



VOCAL BEATS

Year 2 Interim Report 2018-19

Conni Rosewarne, Project Assistant



Background:

Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust

Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust is the UK's largest specialist centre for the treatment of heart and lung disease. Working from two sites, Royal Brompton Hospital in Chelsea, London, and Harefield Hospital, near Uxbridge, the Trust has an international reputation for the expertise of its staff, high standard of care and research success. Experts at the Trust treat patients from all age groups who have heart and lung conditions, providing some of the most complex surgery and sophisticated treatments available anywhere in the world

Rose Ward & Paediatric Intensive Care Unit

The paediatric department, Rose Ward, is a national referral centre for children, offering a full range of diagnostic and surgical interventions from prenatal stage to 16-year olds. Hospitalised children face a myriad of complex challenges which can be further affected by prolonged and/or recurrent stays in a hospital.

The Trust's Play Service supports patients and their families during their stay. They aim to ensure that every young person has the best possible hospital experience, offering a range of fun and social activities in the Play Room/by the bedside. In addition, the Chelsea Community Hospital School provides the National Curriculum for all young people at the Trust.

rb&hArts

rb&hArts is delivered through Royal Brompton & Harefield Hospitals Charity with 3.6 (FTE) staff members. It is charitably funded to bring the benefits of the arts to support in and outpatients and the local communities surrounding each hospital. The arts programme aims to increase levels of wellbeing, enhance the patient experience and improve the healthcare estate through the arts. It first began in 2002 and now, in a typical year, runs over 500 interventions across arts, music, and participatory arts working with 30 artists recording over 6,500 participants. The core creative programme includes 3 weekly Singing for

Breathing workshops for older people living with COPD; 2 musicians in residence playing for adults providing 6 hours of live music per week, temporary exhibitions and Crafternoons which offer participatory arts and crafts workshops 10 hours per month.



Singing for Breathing at Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust

(Photo courtesy of Alex Orrow)



Two young Vocal Beats participants play glockenspiel and kalimba while singing along to Christmas songs in the Rose Ward play room

About Vocal Beats

Providing singing and music workshops to children and young people with complex heart and lung conditions, this project aims to increase personal resilience, confidence and self-expression

Vocal Beats supports children and young people (0-25 years old) at Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust through music, to enhance patient experience, promote wellbeing, increase confidence and develop music-skills. As a specialist Trust, RBHT treats children from across the UK living with the most rare/complex cardio-thoracic conditions, treating approximately 2,200 young inpatients annually.

Our young patients face an array of complex health challenges and/or life-limiting conditions including congenital heart disease and cystic fibrosis, often managing extensive treatment regimes. The impact of multiple and/or long-term hospital admissions (especially if far from home) can negatively impact upon their levels of isolation, anxiety and self-determination. Being in hospital often creates a feeling of “missing out” which in turn impacts on educational, psychological, social, familial and cultural outcomes.

Vocal Beats is a successful three-year singing, music-making and beatboxing project delivered by Heather McClelland, Bellatrix, MC Zani and Grace Savage. With a flexible design, it responds to individual patient-need, offering personalised creative music engagement for any/all young musicians during their stay. Since starting the project in 2015 we have worked with over 600 children aged 0-16 years.

During 2018-19, we expanded the project to include young people aged 17-25 years, with facilitators Heather McClelland and Stac Dowdeswell offering 1-2-1 vocal coaching sessions for cystic fibrosis and transplant patients respectively for six hours a week.

We have recently received a grant from the Co-op Building Connections Fund to develop an online strand of this programme for patients with chronic/long-term conditions to bridge the gap between hospital and home.

The project is generously funded by BBC Children in Need, Youth Music, BUPA, Co-op Building Connections Fund and The Brompton Fountain.

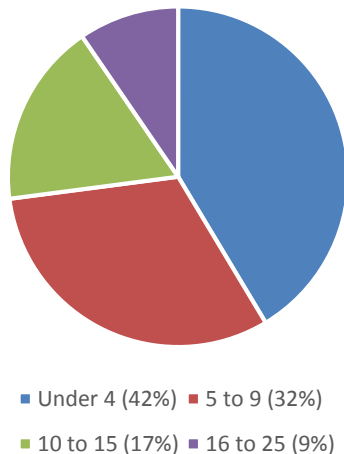


The sibling of a hospitalised child joins in with singing, dancing and playing instruments on the ward

Participants

Vocal Beats has supported 310 children and young people aged 0-25 years old during between June 2018 and March 2019. Activity on the adult wards (for 17-25 year olds) began in September 2018.

Participants by Age



Gender:

- 52% Female
- 46% Male
- 2% Gender unknown

When collecting data, we aim to be sensitive to participant's circumstances and the relationship of trust that has been built. Asking for personal details can feel intrusive and an additional burden for patients in a clinical context. It means that our records regarding levels of diversity and disability are limited. However, the data currently collated shows:

- 15% of participants are from BAME communities
- 6% of participants have additional needs alongside their conditions including Downs syndrome, learning and physical disability

Achievements in 2018-19

"Vocal Beats has boosted my confidence in singing and allowed me to come out of my shell a bit more during my stay. Reminded me of why I love music" – patient, age 14.

[Video: Caitlyn performing 'Riptide' on ukulele from her hospital bed, accompanied by beatboxer Bellatrix](#)

Now in its third year, Vocal Beats facilitators have observed, and our impact measures show, that real musical progression and development has been achieved in many patients who have experienced multiple admissions over the duration of the project.

Strong relationships of trust between music leaders and young people have developed, allowing repertoire and activities to evolve with participants as their interests change with age. Young people now expect to see the Vocal Beats team during their admission, and will often return to hospital with requests for songs, instruments or beatboxing patterns they have been practicing at home, and even material for song-writing. During the past 10 months our facilitators have lead 535 1-2-1 music sessions on the ward for children aged 0-16 years, 52% of which were re-admitted or long-term patients, who were able to develop their music-making as a result.



Rb&hArts' partnership with the UK Ukulele Kids Company means musicians can gift ukuleles to participants who show a real interest in learning to play. This means participants can bring their ukuleles with them for more lessons when they are re-admitted to hospital.

[Video: Ben singing and playing ukulele with Heather and Bellatrix on the ward](#)

Vocal Beats creates a strong sense of community spirit on wards. Creative music activities have become further integrated into life at the Trust with parents and staff alike often taking active roles in project delivery. Facilitators ran music sessions as part of Brompton Baby Social Club (BBSC) – a baby group run by nurses providing opportunities to learn, grow, develop and socialise in 'non-clinical' settings, thereby

bridging the gap between hospital and home. The club was recognised by the Care Quality Commission who graded the paediatric department 'Outstanding', citing the culture of the department for its success. The BBSC lead Rebecca McKeever (also Deputy Sister for Paediatric High Dependency Unit) credited Vocal Beats, saying:

“Your team is such an amazing and integral part of our project. As a senior nurse with experience in other London hospitals I can definitely say what a special and incredible service you provide, a huge contribution towards the holistic care the NHS is striving for!”



Evaluation data has shown that Vocal Beats provides positive distraction from clinical settings and an opportunity for family time on the ward

[Heather and Stac singing for baby: https://youtu.be/1OuqoD0nITU](https://youtu.be/1OuqoD0nITU)

Evaluation

Evaluation and documentation is undertaken by Project Co-ordinator Conni Rosewarne who joins the Vocal Beats musicians on wards two afternoons a week thanks to contributions from BBC Children in Need.

Outcomes and Methods for Data Collection

Through music, Vocal Beats aims to support young people with the following objectives:

1. Improve levels of wellbeing
2. Increase levels of music skills
3. Increase levels of confidence
4. Enhance the patient experience/community spirit on Rose Ward

r&hArts used a variety of evaluation methods to capture outcomes including Arts Observation Scales (ArtsObS), online surveys, hand-written comment slips from young people, guardians and clinicians, case studies as well as photography & film.

The ArtsObS, devised by Dr Daisy Fancourt, is a validated template designed to capture observations of music interventions to create both quantitative and qualitative data. This includes:

- Observed before-and-after scales for levels of happiness, relaxation and distraction for groups of patients, families and staff
- Scoring system for overall impact on the ward
- Recording of sessions including repertoire and techniques used by artists
- Recording of significant verbatim comments from participants during or following the music intervention, both positive and negative
- Anecdotes of what happened in the session and how participants responded and what the impact of the session was

Musicians and the Project Co-ordinator captured data at the end of every session throughout the delivery period. Data was collated and analysed throughout the year.

Impact

44 ArtsObs scales and case studies (Fancourt, 2017) collected this year have so far shown:

- Based on before/after scales, on average each participant's individual mood was observed to improve by 26%
- 70% of ArtsObs showed participants **learning new musical skills**
- 90% of ArtsObs observed patients feeling more **relaxed** after music intervention
- 90% of ArtsObs observed patients **distracted** from hospital settings



Heather McClelland sings nursery rhymes with baby

35 online participant surveys measuring happiness, distraction and musical development; surveys for participants under the age of 6 were completed by observer, surveys for 6+ years were self-reported (this is done using iPads). There is currently a low number of completed surveys as half way through the year it was concluded that Youth Music scales were not producing effective data due to the structure of our project. Our new adapted surveys have so far shown:

- 70% of participants aged 6-10 reported that taking part in Vocal Beats made them feel **happier**
- 71% of children aged 3-5 show **active responses to music being performed**, from **intelligent listening** to **energetic dancing**
- 85% of babies aged 0-2 appear to experience **positive shared moments with family** members that is **fun, comforting, and/or distraction**

110 handwritten comments from participants, family members and hospital staff including:

- 85 comments reporting music had made **patients and families feel happier**
- 44 comments reported patients learning a **new skill**
- 43 comments reported music being a **positive distraction** in a hospital environment.

“My son has really enjoyed his music experiences here at Brompton but especially his learning about beatboxing. The musicians have been brilliant. Lovely with children and inspiring” – parent



Bellatrix and MC Zani lead a bed-side beatbox session

Case Study: Lucy's Story

Lucy* is a 15-year-old girl living with cystic fibrosis and several other acute health conditions. She is also bereaved, having lost both of her parents and a sibling, and often has caring responsibilities for her younger siblings. She was admitted to Royal Brompton Hospital for two-weeks during which she participated in four Vocal Beats sessions. Lucy is also school-friends with another patient who has engaged significantly with Vocal Beats and they have been beatboxing together at home since participating in the project.

On Rose Ward Lucy was regularly in the ward playroom often spending time with a group of younger patients. Sometimes she would assume a carer role, looking after younger children. Zani (facilitator) gave a beatboxing demonstration, and she, along with all the little boys were staring wide eyed, looking at each other and grinning.

Lucy would calmly give the beatbox sounds a try occasionally laughing and saying, 'I can't do it' but continuing with gentle encouragement. She was reflective about her learning, discussing how she was getting used to using the sounds and developing from when she practiced them before.

Heather (facilitator) brought out a set of B-T-K cards (each letter representing a different sound, made by facilitators to practice building beats) to encourage her to experiment with creating different patterns. It was clear she was really paying attention and being mindful of her physiology as Zani and Heather discussed breath control, her sounds gaining power as a result. Ollie*, aged 12, then came in and wanted to join in. As they both have CF they were kept over 6 feet apart, at different ends of the room, each with their own set of cards.

They experimented with creating beatbox tracks and performed to each other, receiving kind, non-comparative feedback - both gaining power and rhythm very quickly. They were given beatboxing homework sheets which both gladly took away with them. As we left Lucy she was bent over her desk filling out her homework sheet with new beats to try. She was really engaged and it felt positive that the session had taken her

* Names of participants in this case study have been changed to ensure anonymity.

attention away from being a carer and into being creative and playful whilst learning a new skill.

We had more sessions with her and each time she had noticeably been practicing, concentrating on what she was doing and the feedback Zani gave her. We gave her a list of online resources (YouTube videos, etc) she could look at to continue learning at home.

“Vocal Beats [was] very enjoyable and supported me. They helped me and they took the time, that's what I like about them and they are very kind”

– Lucy, age 15.



Heather sings with Jack who created his own music festival in the Rose Ward play room with the help of the Play Team

What We've Learned and Looking to the Year Ahead

Young People and Transition to Adult Services

It is clear there is a need for participatory creative music-making opportunities for young people beyond Rose Ward and PICU (where Vocal Beats has been placed so far) and onto adult wards where

patients aged 16-25 with chronic or life-limiting conditions are transferred.

Transition can be an alienating experience for young patients with chronic, long-term, or life-limiting conditions, and can feel very detached from their previous hospital experience. It often comes at a time of wider cultural and developmental changes that lead them into adulthood (McDonagh and Viner, 2006). Evidence suggests that this places young people with long-term conditions at greater risk of isolation and poor mental health (Edwards, 2009; Patten and Viner, 2007).

Vocal Beats has been expanded in recent months to include 17-25 year olds at the Trust; currently musicians are delivering 1-2-1 sessions for cystic fibrosis patients on Foulis Ward and for transplant patients on Rowan Ward.



Stac Dowdeswell leads singing sessions for 17-25 year olds at Harefield Hospital

Vocal Beats Online

A peer-lead and co-produced approach offers a methodology to empower young people and deliver outcomes of importance to them. We will implement this into the expansion of Vocal Beats by recruiting five young ambassadors aged 13-25 years old to co-produce Vocal Beats

Online; delivering music workshops online to bridge the gap between hospital and home, acting as a creative social space for young people living with chronic/long-term cardiothoracic conditions.

Sharing Practice

This year we have presented our work at:

- The National Association for Musicians in Healthcare hosted by Alder Hey Hospital, Liverpool.
- Box Con Festival, part of the UK Beatbox Championships at Battersea Arts Centre.
- A shared practice meeting for practitioners working with respiratory patients including physiotherapists, musicians, singing for lung health practitioners and music therapists, hosted by rb&hArts.

Members of our team have also written and published blogs from their personal perspectives on the Youth Music Network.



Conni Rosewarne and Heather McClelland present Vocal Beats at Box Con Weekender, part of the UK Beatbox Championships

(Photo courtesy of the UK Beatbox Championships)

We are currently delivering a music mentoring programme for young musicians wishing to learn the skills to work in complex health settings.

Five musicians with diverse skills are shadowing our resident artists to gain experience in reflective music practice in healthcare settings. We received 27 applications for these posts, demonstrating demand for more entry level opportunities within the sector.

A full report on the Vocal Beats project will be available on Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust website in summer 2019.

We are very grateful to the Rose Ward Play Team and all paediatric staff at Royal Brompton Hospital for their continued support of Vocal Beats.

Thank you to BBC Children in Need, The Brompton Fountain, Youth Music, Co-op Building Connections Fund, BUPA and UK Ukulele Kids Company, without whom this work would not be possible.