

# Musical Connections



## OUTSIDE THE TICK BOX

A Creative Reflection and Evaluation Process



Birmingham and Solihull  
Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust





# PROJECT OUTCOMES:



**Vulnerable, isolated and disabled participants will have better chances in life through developing personal, social, artistic and life skills.**

*“I keep coming because it makes a difference to my life: it gives me peace and relaxes me. Here people are helping each other. Making music elsewhere feels like making music on your own in comparison.”*

**Participants will feel less isolated, having improved health and wellbeing through music-making, encouraging active engagement in group and social activity.**

*“When I’m on stage I feel happy. I enjoy performing and also writing songs. It has made me meet new people and make new friends. It has changed my life, because I wouldn’t be doing anything else if I didn’t have Musical Connections”.*

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**Participants will develop transferable personal skills enabling them to be signposted to further accessible training/development opportunities giving better life-chances**

*“I'm involved in the BSMHFT Peer Support project... I became involved in a voluntary position at Worcester Snoezelen which is a place of sensory happiness...I write film scores and also act in productions...Then there's ADHD the band, which has become a mainstay in my life. Without the project I wouldn't have done these things.”*

**Workforce development for emerging artists, through volunteering roles and training, will increase participation opportunities for vulnerable adults with specific needs**

*“Volunteers get an amazing deal as we get to work with all the artists and learn from all of them and see different ways of working. I cry at every concert as it overwhelms me how amazing everyone is to be brave enough to share the songs and stories. I am so proud of everyone and feel touched to be part of it.”*



# APPROACH:

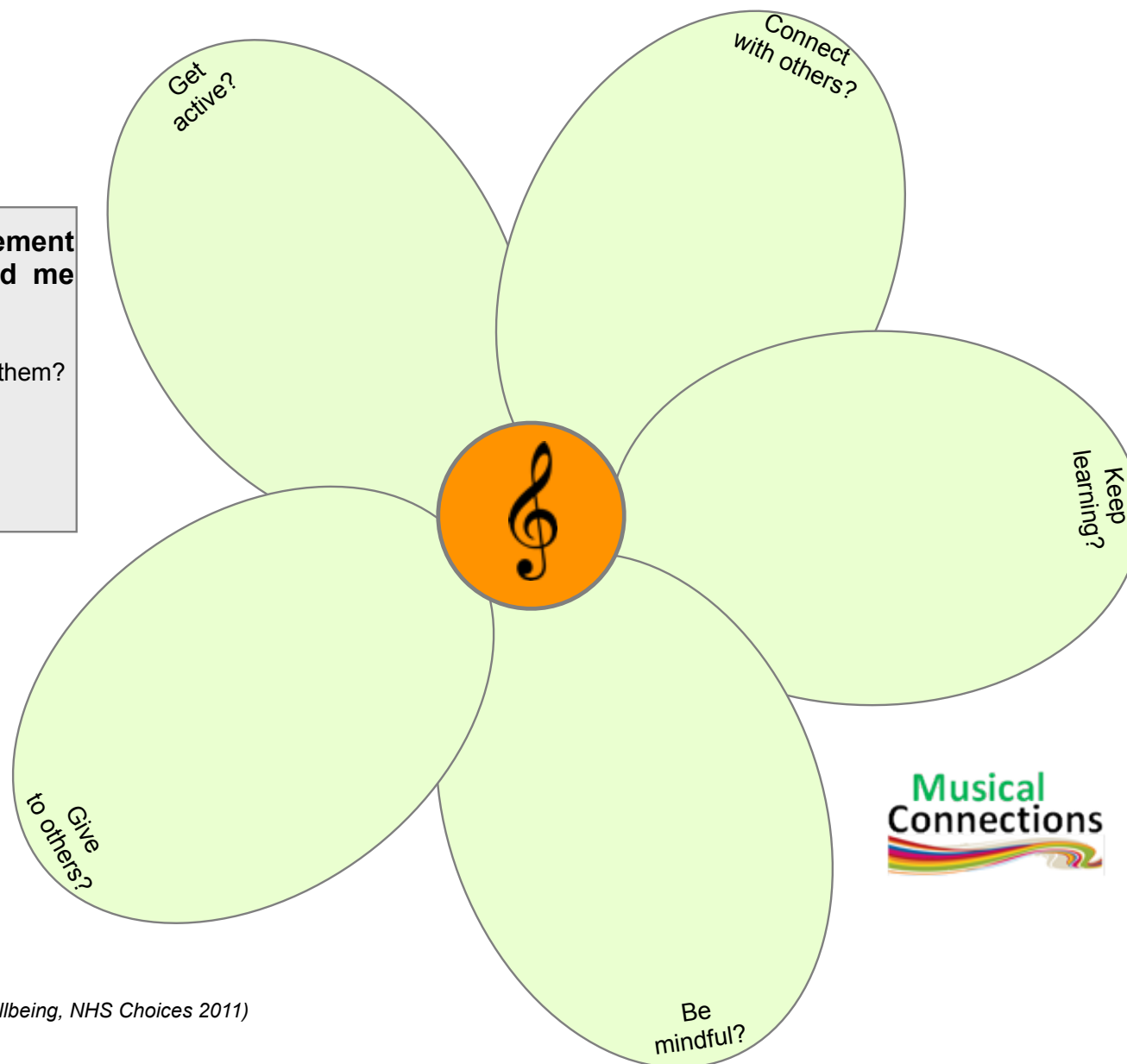
## How Am I Doing With My Goals For Musical Connections? (Final)

**How has my involvement in the project helped me with my goal/goals?**

Am I still working towards them?

Have I met them?

Have I exceeded them?



*(adapted from Five Ways To Mental Wellbeing, NHS Choices 2011)*

Reflection

Creativity

Triangulation

## Outcome Star 1 (Start)

How much do you agree with each statement at the beginning of your Musical Connections journey?

"I find it easy to sing/play in front of others and express myself through music"

"I often take part in local positive activities related to my interests"

"I can achieve what I want to"

"I am able to do things as well as other people"

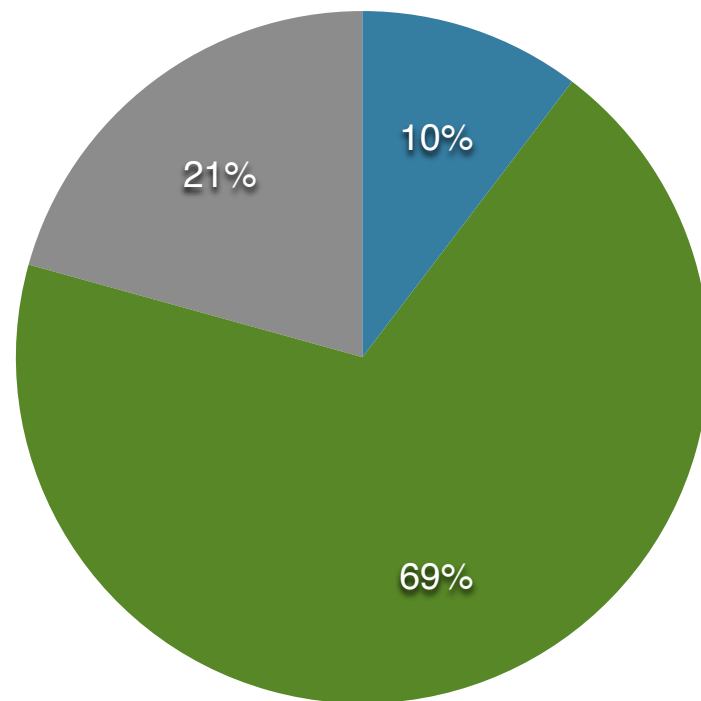
"I find it easy to work with other people and I can compromise"

"I feel valued and accepted"



## Sample 5 Ways To Wellbeing analysis:

● Working towards ● Met ● Exceeded

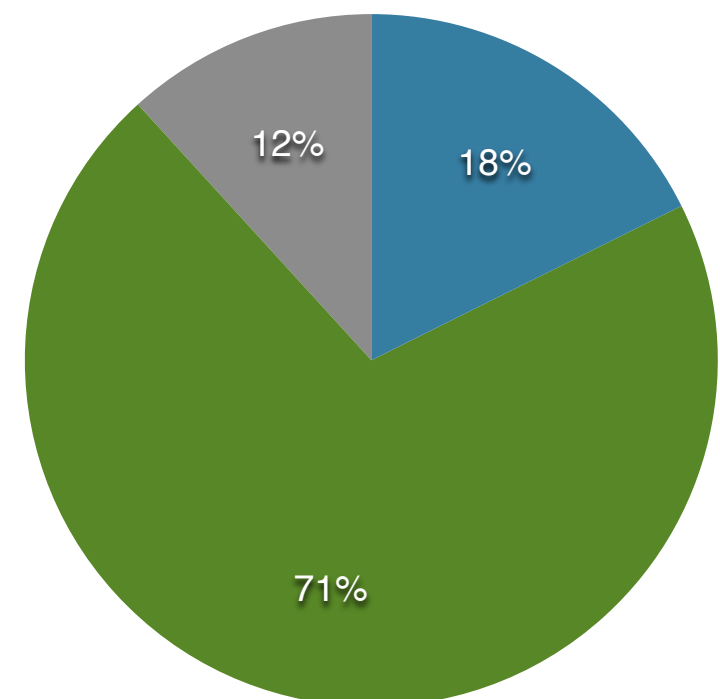


*Keep learning*  
(29 members selected this goal)

Example:

Start: "I will be learning about how to play music and instruments"  
End: "[I'm] really learning to play guitar/bass and play keyboard better."

● Working towards ● Met ● Exceeded



*Connect with others*  
(17 members selected this goal)

Example:

Start: "Help with confidence with people and communicating with them. Making friends."

End: "Making friends and having fun and enjoying yourself. I feel like I've achieved something. I feel I've got better at opening up to other people and letting them open up to me."



# Playing with metaphors



*“I chose the sponge:  
I am sad today but as time goes  
on on this project, the water in the  
sponge will evaporate and I will  
achieve my goals.”*



*“I chose the bar of soap:  
Because I feel refreshed, making  
new songs.”*



## Reflection...



One member reflects on his personal progress during the residential weekend of 2016.  
(The original document used “traffic light” emoticons):

*Arrival: “Concerned about getting lost.”*

*After Friday session: “Very productive... feeling the harmony!”*

*Saturday: “Feeling a bit behind - understanding of structure.”*

*“Games were a laugh and warmed me up.”*

*Saturday Night: “Feeling pushed after dinner. Need more of a gap/break.*

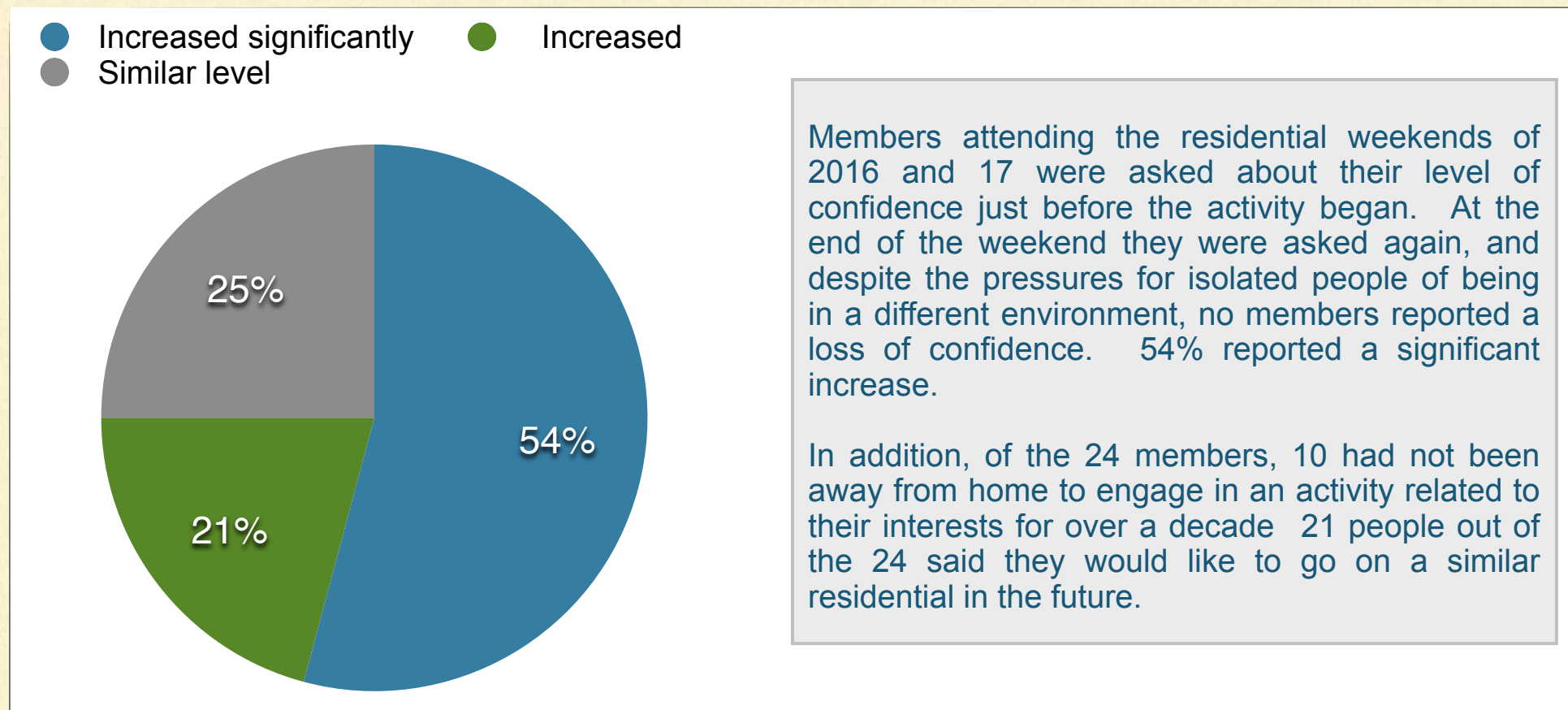
*A bit full on. Feeling drained.”*

*Sunday: “A little anxious. Memory zapped but hopeful still.”*

*End: “Feeling more optimistic about working on music projects, songwriting, thanks to the enjoyable music created by all of the talented persons who helped make this experience one to be remembered. One love.”*



## ...leading to evaluation:



**This weekend (Residential 2017) has had an impact on the way I relate to others or work in a team because...**

*“It helps me to keep organised and be able to socialise with the band. It’s been emotionally exhilarating for me.”*

*“Working with people of different ages and disabilities has been a real eye opener when putting together a song and has given me a different perspective.”*

*“I usually spend all my time alone (isolated) so I have had to spend time with others and work as a team. I have listened to others and encouraged others.”*



# Triangulation:

Excerpts from a case study of one longer term member:

Member:

“...Being in M.C. has improved my confidence and helped my mental health. I have met so many musicians and now have lots of things to go to and attend. In one word, Musical Connections is amazing...”

Family member:

“...This has given him confidence and something to focus on. The team that support him on the project are fantastic. Inspirational. It's like they have said, “Here are the keys, the space is yours: go create something...”

Artist:

“...His starting point was one of extreme shyness, lack of confidence and low self-esteem. His greater ease socially and enjoyment of the company of others is very evident as an observer, as is his increased confidence as a performer. It is testament to the nature of a longer term project such as M.C. that such a change can be seen in over the course of time...”

Changes measured by Baseline:  
increase of **5** points for the statement, “I often take part in local positive activities related to my interests” and an increase of **3** points for, “I can achieve what I want to.”





# Musical Connections

“Family”

“Fantastic”

“Positive”

“Liberating”



*“I had a seizure in 2007 and I couldn’t function for a long time. When I came to Musical Connections it really made my recovery happen. I am more confident and assertive and it has made my mind healthier and more focussed.*

*This spills over into my day to day life. I can do some things that I would have been too introverted to do before, because I have come out of my shell. It is very good for creating more positive emotions.”*