What works in music, arts and wellbeing?

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POLICY AND PRACTICE

- Cultural commissioning/social prescribing
- APPG
- Royal Society of Public Health SIG
- Creative and Credible (http://creativeandcredible.co.uk/)
- PHE evaluation framework (Daykin with Joss, 2016)

Growing evidence base
Increasingly ‘robust’ research designs
Shift from ‘health’ to ‘wellbeing’
Gaps: understanding mechanisms of impact; the role of artistic quality.
Why Wellbeing?

- Wellbeing linked to a range of personal and social outcomes; and is a valued end in itself (Huppert, 2017).
- Positive state rather than absence of disease.
DEFINING AND 
MEASURING 
WELLBEING

- Hedonic (feelings e.g. happiness, anxiety)
- Eudemonic (life is meaningful, worthwhile)
- Evaluative vs experiential (Dolan, 2014)
- ONS 4: satisfaction with life, worthwhileness, happiness and anxiety
- Wellbeing linked with ONS data on cultural and sporting engagement
WHAT WORKS FOR WELLBEING?

- [https://www.whatworkswellbeing.org](https://www.whatworkswellbeing.org)
- Four programme areas: work and learning; communities; culture and sport; cross cutting.
- CSW evidence review programme 2015-2018
  - Music and singing in adults
  - Sport and dance for young people
  - Visual arts in mental health settings
  - Family leisure and outdoor spaces
- 5397 records, 61 relevant research studies
- Music and singing associated with a variety of wellbeing measures across the adult life course
- For older people, music is associated with improved mental wellbeing, resilience, reduced loneliness and reduced risk of depression (meta-analysis)
- No common definition of wellbeing
- Challenges of measuring SWB in dementia
- Evidence quality
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Area</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music in youth justice settings</td>
<td>Daykin et al. 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music in military settings</td>
<td>Clift et al. 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music in acute dementia care</td>
<td>Daykin et al. 2017</td>
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<td>Genre based community music</td>
<td>Tapson et al. 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music with refugees and migrants</td>
<td>(in process)</td>
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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social construction of healthcare knowledge (Stacey, 1988)

Music doesn’t speak for itself – situated understanding of what music means (McClary, 2000, Williams, 2001)

Musical affordances (Denora, 2000)

Appropriation:

‘... music is an emergent, flexible object. Music’s powers to help become activated only through the ways that we couple music with other things – postures and physical practices, expectations, beliefs and social relations to name but a few’ (DeNora 2013: 138).
WELLBEING IMPACTS OBSERVED

- Fun and enjoyment
- Learning and engagement
- Distraction and coping
- Meaning and purpose
- Identities: reinforced, renewed, emergent, disrupted and challenged
- Conflict, stress and pressure
- Risk and achievement
- Social connection, relationships and stigma
Distraction, coping, meaning and purpose

Thomas, 17, Youth Justice Study.

... It is MY time, doing something I adore which relieves the stress of the week... I couldn’t live without it now!
(MYC)

When I joined the choir I was on antidepressants... Within six months I was off anti-depressants and improving. I wouldn’t say I’m completely cured but my weekly choir fix is an important part of my life, it gives me focus (MYC)

Having the CD at the end, it makes me feel I’m like ... I’m actually getting somewhere ...
I’ve achieved something ... I’m try’na do the best with the time I’ve got to spend in here.
(Thomas, 17, Youth Justice Study).
Social connection

“When we get together we work all as one unit. We might not always play like one unit, but together, we all seem to gel; even though we’re all from different backgrounds” (Community orchestra participant)

“I’ve been with the orchestra ever since it first began [...] It’s like a community. It’s like a little family actually’ (Community orchestra participant)

“If you’re somebody, for example on benefits and doesn’t get out much, this is a way of meeting people [...] maybe English isn’t your first language ... or you’re new to [the city], this is a way of getting to meet new people’ (Community orchestra participant).
Conflict, stress and pressure

‘[When things go wrong] ... I think we gave ourselves more of a talking to than the audience gave us. We felt worse than the audience because we know what we put in’

(community orchestra participant).

On the negative side I find some members of the choir power mad either through their husband’s rank or position on the committee and ... if I disagree with the committee I am branded as ‘negative’ (MWC)

‘Sarah had a real dislike for the bird noise, which she said haunted her ... Jess quickly interjected and said that she liked the bird sound ... During the rest of the session... she kept playing the bird noise over and over again, and it seemed like she was deliberately trying to torment Sarah.’ (Observation notes, Site D, Youth Justice Study)
Identities

“Before I came in jail, I used to listen to a set of music, like. But now I’m very versatile, like.”
(Eric 19, Youth Justice Study)

“It’s got to be sea music or things connected with the sea. I had a husband who was a sailor and he was a lovely lad (P5, female, dementia study).

‘Any time you’ve got someone external coming in, especially with our lot, if you don’t have an obvious understanding of (genre), then there may be some people who disengage’
(Community Orchestra participant)
Participant characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, language, impairment, musical histories and preferences)

Programme context and characteristics (delivery models, resources, project management, artistic focus and goals)

Music facilitator attributes and responses (musical and non musical, points of connection, authenticity)

Institutional rules, roles and imperatives (operational requirements, gatekeepers, proscribed forms of expression)
### Social Construction of Artistic Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills and talent</th>
<th>Developing, discovering and celebrating abilities. Discourses of ‘talent’.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk and reward</td>
<td>Nerves, stress, pride, connection. ‘Good enough’ performance.</td>
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<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Music leaders’ identities and relatability. Story telling and life experience. Genre and ownership. ‘honesty’ versus production effects.</td>
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<td>Product and process</td>
<td>‘Fun’ vs ‘serious’ music. Professional skills and resources. Limitations of recording environments. Recordings as work in progress.</td>
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<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Imagination, mystique, originality and innovation. Exploring cultural diversity.</td>
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REFERENCES (1)


REFERENCES (2)


