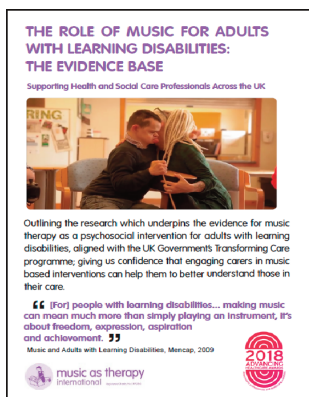




## Welcome to our third quarterly newsletter!

Our last newsletter focused on the impact of music for people living with dementia. In this edition we are shining a light on adults with learning disabilities, before we turn our attention to music used with young children in our final Newsletter of the year (due out in December).

### The Evidence Base



The number of adults with learning disabilities in the UK is growing, but there is not very much research into the benefits of music for this group. That's why we've pulled together research, sector information and our own experiences to create an [ALD Evidence Base leaflet](#). You already know this from

your own experience, but there is wider evidence available to support our understanding that music can benefit adults with learning disabilities in the following ways:

- Developing communication and social skills, interpersonal skills and building relationships
- Emotional development and self-expression
- Addressing isolation and diffusing stress associated with social interaction
- Reducing anxiety and agitation
- Contributing to, maintaining or rehabilitating functional cognitive and sensory abilities
- Increasing self-confidence and self-esteem, acceptance and success
- Promoting opportunities to show preferences and make choices
- Enhancing co-ordination and motor skills

Don't forget you can access our [Partner Support Mechansim](#) to request support, supervision or advice.

### Darren's Story



Thank you to Geoff at the Montrose Centre for speaking to one of his service users about what it is about music that he values:

I asked Darren what he likes about the sessions and he replied "they're really really good." In fact, I often ask him at the end of a session to give me a mark out of 10 - it's never less than 10!

Because Darren uses a wheelchair and has some difficulties with his arm movements, he also comments that sessions are "good exercise for his arms." Darren told me he appreciates that he "gets to pick songs sometimes" - he likes the 'days of the week song' because "it's a nice tune, and it's active" or the Makaton songs - we've done 'Sailing', 'Roar', 'Wonderful World' and 'Somewhere over the Rainbow' so far.

Darren likes "when other folks pick different things out of the box (of musical instruments) for me to play." He says the key thing he gets out of music sessions is that he is "really really good at listening."

The final thing, which stopped me in my metaphorical tracks, was when he said: "I like that it's not all about me." This is such great feedback given the importance of social activities for our group participants.

Darren's story comes three years after Geoff took part in a *Music as Therapy International* introductory training project. It is a fantastic example of the lasting impact such training can have.

We love hearing our partners' stories (read more on our [website](#)) - please do also get in touch if you, or someone you work with, have a story to share... and we'll add a new instrument to your collection!



**Do you know anyone working with adults with learning disabilities who would like to find out more about how to use music?** We are currently looking for an ALD Partner Setting for an introductory training project in 2020. Do please put them in touch!

## ALD Activity Resources



### Singing songs with adults with learning disabilities

**Aims:** Opportunities for choice-making, enjoyment and joining the group together.

Invite the group members to suggest songs they would like to sing as a group. Service users we know have suggested the following songs in the past: Summer Holiday; Help; Somewhere Over the Rainbow, She'll be Comin' Round the Mountain and My Heart Will Go On!

Having instruments to play at the same time as singing can feel less intimidating, and is a way of including those group members who can't, or don't wish to sing. It may help the group members to join in if you sing the song a little bit more slowly and leave gaps for people to catch up; try and follow the lead of the group as a whole.

It is good for the music leaders to be able to sing the song choices confidently to ensure the song will be well supported. You could print out the lyrics of popular songs if this will help you. You could also try adapting the lyrics of one of the songs with the group so it becomes a 'group song'. Write down the requests each week so you can help offer suggestions if needed. If any entertainers come into your setting and sing songs popular with service users, these too could be added to your list.



### Ideas for Structuring a Group Music Session

Include a variety of different activities depending on the needs and abilities of the group members. Pick a range of lively activities, being still and concentrating, free playing and whole group activities. For example:

- Greeting songs acknowledging everyone by name
- Everyone play together
- Opportunities for solo playing
- An activity where each group member is equal
- An activity where everyone has the chance to be leader
- Physical movement
- Encourage vocalisation – this could be through singing or other sounds like humming
- Taking turns, waiting and listening
- Goodbye songs

You don't need to include all these types of activities in every session. Think of the group aims and choose activities to support them. Each week you can incorporate familiar activities that have worked well in the past, and adapt old activities.

## In other news...

### New projects and new partners!

We are delighted to welcome staff from Chelsea Court Place and Invernevis House to our network, following the introductory training we provided this summer. Both settings support people living with dementia and the projects were led by music therapists Susanna Bajali and Clare Reynolds. Read more on the [Blog](#) section of our website and features in [Charity Today](#) and [Care Appointments](#).



“ I'm at the top of the band! I never knew I could do this! ”

Chelsea Court Place resident



“ Today's music session was with a 102 year-old, who literally just 'woke up' as we began to play. ”

Clare Reynolds

### BBC Music Day 2019

This September the BBC chose a dementia focus for its annual celebration of the power of music, and we were proud to see both our Invernevis and Chelsea Court Place projects listed as official BBC Music Day Events. Read more about it [here](#), and check out their brilliant BBC Music Memories resource [here](#), which features playlists across the decades, as well as from particular regions and countries across the world.

Support our  
Radio 4 Appeal  
13-17 October

### Our Radio 4 Appeal!

We're excited to announce our [Radio 4 Appeal](#). It will be broadcast on 13th October 2019 (repeated on 17th). Tune in to hear Imelda Staunton talk about our work and how our Local Partner Audace uses music in [Rwanda](#), who works with children with disabilities. It is an inspiring reminder to all our UK Partners that your network is global. Follow this link to our [countdown!](#)

To register to receive future copies of this Newsletter directly to you via email (and to receive your own pair of egg shakers) email [freyagibbs@musictherapy.org](mailto:freyagibbs@musictherapy.org)