



The Music Pool - Livewire Hereford 2013

Transition Report November 2013

Musical Inclusion project - Funded by the National Foundation for Youth Music

Livewire is a music project for young people aged 12-24 living in Herefordshire. The project responds to young people's ideas and enables them to write and perform the music they are interested in. The project employs a team of music leaders who work across all sorts of musical genres to accommodate the variety and diverse creative talents of young people across the board.



About Livewire

Throughout 2013, 159 Young People from Herefordshire and surrounding counties chose to work alongside 13 musicians and 10 volunteers to create original music which drew on influences from all genres of music as part of *Livewire Hereford*. The main reasons they chose to get involved were:

Freedom to choose and take control: “we can choose what we want to do” “the music I do at school is just sing along and at Livewire I get to write my own music” - ***Celebrating individuality enables young people to feel in control and work towards independence***

Direction and support: “it led on to other opportunities” - ***Continuity and progressions routes motivate young people to open up to new possibilities, and sustain enthusiasm***

Community: “people listen to us here” “it gave me confidence and you get to make friends that will last a lifetime” - ***Coming together, sharing, reflecting and expressing ideas through music involves listening, working collaboratively, taking responsibility and learning to respect one another. All of these skills break down social barriers, reduce isolation and enhance communities.***

Quality, variety, inspiration and motivation: “there is so much variety, the standard of all the original music is amazing, the people helping you know what they are talking about” “It’s really good to hear and be influenced by all the different styles of music. I am more confident about everything now. Before I started getting in to writing heavy stuff I preferred playing acoustic and country music and *Livewire* showed me you don’t have to stick to one genre, you can do anything you want, there’s a lot of people sharing their talents and lots of talented people which is great to see” ***When young people have the support to achieve their best they are proud of their achievements - their enthusiasm for life changes in all sorts of ways and they start to believe in themselves.***

Livewire encourages Young People to aspire and to believe in themselves

“I have seen people come a long way in everyday life – in just talking to them they seem more alive, I don’t think people realise how much projects like Livewire can change somebody, it’s not just what they love doing, it’s as if they have suddenly found part of themselves and discovered that “yes I can do it because I have got you supporting and believing in me” (Freelance musician working on the project)

The Music Pool, Herefordshire’s Community Music Charity The Music Pool received funding from the National Foundation for Youth Music to develop the organisation’s capacity to deliver meaningful, life- changing opportunities to more young people throughout Hereford and Herefordshire. Following the successful development of the *Livewire* brand of music development opportunities in 2009-10, The Music Pool aimed to extend the reach of the project, increasing its impact and sustainability with an emphasis on making music accessible and relevant to all young people.

The 2 main areas in which the *Livewire* project supported Young People were:

Enabling young people to develop socially and holistically “I know quite a few people from friendship groups or college or even just people I have met on the street and they are always really enthusiastic when they are talking about *Livewire*. It’s not only the fact that they get to do music, it’s how friendly everyone is, they know that if they wanted to try anything they can always talk to you. And when they talk about it they are always so enthusiastic and I just wanted you to know that people really do love what you guys do.” (Daisy – 18 Volunteer from Hereford College of Arts)

Supporting young people to think about their future and to how take the next step “The first time I did *Livewire* in Easter I kind of said to myself that with music I can’t really work with anyone, I found that quite hard, but then I did a collaboration with Joel for the first time and that gave me confidence and working with people like Murf and Rich and Lofty has given me the confidence to make my mind up about the fact that I actually want to do music as a career. I have come to the conclusion that I want to do music and *Livewire* has really helped me with that.” (Dan, 18 - Participant and then Volunteer from Hereford College of Arts)



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Responding to the environment *Livewire* aimed to maximise the number of young people from all around the county who could access meaningful quality music opportunities by centralising the programme through delivery in Hereford City

Herefordshire is one of the most rural counties in England and has the 4th most disparate population in the country, with residents scattered across its 842 square miles. Two-fifths of residents live in the most rural areas of the county and providing any service to people over this large area presents a huge challenge. Just under a third of people live in Hereford city, just over a fifth of people live in the five market towns: Leominster, Ross, Ledbury, Bromyard & Kington, and nearly half of the population lives in villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings in the surrounding rural areas. In total, 54% of the population live in areas classified as 'rural.' (Herefordshire Council; facts and figures) To deliver a network of meaningful workshops, courses, gigs and events in the remote settings listed above would have been impossible through the Youth Music Grant alone.

So when a community association called **The Friends of the Castle Green** took on the lease of a previously council owned building in Hereford City, a partnership was formed to deliver a core part of the project from this venue. The building is situated in a beautiful location next to the river Wye, bordering both the North and South of the Hereford city with access to trains and buses. The venue is also in walking distance from the only other youth centre in Hereford, Close House Youth Projects, a charity.



“One of the most impressive things that we have worked out with this project is the way in which young people perceive the building. It isn’t in North Wye, it isn’t in South Wye and it isn’t perceived as a building with barriers: that is really, really exciting. The Castle Green was a place of safety where people used to come when the city was under attack, that is a theme for the building. I have known the building all my life and as a child I used to come here to feel safe, young people using the building is one of the most exciting things for us” Mark Hubbard – Chair of the Friends of the Castle Green.



Above: The Castle Green Pavilion



Above: Close House Youth Projects

Close House Youth Projects expertise lies in engaging with young people aged 13-24. The vast majority of the young people using Close House are vulnerable, disadvantaged or socially excluded and their open door policy means that young people from all backgrounds can access the youth centre until 5.30pm. Close House work with a large number of young people who experience homelessness, mental health issues, substance misuse, have minor criminal records, are not in education, training or employment or who have suffered abusive childhoods. They employ a part time music/youth worker and music is an important part of their vision. Consultation with the charity's director Ben Lea identified that young people at Close House value music and engage in organising biannual concerts. However, a lack of rehearsal space and need for music leader input has limited what they have previously been able to achieve. Close House were pro-actively seeking musical opportunities for young people, particularly beyond Close House, to:

- promote wider social circles and independence for young people.
- give young people easy access to clear information about gigs and music sessions they can get involved with.
- provide opportunities for young people in a safe, positive environment after 5.30pm, when Close House closes.

Hence, *Livewire Central* evolved at The Castle Green



Geographic Reach

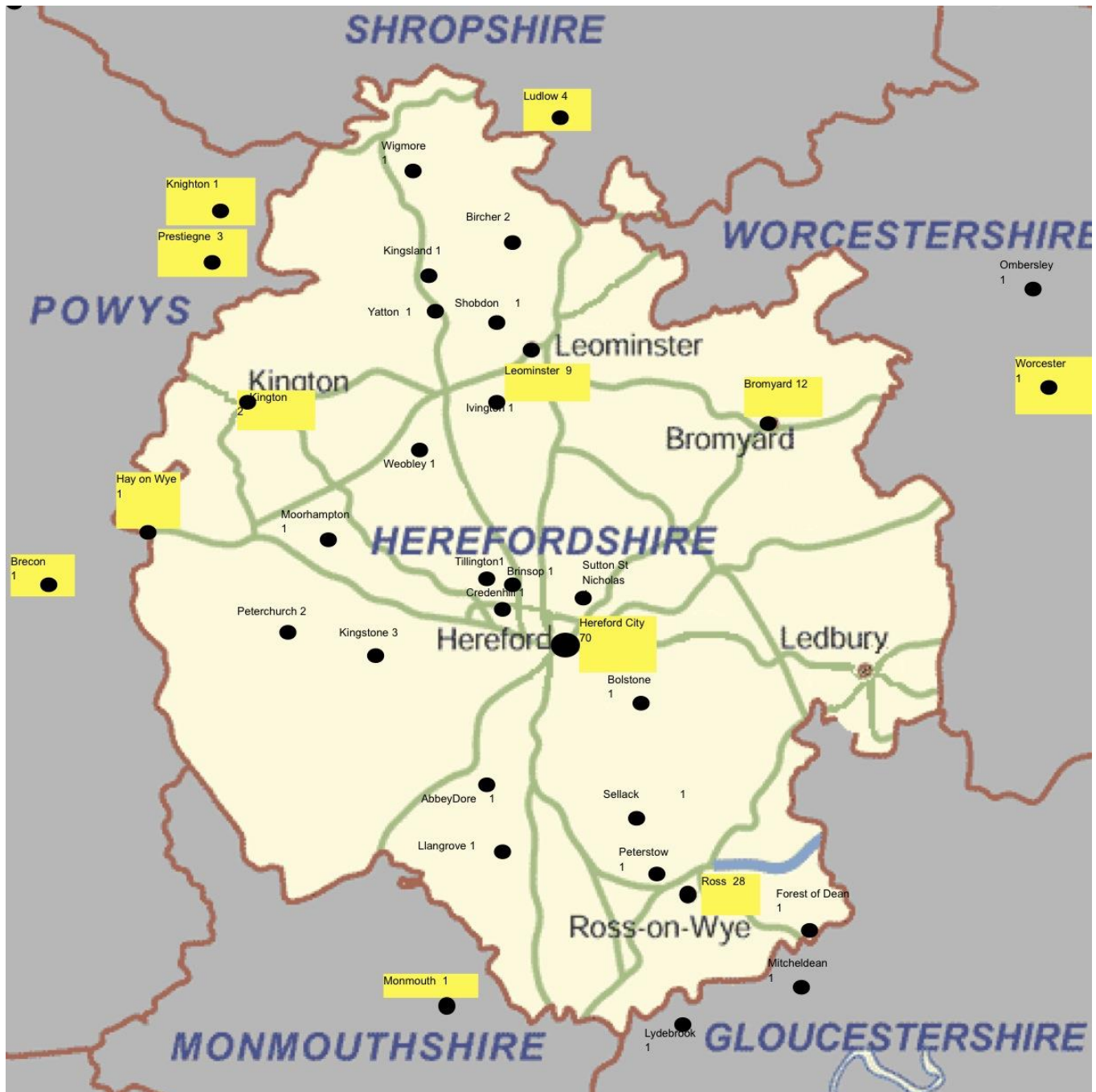
By centralising the provision in Herefordshire Young People from all over Herefordshire and neighbouring counties were able to access the project:

70 YP in Hereford City

24 YP in rural areas – villages or hamlets

52YP from Herefordshire market towns

13YP from 5 neighbouring counties



Structure of the Project

Livewire Sessions at the Castle Green

Weekly sessions were held:

- ▲ **Tuesday evenings 5.30-7.30 at the Castle Green Pavilion: *band development, music production and song-writing***, in partnership with Close House Youth Projects. These sessions were open access

and many young people attended after school sixth form closed as well as a group of young people from Close House. **48** Young People attended the Tuesday sessions.

- ▲ **Wednesday evenings 6.30-8.30 at the Castle Green Pavilion: *Hip Hop, Street Soul / RnB vocals, Djing and MCing*** These sessions were funded by the Music Pool's Children in Need project and several Looked After Children are supported to attend regularly as well as a number of individuals from Herefordshire Pupil Referral Units. **28** Young People attended the Wednesday sessions.

Livewire Central @ The Castle Green



3 week-long intensive development weeks, focussed on the production of original material in varied genres to culminate in a range of young people's gigs at The Jailhouse Nightclub, Nozstock Festival, Herefordshire College of Arts and Herefordshire Flavours Food Festival.



Above – Introductory workshop at the Castle Green – Livewire Central

Easter Livewire Central: **34** young people attended a week-long project and performance

10 of those young people had been attending outreach sessions

Summer Livewire Central: **54** young people attended a week-long project and performances

20 of those young people had been attending outreach sessions

Autumn Livewire Central: **45** young people attended a week-long project and performances

21 of those young people had been attending outreach sessions

15 of those young people found out about or were supported to attend through Close House Youth Projects

Livewire Outreach sessions around the County

Inclusion

Working with Young People in Challenging Circumstances and outreach settings

To ensure young people isolated geographically or at risk in any way could get involved we also delivered taster sessions and were funded to deliver regular workshops in certain settings to support the young people to gain the confidence and skills to take part in the open access inclusive Livewire provision.

We were funded to deliver outreach workshops at:

- **St Davids PRU, Hereford** – 3 Young People out of 12 went on to take part in the Castle Green Sessions once the outreach sessions had finished
- **The Priory PRU, Leominster** – 5 Young People out of 11 took part in either Livewire Central and/or the Castle Green Sessions in addition to their outreach sessions

We also delivered taster sessions in settings who could not match fund provision:

- **Aconbury PRU, Hereford** – 2 Young People took part in Livewire Central and the Castle Green Sessions
- **South Wye Girls Group, South Hereford** – 4 Young People out of 13 took part in Livewire Central and Castle Green sessions after their outreach sessions had finished
- **The Y-Zone, Ross on Wye** – none of the Young People from the Y-Zone got involved in Livewire due to a lack of transport and support.
- **Bromyard Library** – As above. (Further resources are clearly needed if we are to successfully develop outreach provision in the market towns which has clear progression routes. Many of the young people who live in these towns have no financial support for transport or cannot access transport)



The young people in these settings have to deal with difficult circumstances. Many of them are Looked after Children and several had substance misuse and alcohol dependency problems or were young offenders. Most of the young people were not engaging with education and for them to engage with the project was a massive success.

In total 86 out of 159 YP who took part in *Livewire* were experiencing Challenging Circumstances

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of young people on a child protection plan | 27 |
| Total number of young people from pupil referral units or excluded from school | 26 |
| Total number of young people who spoke English as a second language (Polish) | 2 |
| Total number of Looked After Young People / Young People in Care | 11 |
| Total number of young people with Mental Ill health | 11 |
| Total number of young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) | 15 |
| Total number of young people with a physical disability | 2 |
| Total number of young people with special education needs (SEN) | 16 |
| Total number of young people living in rurally isolated parts of the County | 88 |
| Total number of young carers | 1 |
| Total number of young offenders or young people known to the police | 5 |
| Total number of young people with substance misuse problems | 14 |
| Total number of young people living in economic deprivation | 67 |
| Total number of young people taking part in a new activity | 80 |
| Total number of young people taking part in more than one activity | 68 |
| Total number of young people who went on to education, training or volunteering | 23 |

It is important to note that this information is often sensitive and hard to represent accurately many of the other young people involved in the project may have been economically deprived or dealing with other extenuating circumstances unknown to the music leaders or agencies involved with the project.

Impact

In the case studies that follow you can read about how these young people felt that *Livewire* helped them to:

- Feel included (to fit in),
- To develop confidence and move on,
- To open up,
- To respect each other,
- To meet new people they wouldn't have met before and
- **To feel generally more positive**

Steve got involved in *Livewire* through attending outreach sessions at the Priory Pupil Referral unit. Steve expressed an interest in writing songs from the beginning and went on to immerse himself in all sorts of genres of music and play with lots of other young people during the Castle Green evening sessions and then in both the summer and autumn development weeks, here's what he had to say before the *Livewire* gig at the Jailhouse:



Above: Steve Busking at Herefordshire Flavours Food Festival as part of the Autumn Livewire

“Livewire has inspired me because it gave me a massive confidence boost, I never thought I would do well because I am really bad at confronting people when I am really showing the opposite as I am really quite shy. Performing is a big deal because I can overcome the shyness.”

Full interview *why did you decide to get involved in Livewire:* Because I really wanted to be in a band and I never knew I could fit in with the genre that I really adore - to have that chance is a great experience. (I will be performing) mostly thrash hard-core which is the genre I really really love because it's a whole different way of expressing how you feel. You feel free because it's your own songs. You can say whatever you want and spread the word.

What inspired you to write the songs? There's been a lot of things that I haven't really got off my chest through speaking to someone and I have found writing songs and singing it the way I want to and matching it with how I feel really helps.

Why is music important to you? It allows me to express how I feel on different days at different events, I can write about life in general in a different way.

How has Livewire changed your approach to Music, do you do anything differently? I never thought that I would be able to cooperate with a group of people as a band, and to be able to

communicate as a group. But I got a chance to meet new people that I get on with in *Livewire*. It feels nice to communicate with the members and of course with the listeners.

How is Livewire different to learning music at school? There's actually a choice, there's been a choice given to us about what we really want to focus on. *Livewire* has inspired me because it gave me a massive confidence boost, I never thought I would do well because I am really bad at confronting people when I am really showing the opposite as I am really quite shy. Performing is a big deal because I can overcome the shyness.

How have you found working alongside the musicians on the project? It's good to hear what they have experienced and to have them share it with us. It's very helpful because we get different pointers and different points of view from lots of different artists.

How do you feel about performing now, tonight? I feel great and I can't wait. During *Livewire* in the summer it's was the first time I performed in front of people playing what I really love and being able to share it with others that can relate, the rush was just amazing.

Is there anything in particular you have learnt this year? How to work with people, sometimes people find it hard to all communicate and listen and understand each other especially when there is 4 or 5 people and there's been a lot of listening as part of *Livewire*

Do you feel motivated now to write more of your own music? Of course, yes, I am more confident. Before I started writing quite a lot of heavy stuff I preferred playing acoustic and country and *Livewire* showed me you don't have to really stick to one genre, you can do anything you want.

What's been the best aspect of Livewire? Performing with everyone. Seeing everyone expressing themselves and sharing their talents, there's a lot of talented people in *Livewire* which is great to see. It's just a great experience, I can't wait!!!



Above: Steve's band *We will Remain the unknown* Performing at the Jailhouse (Autumn Livewire)

Hope got involved in the project through meeting the project manager and one of the volunteers at Aconbury pupil referral unit. One of the staff at the PRU supported her to attend the HipHop sessions at the Castle Green on Wednesday evenings and Livewire Central during the summer and the autumn. She now has singing lessons at the PRU with one of the musicians from *Livewire*.

“Before I came here I never used to sing to anyone, I wouldn’t be able to do this if I was at home, or at school never. It’s given me a lot more confidence in myself.”



Full interview:

Why is music important to you? It helps me forget about things, my life, it takes me away from everything else.”

What are you performing at the gig? I'm performing a song called my life and I am doing harmonies in the Hip Hop section and I am doing my own song. I never used to like rap but now I really like it which is mainly because of Emileigh and Lofty, mainly because of the lyrical content because the people that write the lyrics have been through what I have been through and it helps me know I am not the only one.

How do you feel about performing now, tonight? I think it’s an adrenalin rush, when I do it I get scared but then afterwards I just want to do it again.



How have you found working as a group? Instead of coming to Livewire just to sing I have met so many new friends, it's so good and the instructors, they are so nice.

What’s been the best aspect of Livewire? Meeting new people and getting to perform with them. Everyone’s enjoying it there’s so much feedback about this it’s unreal.

Left: Hope singing backing vocals in Ali's solo song, Summer *Livewire* Central

Above: Hope singing her own solo song at the Jailhouse, Autumn *Livewire* Central

Emiliegh

Emiliegh is from London but now lives in a care home in Worcestershire, she has one to one support and has been involved in the Hip Hop sessions on Wednesdays and both the summer and Autumn *Livewire* Central weeks.



Above: Emiliegh and Lofty performing at the Jailhouse, Autumn *Livewire* central

Full interview: *Why did you get involved in Livewire how have you been involved?* I just love music, I think it helps me express myself; I have been doing the sessions with Lofty, writing and performing my own lyrics.

What are you performing at the gig tonight? We're doing a song called *My Life* and I'm doing a couple of raps in the Hip Hop section.

What inspired you to write the songs? My life, being in care and that, a variety of things in my life, Music helps me express my feelings, I feel like I have told people, even though I haven't exactly told them, it's gone down in lyrics.

How has Livewire changed your approach to Music? The music I used to listen to was always about drugs, crime and stuff like that but now I focus on writing my own lyrics about life and it's kind of changed, it's more about real lyrics now, some rappers chat about rubbish, last time when I was writing my own lyrics, they weren't proper lyrics but now I can write them really fast.

How have you found working alongside the musicians on the project? You don't have to be shy, you can just let it out. They have done a lot of gigs and they are really confident, and because they are older than us, it just shows that you can do music and it never gets old.

How do you feel about performing now, tonight? I'm really scared but I am excited as well though because people see you and they think wow she's this age, it's a way of expressing yourself and showing people what you can do and when people have seen me do what I can do they understand.

Do you think people respect you for doing it? Yes because it takes a lot of confidence to get up there and do it, singing and rapping.

How have you find working as a group? Well last *Livewire* it was just me and this *Livewire* I have been working with Hope, it makes it feel like everyone's not just looking at me, when you're performing. *I like that* you get new people coming in and you get to see what they can do.

Jessie travelled from Shropshire to take part in Livewire. She has been involved in music from a young age and has the support of her family. Jessie's experience demonstrates that there is something for everyone at *Livewire* and that young people of all backgrounds can get involved and excited about the project based on the quality of the experience and the music.



Above: Jessie performing at the Jailhouse; summer *Livewire* Central

Full interview *you travel a long way to get involved in Livewire. Why did you decide to involved?* My friends had been before and told me it was really good, I have been once before in the summer. I missed the gig at the college but did the gig at the Jailhouse. I really enjoyed meeting new people and writing songs and working with other people, just the whole idea of collaborating.

What are you performing at the gig tonight? I'm performing an original song I wrote this week, an acoustic cover, I'm playing guitar in another cover and singing in another one

What is the inspiration behind the songs you have written? I wrote about a friend who was quite over protective and didn't like me talking to other people. I'm away from all that now so it was nice to write a song looking back on it. It's a really good way to get your feelings out there.

Why is music important to you? I do a lot of music but I wasn't able to take it for my GCSE's, it's more of a hobby, I've been playing guitar since I was 7 and I was in a choir until it closed a few weeks ago. It's a good release , there's just so much variety.

How has Livewire changed your approach to Music, do you do anything differently? Yes, a lot. Before when I wrote songs they weren't very original, I could never think of words and they were too long and repetitive so I have learnt how to write more professionally, that's been really helpful. Because I learnt to play guitar first and I didn't sing it was always about the guitar, and I've started to use my voice more this time.

How is Livewire different to learning music at school? You're actually with other people who want to learn music, it's a very different environment, it's a good environment for music. The standard of the music is even better this time, mine has anyway.

How do you feel about performing now, tonight? Mixed feelings, I'm sort of nervous but then we've been working towards it all week so there's not much to be nervous about, it doesn't matter if you get something wrong anyway it's not the end of the world and it will be alright. I'm more relaxed than I used to be, I've done a lot more music this year and I feel much more relaxed about performing.

Are any of your friends and family coming to the gig? Yes, my parents and my brothers are coming, it will be different because they haven't heard me play with a band before so it'll be interesting. They're supportive of my music, especially my brothers, but they tell me when it sounds bad!

It's good to take in other people's ideas, I used to just do it my way and that was it, I didn't listen to other people and it's good because you know that the people helping you know what they are talking about. It's good to improve my standard by being exposed to all the different styles

Do you feel motivated now to write more of your own music? Yes I want to apply my new knowledge. It's satisfying knowing something is your own and you feel very proud, it's really good when people give you good feedback, people don't realise how nice it is when someone says to you "oh that was really good" After writing your own songs and performing them, it does make you feel more confident as a person. Especially with the song I wrote this time, it made me realise what I needed to do to. Writing songs really helps in bad situations

What's been the best aspect of Livewire? All the original music that comes out of it, it's really good to hear and being influenced by it because there is so much variety. There has been less people has been good this time so you can get more involved!



The Livewire Network

Working collaboratively with organisations across different sectors to achieve maximum impact

The *Livewire* project demonstrated that in order to create an inclusive positive environment for young people to work together formal, informal education and further education providers need to work collaboratively in order to meet the all-round needs of young people. A purely targeted approach to working with young people does not aid their social development and well-being and yet some young people need extra support before they are ready to work in an open environment. Working in partnership with all agencies working with young people is necessary to engender a sense of community, break down barriers and broaden young people's opportunities and achievements.

The Livewire Network was established at the beginning of the project to influence how music can be used to support young people across the board. The following organisations were consulted with and invited to attend network meetings throughout the year:

Herefordshire Music Hub – Encore Enterprises

Heads of Music in the county's secondary schools

Hereford Sixth Form College

Hereford College of Arts

Representatives from all 3 Pupil Referral Unit

Close House Youth Projects

SHYYP – Sheltered Housing for young people

The Rural Media Company

Integrated Support Workers (former Youth Workers – Before Herefordshire Councils Youth Service dissolved)

Friends of the Castle Green

The Jailhouse Night Club

The Music Pool aimed to initiate a forum to ensure that Young People had access to all music opportunities available and clarity of progression routes open to them. The Music Pool held 3 meetings throughout the year at the Courtyard Centre for the Arts and The Castle Green Pavilion.

Monthly bulletins aimed at raising awareness of music opportunities across the board in particular those which directly led into Livewire opportunities. Herefordshire College of Arts and Close House Youth Projects kept the team well informed about opportunities that could be included in the bulletins. Pupil Referral Units, voluntary organisations and support workers working with young people were helpful in circulating information about the projects and parents, young people and volunteers were key in distributing information via word of mouth and Facebook. Whilst 2 schools in Hereford city were open to promoting the projects and actively arranged taster sessions within the schools we found the music Hub, other secondary schools and institutions working within the classical traditions less communicative. During the consultation period we spoke to several organisations who said: "musical opportunities in the county for young people are not joined up." We hope that feeding this back to the music Hub may promote a more thorough information portal which has unfortunately been beyond the reach of the *Livewire* team's current available resources.



Key partners - Feedback

Further Education – Hereford College of Arts

17 students who are now studying at Hereford College of Arts (HCA) and at least 8 young people who attend their Saturday Morning Music School got involved with Livewire through a close working partnership. Several of the students started attending *Livewire* as participants and then got involved as volunteers - the relationship with HCA enabled a wider network of young people to get involved in the project and they provided us with access to their facilities during the Livewire Central week in the summer.

“At the Arts College we are increasingly working with students from PRUs, young offenders and children/young people at risk. We recently delivered a course which was under the auspices of Live and Learn which was in fact creative arts and music. I think anything that reaches out to these kids and gives them confidence is fantastic. One of the problems we have at College at the moment is that we have so many students and we haven't got the capacity to deliver workshops during the week. But we have started a Saturday Music Club which has been running quite successfully (and has just started again this term) which The Music Pool has been promoting through *Livewire* which is great because we really would like more people to come along. I think our great success story was when I realised that The Music Pool was doing the *Livewire* week when we were doing the Summer School up at College. We met up and decided not to reinvent the wheel and our collaboration was really really successful.

We had the bands practicing up at the college because we have got more studio space, and the individuals at the Castle Green. Then on the Friday afternoon we had this fantastic performance with 50 young people which was amazing. I think the fact that there were potentially students who would have fallen off the radar who were actually taking part is a credit to everybody. I think that our collaboration with The Music Pool is in its infancy and I am hoping that we can go on and develop it further. I see that it is mutually beneficial and I think we are looking at the same cohort of students - there is definitely no point in putting up the draw bridge. Hereford's too small and we need to reach out to all the students whether it is for music arts or performing arts. There are young people who have been coming to Summer School and Saturday Music Club for years and then suddenly to have that opportunity to play at the Jailhouse and Nozstock was just magic. 2 of those particular young people have now come on to the full time music course so it does work. But also I think for young people to take an interest even as a non-progression route, just as extra-curricular is so important. So I would love to see us carrying on working together, it is a good partnership.” (Maxine Williams)

Formal Education - The Priory PRU Leominster The structure and continuity has enabled the young people at the Priory to get something much more meaningful out of the *Livewire* project.

“The Priory Centre which is one of 2 Key Stage 4 PRU's, the other one is St David's. We take students from all over the county aged 14-16 but this year we are pushing the boundaries and we have year 12. We currently have 24 students on roll. Most of them do not have permanent exclusion now as schools try to avoid that but they are all students who might have a permanent exclusion or just haven't engaged in mainstream education. So most of them have really negative experience and they don't do music or anything in a very formal way.

We had a very long relationship with The Music Pool which predated my start at the Priory but this year we started with 2 boys who would come in on a Monday morning saying “listen to this miss” on their phone where they'd have spent a Friday evening in someone's bedroom where they were all rapping and it was pretty good really. They wouldn't do traditional music but that's what they were interested in – rap; so we got Lofty to come in to do rapping workshops with them. And then we hooked up with Nicky and thought maybe we could really encourage these boys to move their performances out of the bedroom into another arena. They were both really poor attenders and one of them was really close to going in to a secure unit because out of school hours he was getting in to mega trouble really. There was a real positive knock on from the rapping which was that they were writing lyrics and then using that in English so it started to make sense for them, this thing called education, and we could use The Music Pool's experiences to tie into other parts of the curriculum, so they kept up with their weekly rapping sessions and it was one of the big hook ins, it was one of the reasons I could get them to come to school really. We then thought let's try and support them to prepare for the *Livewire* event back in Easter and they did engage. It wasn't just that they had a purpose for their work in school with the rapping sessions but then they

were then spending their evenings a bit more positively and not doing the other things they might be doing in the evening, so I thought it was a fantastic link. We did work really hard with them and then they didn't turn up for the performance. One can put an awful lot of effort in and we talked about these two cases in particular. There's a huge leap for our kids from the bedroom to having the small group support, making it real and then taking that step to a bigger audience and it is really huge for some of them. Ok so those two boys couldn't make it, we nurture them over a long period of time, lots of different things and they still fall away at that point of challenge. That's about resilience really which is a key theme for all of us working with these kinds of young people.

But then we got a group of girls who were really into music again all of them bringing lots of very different issues, whereas the boys were acting and well known to the police the girls were much more withdrawn and perhaps on the self-harm side of things - with gender and sexuality issues. These girls wouldn't engage with counselling but music has been very therapeutic for them, so the writing of lyrics, the working in a group, the kind of gentleness of the model that Murf and Nicky give them makes it very safe for them. We started to do some sessions on an afternoon and this group of girls would play guitar and start singing and working from their own popular songs but it helped them move out from that. But that group has continued which has been very helpful as three of the girls have engaged very readily with coming down to the *Livewire* practices, and came two of them attended *Livewire Central*.

So, in terms of the safety of these students it's been immensely effective, because we know where they are and they are engaging positively with activities. And that's continued, we have one that's definitely up for continuing and we have another little group tagging on who we also think are going to be performers. That's quite a success story, so we are hoping that like with the boys a longer run-in is probably what we need. It's obviously down to personalities as well but the group is supporting each other and one of the group said to me today "can you get me some forms, I really want to go" and knowing that Nicky and Murf are there and that she's already got those faces so she knows who to go to in a room of unfamiliar faces and that's really helpful. Plus there's the fact the group can take their skills into the wider forum, so the whole thing about performing in front of others is hugely important to them, it's all a work in progress and I really hope it continues." (Angela Tempany, head of The Priory PRU)

Voluntary Sector - Close House Youth Projects the *Livewire* project supports the informal education and development of the young people working with Close House.

"Basically I work at Close House. Close House is a Youth Centre that has been around for about 9 years. We've got a building in the city centre, a four room building where we open the door and let anyone in and let good things happen.

"Youth Work: is somewhere between parenting and education, it's not either of those! We are not trying to set up a school but we are also not trying to be people's mums and dads. The way that we learn things as we grow up, soft skills through parents and at home where – as you learn a lot of your formal skills at school, youth work tends to pendulum through these things. There are some things you need to be taught; how to use a computer, how to do maths, how to write a CV etc. There are some things you just need to experience to learn and that's where that informal education comes from, making opportunities where young people can learn for themselves. This works well in cases such as *Livewire* because they are:

- ⚡ Participative – people have to choose to be part of it – Young people come to Close House because they want to, because they have time on their hands and they need some support or help, the same with many youth projects and the lovely thing about *Livewire* is that people come because they want to and it's the same with counselling, the same with any kind of learning, if you want to achieve something then you generally will.
- ⚡ Informal Education – You just learn it because it happens around you. Sometimes you just need to rub up against other people to learn things.
- ⚡ Character-building – your character rather than your competencies. Your character is the bits that make you who you are, how gregarious you are, how creative, how imaginative, all those things that are inside you. If you have chosen to do something and you have learnt something then that builds your character so you will be more confident going in to new situations and happy to take on new challenges.

"We're open during the day 12-4 so you get a lot of people who go to college and they learn lots of things and that's all very well and good. But, you get some people who don't make it to college or don't stay in school and so

you miss out on the formal education side but also on those social, informal bits too, how not to annoy people, how to turn up for work on time, how to get up in the morning. One of the lovely things is that they come to Close House and learn some of that stuff but then when they move on from Close House and come in to a project like *Livewire* they have to learn to get on with people who might be a bit brighter, who might be a bit better at things but they have to learn how to work with them.

We've seen a couple of young people go from Close House, be part of *Livewire* and then go on to college. One lad has gone back to College this year which is absolutely fantastic because when he came to Close House three years ago he was adamant he was never ever going to college again and it is through that experience and having a lot of support through that experience that he has gone back to college. We had 2 young people that went back to college but then there are also just lots of young people that are just keen to go out and do stuff which is great because at the moment it's really hard for young people to find the ambition and impetus to go out and do things because the world is just saying there are no jobs, there are no prospects, you'll never get a house and a mortgage. But we're seeing people going out and doing things and that's only because of wonderful projects like *Livewire* and Close House." (Ben Lea, director of Close House Youth Projects)

Lessons learnt and areas for further development

This year *Livewire* was attended by more hard-to-reach young people than ever before. Resources were stretched and music leaders were working with more young people than ever before. It was recognised on evaluating the project that some young people need further support in attending the *Livewire* weeks from other agencies.

Further training and development opportunities also need to be made available to the staff working on the project as well as further input from volunteers and qualified youth workers.

Working in buildings such as the Castle Green Pavilion and the Jailhouse nightclub which do not have the right systems in place for working with young people involved more regulation in safeguarding those involved in the project. Staff struggled to ensure these aspects of the project were covered and required more non-music leader staff. In this area other partner organisations referring young people to the project may need to commit more resources to the practical running of the project or the project needs further funding.

Building a relationship with young people takes time and patience. After a year of consistent delivery we have developed a strong community of motivated young people. Many of the young people who access the project are in a very important period of transition and sustaining the support network available to them through *Livewire* is really important, for some of those young people it is the only support network available to them and it prevents them from falling out of the system.

Recommendations for the future

Review induction / training requirements for musicians / work shop leaders and volunteers - DBS check, safeguarding and health and safety training /First Aid courses (These could be accessed through the partnerships with the educational establishments?)

To identify funds and resources with the Music Hub and to address the lack of a mechanism to connect the various musical activities available

To respond to the artists' aim in making *Livewire* a social enterprise - creating a label to support the professional development of young people who want to take the next step with music and to expose the diverse talents that young people have to offer. This would involve investment in recording projects to follow on from the current *Livewire* model.

To continue to work in partnership with other organisations to develop more regular performances for the young people to attend – to enable young people to develop the skills to promote and market the events themselves and raise income for the project on a local level. Interested partners: Close House, HCA, a new community group called Hereford Live, and the Friends of the Castle Green. *"It's important to get all those people together, we need regular young person's gigs to keep everyone's motivation up and bring people together"*

To assert the benefits of Musical Inclusion as fundamentally important in education and across the Music Hub as a whole. Discuss investment in the development of the inclusion model to increase the number of young people engaging with the Hub as a whole – rather than the project being seen as an add-on.

Future challenges

Sustaining the Livewire model requires local and national support, both financially and in the practical delivery of the project. Projects such as *Livewire* face huge challenges in the future:

- There is no longer a statutory youth service in Herefordshire which can support the delivery of open access provision like *Livewire* and so the voluntary sector are at capacity trying to fulfil this gap.
- Young people in Challenging Circumstances are not able to access the support they need from volunteers alone, and cannot always access support unless they are already in the social services system, but there are no preventative models to support the young people's involvement in the *Livewire* project
- We have seen an increase in the number of young people who cannot afford to pay to take part in extra-curricular activities over the year and this figure is likely to increase.
- Competition to fund activities for young people through external grant funding is increasingly competitive.
- The access to transport around the County continues to be a problem and whilst the *Livewire* project subsidised a number of young people's bus fares from rural locations this would not have been feasible on a large scale without a relevant funder.



Summary – The benefits of Musical Inclusion

Livewire has been developed through consultation with young people and organisations across the board. Here's a summary of the Key things that the Young People who worked with *Livewire* this year felt they had gained through an inclusive approach to music making:

Skills “I have grown in confidence knowing I can pick up a new skill again, *Livewire* is different because you can take your time with it, understand the chords and understand the instrument better, it's good to work with different people”

Motivation “I've been doing song-writing and performing and I am singing with my band which is really awesome. It's really good to have something to look forward to”

Meeting new people “it's something really interesting for lots of different people to do and you get to meet loads of different people. It's really awesome because people listen to the music when you are here.



Self-expression “Sometimes your feelings can get consumed within yourself, the only way to let it out is to write it down and put it out in a song so the songs we have written are our emotions. It feels so much better to get them out.

Working in a group “It's really good to work in a group because people give out different ideas and you can put those ideas together”

Achieving “Nozstock was big for us, the biggest audience we've had. We hadn't really done many gigs and it was a massive jump”



Support “There's quite a lot of free will but at the same time it's quite guided and helpful”

Ambition “We're looking to build up a bit of money to record our EP and do more gigs”

Communication “Communication was pretty good and crucial and that's why I think our band are going to stick together, hopefully anyway”

Exposure “The Jailhouse is a bigger venue for us, it's busy, further away from home, good publicity”



Choice “We actually get to choose what we want to do”

New styles of music “I've done heavy, alternative, acoustic, “normal”, rap, HipHop, Ukelele with drum machines, there's been lots of variety”

Confidence “It gave me confidence and gave me more techniques on my DJ-ing. You get to make new friends which will last a lifetime. I'd recommend it to anyone”



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Report written by Nicky Jaques, Youth Music Project Manager October 2012 – November 2013