

A CHOIR IN EVERY CARE HOME

VIEWS FROM OTHER AGENCIES

WORKING PAPER 11

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'A Choir in Every Care Home' is an initiative to explore how music and singing can feature regularly in care homes across the country. Funded and initiated by the **Baring Foundation**, it is a unique collaboration between 30 leading national organisations from adult social care, music and academic research. It is led by **Live Music Now**, **Sound Sense** and **Canterbury Christ Church University**.

The Baring Foundation



About a choir in every care home

This enquiry is an initiative of the Baring Foundation which since 2010 has focused its arts programme on older people, especially those in care homes. Following a roundtable discussion in October 2014 the Foundation decided as a first step to undertake a short-term investigation into singing in care homes which would:

- Collate the existing evidence for the benefits (for staff, family and friends, choir members as well as residents) of singing/choirs for older people/in care homes/links to the wider community.
- Map existing activity
- Explore different models of activity: benefits, challenges and ways forward
- Collate existing materials that support choirs in care homes and produce new materials where needed.
- Consider issues of quality of the artistic experience and art achieved, with special reference to dementia
- Describe what more can be done without extra resources and cost what more activity could be achieved with further resources.
- Launch and widely disseminate this work in a way that will encourage the greater use of choirs in care homes.

Following an open application process a consortium of three organisations, led by Live Music Now, was awarded funds to carry out the investigation.

Our working approach

The worlds of singing, arts and wellbeing, and care homes are all well understood by a wide range and large number of organisations working at both practical and policy levels. These organisations – nearly three dozen at the last count – not only know about the subject, the results of this enquiry matter deeply to them. No investigation could successfully research the issues – nor, crucially, be able to “disseminate the findings in ways that will encourage the greater use of choirs in care homes” – without genuine buy-in from these organisations. Our working approach therefore invites these organisations to form not a steering group, but a working group that shares and learns from each other, that determines work that needs to be done – and that then is involved in carrying it out.

Compared with conventional practices of evidence-gathering and recommendation generating, our approach:

- involves the sector fully from the start – so they own the solutions
- makes full use of the knowledge, expertise and experiences in the sector – it is efficient
- creates a community of practice that is worthwhile in its own right – so leaves a legacy
- creates solutions already agreed by the sector – so are much more likely to be adopted.

About working papers

Our working papers distil the sharings and emerging learnings of both the working group and the consortium, to provoke further debate and discussion. They are subject to change as the initiative develops. Together, they form the evidence for our actions and recommendations for future work. A list of proposed working papers is on the outside back cover.



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see back cover*

1 Introduction

This short paper looks at two specific health agencies – the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) – and the role they might play in music making in care homes.

2 Care Quality Commission assessments

- 2.1 The CQC monitors, inspects and regulates care homes' services around England to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety and publish what they find, including performance ratings to help people choose care. In assessing the quality of the services, the CQC asks five questions of all care services they inspect:
1. *Are they safe?*
By safe, we mean that people are protected from abuse and avoidable harm.
 2. *Are they effective?*
By effective, we mean that people's care, treatment and support achieves good outcomes, promotes a good quality of life and is based on the best available evidence.
 3. *Are they caring?*
By caring, we mean that staff involve and treat people with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.
 4. *Are they responsive to people's needs?*
By responsive, we mean that services are organised so that they meet people's needs.
 5. *Are they well-led?*
By well-led, we mean that the leadership, management and governance of the organisation assures the delivery of high-quality person-centred care, supports learning and innovation, and promotes an open and fair culture.
(CQC provider handbooks)
- 2.2 Andrea Sutcliffe, Chief Inspector at CQC has discussed with us how regular musical activities can influence the assessment they make of a care home's services. Taking each of these questions in turn, the table below shows how the regular inclusion of singing and music activities in residential care homes can support positive responses to the CQC's assessment questions.
- 2.3 The evidence for the statements about how music can help, in the final column are to be found across a number of working papers, especially WP2 surveys, WP6 research review, and WP8 case studies.

Table 1: How music can address CQC quality questions

Quality question	CQC Provider Handbook Characteristics	How music can help
1. Safe	<i>In residential care this means that people are supported to make choices and take risks and are protected from physical, psychological and emotional harm, abuse, discrimination and neglect.</i>	<p>Music activities support bonding, build relationships and respect, encouraging person-centred care, leading to a safer environment.</p> <p><i>This is demonstrated by our research review, and the feedback from care homes shown in our surveys. Care homes reported fewer accidents and improved sleeping patterns.</i></p>
2. Effective	<i>In residential care, this means that people are supported to live their lives in the way that they choose and experience the best possible health and quality of life outcomes.</i>	<p>Music activities contribute to meaningful lives of people living in care . Taking part in music activities develops skills in staff that contribute to how they are equipped to offer holistic and person-centred care</p> <p><i>This is demonstrated by our research review, and the feedback from care homes shown in our surveys. Families reported that older people were happier as a result of music projects</i></p>
3. Caring	<i>In residential care, this means that people, their families and carers experience care that is empowering and provided by staff who treat people with dignity, respect and compassion.</i>	<p>Participatory music activities support bonding build relationships and respect encouraging person centred care. Music supports residents to communicate about themselves and their histories. Music improves mood, can help with depression and can alleviate distress.</p> <p><i>This is demonstrated by our the feedback from care homes shown in our surveys and case studies. Care homes reported that staff were happier in general, and more engaged with residents.</i></p>
4. Responsive	<i>In residential care this means that people get the care they need, are listened to and have their rights and diverse circumstances respected.</i>	<p>Taking part in music offers residents choices, agency and control. Music is a social communal activity that is open to all. Music brings people in from outside and connects the residents with the wider community</p> <p><i>This is demonstrated by the feedback from care homes and musicians shown in our surveys. Families reported that older people were happier and more engaged with others and in their circumstances during and after music activities.</i></p>
5. Well-led	<i>In residential care, this means that management and leadership encourage and deliver an open, fair, transparent, supporting and challenging culture at all levels.</i>	<p>Music creates an open culture and shows spark and innovation. Taking part in music can be empowering and allow people to find new things about themselves and grow creatively</p> <p><i>This is demonstrated by the feedback from care homes and musicians shown in our Surveys. Families reported that older people were happier and more engaged, and care homes reported that staff were more motivated and communicative.</i></p>

3 National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

- 3.1 NICE provides national guidance and advice to improve health and social care. A recent guidance document looked at interventions to maintain and improve the mental wellbeing and independence of people aged 65 or older. This examined the evidence for the benefits of singing (among a number of activities).
- 3.2 It found that there was "strong, consistent evidence of effectiveness, including good to moderate quality studies with a low likelihood of bias," and that for most older people singing would "prevent a decline in independence and support their mental wellbeing." Moreover, the cost-effectiveness evidence was "strong."
- 3.3 There were weaknesses noted: a poor quality before-and-after study (though this was mitigated by "quality evidence, from a randomised controlled trial"); and an inability of studies to explain what was going on:
it is unclear whether it is the singing itself that produces the benefit, the group-based nature of the activity or something else.
- 3.4 However, a clear, consistent benefit was demonstrated. Finally, all the evidence on singing was based on professionally-led programmes – but "there was no strong evidence that singing programmes are only effective if there is a paid lead." Nevertheless, the guidance does "acknowledge the value of leadership and professional qualities of the lead."
- 3.5 In short, the recommendation is that, among a range of multicomponent activities for older people should be
Singing programmes, in particular, those involving a professionally-led community choir.

4 References

- 4.1 CQC
Five key questions W: www.cqc.org.uk/content/how-we-inspect-and-regulate-guide-providers%23five-key-questions

Residential adult social care services: provider handbook (25 April 2016) and appendices (updated 31 March 2015 W: www.cqc.org.uk/content/adult-social-care-providers#handbooks)
- 4.2 NICE
Older people: independence and mental wellbeing, NICE guidelines NG32Dec 2015 W: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG32/chapter/Recommendations>)