researcher's experience in the setting that may not be replicated. One way of overcoming potential bias is through having a second witness undertake observations with the leading researcher, who can concur with what the researcher saw. Ailbhe Kenny (2016)

undertook participatory observations, in which field recordings (video, audio recordings) were undertaken as a way of overcoming any potential bias. Within the SoundLINCS case study, a small team was used to gather data adding to the credibility of the participatory logs. Across the other two cases, due to ethical considerations, it was deemed inappropriate due to the small size of the group to have a second witness during the session. However, facilitators within these sessions are expected to keep reflective diaries that outline activities used and participants' responses. Therefore, these diaries could be used to overcome questions on the reliability of the observations.

Participatory Group Action Research

Due to the high number of participants attending the Loud and Clear adoption programme, it was deemed that a focus group would not be feasible to provide each participant with enough opportunity to have their voice heard. Consequently, a participatory action research method was used in the final week to explore the themes that emerged from interviews. Participants created four questions to answer and were asked to chat through the answers in small pairs, before feeding back to myself. This made the conversation focused and coordinated with participants feeding back to one another, whilst still providing opportunities for small discussions around the topic.

Participatory action research is described by John Bray as being 'an interaction between action and reflection that produces generative learning' (Bray et al. 2000 p.28). Providing a space for reflection between participants may open up further insights about their impacts and their

experiences of being in the session that resonate with others helping to aid the ability to form conclusions on the impact of music making.

Daphne Rickson and Sanne Johanne Renne Haannen (2014) use participatory action research to explore music making with young people with intellectual disability, highlighting the importance of collaboration in this approach. Within the study, Rickson and Haannen had participants read and discuss articles on music making and disabilities before choosing questions that they wanted to answer. Collaboration within the Loud and Clear adoption case came from asking participants to identify key themes they would like to talk about in pairs in response to the questions, before feeding back their answers to the group. Results from this approach were grounded in the experience of the participants, which again was what was aimed to be uncovered within this study.

Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations were in place, due to the vulnerability of the participants. In this project, the gatekeepers that needed to be considered were the music organisations involved in the delivery of the project and the councils that co-ordinated the project. Both were approached, where conversations regarding the data collection and aims of the project were undertaken. Through these conversations, gatekeepers provided details of ethical guidelines already in place, alongside providing feedback on the methods proposed in this study. Within the SoundLINCS case study, ethical guidelines were in position as contact had already been made with Lincolnshire social services as a gatekeeper to their staff. Similarly, within the Loud and Clear cases, Sage Gateshead had ethical guidelines in place for staff working with the participants that had been devised with Newcastle and Gateshead councils.

Consent forms were provided to all participants before beginning data collection, outlining the aims and objects of the research as well as what the participant's involvement would be. Each group was given an opportunity to raise any concerns or questions before data collection began. To comply with research ethics participants must have a clear idea of their involvement in the study and how much time will be required (Denscombe, 2003, p. 310). Due to the sensitive nature of some of the narratives, the data transcribed from focus groups, interviews, and participatory observations were anonymised with specific coding in place. Additionally, all recordings were stored on password protected devices in line with data protection and later destroyed once they had been analysed.

The role of the researcher itself has ethical considerations. Kenny identifies that having connections within the group may pose a question over the potential bias within the results (2016). Similar considerations had to be taken into account within this study due to my past role as a facilitator on the Loud and Clear project and what impact this could have on the results. Kenny overcame potential bias by recording the session through video or audio data. However, due to the vulnerability of the participants, it was inappropriate to gather video data from the Loud and Clear projects; therefore, audio data of the focus group was conducted as a way of capturing the data. Additionally, following on from Kenny's use of participatory logs (2016), field notes were also used to outline the activities and participants responses. These were analysed against the experiences spoken about in the narratives.

Analysis of results

The results taken from the interviews, focus groups, and participatory action research logs were analysed following a thematic coding approach, outlined by Robson as a way of allowing potential interests and key themes to emerge (2011 p.467). Each of the case studies was analysed separately before being compared to the other cases.

Robson's guidelines on how to undertake a thematic analysis were followed, giving the data an initial code linking to the research aims (2011, p. 476). The coded data was then organised in relation to the themes identified through the literature review and those identified by the participants. Once each case had been examined, the data was then cross analysed to draw comparisons and differences between each case.

Numerous studies have used thematic analysis as a way of collating data within case studies. Kenny (2016) used a four-phase thematic analysis approach when examining each of the three different cases, this included: coding the data, entailing a template approach, collating the data against the key themes and completing a cross-case comparison. Through conducting this thematic approach, Kenny identified emerging themes that were across all three cases to understand the similarities and differences participants had of partaking in different communities of musical practice. Adopting a similar approach in this study allowed insights to be gained into the different impacts participating in music making had for children and their support networks at different stages of looked after care.

Summary

This chapter outlined the strategy, methods and ethical considerations employed in this study. Ethical considerations were particularly important within this study due to the nature of the participants involved. Using a case study strategy allowed participants' narratives to be gathered regarding the impact that music making was having upon themselves and their children. Alongside providing an opportunity for insights to be gained into the way facilitators delivered sessions to have the most significant impact upon participants.

The next chapter will examine the first case study (SoundLINCS Fusion project) highlighting the background of the organisation, the methods employed in the data collections and the findings from this case study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Case Study One: SoundLINCS

This chapter explores the impact of providing music training for looked after children's support network. The project examined was a one-day training course delivered by the UK music charity SoundLINCS. The chapter will begin by firstly providing a background upon the organisation and the project being examined, before highlighting the methods employed within this study and the findings.

Background

SoundLINCS is a not-for-profit community music organisation in Lincolnshire, delivering music projects across the East Midlands. Set up in 1998, SoundLINCS currently provides a breadth of projects, ranging from early years mother and children music groups through to specific training programmes for music facilitators or care staff. SoundLINCS state that through their work they aim to:

- Provide advocacy and information through e-bulletins, social media.
- Undertake research.
- Offer training and professional development for both musicians and non-musicians.
- Run music workshops and residencies in an array of music and multi-arts genres; from samba to singing and pop to production and technology.

- Create toolkits, apps, and books designed to provide music-making opportunities to as many people as possible. (SoundLINCS website, 2018)

There are several partners with whom SoundLINCS work through in their project delivery, including Youth Music, Arts Council England, Lincolnshire County Council, and The Mighty Creatives. Through their partnership with Youth Music, a significant source of funding was secured in 2015 for their Fund C initiative which would run from April 2015 to March 2018.

This funding allowed the creation of five different strands:

1. SoundWell: A project engaging children in the paediatric ward of Lincoln County Hospital;
2. Project Y Nott: A project engaging with Nottinghamshire Youth Justice system;
3. Fusion: A multi arts project working with looked after children and support staff;
4. Good Vibration: A project working with children with hearing impairment;
5. Groove and Grow: A project for young parents and children aged 0-5 years.

Within each strand, SoundLINCS aim to develop frameworks and associated documentation which could be used to help share practice between music practitioners. The documentation would also provide a detailed account of the impact musical engagement can have for people in challenging circumstances, which could be used to underpin future funding bids and develop new partners. SoundLINCS expected specific outcomes through these projects, ranging from musical outcomes such as increasing the number of music making opportunities for young people or developing their playing ability, to the social outcomes of raising awareness of the positive benefits of engaging within music for specific individuals and to aid children in developing their resilience.

The Project

This study focuses on the Fusion programme which was developed in partnership with Lincolnshire Social Services, who have seen an increase in the number of looked after children in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands. In 2016 it was reported that within Lincolnshire 630 young people were classified as being in looked after care (JSNA Lincoln, 2016). With numbers increasing year on year, Lincolnshire County Council have developed more CPD training opportunities for their staff to help improve their practice further and cater for this increasing number. Training opportunities offered often focus on helping staff develop strategies for building relationships with young people. SoundLINCS and Lincolnshire Social Services believe that by providing musical training to children's workforce staff, staff would be able to develop their relationships with young people through music.

The Fusion project was a one-day workshop open to any members of the children's workforce staff. Through the training, it was expected that staff would develop their knowledge and practical skills of delivering musical activities, which could then be taken back and expanded upon within their settings. The training day explored four questions:

- How does music relate to social pedagogy and signs of safety?
- How can music improve my practice?
- What does music do and how do we know?
- Where can I go for more help and information? (SoundLINCS website, n.d)

Originally SoundLINCS managers intended to deliver fifteen sessions within a year to allow participants to attend multiple sessions and continue to develop their knowledge and skills.

However, the low uptake at the beginning of the project led to courses being cut and only four sessions being delivered. Sessions were initially intended for foster carers, but in the latter stages of the project, this was opened up to include any role in the children's workforce staff. This appeared to be effective as more participants signed up for the last two sessions being offered.

The training aimed to provide participants with ideas of small musical activities that could be developed further with young people. The activities varied from exploring technological applications versus non-technological activities such as how different songs may evoke different emotions. All activities were developed with the intention of participants being able to use resources they already had access to, alongside making links to initiatives which staff may already be using such as Signs of Safety or Social Pedagogy. The sessions were linked to the assessment and accreditation criteria for social workers supporting vulnerable families.

Methods

Several different methods were employed in this case study. Participatory observations were undertaken across the two training sessions, where logs were kept outlining key moments and the engagement of the participants. Additionally, eight sets of focus groups were conducted over the dinner time break within each training session, with four to five of the children's support workers in each group. A small research team of five people was used to gather the data, undertaking the participatory observations and conducting a focus group each. This proved useful for collecting a substantial amount of data within a short space of time. Across the two sessions, seventeen participants undertook the training, ranging from staff working in residential homes in a supporting role to participants working as therapeutic activity coordinators in private residential homes.

This next section will begin to outline the findings and the limitations within the results.

Findings

The analysis of results took on a thematic approach, using emerging themes that resonated with those found in the literature. These can be categorised as follows; attachment theory with looked after children (Bowlby 1969; Simkiss, 2012; Maslow 1943), communication between looked after children and their support network (Simkiss, 2012; Rahilly & Trevelyan, 2010; Handley & Doyle, 2012) and tensions within social workers CPD (Postle et al., 2002; Brady, 2013). Several themes stood out as paramount when participants reflected on how using music may impact upon a young person, including; the impact on communication between support networkers and children music may have, how music may provide an opportunity to build relationships, what support participants felt they needed and what their experience were of the training day. Amongst these reflections, the potential barriers to the use of music in this setting became apparent as well.

Expected Outcomes of using music with young people

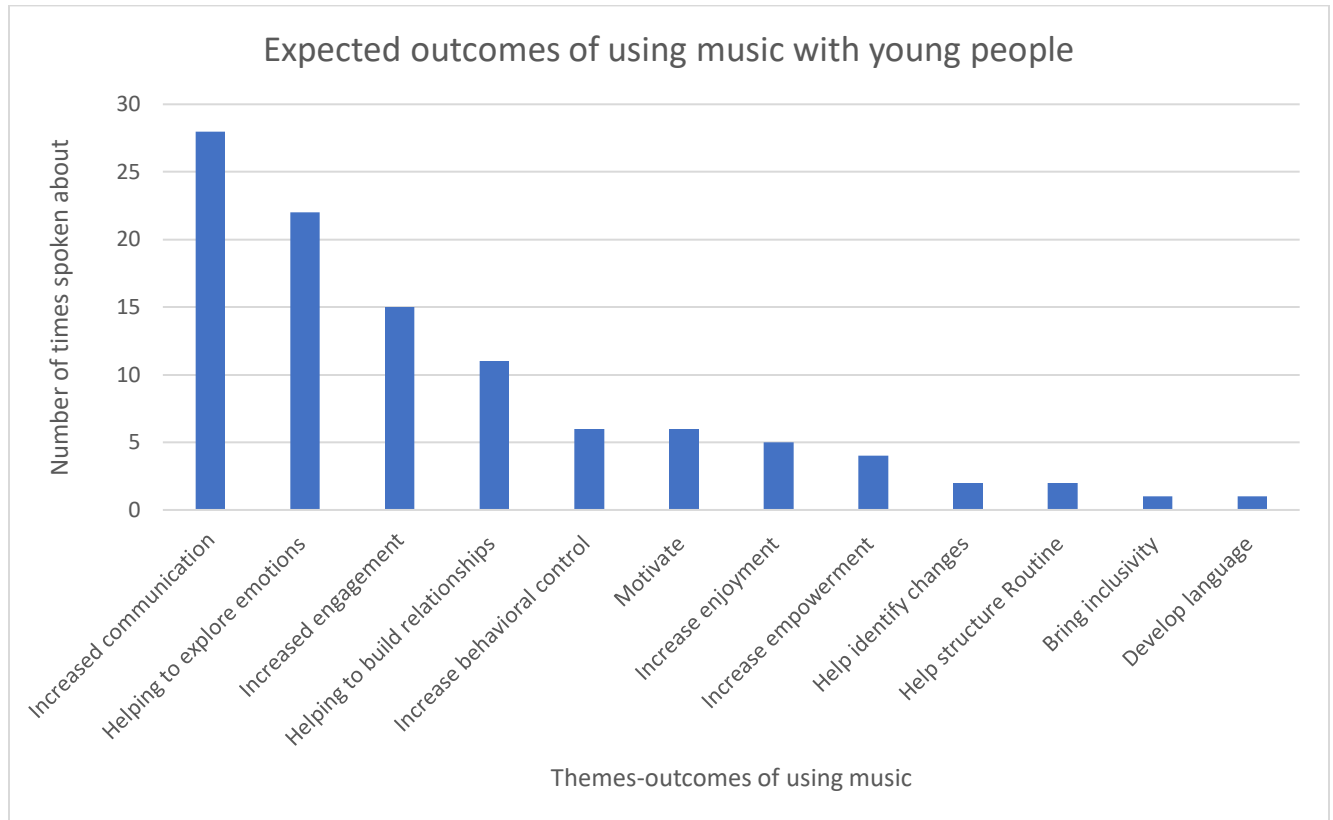


Figure 1.1-Expected outcomes of using music with young people

The focus groups identified several outcomes that they believed would come from using music within their practice (see Figure 1.1). An increase in communication presented itself as a key attribute, particularly as to how music can aid topics of conversation with the young person, thus beginning the process of building a relationship. Additionally, it was recognised that music making could engage participants in an activity and thus open another pathway towards conversation. Participants identified how older age groups (16+) could often be a struggle to engage, which could be overcome by providing activities such as music which the young person

may already have a connection to. One participant clarified that they felt it was more likely that a tablet with musical apps would engage older children, and physical instruments would more likely engage younger children (see a [transcript from the SoundLINCS end of training day reflections](#)).

The focus groups also identified increased enjoyment for participants through music making. Several participants described looked after children as potentially missing out on opportunities of just being children. One participant stated:

‘So many of our children have missed out on the opportunity of being children, from the circumstances they have come from. They haven’t played — they haven’t bounced saucepans with wooden spoons, you know, the things that we take for granted.’ (see a [transcript from the end of day reflections from the SoundLINCS training](#))

Impacts of communication

Exploring the impacts of communication through music, it was hypothesised by the focus groups that music would help young people express their emotions to adults more easily. Participants identified that the young people they work with often struggle to express their feelings. There was a suggestion that the music they listen to could provide an insight into their emotions at that moment. In this way, the music and lyrics might provide significant scaffolding towards conversation and thus lead to emotional exploration (see Figure 1.2).

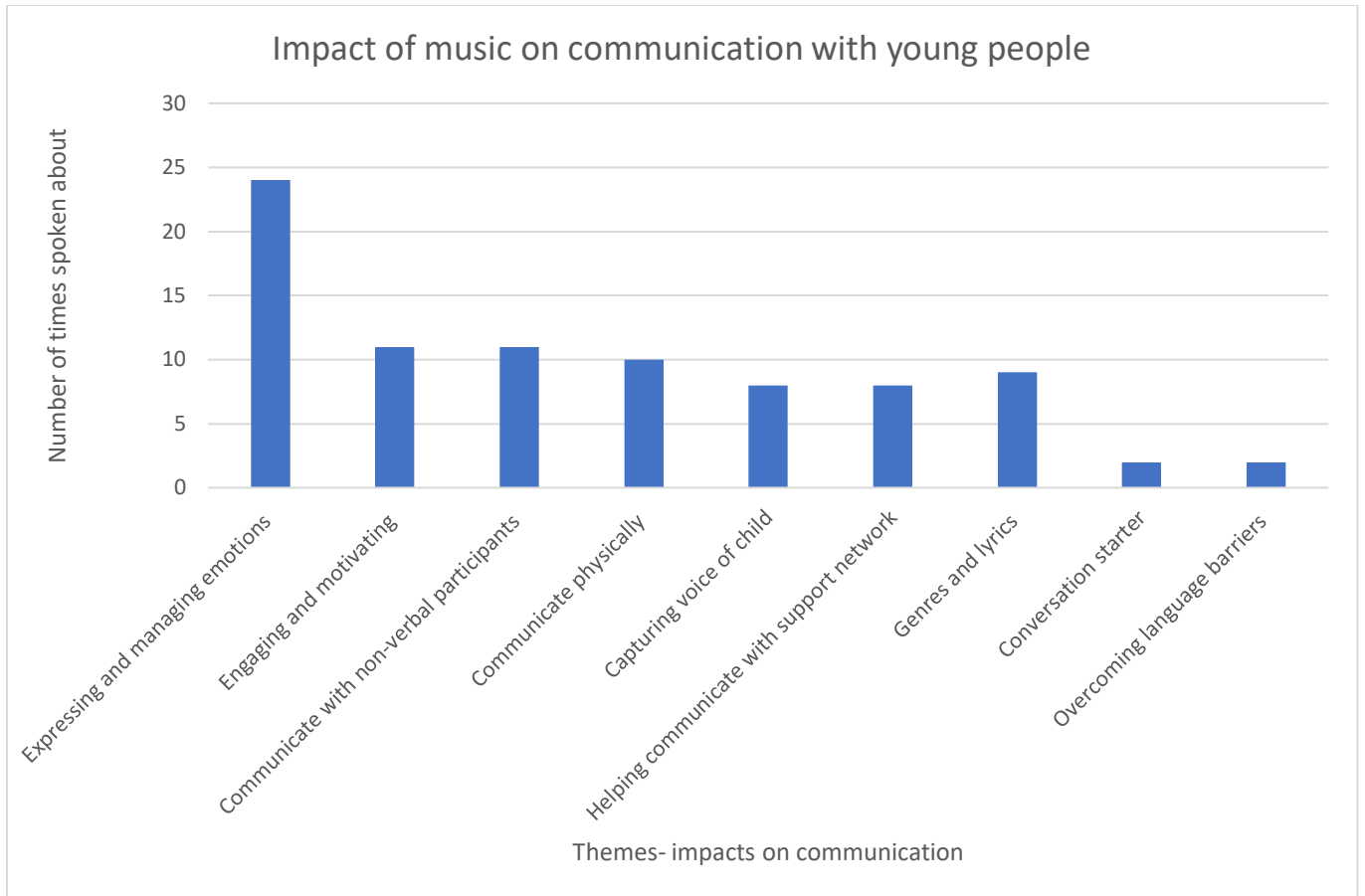


Figure 1.2-Impact of music on communication with young people

Additionally, it was identified that music could aid in working with children who may be non-verbal or face potential language barriers. Several participants drew on past experiences of using musical instruments with non-verbal children where they could copy one another and provide a sense of control children may never have had.

Within the training event, several videos were used to demonstrate different projects which SoundLINCS had delivered with children in residential homes. Participants described how the

videos showed young people expressing their emotions and how this technique could be a way of allowing the children to express their own voices.

Supporting the Workforce

Another theme that arose from these focus groups were the practical considerations of running music-based projects with looked after children (See Figure 1.3). Resources were singled out as being the most important area for development. Although many participants recognised that they did not have any musical instruments, the lack of technology (iPads, tablets, etc.) at work was viewed as being the most detrimental to implementing the training into their everyday routine. Additionally, participants identified that they needed the support of their managers and teams to incorporate music making in their work. Staff described how, without having research on the positive impacts music had for young people, their managers and their colleagues would be unlikely to support the activity. This often led to a lack of continuity with children's support networks when it came to delivering artistic activities.

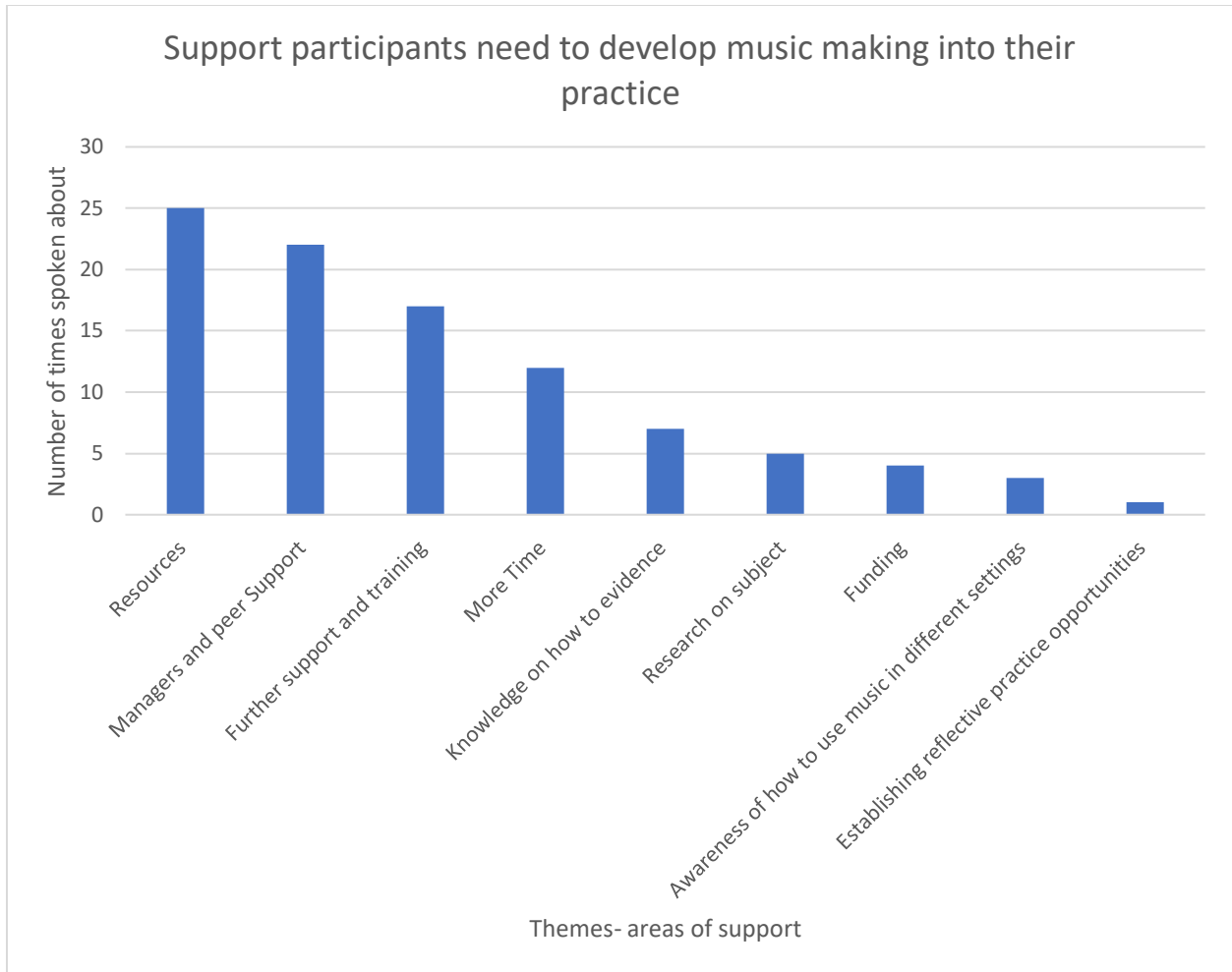


Figure 1.3- Support that participants needed to use music

The lack of funding was a common theme in participants' responses. They commented that although the training activities were enjoyable, they would struggle to implement many of them without funding for resources such as tablets. Exploring music applications on tablets through the training generated excitement and interest amongst several of the participants; however, many of them expressed disappointment at not having any accessible in their work. Additionally, there were also concerns about restrictions on devices preventing workers from accessing and downloading applications.

Potential Barriers

The focus group identified there were several perceived barriers that may prevent them from implementing music into their practice. These barriers included not only a lack of resources but also a lack of time, with participants describing heavy workloads with limited opportunities to plan and develop activities. It was also noted that even if they were in a position to do an activity, staff often lacked knowledge on how they could ‘evidence this against their current systems’ to show it was meeting targets (see a [transcript from the end of day reflections from the SoundLINCS training](#))

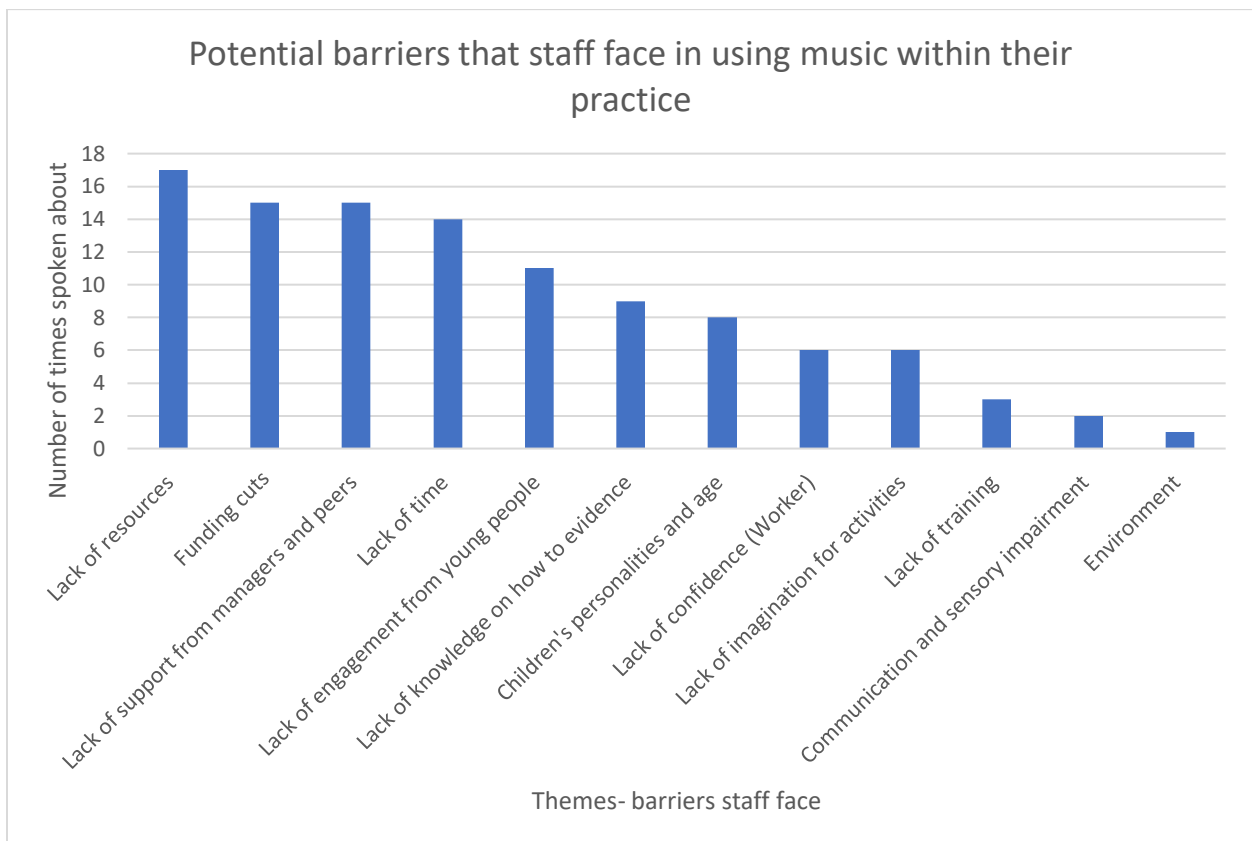


Figure 1.4- Barriers preventing staff from using music

Participants also believed personal factors would prevent them from using music in their work. A lack of confidence by several participants on how to use the activities was indicated, with several suggestions that they were unsure of how to continuously develop the activities to achieve the intended results.

Experience of attendance

Figure 1.5 reflects participants' thoughts on the SoundLINCS training. Participants felt that they gained some ideas that they could explore further, including choosing musical tracks that mean something to the individual or using websites providing tips and tools. Participants stated this as being one of their primary reasons for attending the training. Many participants commented on the interactive nature of the training, a feature which contrasted most other CPD, which usually relied on PowerPoint presentations. Several suggested that the interactivity of the session was beneficial for their learning, allowing them to remember the activities better and to experience it as the young people would:

'I remember better than you've done it before you try to do it with a young person. You are experiencing those anxieties that kind of nervous energy – that 'oh my god, what if I get it wrong...' – which is the same kind of feeling that a young person is going to feel when you try and do that activity with them.' (see a [transcript from one of the SoundLINCS focus groups](#))



Figure 1.5- Experience of attending training.

Due to their experiences of attending other non-musical training sessions, participants stated that the training had been different to what they had originally expected. Many participants thought the training would be more focused on the actual playing of instruments, rather than focusing on what music meant to them. Although, the training was different several participants described it being useful for giving them ideas of different musical activities they could use and develop.

Limitations of Results

Although these findings provide insight into the impact that music training can have for looked after children's support networks, further research is required to develop insights into what the effect was once workers used the training. Follow up interviews were initially set up one month following the training; however, this was unsuccessful due to a lack of responses from participants. Therefore, it is unknown whether the intended outcomes of using music were achieved and if the potential barriers were overcome.

Summary

There were several perceived benefits for both staff and looked after children in the SoundLINCS programme through musical training. One of the most significant benefits was that their support network would be able to develop their relationship with a young person, helping the child form a secure attachment. Staff would be able to use music alongside their other initiatives, hence helping meet their targets set for the young people. However, several barriers are needed to be overcome, particularly in terms of managerial support and increased technological resources. These themes will be discussed further against the current literature surrounding looked after children in chapter seven.

The next chapter will examine the second case study (Loud and Clear foster family learning) which works with foster children and their carers. The chapter will outline the background on the organisation delivering the project, before highlighting the methods employed in this study and the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

Case Study Two: Loud and Clear Foster Project

Sage Gateshead is a music charity based in the North East of England that delivers a project (Loud and Clear) working with foster children and their carers. This chapter will examine the impact that music making has for looked after children in foster care and their carers. Beginning by providing a brief set of background information on Sage Gateshead and the Loud and Clear project. This will then be followed by highlighting the methods employed within this study, the limitations posed within the study and the findings.

Background

Sage Gateshead delivers a breadth of participatory projects through their learning and participation department, ranging from the In Harmony (El Sistema) project to an over 55s ukulele ensemble. Since its opening in 2004, the building plays host to many different participatory arts festivals as well as housing three performance venues.

CoMusica (Community Music Activity), a learning strand in Sage Gateshead, provides participatory music projects for young people in challenging circumstances, including looked after children, young people classified as being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Projects offered range from informal song writing workshops to formal training sessions for music practitioners working within the community music sector. CoMusica relies on partners such as Arts Council England, Youth Music and the NHS for providing funding for many of these projects. Bids to Youth Music in

previous years have also focused on providing more music projects for looked after children, refugee children and families in turmoil.

Loud and Clear which is delivered in partnership with Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council, works with foster children, adopted children and their support networks. These projects are particularly important in this area, as recent years have seen an increase in the number of children entering local authority care in Newcastle and Gateshead. The year 2016 saw 843 young people in foster care (NHS looked after children report, 2017).

This case study is examining the Loud and Clear foster family project, which provides weekly music making sessions where foster children have the opportunity to develop instrumental skills, develop their singing and socialise with other children in similar circumstances. There is an expectation that carers will join in with the music making, developing their own musical skills alongside having the opportunity to bond with the child.

The projects were set up in 2009, under the sing up strand of 'Beyond the Mainstream', which was a national initiative aiming to provide music making opportunities for looked after children (Mooney & Young, 2012). The Loud and Clear foster family project was the first project working with looked after children to be set up within Sage Gateshead.

The foster family project has several aims intended to be achieved every term;

- Improve the quality and standards of music delivery for children and young people
- Embed learning and effective practice in host and partner organisations and share practice beyond the project

- Improve the personal, social and emotional development of young children at higher risk of delay through participation in a creative musical activity
- Improve the communication, language, and literacy of young children at higher risk of delay through creative musical activity
- Build emotional bonds between looked after children their foster parents and siblings, and guardians through the medium of music making (Mooney & Young, 2012)

To meet these aims, facilitators emphasise a social pedagogical approach where the needs of the child and the building of relationships are central to the running of the sessions. To aid this development, there are opportunities for the children and carers to make music together, eat together and socialise with one another in the sessions (Mooney & Young, 2012). The activities used within sessions are based around the Sage Gateshead early years framework, with an emphasis on children developing language, knowledge of the natural world, and numeracy skills (Mooney & Young, 2012).

Methods

Several different methods were employed to examine the impact that joint music making had on children in foster care and their carers. Eight sets of participatory observations were undertaken across the project, where detailed logs of the activities and responses of the participants were taken into account. Alongside this, a focus group was conducted within one of the sessions where carers experiences of attending the session could be heard, and key themes could be identified. These themes were then explored further through six interviews with carers. Additionally, both facilitators on the project were interviewed to gain insights into the way that they were delivering sessions and the impact they believed the project was having.

The sample size of participants attending the project was relatively small, due to the informal nature of the group. Hence, there are limitations within the results on the conclusions that can be formed on the impacts that music making may be having upon the carers and why carers attend the project. Additionally, the impacts of music making on the foster children is also limited, due to the carers only working with the children for a limited amount of time. Thus, it is difficult to form conclusions on the longer-term impacts music may be having for these children.

This next section will begin to outline the findings and emerging themes that were identified through analysis of the focus groups, interviews and participatory observations.

Findings

The analysis of results took on a thematic approach, using emerging themes that resonated with those found in the literature. These can be categorised as follows; looked after children well-being reports (Bazalgette, Rahily & Trevelyan, 2015; Simkiss, 2012), attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969; Maslow 1943) and communication and learning for looked after children (Bazalgette, Rahily & Trevelyan 2015; Handley & Doyle, 2012). Several themes stood out as being paramount to this case study, these included; reasons why carers began attending the project, impact the project was believed to be having on the children and the carers themselves, the impact that music making was seen to be having within the home and the potential barriers that may prevent them from attending the project.

Participants Narratives:

Reason carers attended the project

Carers described several reasons as to why they had begun attending a music project (see Figure 2.1), stating they were often drawn to the project by the sense of support they felt, by having the opportunity to socialise with others in similar circumstances.

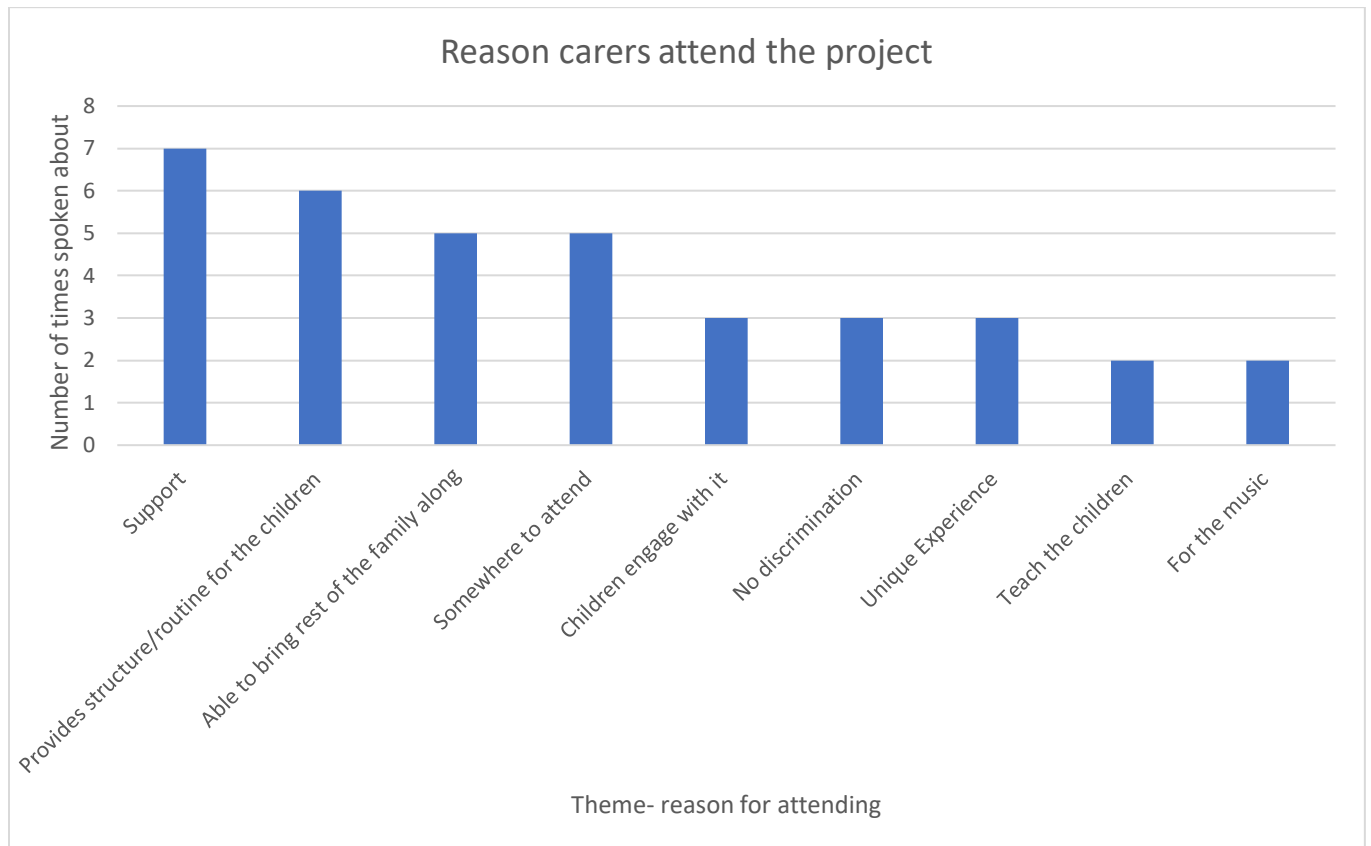


Figure 2.1- Reason carers attended the project

Several carers described having negative experiences when attending other mother and children's groups, often facing awkward questions or judgment about the child's challenging behaviour they may be displaying. One carer spoke about their experience of attending a toddler group and the discrimination that they had felt from parents towards the child:

‘Everybody presumes they are your grandchildren, and you think — especially if they are kicking off they are always like — I’m glad she’s not mine. And you want to say actually they are a looked after child... where at least here everybody understands that.’ (See a [transcript from the Loud and Clear focus group](#))

Attending the session was also noted as a unique experience for the carers and children where they could see and play instruments. Carers commented how the children had probably ‘never seen the instruments, never mind being given a chance to play them’ (See a [transcript from the Loud and Clear focus group](#)). Thus, carers hoping to provide enjoyable and new experiences for their children saw Loud and Clear as being one way to achieve this. Surprisingly only a small number of the group stated that their reason for attending the group was for the music, or to provide a musical experience for the children.

Why Carers chose to use music

There were multiple reasons as to why carers chose to use music with their children (see Figure 2.2). Building of structure and routine was one of the predominant reasons for using music, with participants identifying the lack of structure looked after children usually have when first entering foster care.

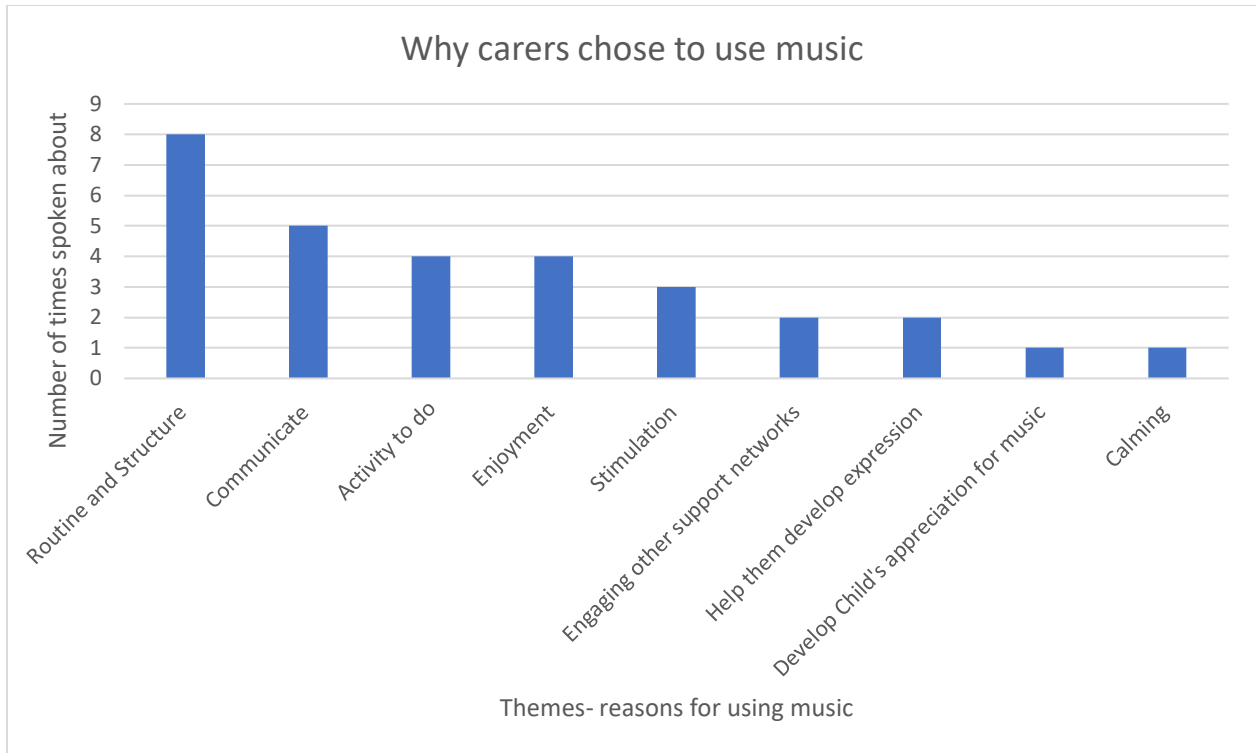


Figure 2.2- Why carers chose to use music

Music also provided an enjoyable joint activity for the carer and the child. Several carers described replicating the activities at home to provide the children with a source of entertainment. One of the carers, in particular, expressed how they used music as a form of stimulation for one of the children who had down syndrome. For this child, the use of the CD at home and school had become a way that other individuals could engage with them.

Musical activities going on at home

Details were provided on the musical activities that were going on at home (see Figure 2.3).

Singing is one of the leading musical activities most commonly done, particularly drawing on the nursery rhymes and songs from the sessions.

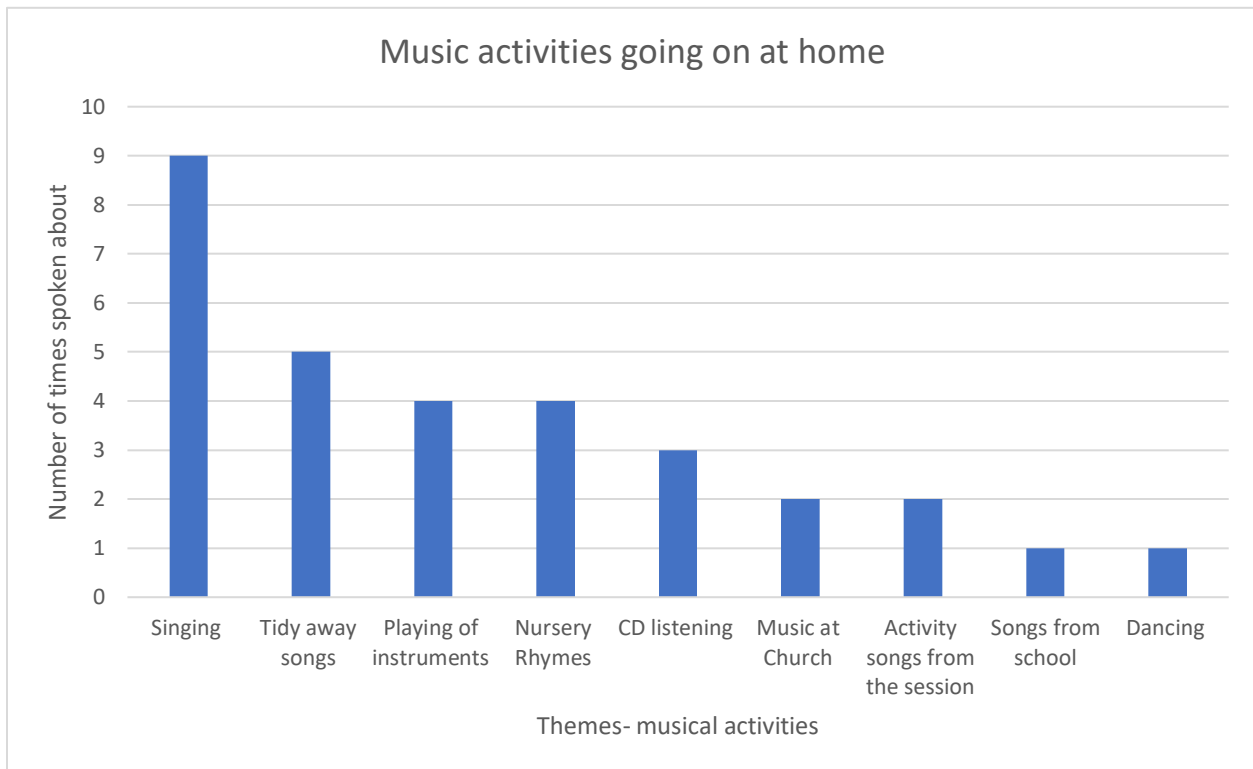


Figure 2.3- Musical activities going on at home

Likewise, the instruments from the project for carers to use had led to many of the children playing instruments daily. One carer stated their children had developed a love of playing instruments, mainly the guitar, describing how their child would often strum the guitar as a pastime at home (See a [transcript from the Loud and Clear focus group](#)). This resonates with what was observed in the session, where on several occasions the child brought a ukulele to a session, where they would often strum their ukulele along with the facilitators.

Several of the interviews also brought to light how listening to music was also a frequent activity for carers and their children. For one carer, listening to CDs had become an everyday activity within the child's life, often taking the CD into the car or school. The carer described how the

child would often ask for the CD on as soon as they got in the car, thus becoming part of the child's everyday routine.

Impact on Children

There were several perceived impacts the project was having on the children (see Figure 2.4).

Carers noted that children increased their engagement in music after attending the project for several weeks, describing how they played instruments and sang songs at home, often replicating the same activities from the session.

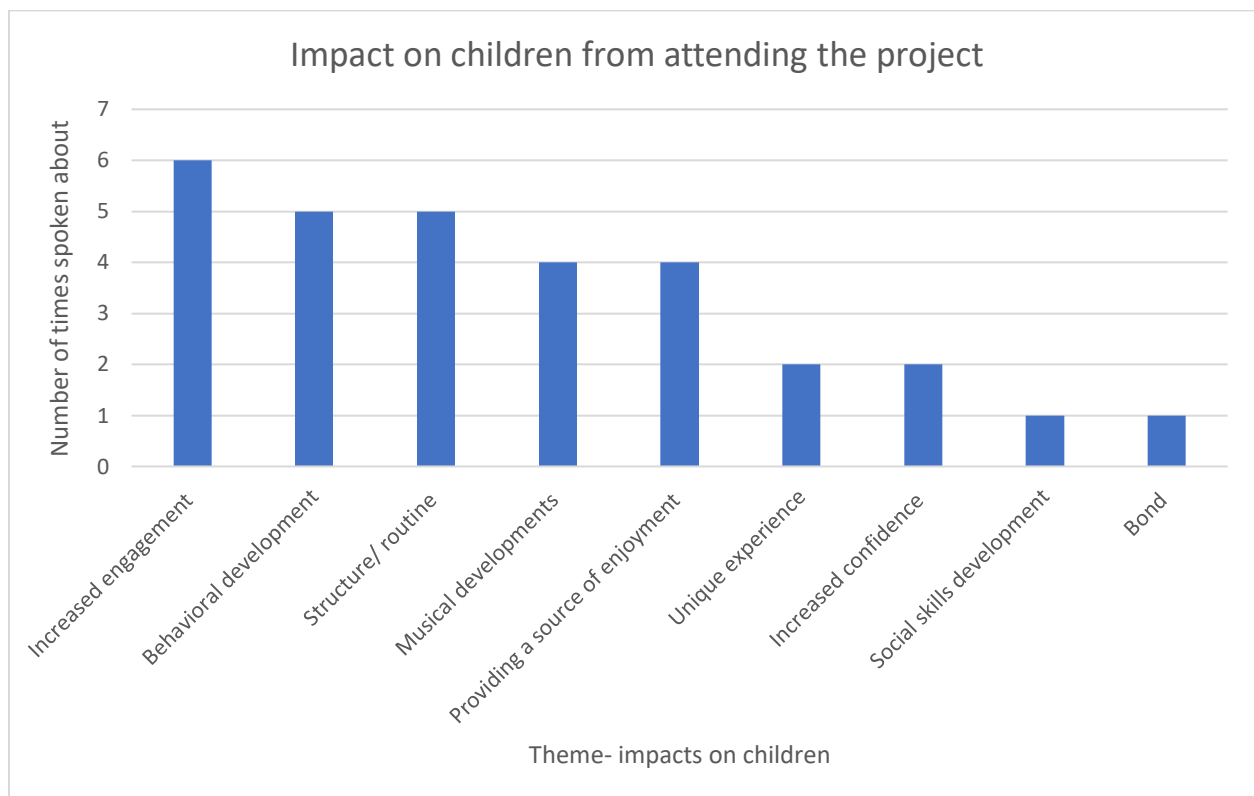


Figure 2.4- Impact on children from attending the project

Additionally, carers found they were able to use music as a tool for building structure and routine for the children, describing how attending the sessions became part of the children's weekly

schedule. Furthermore, the repertoire used within the sessions to motivate participants to tidy away instruments and move to the beat of the music was also noted as being used at home as a way of motivating the children into everyday tasks:

‘All of them — to get them in the bath — we've adapted them — k's adapted them for us to use, to fit with what we are doing. You know when we are walking on the beach we will do ‘we walk, we walk, we walk, and we stop.’ Yeah, that's probably the most important.’ (See a [transcript from the Loud and Clear focus group](#))

Hearing certain songs at specific points of the day had become integral for some of the children to know what they were doing. Carers believed that without hearing the songs, the children would be unlikely to engage or respond to their instructions.

Impact on Carers

For many of the carers, the sessions provided a source of learning where they could develop their knowledge of songs, musical activities, and understanding of how to use music as a tool for motivating children (see Figure 2.5). Several carers described that before attending the project that they had never thought of using music as a motivational tool, often only using it to calm the children.

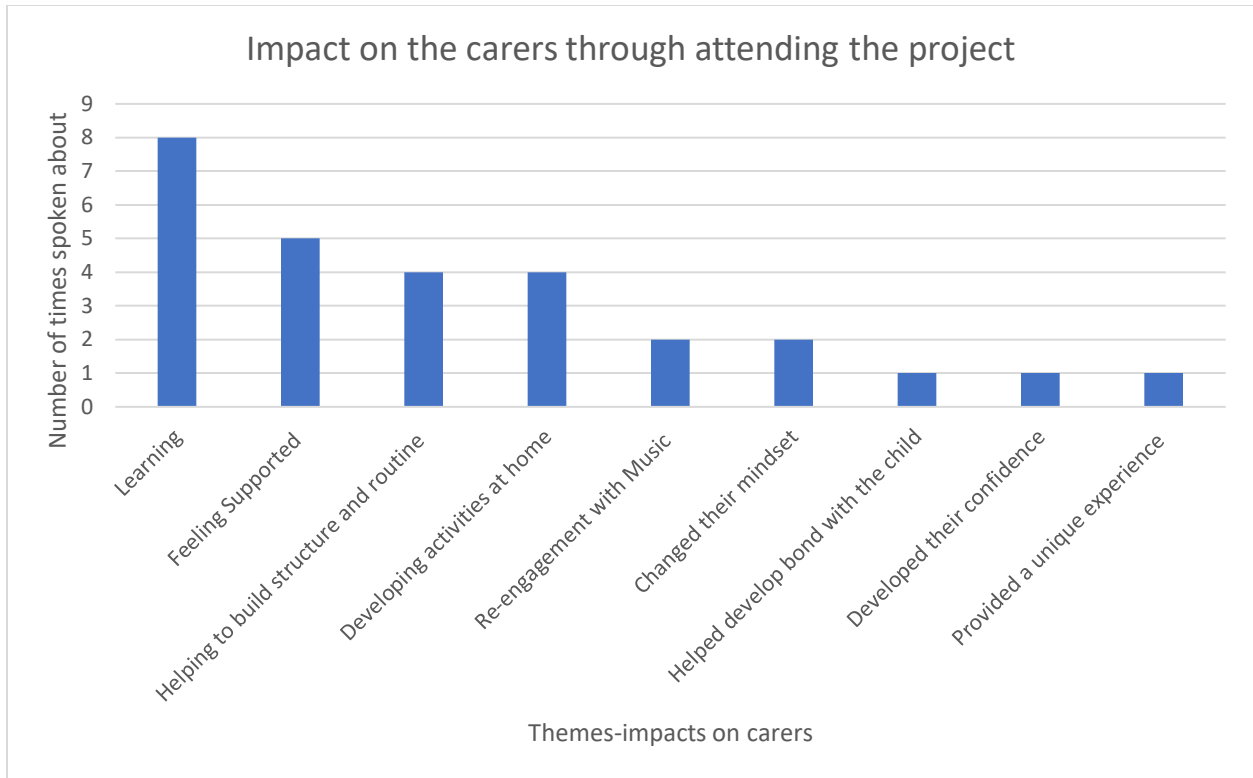


Figure 2.5-Impact on carers from attending the project

Additionally, the project provided an opportunity for carers to re-engage with music making. Carers reflected in the focus group on their past experiences of playing instruments or being in bands while in school. However, upon leaving school, many of the carers had stopped participating in music making and believed they would now struggle to remember how to play an instrument. Since attending the group several of the carers had been encouraged by seeing the facilitators play instruments, to retry to learn their instruments to use with the children.

Barriers preventing carers from using music

There were relatively few barriers that carers identified as preventing them from engaging in music (see Figure 2.6). The age range of the children was noted as being a potential barrier for

stopping carers from attending the project to gain support. Many carers who had once attended the group, could no longer attend due to the children they are caring for being above the age of five.

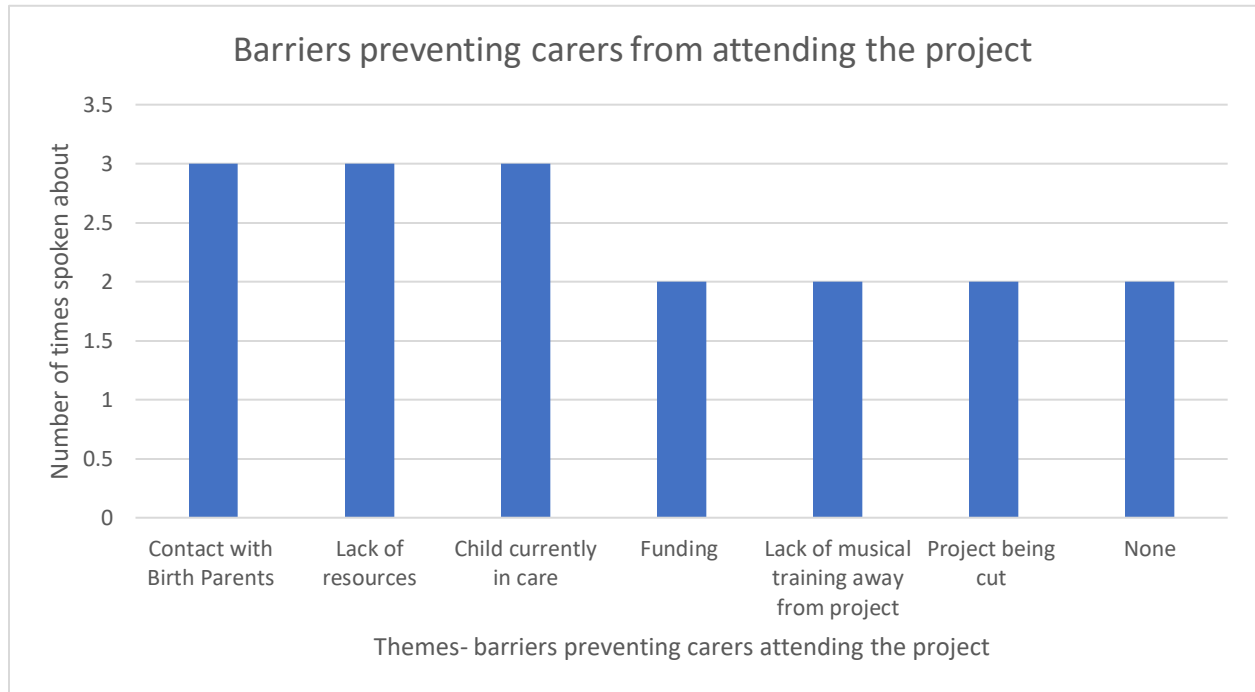


Figure 2.6- Barriers preventing carers from attending the project

Carers also described contact time with the child's biological birth parent as a barrier from preventing carers from attending the session. Although parental contact happened continuously through the week, Fridays appeared to be when most contact was scheduled. This impacted potential participants from attending the group regularly.

Funding was also a potential barrier preventing carers from engaging with music outside of the sessions. Although carers receive wages for their work with the children, there is no specific funding in place for them to buy music resources such as instruments. Hence, the group is reliant on the gifts from the project to provide musical resources to use at home. Carers also spoke about

their awareness of funding as a significant issue surrounding the continuation of the project, with the belief that funding for the project was contingent on attendance. For example, one of the carers advertised the group to other carers, taking on the role themselves as a way of drawing more participants to the project.

Interviews with facilitators

Through undertaking interviews with facilitators, insights could be gained in the way facilitators were developing sessions to meet the intended impacts of the project.

Facilitators belief of the impact on participants

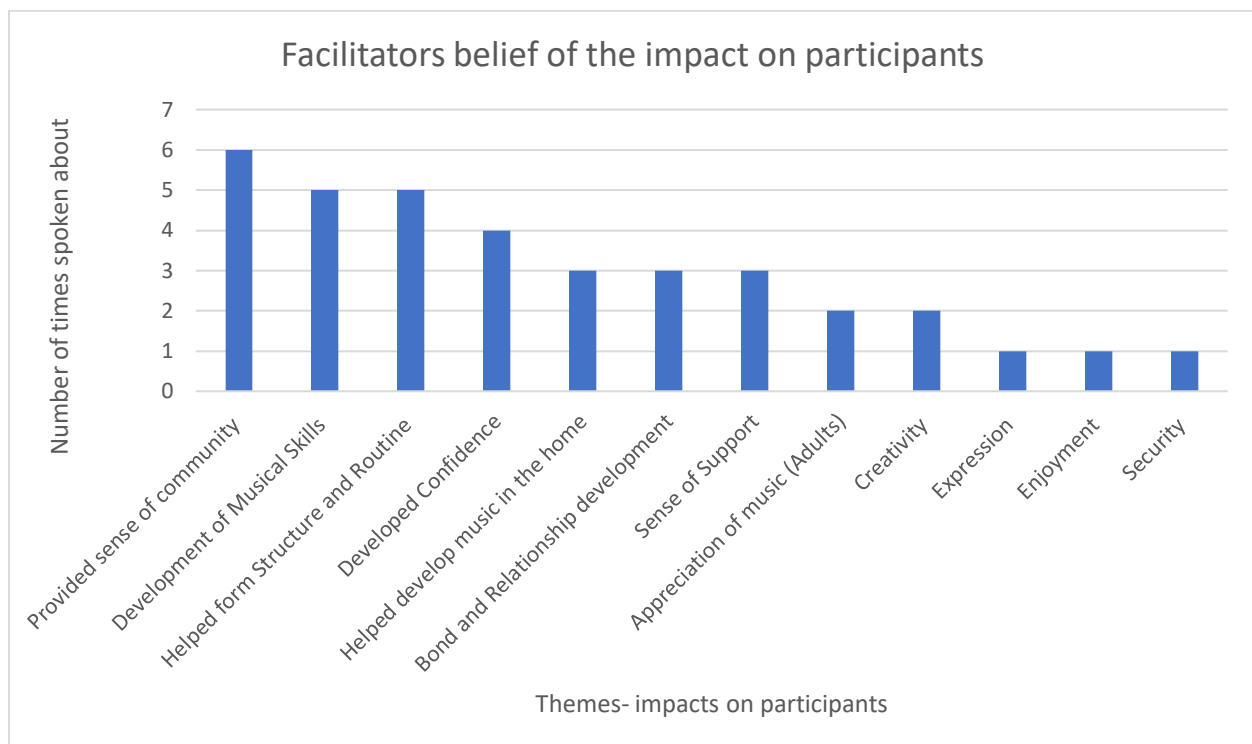


Figure 2.7- Facilitators belief of the impacts on participants

Figure 2.7 showcases the impacts facilitators believed attending the project had on participants, with the sense of community being the most prominent impact. One facilitator described how they understood carers could often be ‘ostracised’ from other mother and child music groups, due to the context of the child and carers relationship. Loud and Clear participants were all from similar backgrounds, hence carers felt at ease and that they were able to gain support and understanding from the other participants easier than within other groups.

Carers and Children were also seen to have developed their musical skills through attending the project. Facilitators described children as having developed their singing, with one participant in particular noted for continuing their musical engagement even after they had left the project:

‘when J goes to school she sings the songs; she tells people she conducts she does all the things, even though she has probably been once or twice in the last year. She- cause her carers [...] still do it at home with them as well which is important. So, it's not just a case of she remembers it off when she came; she's doing it at home still which is really important. It's just part of their life.’ (see a [transcript from an interview with one of the Loud and Clear facilitators](#))

The project aimed to increase the music making within the home of the child and carer, which could be seen to be happening in this case. Many carers often feedback during the session to facilitators about how they had tried to use or develop activities at home from what they had done in the session.

Facilitators approaches to delivery

Additionally, insights could be gained into the approaches facilitators were using within the project (see Figure 2.8). Repetition of activities was seen to be beneficial for helping participants continue to make developments whilst attending the session. Facilitators would repeat activities often trying to make small developments (change the tempo, dynamics etc.), which would provide participants with a different musical experience. Using repeated activities was noted as being a standard approach when working with any early year's group as a tool for facilitating small developments.

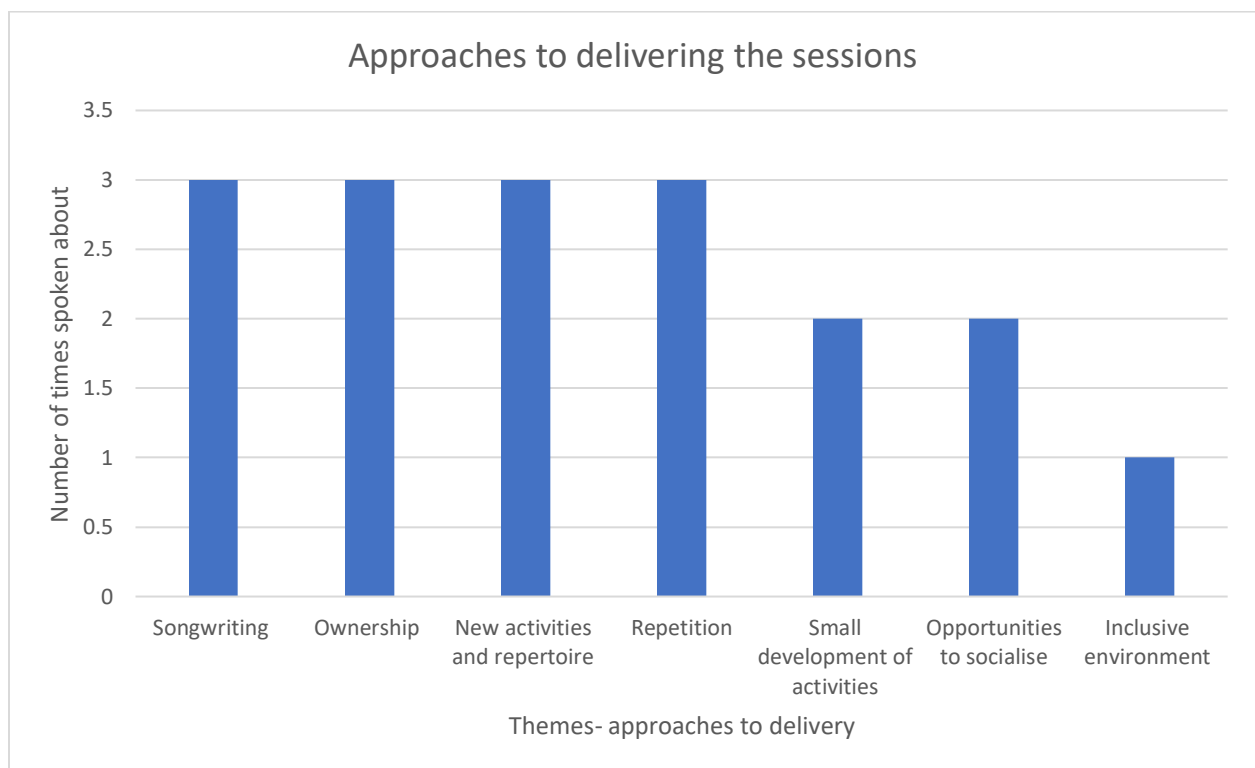


Figure 2.8- Approaches to delivering the sessions

Children were provided with an opportunity to input into the songs, due to the project being based upon a song writing approach. This was believed to be providing a sense of ownership for the children and an opportunity to have their voice heard. For example, one activity involved a song where children were choosing soft toy animals from a bag to be included within a 'down in the jungle' song. Each child described what noise the animal made and what it was called which was then added to the song lyrics. Occasionally children would be unsure of the animal noise or would suggest the wrong noise, but facilitators would still take on the suggestion.

Facilitators were aware of the importance of providing an opportunity for carers to socialise during the session. One of the facilitators spoke about how they believed the opportunity for carers to socialise was one of the elements that drew carers to the session. They identified that snack time as being a particularly valuable opportunity for carers to chat with one another about their experiences.

Challenges facilitators faced on the project

Figure 2.9 illustrates the challenges that facilitators believed they faced when working on the project. Funding was a constant challenge they faced, with one facilitator describing how a lack of funding in the past had led to some Loud and Clear sessions being phased out. Likewise, the restricting funds were also believed to be a barrier preventing the sessions from happening more than once a week. Offering more sessions was seen to be particularly beneficial for engaging children who may be unable to attend the current sessions, due to having to attend contact with their birth parents.

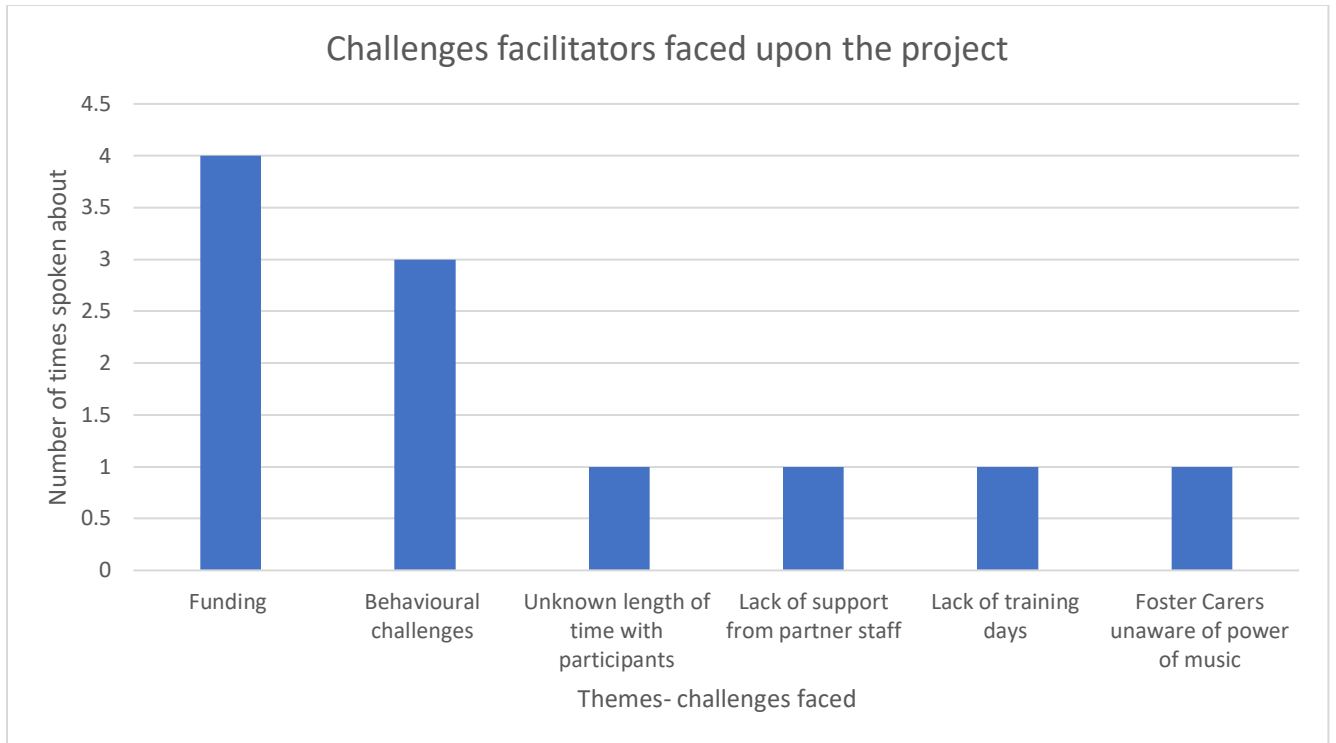


Figure 2.9- Challenges facilitators faced upon the project

Behavioural challenges were also noted as being a challenge when working with looked after children. Although predominantly these challenges were encountered when working with older looked after children there were times within the 0 to 5-year-old sessions that behaviour had been challenging, notably when carers would fail to recognise the behaviour and stop it.

Therefore, facilitators could often find themselves in a balancing act between supporting the children with challenging behaviour, while ensuring the rest of the group are safe and having an enjoyable experience.

The unknown length of time with participants was an additional challenge that was identified as being unique within this project. Children's period of time with a carer could often vary, and

children would often leave the group without much prior warning. Therefore, facilitators could often find it difficult to plan for progression with the children and plan for the session ahead.

Summary

Music making was noted for having several benefits for both foster children and their carers. The most significant advantages that attending Loud and Clear and using music in the home had for the children was the sense of structure and routine which could be facilitated by the music making. Through attending Loud and Clear, foster carers developed their confidence and knowledge of how to adapt the musical activities to build up routine, which they had never thought of doing before attending the project. Therefore, attending music groups such as Loud and Clear may be beneficial for helping carers develop their knowledge on the usage of music to help provide structure for the children they are caring for.

The next chapter will examine the final case study- a project working with children who have recently being adopted and their adoptive parents. The chapter will outline a brief background on the Loud and Clear adoption programme, before indicating the methods employed within the study and the findings.

CHAPTER SIX

Case Study three: Loud and Clear Adoption group

Sage Gateshead through their Loud and Clear project also deliver music making opportunities for adopted children and their adoptive parents. This chapter aims to explore the impact music making may be having for adopted children and their adoptive parents. This next section will provide a brief background on the Loud and Clear adoption programme, including details on the funding and the rationale behind the project.

Background

The Loud and Clear adoption project was set up in 2011 following the success of the Loud and Clear foster group. Similar to its counterpart, the project relies on funding from Youth Music and the support of Newcastle and Gateshead councils. In the project, children have an opportunity to continue to develop their relationship with their new guardians, develop their knowledge and playing of musical instruments, and have an opportunity to socialise with other children in similar circumstances.

Due to the success of the Loud and Clear foster family project, the aims of the project and the approaches facilitators take have been replicated within the adoption program (Mooney & Young, 2013). Emphasis has continued to be placed on using social pedagogy to structure sessions alongside helping to facilitate attachments between children and their adoptive parents. Initially, the project was set up as a separate session for each council being delivered in

community centres, however, due to financial difficulties the sessions were eventually merged into one bringing both councils together and began being housed within the Sage Gateshead building in 2016.

Statistics indicate that in the year 2016 only 24% of the children in foster care were adopted across Newcastle and Gateshead (NHS looked after children report, 2017). This is showing a steady increase in the number of children being adopted compared to previous years, but at a much smaller rate compared to the number of children entering local authority care. Adoptive care is often viewed as being the most permanent outcome for children in the looked after care system.

The next section will outline the methodology undertaken within this case study, followed by an analysis of the findings and an outline of the limitations within the findings.

Methods

Several different methods were employed to examine the impact that joint music making was having upon these participants. Eight sets of participatory observations were undertaken across the project, where detailed logs of the activities and responses of the participants were taken into account. Alongside this, five interviews were undertaken with the adoptive parents to hear their experiences of attending the session, the impacts attending the project was having, and the families' music making going on at home. Key themes could then be identified and explored further, through the participatory action group research where participants worked in pairs to answer questions that were then feedback to the group. Additionally, interviews were conducted

with the facilitators of the project to gain insights into their experiences of delivering the sessions and the impacts they believed the project was having upon participants.

Findings

The analysis of results took on a thematic approach, using emerging themes that resonated with those found in the literature. These can be categorised as; attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969; Maslow 1943), communication (Hughes, 2000) and social pedagogy (Cameron & Moss, 2012). Several themes stood out as being paramount to this case study, these included; reasons why participants began attending the project, impact the project was believed to be having on the children and the parents themselves, the impact that music making was seen to be having within the home and the perceived importance that music making may have.

Participants Narratives:

Why participants began attending the project

There were several reasons why adoptive parents first began attending the Loud and Clear project (see Figure 3.1).

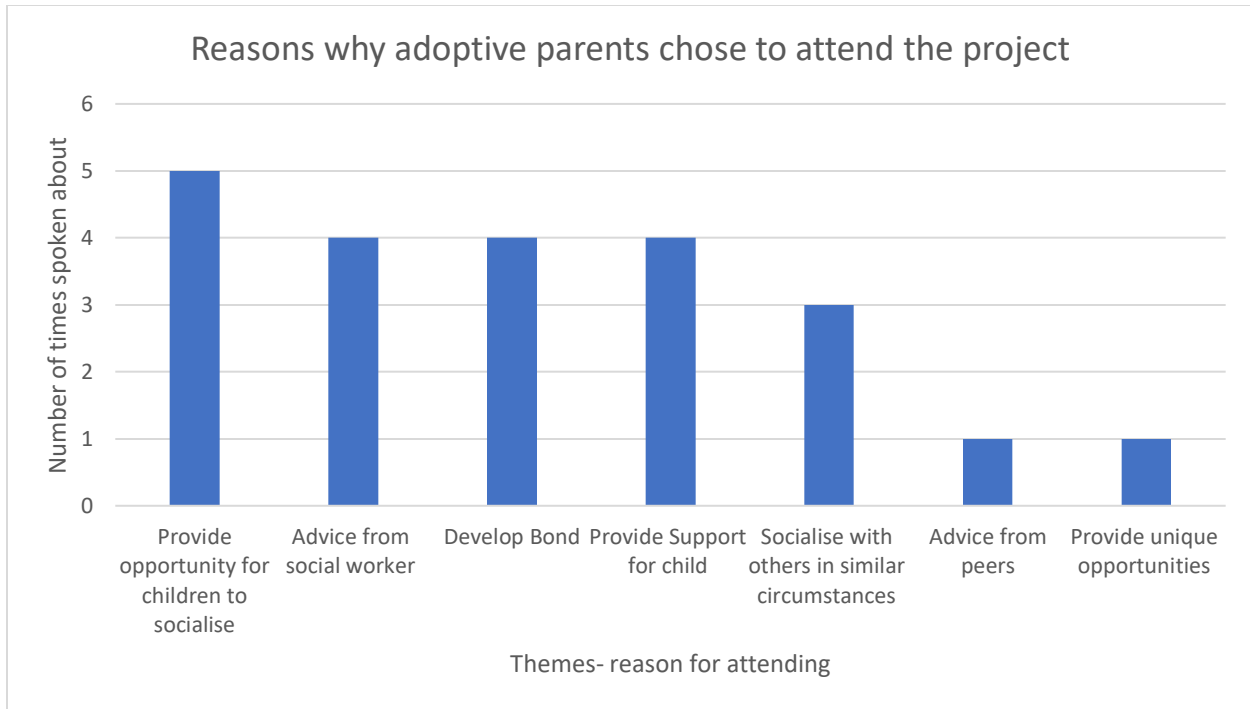


Figure 3.1- Reasons why adoptive parents chose to attend the project

Providing an opportunity for the children to socialise with other children from a similar background was indicated as being the most influential reason for attending. Adoptive parents spoke about the importance of providing children who were being adopted with an opportunity to socialise with other children going through similar circumstances. It was believed this would be important for helping the child settle into their new surroundings, while also developing a friendship network who they could be reliant upon as they got older having been living in similar circumstances.

Many parents also began attending due to the advice they were given from the social workers of the project being a way to support parents in building a bond with their child. One parent, in

particular, spoke around the struggle they had originally to bond with their new child, which they felt they had overcome through attending the project.

Additionally, Loud and Clear was seen to be providing parents with a unique opportunity to socialise with other families in similar circumstances, which they struggled to find within other groups. Several parents saw this as being key in helping them develop their relationship with the child, particularly in the 'early days', as they would often gain advice from other parents on how to help settle the child into their new home.

Why Parents choose to use music

Adoptive parents provided several reasons why they incorporated music into their daily routine (see Figure 3.2). Music was recognised as being particularly useful to use in everyday locations (supermarket, cars, etc.) as often it did not require any specific equipment; therefore, it could be done in any environment to engage the children. For example, several parents described singing with their child around the supermarket to keep them calm. Similarly, using music in the car to occupy the child was another setting where it was deemed most useful. The fact no equipment was necessary to participate in music making was seen to be unique over other activities.

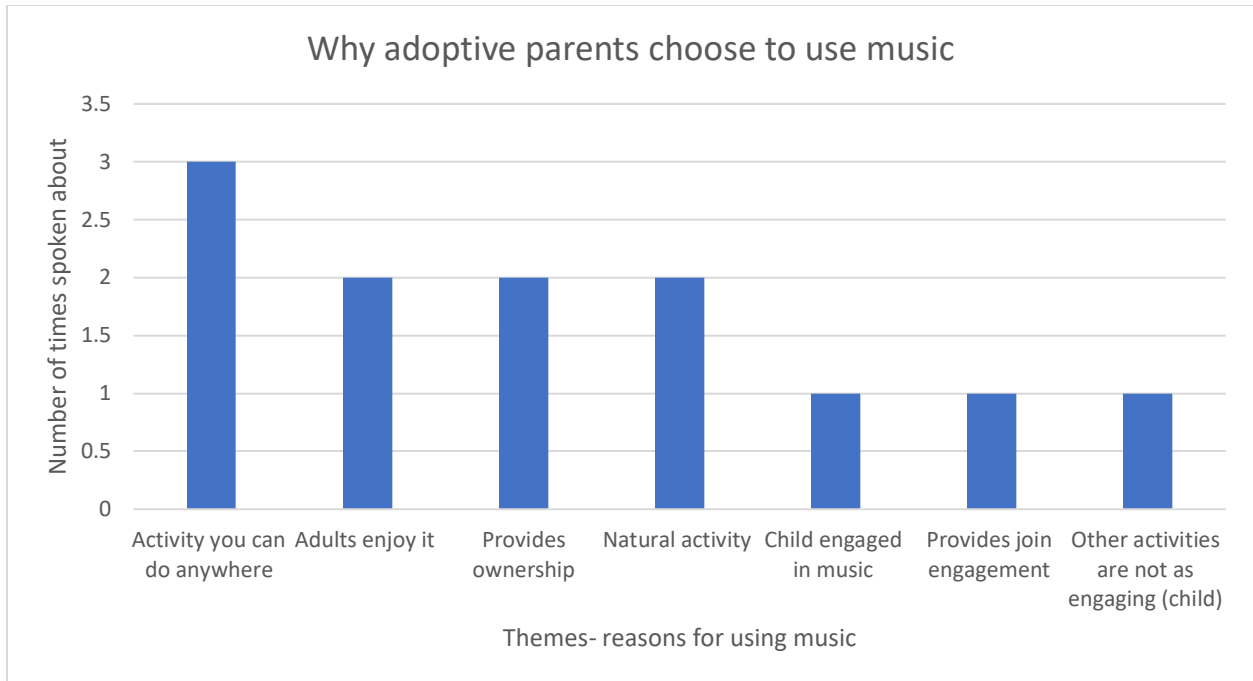


Figure 3.2- Why adoptive parent choose to use music

Additionally, parents described how participating in music seemed like a natural activity that they wanted to use. Several parents identified that having a love of music had prompted them to want to use music with their child, with the hope of fostering a similar sense of appreciation in the child towards music.

Music making at home

Music making was identified as being an everyday activity for parents and children, with singing and playing instruments being the most spoken about (see Figure 3.3). One parent described having a set of repertoire they would replicate each night to calm the child, while another parent described singing *Three blind mice* at meal times to engage their child in eating. Likewise, instrument playing was also described as happening at regular points of the day for most

families. One parent spoke about having a specific point of the day where the family would play instruments and sing songs together. Although, parents noted that this was becoming more of a struggle to do so as the children got older.

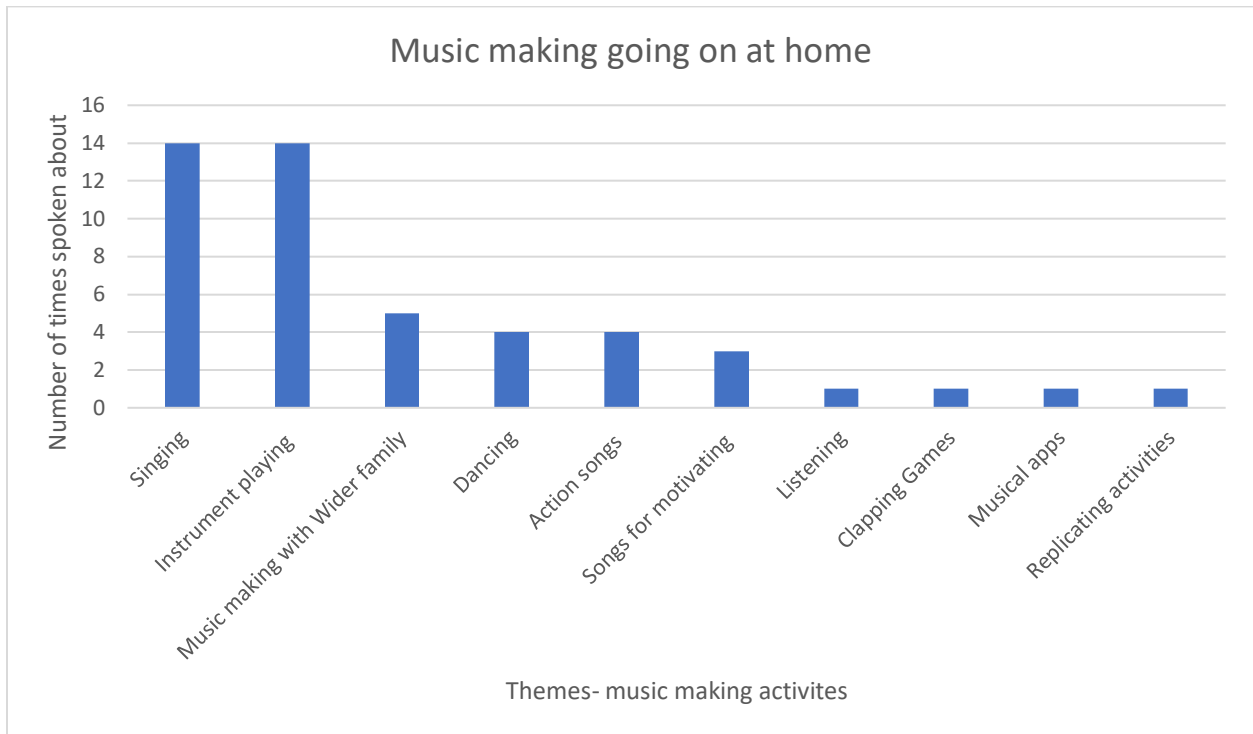


Figure 3.3- Music making going on at home

Recognising the struggle to engage the child in the playing of musical instruments had led one family to look towards using music technology as a way to engage the children in music. The family had taken to downloading virtual instruments (guitars, pianos etc.) on their iPad.

Importance of music making at home

Figure 3.4 indicates the importance that parents deemed music making as having within their homes. Music making was seen to be an activity that children would participate within on a daily

basis, through singing or listening to music. Parents recognised that this often provided a source of enjoyment for the children, which was seen as being key for helping them settle into their new home.

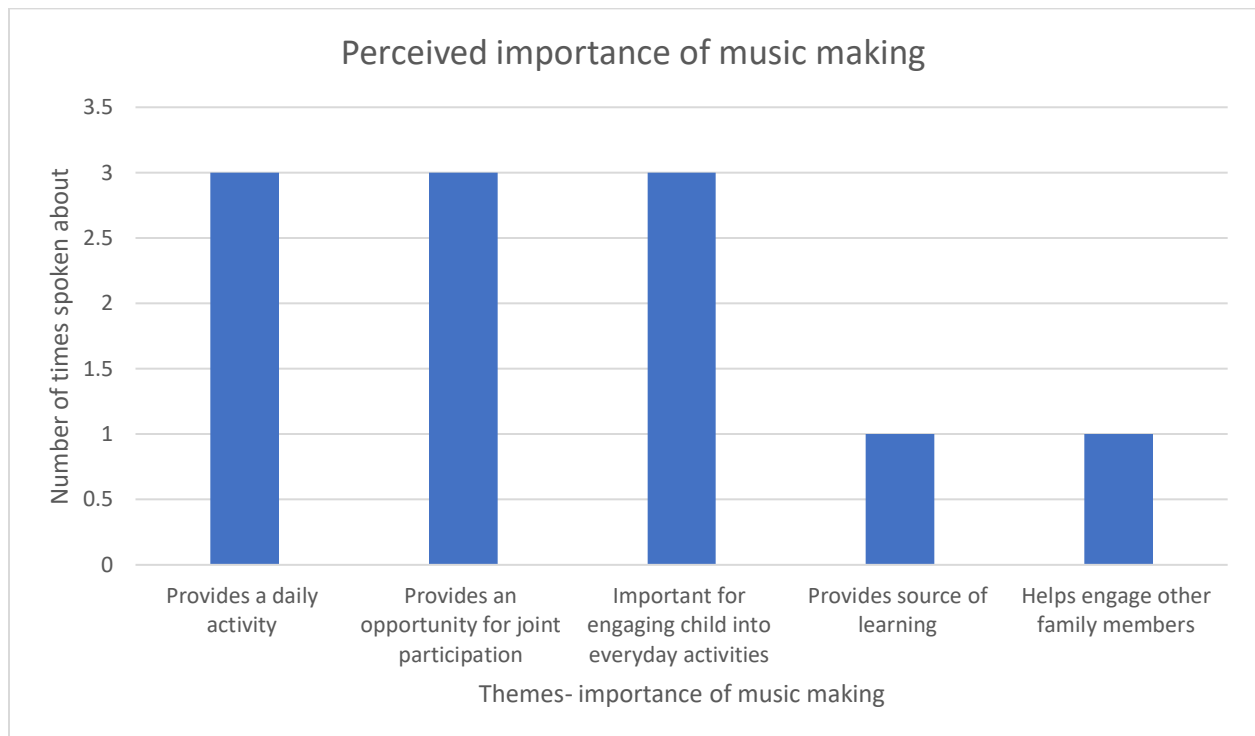


Figure 3.4- Perceived importance of music making

For several parents, music making provided an opportunity for them to interact with their child. Singing songs at bedtime or dancing with the child was noted as being a common everyday activity. One participant also identified the instruments and resources provided by the project as being a way to structure joint activities at home. Additionally, it was identified that music making activities were a novel way of engaging wider family members, such as grandparents, into activities with the child that would help strengthen their bond.

Impact upon the children

Figure 3.5 represents the impacts that adoptive parents believed attending the project had on their child, with the increase in their child's musical engagement being most prominent. Many of the parents described their children replicating the musical activities from the session at home, such as playing instruments or singing songs.

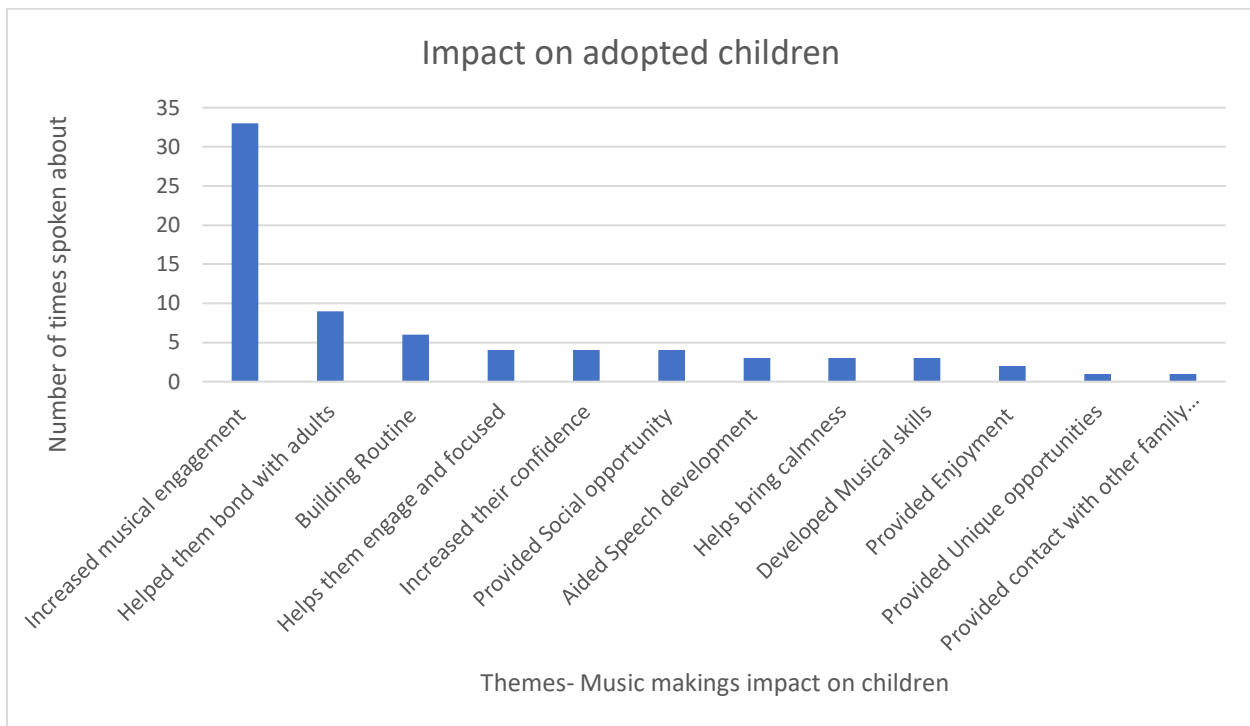


Figure 3.5- Impact on adopted children

For one family, in particular, participating in the project had increased their child's interest in musical instruments and had led to the child requesting a trumpet as a Christmas present. The parents were surprised by this, as they believed the child had never seen a trumpet in the session or at home. However, since receiving it, they have played it almost daily along with their sibling.

Similar to the Loud and Clear foster case study, repertoire was again noted as being a way to helping form routine for their children. Parents described that they would often change the lyrics of the songs to fit with everyday tasks, which they would have been unlikely to do before attending the project.

Impact upon Adoptive parents

There were several perceived impacts engaging in music making was seen to be having upon adoptive parents (See figure 3.6). The opportunity to socialise with other parents was seen as being highly beneficial, with one parent describing it as being particularly important in the early stages of the adoption process to gain support. Similarly, for another parent attending the group had provided them with an opportunity to hear how other parents had overcome the struggles of forming a bond with the child. This parent believed they would have struggled to gain similar support in overcoming this if they had attended other mother and children groups.

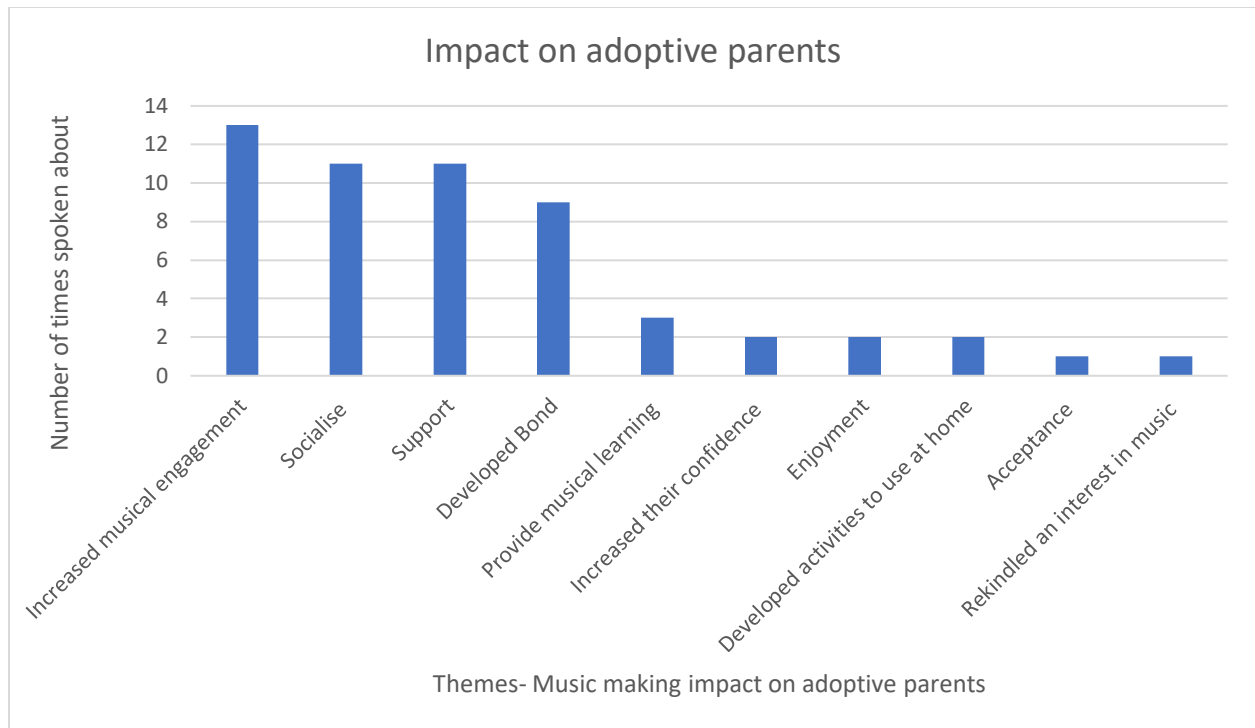


Figure 3.6- Impact on adoptive parents

For several of the parents, attending the project had helped them further develop their bond with the child. Parents described learning repertoire which they then replicated at home with the child, providing opportunities for engagement with the child. Singing and dancing were identified as being the most commonly used activity that led participants to feel an attachment to the child. Within the observations undertaken, there were several opportunities for parents to interact and dance with their children. An adaption of the song *Do you love me?* by The Contours was used within several sessions, in which facilitators changed the lyrics to incorporate different child and adult interactions, such as through tickling, cuddling and dancing.

Additionally, for one parent attending the group over several months had led to them rekindling their interest in music. They described how attending the group and developing their child's

interest in music, had led them to re-engage with songs that they had listened to when they were younger;

‘It’s rekindled a bit of an interest in music for us because it’s just takes time. I play songs for them that I liked when I was a lot younger to see if they take to them. I mean this one’s taken to across the universe by Rufus, and he’ll sing along to it if it’s on the radio. It’s just enjoying ourselves.’ (see a [transcript from an interview with one of the adoptive parents attending Loud and Clear](#))

Interviews with Facilitators

Interviews with the facilitators leading on the Loud and Clear project provided insights into the impacts that they believed the project was having on the participants, the effect delivering the project had on themselves and how the project is delivered to continue to facilitate developments for the participants.

Impacts upon participants

There were several impacts that facilitators believed the project had on participants (see figure 3.7). The development of musical skills was identified as being the most significant impact that facilitators had seen through leading on the project, with facilitators describing seeing the children developing their knowledge of instruments and sense of pulse. These were described as being key areas which the child may need when participating in music while at nursery or school.

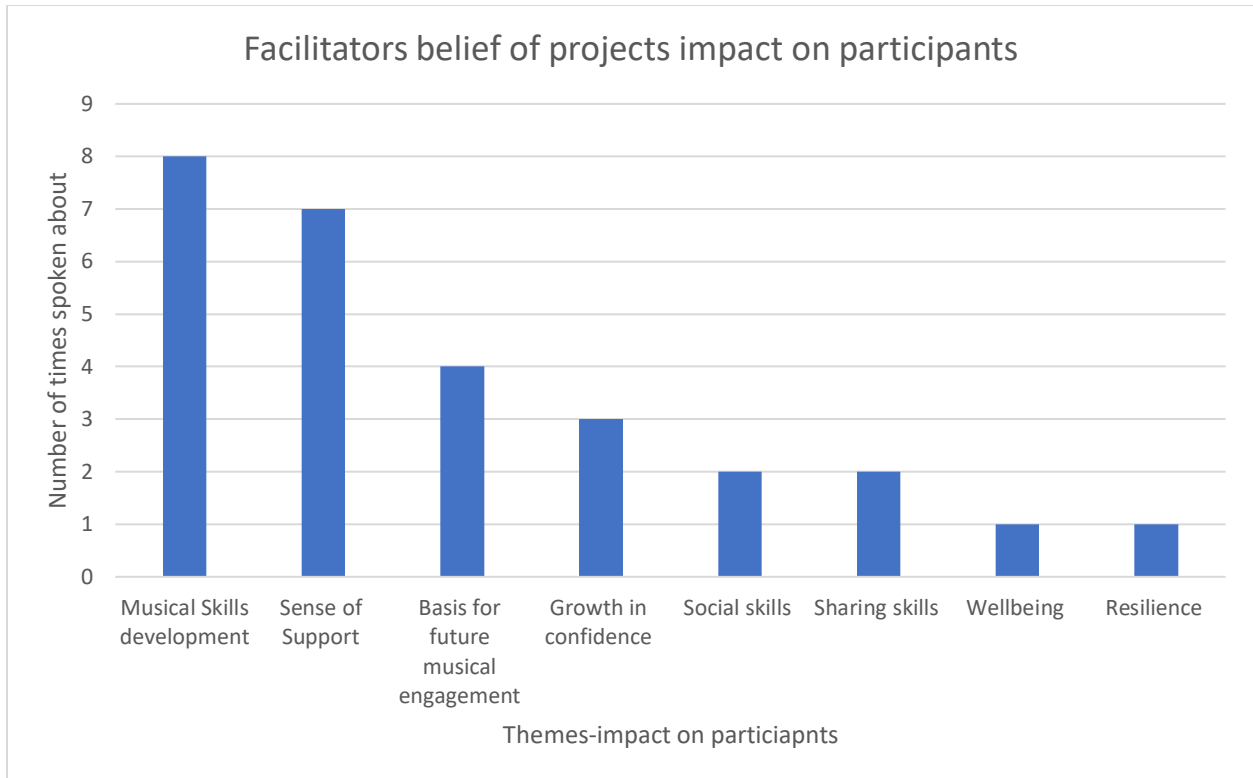


Figure 3.7- Facilitators belief of projects impact on participants

Both adults and children developed their confidence through the project. Facilitators recognised that often children came to the project shy and unresponsive to many of the activities in the session. However, after attending the project for several months, they were seen to be engaging providing suggestions for the activities and interacting with their adult. Similarly, adults were seen to be increasing their confidence in using music through attending the project, alongside increasing their confidence overall. One facilitator commented on how they could see a distinct progression in one parent's engagement and responsiveness in the session, often going from being quiet to socialising with others.

Children also developed their sharing skills through attending the project. One of the facilitators noted this as being a particular skill that can often be difficult to develop, so providing a space to help facilitate children into developing this skill was deemed as being necessary. This was often done in the session through sharing toys or snacks with one another which parents and facilitators often initiated.

Impact on facilitator

Delivering the project was also seen to be having several impacts upon the facilitators (see Figure 3.8).

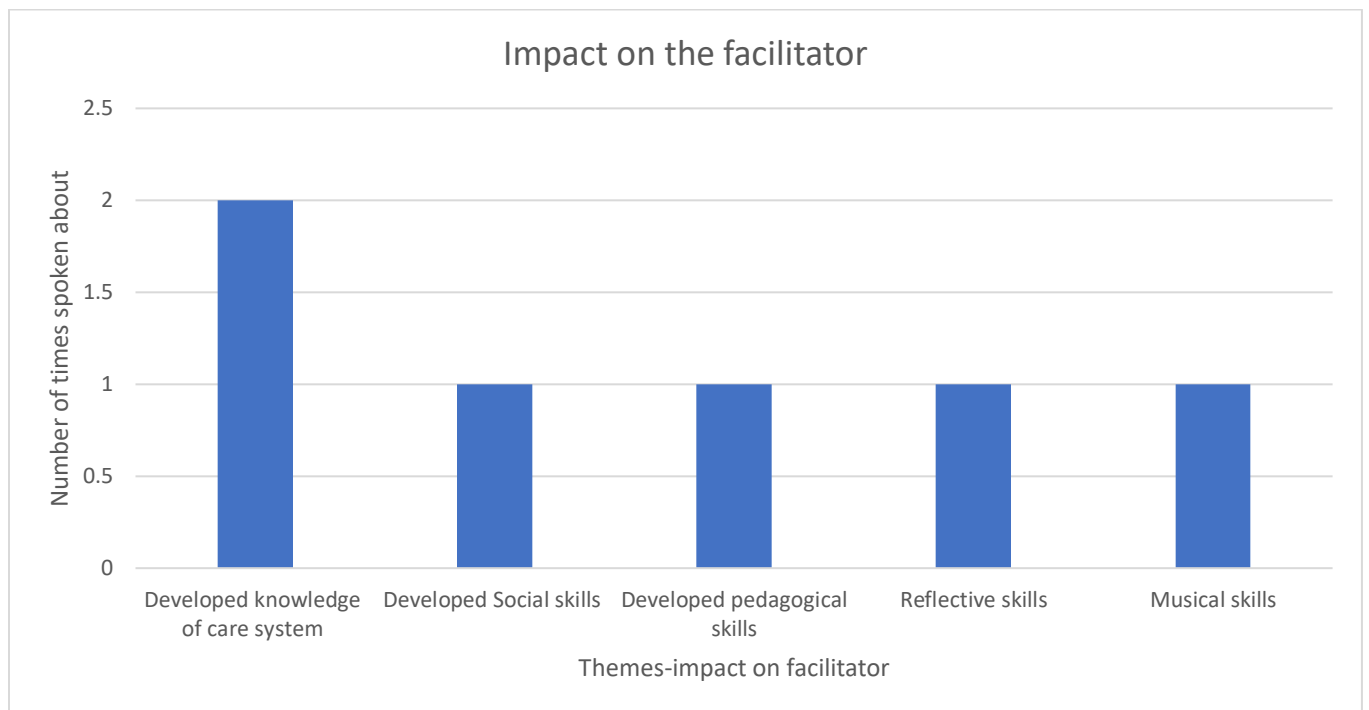


Figure 3.8- Impact on facilitator

Through the training and support of the councils, facilitators had been able to develop their knowledge of the looked after care system and understand what form of support the project

offered for participants. This knowledge was found to be particularly useful for organising the delivery of the session:

‘It gives us a real awareness of just what their needs are and what sort of support they are looking for and how we can enable some of that in the session. You know by having part of the session that is an opportunity for them to sit down and eat and chat and socialise and get a little community amongst themselves.’ (see a [transcript from an interview with one of the Loud and Clear facilitators](#))

Furthermore, one of the facilitators recognised that they had been able to improve their social skills with participants since leading upon the project. They had improved their ability to recognise children’s development and celebrate them as achievements, which they would not usually have done within other projects they lead on. Both facilitators described having developed their musical skills through leading on the project, particularly on how to continue to develop the activities to meet the changing needs of the participants.

Approaches to delivery

Facilitators described several ways that they ran the project to continue to facilitate developments for the participants (see Figure 3.9). Repetition of activities was deemed to be the most beneficial for facilitating developments for participants, due to the children’s age.

Facilitators recognised that repeating activities in the session allowed the children to ‘learn a skill deeply’ which they could bring ‘ownership and creativity to’ (see a [transcript of an interview with one of the Loud and Clear facilitators](#)). This was believed to be vital for helping the children develop their confidence.

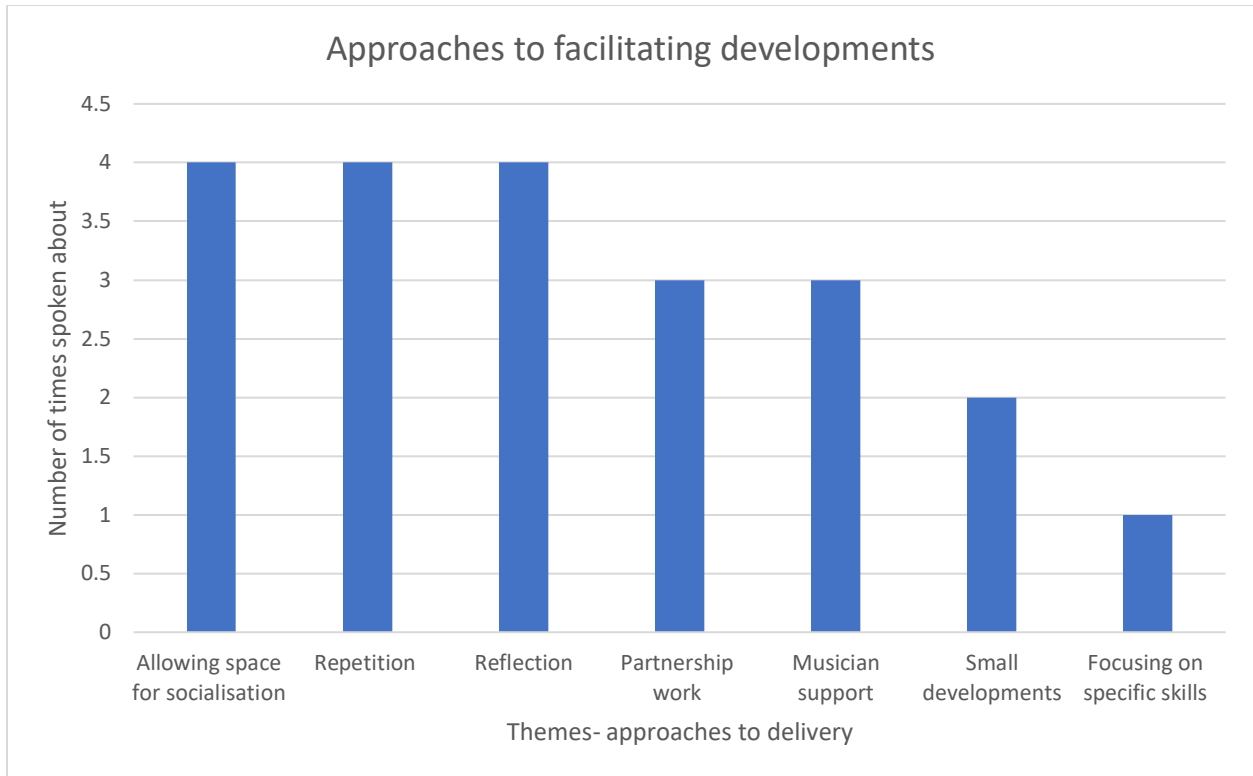


Figure 3.9- Approaches to facilitating developments

The support of the other facilitator in the room was also deemed as being a valuable tool for helping facilitate developments for participants. Facilitators described ‘bouncing ideas’ off each other on different activities they could use as a way of continuing to keep the activities developing and challenging. It was recognised that having two facilitators could also help support the running of the session if certain participants required further support:

‘We found that children that have been in care if they make an attachment to you they will try have physical contact with you, it's that need for a connection. So, it can be quite distracting if you're the only musician, but that means that there is someone there to continue leading the session while you are working with this child.’(see a [transcript of an interview with one of the Loud and Clear facilitators](#))

Facilitators also undertook weekly reflections on the sessions, in which they could identify areas where the children may need some more support and help them plan specific sections of the session to cater for these needs.

Limitations of findings

Although the findings gathered provide an insight into the benefits that music making can have for adopted children and their parents, further research could be carried out to explore the longer-term impact that attending the project had for participants. Although parents and facilitators expressed a desire for the children to engage in music following their attendance at the project, due to the limited time to conduct this study, it is unknown if participants continued to be engaged within music once leaving the project.

Summary

Loud and Clear was perceived to have several benefits for both adoptive children and their parents. The most significant benefit identified was the increase in musical engagement that children were seen to have developed through taking part in the project. It was noted as providing a source of enjoyment, ownership and for providing an opportunity for skill development, which are areas noted as often lacking for looked after children. For adoptive parents attending music projects that were specifically catering for looked after children provided an opportunity to build up a support network, which often stretched out further than the session. This was noted as being integral for helping them support their development of their relationship with the child.

The next chapter will begin an in-depth discussion of the findings from the three cases against the literature surrounding looked after children, to begin to draw together conclusions on the impact that music making is could for looked after children.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Emerging Themes

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings from the three cases, by exploring the most prominent themes that emerged from the participant's narratives. Beginning first by highlighting the findings from each case, this will be followed by a discussion on the impact that increasing both looked after children and their support networks engagement in music had and how music could be used to form structure and routine, provide support and help form attachments. Additionally, part of these explorations will involve discussing the way facilitators and organisations are currently developing and running projects to meet the needs of the looked after children and their support network.

The SoundLINCS case study highlighted how children's support workers may be able to use music to help aid communication between themselves and the children in their care. It was believed that through the children having an interest in music already, support workers would be able to use the listening of specific musical tracks as a way of beginning a conversation around the emotions and themes of the track. This would be particularly beneficial for helping the child to develop their ability to express themselves and begin to form attachments with their support workers.

Similar findings also emerged within the Loud and Clear foster case study, which indicated how music making was a useful tool for helping carers to develop a sense of structure for their foster children. It was noted through the narratives how foster children often arrived with little routine

or security within their lives. Attending a music project and engaging in music had become part of these children's everyday routines, where the foster children were often reliant on hearing the musical repertoire to feel motivated towards participating in everyday tasks.

The Loud and Clear adoption case study also highlighted the increase in musical engagement that children and their parents were seen to have developed through participating in a project. Children were seen to be engaging in music making at home on a daily basis often replicating the songs and activities that they had seen within the session. In this case study it was noted how the adoptive parents and the wider family also felt encouraged to partake within the music making, using it to interact with the child and begin to form attachments.

Across the three cases it was noted how attending a music project provided an opportunity for support workers to gain a sense of support in their work. Participants from both Loud and Clear cases described feeling unsupported or judged within other mother and children groups, due to not being the child's biological parent. Similarly, within the SoundLINCS case study participants identified that having opportunities to engage with other support workers may be beneficial for continuing to develop music into their practice. Thus, having project or training they can attend was beneficial for providing a sense of support to help them continue to work with the child

This next section will begin to explore the findings above in relation to the current discourse surrounding looked after children.

Increased Engagement in Music

Both children and their support networks across the three cases were seen to have increased their engagement in music through these projects. It was believed that providing opportunities for looked after children to engage in music making, may be beneficial for providing a sense of enjoyment, an opportunity to develop new skills and provide a source of communication between themselves and their support network. Through increasing the support networks engagement in music, new ways of interacting with the child were seen to be developed that provided opportunities for forming attachments.

Youth Music's review of their projects working with looked after children indicated how through increasing their engagement in music, children were seen to develop their self-esteem, friendship networks and develop new skills (Dillon, 2010, p. 34). Similar results were seen in the Loud and Clear cases, in which carers and adoptive parents recognised that children had developed their interest in music since attending the group. For several of the children, participating in music was seen as being a unique experience for them, as it is believed that many of the children had often come from birth families where there was little active music making going on. The singing of nursery rhymes and lullabies were noted as being two key areas that many of the children were believed to have not experienced before entering the looked after care system.

The singing of lullabies and nursery rhymes by a child's parents are often indicated within early childhood studies as being the first songs they will likely hear, and are often where language acquisition, relationships and knowledge of the world is formed (Levitin, 2010; Williams &

Barrett, 2015). This was found not to be the case for many of the looked after children attending Loud and Clear, as carers and parents described their children as being uneasy when first hearing them sing. However, through attending a music project for several months and having a support worker who engaged in singing, the children were seen to be far more engaged and often asking for carers to sing to them on a daily basis. Therefore, increasing the child's engagement in music making within this case was found to be beneficial for providing an opportunity for communication between the child and their support network, where attachments and language acquisition could be developed.

Likewise, participants attending the SoundLINCS training day noted how increasing the opportunities for music making and increasing the child's musical engagement, may provide an opportunity for them to develop their relationship. It was believed that activities such as 'listening to songs together' or doing 'simple rhythmic games' may provide a way of interacting and starting a conversation with the child that could form the basis of relationship building.

Looked after children are noted as often struggling to form a relationship, due to feeling that their voices are not being taken into account by their carers, parents or social workers (Simkiss, 2012 p.5-6). This, in turn, has been found to be detrimental in the child's ability to build resilience for life after leaving the care system and impact upon their ability to form meaningful relationships in the future (Stein, 2005). Hence, it is vital for looked after children's support networks to find ways to help children develop secure attachments. Thus, joint music making that the child already has an interest in may prove to be a beneficial tool for providing an opportunity for the support network to engage the child.

Music therapy is a prime example of a way in which having an engagement in music making has paved the way for building relationships between children and their primary carer. Collette Salkeld's work as a music therapist found joint musical activities were seen to be helping children communicate their feelings to adults, which they otherwise may have struggled to verbalise (Salkeld & Oldfield, 2008. p.142). Salkeld's findings resonate with SoundLINCS participants' beliefs that increasing the child's engagement of listening to music, provides opportunities to understand the young person's non-verbalised emotions. Participants suggested that one way of achieving this would be through taking into account the genre of music the child was listening to or using the lyrics as a way of beginning a conversation with the child whereby the central themes of the song could be discussed. Thus, music may be seen to be a non-pressured tool for helping looked after children communicate with their adult, which they otherwise may have struggled to do.

Additionally, through having an increased engagement in music, it was noted how music might be beneficial for providing a source of enjoyment for looked after children. For instance, instrumental playing was identified as being one of the activities that provided participants from Loud and Clear with a sense of enjoyment. Participants from both Loud and Clear cases described their children as increasing their playing of instruments at home, often on a daily basis as they would playing with toys. For two children, in particular, the playing of a guitar and drum was noted by their carer as being an activity they did every day and hoped would continue when they left their care. Similarly, for two children who had recently been adopted, playing the trumpet had become a daily activity.

Within these cases, playing instruments recreationally helped children develop musical skills that provided them with a sense of achievement and enjoyment. One carer described seeing the child smiling when they were playing the instruments at home, or when they were singing along within the session. By increasing the child's engagement with the playing of instruments, it was noted how musical skills were being developed. One child, in particular, improved their rhythmic skills through playing an instrument both at home and within the session. The carer noted how participating within a music group had been a tool for increasing the child's confidence, through having the opportunity to have their voice heard and being encouraged by facilitators. Children in several Youth music projects were seen to develop their musical skills, particularly in writing lyrics and playing instruments. Receiving encouragement and praise from facilitators and their support network on their developing skills was believed to be key to increasing the self-confidence and self-esteem (Dillon, 2010 p.40).

Facilitators from both Loud and Clear projects were aware of their role in continuously helping develop children's engagement and musical skills, making sure the activities were continually expanding and changing to challenge the participants. Facilitators believed that developing children's musical skills and engagement would provide them with the knowledge required to engage in music in school or nursery, aid self-confidence, alongside providing a sense of ownership. Looked after children are noted as often feeling that they lack ownership in their lives, having impacts on their development to build resilience (Bazalgette et al. 2015). Therefore, increasing a child's engagement in music may be seen to be beneficial for providing a looked after child with a sense of ownership, where they may start to build their self-confidence and resilience while in care.

Furthermore, instrumental playing was seen in the Loud and Clear cases as providing an enjoyable activity that other members of the family could partake in. Several participants described that through encouraging and playing the instruments with their child, they too found themselves developing their musical engagement. Thus, music making became a family activity that provided an opportunity for the whole family to engage and begin to build bonds with the child. Facilitators from the three cases were aware of their role in helping looked after children's support workers develop their engagement in music and their awareness of how they could use music as a tool with their children.

Several participants from across the three cases were unsure of how to use music as a tool with a young person before attending a music project, recognising that attending one of these three projects had developed their knowledge of activities and repertoire. For example, carers and adoptive parents within Loud and Clear cases described being aware previously of nursery rhymes and lullabies they could use. However, they had not been aware of how music could be used to engage the children into everyday activities. After attending the project for several weeks, participants had been able to see facilitators use music within the session to engage the children into various activities, prompting them to try the repertoire at home and to develop music into their everyday routine. In the case of the foster carers, using music as a tool for motivation had become an essential way of helping the child settle into their new environment. Carers identified that without attending the project, they would have been unlikely to use music every day as much as they have. Thus, within this case attending a music project was seen to be beneficial for helping the child's support network develop new ideas of ways of working with the children, that may help settle them into their environment.

Through developing their knowledge and practical skills of using music as a tool, many of the participants across the three cases noted how they were being provided with an opportunity to re-engage in music that they had not done since leaving school. For example, participants attending the SoundLINCS training day identified that through attending the training they could feel their interest in music growing, which would be a driving force for motivating them to use music with the children. Stephanie Pitts found that attending musical groups may often provide adults with opportunities to re-engage within music, learn new skills and have another source of enjoyment (2012 p.16). Participants from the SoundLINCS training described at the end of the day how attending the project had prompted them with new ideas of ways of incorporating music, that would be engaging for the children and themselves. Thus, it could be seen how participating in musical projects may provide unique opportunities for the support networks to re-develop previous musical interest that they may already have held.

Increasing a looked after child's engagement in music making was seen to be beneficial for helping them communicate and form bonds with their support network, while also providing a source of enjoyment. These were two areas noted as often lacking in a looked after child's life, which can have detrimental effects on their ability to build resilience for life after care (Stein, 2005). Through, increasing their communication with their support network, their carers, social workers and parents can offer more support for the child while in care.

Structure and Routine

One way of providing support is through helping the child to build a sense of structure whilst in care (Bazalgette et al. 2015). Participating in music making was seen to be a beneficial tool for helping the support networks build a sense of structure for looked after children, particularly the younger children attending the Loud and Clear projects. Musical repertoire can often play a significant role in helping provide a sense of structure for children (Williams & Barrett, 2015 p.121; Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009 p.114).

Looked after children often miss opportunities to form a structure within their lives, as they can go through several placements in a short space of time (Stein, 2005). Therefore, they can lack the opportunity to feel a sense of belonging, build attachments and establish a routine while in care (Bazalgette et al. 2015; Stein, 2005). For carers attending Loud and Clear, establishing structure was deemed as being particularly important as many of the carers try to implement a routine quickly. Many of the children often arrived in their care lacking any form of structure, making it challenging for carers to develop a relationship with the child. Thus, carers were reliant on using an activity that the child was already engaged with as a way to bring a sense of structure and begin forming a relationship with the child.

Using specific repertoire at different points of the day was found to be a way of providing structure for participants from both Loud and Clear cases. For instance, participants identified that the tune of the 'tidying up' song used within the sessions had been particularly beneficial for

motivating the children into everyday activities, such as walking and eating, through adapting the lyrics. Facilitators encouraged participants to use this tune at home, though demonstrating how to alter the lyrics of the song in the session. Therefore, participants in the session got to witness how their child engaged with the song and developed an idea of how repertoire can be adapted. This is indicating how the repetition of repertoire that is adaptable and demonstrated as such, is an essential step in the delivery of the session to support participants.

The singing of songs was being used to structure and motivate children across everyday activities. An example was spoken about by one parent from the Loud and Clear adoption group, where they described being reliant on music at meal times:

‘we use singing as a way to keep him calm, to get him to focus on activities so like when we are eating we use the music. The music literally calms him down, and he can focus on that, rather than having to focus on what he's eating.’ (see a [transcript from the Loud and Clear participatory action research group conversation](#))

Thus, integrating music into a looked after child’s routine had become an integral tool for the parents to help motivate the child to eat. Without using music, the children’s support network may have found it difficult to overcome this challenge, and this could have had adverse effects upon the child's health.

The children’s knowledge that they would be attending a music project was also noted as being another source for the building of a structure. Children from the Loud and Clear projects were seen to become reliant on attending the session weekly, often asking carers or parents about attending:

‘He is still going ‘can we go to music on a Friday?’ or ‘do you still go to music on a Friday?’ , so you know he’s still remembered.’ (See a [transcript from the Loud and Clear foster carers focus group](#))

Similar findings were identified within the Youth Music looked after children’s projects, where participants were deemed to become reliant upon attending the project. Douglass Simkiss' deems reliability of the children's support network and placements as being key to building a structure, as children have opportunities to develop their confidence and relationships making them feel settled in their environment (2012, p 8.). Therefore, having a weekly music project that the children can become reliant upon may play a key component of the child's structure while in care.

Organisers and facilitators in the Loud and Clear project were aware of the impact attending the music project can have in helping the child build a sense of structure. Therefore, they decided to have two musicians work on the project to provide a sense of stability and security for participants; if one musician was unable to attend, there was still a familiar face there.

Additionally, sessions followed a similar structure every week, to help aid the participants comfort and increase their engagement into the session. This included using familiar repertoire, having a break in the middle of the session and taking into consideration the development of the child. The way sessions were being run played a key role in helping provide a sense of structure for looked after children with music at the core.

Although participants from the SoundLINCS training day identified music making as a structural tool, it was not deemed to be as beneficial as it would be for the Loud and Clear children. This

may be partially due to the older age range of the children than the Loud and Clear participants, where there is a significant amount of emphasis on children building routine within the early years (Williams & Barrett, 2015). However, participants did note how partaking in music may motivate the children into joining in with group activities, particularly with older children who may be harder to reach. It was believed that having activities such as a specific time to listen to music or playing musical games may be implemented on certain days to provide a sense of structure.

Thus, music making was seen to be beneficial for providing support networks with a way to form a sense of structure for the children in their care. As children made music, those activities could be adapted into their routine, which supported them into partaking in everyday tasks that they may have struggled to engage within. Music's ability to be used without the need for equipment was particularly beneficial for the support network to use across everyday settings.

Support

Attending a music project was noted as being beneficial for providing looked after children's support networks with a support network of other families going through similar circumstances. Carers and parents from the Loud and Clear project described gaining support from other members of the group, through providing new ideas for ways of working with the child alongside being able to be open about the situations they are going through. It was noted that alternative children's groups that the participants have attended often left carers and adoptive parents feeling unsupported or unable to form a connection to the group. Support for looked after children's

carers or parents is essential for helping overcome or delaying any 'blocked care' they may be feeling when working with a looked after child. Heather Ottoway and Julie Selwyn indicate how support groups can be beneficial for foster carers, by providing a space where they could talk about the 'daily fostering tasks' they faced with others going through similar circumstances (2016, p.35). Similarly, it was noted when attending these groups or liaising with friends and family who understood their child's situation, carers felt at ease and unjudged if the child displayed challenging behaviour.

Findings regarding perceived judgment that carers often felt from others resonated with the reasons why carers and parents within the Loud and Clear groups described choosing not to attend other mother and children groups. Several carers described situations where they had participated in different groups and had faced either what they deemed as awkward questions or heard various discriminating comments against their child:

'There is lots of yummy mummies and music groups, but I just thought it gets a bit tiring after a while having to explain the circumstances over and over again. Then having to deal with people being quite insensitive and asking personal questions and stupid questions like 'oh will you be sad to give him up' and things like that.' (see a [transcript from an interview with a carer from the Loud and Clear foster family learning project](#))

Likewise, it was noted how adoptive parents attending Loud and Clear found they were able to gain support from other parents, regarding the challenges they may face in the adoption process. Parents identified that other participants in mother and children groups would probably struggle to understand and support the challenges that they faced in the adoption process, having not gone through them. For example, one parent described a difficulty in bonding with the child when

they had first adopted them. They found the support of other parents going through similar circumstances invaluable for providing new ideas for ways to strengthen the bond with their child. It was anticipated that birth parents attending other mother and children groups would be unlikely to face difficulties such as this; hence they would be unlikely to have been able to provide support for these participants.

Facilitators of the Loud and Clear project described having an awareness of the discrimination that carers and parents could feel within other groups, highlighting that providing a space for socialisation and support was key to their approach:

‘Just allowing that happen and not making the music totally the thing, to allow the social aspect of- take priority sometimes. It's us having the understanding and knowing just how important those conversations are for them.’ (see a [transcript from an interview with a facilitator from the Loud and Clear adoption family learning project](#))

To enable a sense of support to be formed, a snack break within the session was implemented. Facilitators identified this as being a significant moment for carers and parents to socialise and gain support. Aiming to provide a social interaction alongside the music making also adjusted how facilitators led the session, as one facilitator described having to occasionally take a step back away from the music making within the session to allow conversations to happen.

Therefore, the organisation and delivery of the sessions played a key role in providing space for socialisation and fostering a sense of support for participants.

Daniel Hughes notes that having a support network for carers and adoptive parents is vital for helping overcome any challenges they may be facing within their unique position (2000 p.213).

Attending music projects catering specifically for these communities was seen to be invaluable for participants as a place to develop their social network of families going through similar circumstances. Often the social network carers and adoptive parents developed through the project stretched further than just attending the session. One participant, in particular, described making friends with other moms within the group; they still kept in contact even after they had finished attending the group and they were still reliant upon for advice. This indicates how the social networks and sense of support that attending music projects fostered for the child's support network often became a crucial feature of their lives that could be relied upon away in future.

Although the training provided by SoundLINCS was only a one-day course, participants identified that it could be beneficial to have future opportunities to meet each other again and to discuss how they had used the activities. Several participants commented on how sharing activities would be beneficial for continuing to develop their use of music across settings, as they would be able to hear how activities had been developed or altered when using them with the children. Therefore, providing more training sessions may offer opportunities for participants to form a support structure similar to what carers and adoptive parents gained from attending a music project. It would also support participants in continuing to develop new ideas for musical activities or ways of using them.

Thus, music making was seen to be particularly beneficial for providing looked after children's support networks with a unique opportunity to socialise with other families in similar circumstances. Through having these interactions, parents, carers and social workers were able to

build up a support network where they could gain new ideas of working with the children, talk through the various stages of looked after care and feel a sense of belonging. Facilitators played a key role in providing opportunities within the projects for participants to socialise and build up their support network, through the understanding that this was why many of the participants attended the group and adjusting their delivery to accordingly to support this.

Attachment

Although participants referenced how participating in music may be beneficial for helping form attachments with their child, it was surprising that this was often viewed as a secondary feature to the other impacts engaging in music may provide. Having an attachment to an individual is indicated by the works of Maslow (1943) and Bowlby (1953) as being an essential human need as it can provide a sense of safety and security. Literature surrounding looked after children indicate that attachments are often a missing feature within their lives. Thus, failing to establish a meaningful relationship at an early age can impact upon their ability to build resilience and establish meaningful relationships in later life (Stein, 2005). Bazalgette, Rahily, and Trevelyan (2015) indicate the vital role that caregivers play in helping provide a sense of security and attachment for looked after children to build resilience.

Group music making has been found to provide a sense of belonging and attachment between participants. Dave Camlin identifies that attuning to each other's breathing and movement fosters a sense of attachment between participants (2015). Similarly, Youth Music's review found joint participation in music projects often helped bring the carers and children closer together (Dillon,

2010). Thus, indicating how partaking in joint music making may be a beneficial tool for supporting looked after children in forming attachments with their support network.

The Loud and Clear adoption group was where music was deemed to be most beneficial for helping to develop a bond between children and parents. This is more prominent in this context as adoptive care is potentially a more permanent outcome for looked after children than foster care. Therefore, the need to form stronger attachments may be more prominent for these families (Mooney & Young, 2013 p.7). One participant spoke about how they first began attending the project on the advice of their social worker when they were struggling to form a bond with their child:

‘We first came when [our child] came to live with us, for the first few months I found it difficult to bond with her actually. So, it was around that time that our social worker said why don’t you try this group, it’s a nice thing to do [...] back in the early days I would sing the songs we had both heard here to her. I could see her recognising the songs and that helped us to bond more.’ (see a [transcript with an interview with an adoptive parent from the Loud and Clear adoption family learning project](#))

After attending for several years, the participant identified that attending the project together and replicating the activities at home had been key to developing their bond. The participant described that the music group became ‘their thing’ that they did together every week.

Additionally, music making was useful for helping the child form attachments with wider family members. Several parents described grandparents actively participating in musical activities with the child, often replicating the activities in a similar style to the parents. On several occasions,

grandparents and parents' friends attended the Loud and Clear sessions with the child. Thus, attending the group became a central point in the child's and grandparents' relationship and a way of beginning to form a family atmosphere to help the child settle into their new environment (Hughes, 2000 p.194). As music can allow multiple people to be involved at any one time, using it as a tool with looked after children may be beneficial in providing an opportunity for the entire family to engage and begin to build attachments with the child.

In all three cases, music was noted as being a common interest that both the children and the adults already had, which in turn made using music on a daily basis more of applicable activity. Claire Cameron and Peter Moss describe that establishing a shared interest with a child is an important step in beginning to form a relationship with a young person (2012 p. 4).

Although using music to form an attachment was not spoken about as explicitly within the foster case study and SoundLINCS case study, it was still noted as being a benefit from engaging in music making. SoundLINCS participants noted how everyday activities such as listening to music in the car provided opportunities for parents and carers to engage in a conversation with the children and begin building relationships. This was particularly useful when working with older children who may be more challenging to engage. Youth Music's review (Dillon, 2010) focused on a project which worked with older looked after children and their carers in which they wrote a song together. Carers described how creating song lyrics together helped them learn more about the child and open up conversations which could be the basis for building attachments. Similar results could be seen within the SoundLINCS case study as participants described a desire to use the listening of songs together as a way to open up a conversation and

begin building relationships. Likewise, for participants attending the Loud and Clear foster group participating in a joint musical activity was seen to be helping develop an attachment with the child. Facilitators were aware of the importance of providing opportunities for bonding, providing several joint activities. One example is that of playing instruments together, in which carers helped children hold and play their percussion instrument to a drum beat. Equally, singing together was noted by participants as being the most useful activity for building a bond, describing how they would often sing with the child on a daily basis, resonating with the work of Camlin (2015) and Malloch and Trevarthen (2009).

Thus, forming attachments through music making was found to be beneficial for looked after children in settling them into their new environment and beginning to build attachments, through having a common shared interest. Music making may be seen to play a key role in helping the child form a stable placement whilst in the looked after care system, where the children can begin to develop their confidence and resilience. Additionally, for the children's support network, music is a beneficial tool for engaging older children whom they may otherwise have struggled to engage and build relationships with.

Summary

Music making has several benefits for looked after children and their support networks. The most common finding that engaging in joint musical activity may be beneficial for providing opportunities for communications, between looked after children and their support networks that may have otherwise been a struggle. Through having increased communications, support

networks were able to aid the children in the building of a structure within their lives, attachments within the family and build new skills, which could play a key role in building their resilience for life after care. Facilitators in the project were vital in supporting carers, parents and social workers in developing their knowledge of musical activities and how to adapt them to work with the young children. Additionally, through facilitators providing a space for socialisation within the group, support networks were able to gain assistance that they may have struggled to find within other mother and children groups.

The next chapter will draw together conclusions on the impact that music making may be having for looked after children against the aims of this study. Alongside this several recommendations will be formed for future work to be carried out, both in regard to research and for practitioners working within the field.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

This study has aimed to bring to light the impacts that partaking in music making may have for looked after children and their support networks. To examine these impacts, three distinct music projects working with looked after children and their support workers were examined, collecting the participants and facilitators experiences of being involved in the project and the impacts they believed the project had. In this chapter, I will outline the conclusions into the impacts that music making had for looked after children and their support networks and in how facilitators were delivering sessions. Whilst, also making several recommendations based on the results that may be used to help develop future projects for this group.

With an increasing number of children entering looked after care within the U.K., and an increase in the number of music projects working with this community, research is needed to understand the benefits and importance that music can play in a looked after child's life. Studies examining community music have indicated how engaging within a project can offer participants the chance to overcome social challenges, feel a sense of empowerment and find a sense of belonging (Camlin, 2015). Literature on looked after children indicates that growing up in care often had several detrimental effects on children's ability to form secure attachments, feel a sense of self-esteem and build their confidence (Bazalgette et al, 2015; Stein 2005). This impacts their ability to form resilience and meaningful relationships for life after care. Likewise, for children's support network often the pressures of CPD training and lack of support could have detrimental effects upon their development of practice and their confidence of working with a

child, impacting their ability to build meaningful relationships with the child (HCPC CPD document, 2017).

To what extent has this research addressed these questions:

- What if any are the holistic benefits that engaging in music projects has for a looked after child?
- What impact do these holistic benefits have for the family and the support unit in the child's lives?
- How are facilitators and organisations developing and running projects to (a) meet the musical needs and (b) the development and care needs of the child?

Results from this study indicated how engaging in music making had several benefits for looked after children, including increasing their engagement in music and providing opportunities for communication with their support network. Through having an increased engagement, participants were noted as being able to develop both musical and social skills that would be transferable in other contexts. Studies have shown that the development of musical and social skills through music projects have led children in the long term to increase their confidence and self-esteem (Dillon, 2010). These were two areas suggested as being key to forming resilience for later life and for forming a secure placement while in care (Stein, 2005). Thus, providing music making for looked after children may be key in helping them form a secure attachment and build resilience for later life.

Likewise, for the support network of the children music making was found to be beneficial for providing a source of communication and helping aid the development of attachments between themselves and the children in their care. The support networks from all three cases described how music could be used as a starting point for a conversation with a child, either through participating within a musical activity together or through discussing common themes from the song. Support networks can often find it challenging to engage and communicate with children, particularly older children, impacting upon the ability to form an attachment (Simkiss, 2012; Fostering network n.d). Finding a shared common interest like music can be seen to be a way of providing a source of commonality and engagement whereby relationships can be formed. This is particularly useful for children who are in long-term foster care or in the adoption process, where the need to form an attachment is vital for developing a sense of security within their lives.

Additionally, attending a music group was a way of providing support and a sense of belonging for looked after children's support networks, as they often struggled to find within other pre-school groups. Facilitators played a key role in helping foster this sense of support for participants through adapting their approaches to provide opportunities for socialisation within the session.

Carers, adoptive parents and social workers can often feel unsupported within their work with looked after children (Ottoway & Selwyn, 2016). Attending a music project where facilitators provided a space for socialisation provided the opportunity looked after children's support networks to gain advice on new ideas and initiatives for ways of working with the child. For

many participants, attending these groups were the only place where they could open up about their circumstance without feeling any judgment, resonating with the findings of Lee Higgins (2007) and Dave Camlin (2015). Thus, offering more music workshops where there is an opportunity to engage with other families in similar circumstances, may play a vital role for providing support for carers, adoptive parents and social workers and delaying feelings of blocked care and placement breakdowns that can occur.

These findings indicate why it is vital to be providing music making opportunities for looked after children and their support network. Music making was seen to become an essential part of participants' lives, which they could adapt and use on a daily basis to overcome challenges they may face. For several participants, integrating music into their everyday lives had become a way of engaging the whole family in working with the child and forming attachments. Community musicians must be aware of the impact that music has on these participants when delivering sessions and strive towards facilitating sessions that can both meet the care, musical and social needs of the participants.

Recommendations

In light of these findings several recommendations can be made to develop further and support the use of music with looked after children:

- **Further training:** Councils and organisations should fund and encourage children's support workers to take part in musical training. This could be formulated as part of their CPD for working with looked after children. Requests from support staff showed how

they would like new ideas for ways of working with their children, particularly for activities that can be adapted to be used more than once. Hence, the adaptable nature of music making may allow it to be a beneficial tool for support networks to develop their knowledge and skills through more training opportunities.

- **Increasing the number and frequency of projects:** Councils and music organisations should continue to work together to provide more opportunities for carers, parents and social workers to attend music projects. Currently, support staff feel that there are not enough projects on offer for their children to attend, or that they are missing out on opportunities through having to attend contact or other meetings. Providing more music projects that are on at other times in different areas may increase the opportunities support staff have. Additionally, for projects that cater for young children such as Loud and Clear, providing opportunities for the children to continue to attend from the ages of five onwards. This may prove to be beneficial for encouraging more children who may be missing out due to having contact on certain days to partake within the project. It may also be beneficial for helping the impacts of the project be more sustainable, due to continuing to be involved within the practice.
- **Communication between facilitators and organisations:** A digital forum offering communication between facilitators or organisations may play a key role in helping support practitioners working in the field to develop knowledge of different approaches being undertaken. It could also be used as a way of providing training for new practitioners entering the field. This forum could also be opened up to enable social services councils to interact with facilitators and music organisations, to further disseminate the impacts music making may have and to further obtain knowledge of

different ways of using music. This recommendation stems from the SoundLINCS case study where participants proposed that more opportunities to discuss musical practice would be beneficial for helping to develop music into their practice. Additionally, such a forum would enable facilitators to support each other in developing sessions that are continuously developing to facilitate developments within the participants.

Ultimately, what these case studies have identified is need for further research surrounding community music, looked after children and children facing challenging circumstances. As a secondary step to develop the current discourse surrounding community music and looked after children, further research should examine further approaches to practice that musicians are using when working with looked after children and other children facing challenging circumstances. Currently there is little knowledge of the impacts that music making may be having on communities such as children in rural isolation or refugees. Thus, more practice-based research could be carried out to further examine the implications of providing music making to support the development of future projects. This could also help develop insights into the approaches musicians are using to deliver sessions with 'interventional' outcomes, which could be explored further to continue to develop the knowledge of practice within the field. This may support new practitioners into the field and provide a framework for the development of future projects.

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