# ATTUNED TO ENGAGEMENT:

## THE EFFECTS OF A MUSIC MENTORING PROGRAMME ON THE AGENCY AND MUSICAL ABILITY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

PAPER TWO

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# ABSTRACT

This paper presents final quantitative findings from phase two of the Youth Music Mentors (YMM) Programme. Evaluation tools were embedded in the programme and participants were asked to complete self-assessment scales of musical ability, knowledge of music opportunities and three measures of agency (feeling respected, able, and in control) at the beginning and end of the project. Paired sample tests indicated a significant increase across all scales, with particularly strong effects observed for increased musical ability, knowledge of musical opportunities and a combined measure of agency. All results are considered in the context of the theoretical design of the programme, (i.e. increasing agency and encouraging greater levels of active citizenship amongst disengaged children and young people through music mentoring). These findings suggest the aims of the programme were convincingly achieved, whilst reiterating the need for continued research investigating the effects of mentoring programmes, and music mentoring specifically. This quantitative based paper is intended to complement the full qualitative external evaluation conducted by Deane et al. and published by Youth Music in May 2011.

# INTRODUCTION

In the autumn of 2006, Youth Music was invited to submit a proposal for a music mentoring programme as part of the government's Respect Agenda. The bid was successful, securing £666,324 via the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to manage and deliver a programme of activity between 2006 and 2008. In 2008, Youth Music was successful at securing a further £999,000 to deliver phase two of the music mentoring programme, from April 2008 to March 2011. This paper presents findings based on the quantitative evaluation tool from phase two of the Youth Music Mentors (YMM) programme (April 2008 - March 2011).

Youth Music also commissioned a team of external consultants to evaluate the programme, whose final report was submitted in April 2011 (Deane, Hunter and Mullen, 2011). This wider evaluation is based on a qualitative methodology; however the focus of the current paper is to present the findings from a quantitative evaluation tool, embedded in the programme and analysed by Youth Music. The extent to which the findings in each paper complement each other is considered throughout the Deane et al. report and in the Discussion section of the current paper.

The aim of the Youth Music Mentors programme was to improve the life chances of young people in challenging circumstances[1] through music based mentoring. The programme was therefore structured around five main objectives:

- To deliver high quality music based mentoring provision for young people in challenging circumstances
- To provide links to high quality music making experiences
- To engage and train inspirational music mentors appropriate to the needs of the participants
- To provide young people with opportunities that will develop their resilience, social and emotional skills, and enable them to lead successful and fulfilling lives
- To help motivate and prepare young people for routes into education, employment or training

For phase two Youth Music identified 14 delivery organisations for the programme, these were; Artworks (Bradford), Audio Active (Brighton), Forest of Dean Music Makers (Forest of Dean), Future Projects (Norwich), GMMAZ (Manchester), Leeds City Council (Leeds), Music 4U (Hull), Nottingham Music Service (Nottingham), Plymouth Music Zone (Plymouth), REMIX (Bristol), Sound Connections (London) Sound Futures (Birmingham), Sound it Out (Birmingham), and Southend YMCA (Southend).

Sound Connections in London subcontracted a further eight delivery partners, these were; Drake Music (Hackney 1), Eclectic Productions (Southwark 1), First Musical Academy (Newham 1), Fluent Music (Tower Hamlets 2), Futureversity (Tower Hamlets 1), Hoxton Hall (Hackney 2), Key Changes (Camden), Kinetika Bloco (Southwark 2) and Rolling Sound (Hackney 3 and Newham 2).

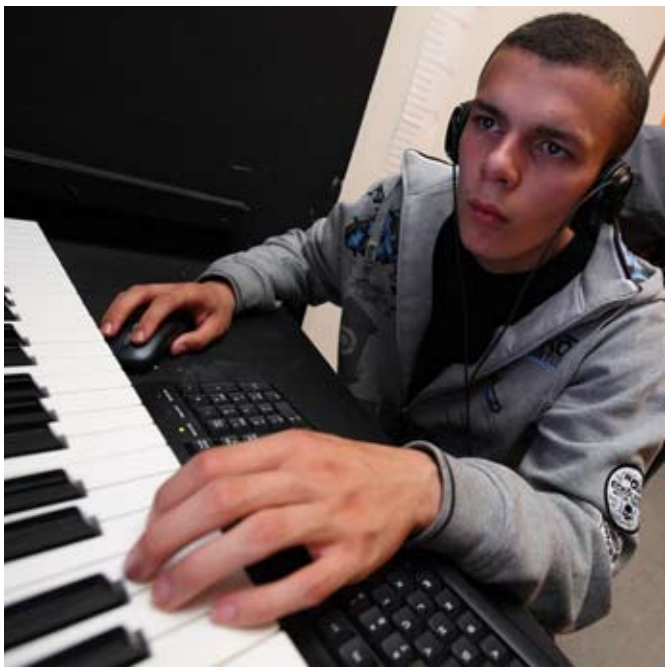
Music-based mentoring uses music as the common ground to develop a relationship with a mentee in order to support them in making significant changes in knowledge, behaviour and thinking. Through this process, the music mentor supports the individual to achieve on a musical as well as social level. Mentoring is goal focused and music mentors use a personal learning plan in order to set and monitor



[1] Children and young people (CYP) in challenging circumstances are defined by Youth Music as those who are often marginalised by society, vulnerable, may be hard to reach, or have fewer opportunities.

musical and personal goals with their mentees. The research and evaluation processes were embedded in the project as a framework around which to reflect on progress as part of the mentoring work. A full discussion of the range of approaches adopted in the programme is provided by Deane et al. (2011)

Each delivery partner aimed to identify twenty young people in challenging circumstances per year to benefit from mentoring for a minimum of 10 sessions within a music-making environment. The mentoring was aimed at children and young people aged 11 to 25 who required particular support and was not intended simply as extra musical tuition.



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# MENTORING

Mentoring is a well established practice across many fields and disciplines. The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation[2] currently reach over 3,500 mentoring and befriending projects throughout England, across a huge variety of contexts, with a number of different aims.

Mentoring amongst young people in challenging circumstances has been established for some time. The Conservative government developed a national youth mentoring scheme in 1993 (the Mentoring Action Plan as part of the Youthstart initiative), and mentoring was at the heart of the Labour administration's social policy throughout the 2000s (the establishment of the Social Exclusion Unit within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 1999 highlighted a commitment to youth exclusion issues and advocated mentoring as a key method in tackling the issue).

Whilst mentoring has been identified by government as a useful tool in dealing with social exclusion and encouraging participation amongst children and young people, it is also acknowledged that the evidence base assessing the effects of mentoring projects is mixed. The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation commissioned an evidence review in 2007 which concluded that the most effective mentoring schemes are those that have a strong theoretical foundation and are clear about the changes they are hoping to achieve, whilst also recognising the potential limitations of mentoring schemes (Philip and Spratt, 2007). Other key findings from the review included:

- There are a wide variety of approaches to mentoring, often within the same project or programme, therefore the extent to which children and young people are receiving the same intervention should be acknowledged
- There is limited evidence that mentoring schemes reduce re-offending rates or likelihood of offending amongst children and young people in the youth justice system
- Results are stronger that mentoring can encourage participation in employment and training through clearer access routes and changes in attitude
- There is some evidence that mentoring improves reintegration and developing social capital but this is strongest where there is additional work to improve the structural conditions experienced by children and young people
- Mentoring schemes are more effective when participation is voluntary rather than coercive
- Mentoring is generally not linear, it shifts and changes throughout the process of engagement. Positive and negative outcomes can be achieved at different stages of the process
- Mentoring schemes focusing on younger children to improve educational achievement are not conclusively effective
- There is evidence that mentoring can improve attitude and behaviour and lead to greater civic involvement where these opportunities are provided

This last finding is particularly relevant to the current paper. Youth Music Mentors was developed in response to the Labour administration's Respect Agenda, launched in 2006. The particular items from



[2] The national organisation representing mentoring in England

the Respect Agenda that Youth Music Mentors responded to were those relating to engaging children and young people in positive activities, improving attitudes to education, training and employment, and strengthening communities by increasing engagement and responsibility.

Whilst the Respect Agenda and the Social Exclusion Unit were both discarded by Labour towards the end of their administration, the specific agenda items mentioned above remain central to the current Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition's social policy, particularly 'Big Society' ideology. Civic responsibility and engagement are at the core of the Big Society agenda. Launching the initiative in July 2010, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, stated that central to the Big Society is creating a climate that allows people to "feel both free and powerful enough to help themselves and their own communities"[3]. Localised schemes that encourage active participation and engagement amongst children and young people therefore reflect this ideology, at least in theory.

There is limited explicit theoretical foundation to the Big Society policy, however it clearly relates to a number of complementary ideas that have shaped social policy for young people in modern liberal democracies for some years. The suggestion that individuals should be empowered and able to take action that affects their local communities is central to the discourse of the 'Third Way' which has been analysed and critiqued for some time (notably by Giddens (1998) and Levitas (1998)). The greatest departure of the Big Society from Third Way ideology is the decreased involvement of the state in financially supporting community schemes from a centralised source (whether regionally or nationally), and instead looking for additional assistance to be provided by philanthropy, volunteers and the private sector.

Despite the changing source of funds for projects looking to increase community engagement, the fundamental needs of children and young people to be able to engage in their communities remains the same. Active citizenship (where citizens are involved in their communities and societies and have an understanding of their associated responsibilities) is a pre-requisite for social action.

[3] http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2010/07/big-society-speech-53572

# ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Active citizenship has become a key political term in modern liberal democracies. Young people in particular are encouraged to be active citizens through formal education (in citizenship classes), and informally through schemes encouraging community participation and development. The basic theory of active citizenship is that in addition to their entitlement to a number of rights, citizens have an associated series of responsibilities to their communities and society (Marinetto, 2003). Social responsibility is about how individuals relate to the groups of people they regularly encounter (in a small sense this could be the immediate family or neighbours, on a broader scale it is about relating to communities, or thinking about how individual action will impact on society at large). The most common understanding of active citizenship therefore suggests that rights should only be earned through citizens being socially responsible.

A common perception is that responsibilities associated with citizenship are mainly political; that by encouraging young people to think about social issues they are more likely to engage in the political process and vote. Whilst engagement in local and national party politics may be one way in which young people choose to be active, responsibilities should be considered as active involvement in any social setting. Whether active citizenship takes the form of establishing a local music workshop, attending a local music workshop, or attending a performance, the 'active' part comes from the motivation to do something, to be involved. People cannot be actively responsible unless they are motivated to be active in the first place.

Many studies have illustrated how positive, self-determined action has benefits for individuals' psychological well-being and social development (Ryan and Deci, 2000), but motivation is the key factor in people taking action in the first instance. Active citizenship is as much about being motivated to take action and the opportunity for action, as it is about responsibility and resultant community development.

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), there are three conditions that facilitate self-motivated action. The first is that people feel able to take part in something (i.e. that any activity doesn't feel too difficult or insurmountable). The second is that there are mechanisms in place that allow or facilitate the activity. The third is that people feel they are choosing to take part and are in control of their involvement. If these three conditions are satisfied then people will be motivated to be active. Obviously there are some actions that do not require such self-motivation (e.g. when people are forced to do things by law or at the risk of punishment); however Ryan and Deci argue that self-motivated, or self-determined, action leads to psychological wellbeing and social development. This provides an explanation for how voluntary mentoring schemes can have positive results for attitude and behaviour, which are both cognitively linked to psychological wellbeing. Participating in a mentoring activity, therefore, can facilitate self-determined action and increased civic engagement.

This theory suggests that in order for children and young people to be active citizens, they must feel competent, be given opportunities to engage, and feel as if they are in control of their decisions. If this is the case, then social development is increased (which has a positive effect on communities and societies), and psychological wellbeing is improved (making the individual healthier and more likely to continue self-determined activity).

# MUSIC MAKING AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Hallam (2009) highlighted many personal and social benefits young people can get from music making. She cites studies such as Broh (2002) who showed that young people participating in musical activity in schools interacted more with their parents and teachers, and their parents interacted more with each other. This led to increases in self-esteem for the young people and increased motivation for action (i.e. increased musical activity). This increase in motivation also led to higher attainment in other academic subjects. Pitts (2007) showed how involvement in an extra-curricular musical performance increased young people's social networks, and sense of belonging. These young people dedicated themselves to the activity despite the constraints on their time, indicating that the benefits of their self-motivated actions were enough of an incentive to remain socially active.

Hallam also discusses how these outcomes can be particularly effective amongst groups of children and young people who are experiencing challenging circumstances. Spychiger et al. (1995) showed how increased music making in schools led to greater social cohesion, more positive attitudes about the self and others, and better social adjustment. The strongest differences were observed amongst those children deemed to be the least engaged and have the lowest academic ability. Costa-Giomi (2004) also showed how the benefits of piano tuition (i.e. improved self-awareness, increased self-esteem) were strongest for children from the poorest backgrounds.

These studies show how the time, effort, dedication and collaborative work required in active music making create a number of benefits for individuals and the people around them, particularly increased wellbeing and social engagement. The key factor underlining all of these observations is the motivation required to instigate and continue involvement in the musical activity. When children and young people start to feel better about themselves, increase their social networks and learn skills of use across their lives, they are more inclined to continue being involved in an activity; i.e. to be active citizens.

An important point to remember, as discussed above, is that children and young people can only become actively involved if they are able to do so. This comes from their perception of being able to get involved, networks and agencies that provide opportunities for them to get involved (or allow them to set up the structure to do so), and the feeling that they are in control of their involvement.

As highlighted by Philips and Spratt (2007), research on the effects of mentoring has shown that results are most strongly observed for positive attitude and behavioural change and increased engagement. The Youth Music Mentors programme was therefore designed to improve attitude, behaviour and engagement, demonstrated through observed changes in active citizenship and increased musical ability.

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# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The literature on mentoring, active citizenship and intrinsic motivation framed the evaluation design of the Youth Music Mentors programme. As stated above, the full qualitative evaluation reported in April 2011, therefore this paper will address three main research questions not fully covered by the external evaluation:

- What were the characteristics of the children and young people who participated in the programme?
- What effect has the Youth Music Mentors programme had on mentees' musical ability, behaviour, attitude and engagement?

# METHOD

Youth Music ensured that monitoring and evaluation tools were embedded from the beginning of phase two of the programme. All project co-ordinators and mentors were provided with tools to record baseline and follow-up data on mentees, along with training on how these tools should be administered.

The quantitative evaluation tool was entitled 'Track Record' and was designed to be completed either by the mentee directly, under the supervision of their mentor, or by the mentor on behalf of the mentee following discussion of the questions. The baseline Track Record tool consisted of seven basic profile questions (age, geographical location, sex, education/occupation status, ethnicity, musical preference, and music making status). There was also five measures of musical ability and agency, which were organised around a visual 'record' where mentees could mark their responses on a scale of 1(low) to 8 (high), these questions were:

- How do you rate your musical ability at the moment?
- How much do you know about opportunities to progress your music making?

And :
Thinking about your life in general, how much do you agree with the following statements:

- I feel listened to by the people around me
- I feel I make decisions that are good for me
- I feel like what I do and say will make a difference to my life

These three questions were designed to measure individual agency across key motivational factors (feeling respected, able and in control), as well as to be combined into one overall agency score. These questions aimed to cover the dimensions of control, autonomy and self-realisation that are central to discussions of agency (Cote and Levine, 2002). Whilst the limitations of this measure are clearly apparent, the tool was designed to have minimum impact on Mentor/Mentee relationships, hence the limited number of questions relating to dimensions of agency.
Mentors were instructed to administer a follow-up questionnaire at the end of the mentoring relationship which contained the same five measures of musical ability and agency described above, alongside a

further four questions designed to allow the mentees to reflect on additional skills they may have developed (co-operation, punctuality, respect and expression).

In addition to the questionnaire administered to the mentee, the mentor was asked to provide details of the mentee's 'At Risk' status (i.e. excluded from school, at risk of being excluded from school, in pupil referral unit, young offender, at risk of offending, learning disabled, mental health problems, physically disabled, sensory impaired, other special needs, refugee, traveller, looked after, economically disadvantaged).

An additional form was supplied to record details of mentees leaving the programme early. Mentors were asked to provide the reason for leaving, any perceived benefits to the mentee and a measure of the mentee's engagement in the programme.

Project coordinators were responsible for collating data and uploading it to an online collection service hosted by social research organisation 'Substance'. These data were then passed to Youth Music for analysis, which was conducted by the author using Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

This repeated measures design allows for baseline and follow-up scores to be compared and the 'distance travelled' to be measured. A control group was not identified for this research; therefore it is not possible to fully attribute observed changes directly to the mentoring intervention. Findings from the qualitative evaluation are presented by Deane et al. (2011) and provide additional evidence as to the effects that can be attributed to the mentoring intervention.

Whilst the theoretical background, objectives, training, suggested duration and delivery processes were encouraged to be the same in each delivery context, there were differences in how the programme was delivered between partners. This makes it difficult to control for environmental factors that may have altered the effects of the intervention between sites. Similarly, baseline and follow up data were only collected for around one third of mentees completing the programme. Whilst this sample is representative of the socio-demographic characteristics of the total population, the lack of engagement by some project partners in the quantitative evaluation should be taken into account and is discussed in the final section of this paper.

# FINDINGS

As of April 2011, data had been recorded for 818 individual mentees. The population can therefore be divided between Completers, (i.e. those who had attended at least 10 mentoring sessions (n=674)), and Early Leavers (those attending less that 10 mentoring sessions (n=144)), with repeated measures analysis provided for the mentees for whom baseline and follow up data were collected (n=280). A full discussion of Early Leavers is provided in Lonie (2010) and Deane et al. (2011) and is not replicated here other than to highlight that leaving the programme early was not necessarily a negative outcome and some success was achieved with many Early Leavers.

# PROFILE INFORMATION

Table 1. Profile Information

| Profile Variables | % | |
|---|---|---|
| | C (n=674) | EL (n=144) |
| **Sex** | | |
| Male | 68 | 69 |
| Female | 32 | 31 |
| **Age** | | |
| 11-15 | 16 | 16 |
| 16-18 | 50 | 51 |
| 19-30 | 34 | 33 |
| **Ethnicity** | | |
| Asian Bangladeshi | 2 | 1 |
| Asian Indian | 1 | 0 |
| Asian Pakistani | 7 | 1 |
| Other Asian | 1 | 1 |
| Black African | 11 | 8 |
| Black Caribbean | 12 | 5 |
| Other Black | 1 | 1 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed | 9 | 12 |
| Other | 1 | 1 |
| White British | 51 | 65 |
| White Other | 5 | 7 |
| **Education/Occupation Status** | | |
| At College | 15 | 17 |
| At Home | 21 | 38 |
| At School | 56 | 31 |
| At Work | 3 | 2 |
| Other | 5 | 10 |

Table 1 presents the profile information for Completers (C) and early leavers (EL):

Table 1 shows that the majority of Completers were male (68%) and that half of all Completers (50%) were aged between 16 and 18. Ethnicity is diverse compared to national averages with 51% of Completers being White British (compared to a national average of 16-19 year olds of around 76%). A large proportion of Completers (56%) were at school during their involvement in the programme, with another large proportion at home (21%). Statistical tests showed few differences between Completers and Early Leavers aside from ethnicity, where a larger proportion of Early Leavers were White British (65%) and education/ occupation status where a larger proportion of Early Leavers were mostly 'at home' (38%) and fewer at school (31%).

'At Risk' status was recorded for 502 of 818 mentees. It was unclear from the records provided where data were missing through non-collection or non-disclosure. Table 2 shows the percentages of mentee at risk status for those whom data were available (mentees could be recorded in more than one category):

## Table 2. At Risk Status

| At Risk Status | % | |
|---|---|---|
| | C (n=394) | EL (n=108) |
| At risk of being excluded from school | 17 | 20 |
| At risk of offending | 17 | 25 |
| Coping with mental ill-health | 16 | 11 |
| Economically disadvantaged | 55 | 69 |
| English as a second language | 1 | 3 |
| Excluded from school | 9 | 12 |
| In pupil referral unit | 4 | 7 |
| In sheltered accommodation | 3 | 6 |
| Learning disabled | 7 | 8 |
| Looked after | 5 | 12 |
| Not in education, employment or training | 9 | 16 |
| Other | 6 | 7 |
| Other special needs | 13 | 14 |
| Physically disabled | 4 | 2 |
| Refugee | 1 | 1 |
| Rurally isolated | 2 | 3 |
| Sensory impaired | 2 | 2 |
| Young offender | 7 | 15 |
| Young parent | 1 | 6 |

Table 2 shows that over half the mentees for whom 'At Risk' status was recorded were economically disadvantaged (55%), with other large proportions at risk of exclusion from school (17%), at risk of offending (17%) and coping with mental ill-health (16%). Relatively few participants were young parents, refugees, or had English as a second language. The main differences between Completers and Early Leavers was in the higher proportion of Early Leavers being recorded as economically disadvantaged (69%), looked after (12%), not in education, employment or training (16%) or young offenders (15%).

In order to reduce the dimensions, related categories were recoded into five broader 'risk' categories; Ability Challenges (physically disabled, sensory impaired, learning disabled, other special needs), Economically Disadvantaged, Educationally Excluded (at risk of exclusion, excluded, in pupil referral unit, not in education, employment or training), Criminal Risk (young offenders and at risk of offending) and Risk of Exclusion (rurally isolated, young parent, looked after, in sheltered accommodation, mental ill-health, refugee, English as a second language). The frequencies for these variables can be seen in Table 3 (as with the first calculation, participants can be counted in more than one category). The total number of recoded at risk cases remains the same (n=502).

## Table 3. Recoded At Risk Status

| Recoded At Risk Status | % | |
|---|---|---|
| | C (n=394) | EL (n=108) |
| Ability challenges | 21 | 21 |
| Criminal risk | 21 | 35 |
| Economically disadvantaged | 55 | 69 |
| Educationally excluded | 35 | 47 |
| Other | 6 | 7 |
| Risk of exclusion | 26 | 32 |

Table 3 shows that, for Completers, economically disadvantaged remains the largest category (55%), followed by those who are educationally excluded (35%) and those who are at risk of exclusion (26%). More Early Leavers were at risk than Completers, with higher proportions recorded across all broad categories, particularly those who were economically disadvantaged (69%) and those were educationally excluded (47%). Information on referral source was also collected and can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4 indicates that the largest proportion of referrals for Completers was other (27%) (Additional detail was not provided in monitoring forms). Followed by education agencies, mostly schools, (24%) and social care/voluntary agencies, largely Local Authority services (23%). This was broadly the same for Early Leavers apart from a smaller proportion being referred by family and friends (6% against Completers' 14%) and a larger proportion coming from social care/voluntary organisations (31%).

## Table 4. Referral Source

| Referral Source | % | |
|---|---|---|
| | C (n=377) | EL (n=101) |
| Criminal Justice Agency | 4 | 8 |
| Education Agency | 24 | 20 |
| Friends and Family/Carers | 14 | 6 |
| Self-Referral | 7 | 9 |
| Other | 27 | 25 |
| Social Care/Voluntary Organisation | 23 | 31 |
| Substance/Specialist Agency | 1 | 2 |

Paired sample t-tests were run in order to test for any significant change in musical ability or agency for those whom baseline and follow up data were collected (n=280). Paired sample t-tests are a way of investigating whether two results from the same sample are significantly different after an intervention, in this case the provision of music mentoring. The test indicates whether the difference is related to the intervention (the alternative hypothesis) or whether it is just down to chance (the null hypothesis). The results can be seen in Table 5 where the negative sign denotes a change away from the null hypothesis.

Table 5 shows a statistically significant improvement in scores for musical ability, knowledge of musical opportunities, and separate and combined measures of agency. The strongest effect size was for knowledge of musical opportunities (r=0.70), followed by self-assessed musical ability (r=0.69). The combined score for overall agency had a moderate to large effect size (r=0.57), as did the items for feeling listened to (r=0.54) and feeling like I make a difference (r=0.52), a smaller, though still significant effect size[4] was recorded for feeling I make good decisions (r=0.44). These changes in mean scores are also represented graphically in figure 1.

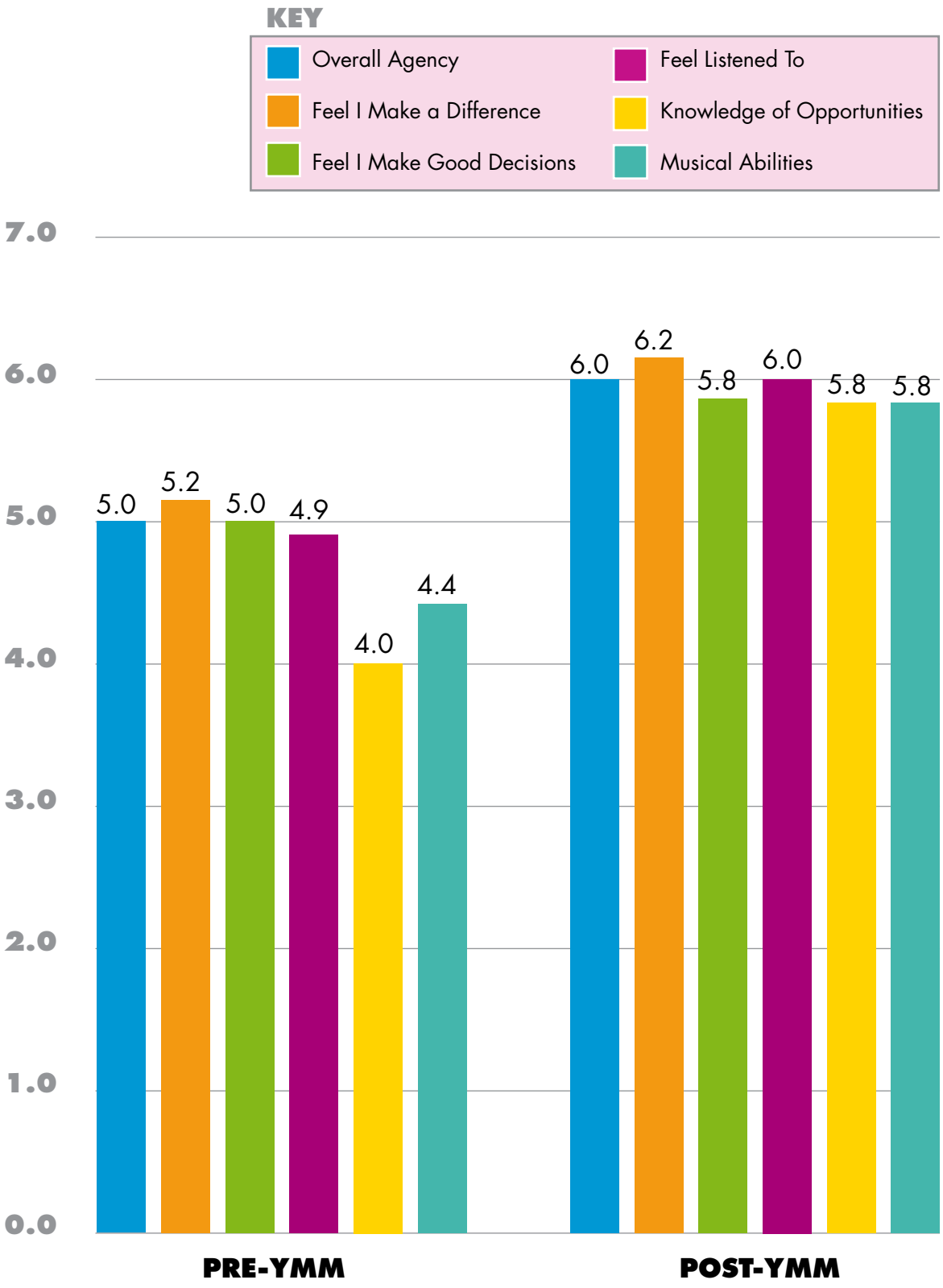
## Table 5. Paired Sample T-test for change in Musical Ability and Agency

| Paired Sample T-test for change in Musical Ability and Agency | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean Change | Std. Deviation | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Effect Size (r) |
| Pair 1 | Musical Ability | -1.445 | 1.504 | -16.103 | 280 | .000 | 0.69 |
| Pair 2 | Music Opportunities | -1.795 | 1.845 | -16.218 | 277 | .000 | 0.70 |
| Pair 3 | Feel Listened To | -1.118 | 1.768 | -10.251 | 262 | .000 | 0.54 |
| Pair 4 | Feel Make Good Decisions | -.843 | 1.739 | -7.829 | 260 | .000 | 0.44 |
| Pair 5 | Feel I Make A Difference | -.953 | 1.557 | -9.752 | 253 | .000 | 0.52 |
| Pair 6 | Overall Agency | -2.884 | 4.114 | -11.060 | 248 | .000 | 0.57 |



[4] The effect size tells us how strong the finding is in real terms, the closer the r statistic is to 1, the stronger the effect.

Figure 1. Mean Score Change for Agency and Musical Ability



These findings suggest that the strongest effects of music mentoring have been an improvement in knowledge of opportunities to make music, actual musical ability, and increased levels of overall agency (i.e. feeling involved, engaged and in control). The individual items all recorded an increase across the sample, with stronger improvements noted for mentees feeling listened to and feeling like they make a difference.

Additional analyses (i.e. Analysis of Variance) were conducted to see if these scores altered between groups of mentees in differing challenging circumstances (based on measures of statistical significance). Overall there were few observed differences. The exceptions were those who were economically disadvantaged scoring higher on overall agency than the general sample (6.3 against 5.9) and those at risk of exclusion scoring lower on improvements in overall agency than the general sample (5.3 against 5.9).

As overall proportions, 76% of mentees noted an improvement in musical ability (i.e. moved in a positive direction on the repeated measure scale), 77% of mentees noted an improvement of their knowledge of opportunities to make music in their areas. 64% of mentees say they feel listened to more, 53% said they feel they make better decisions for themselves and 53% feel like they have more control of their lives. Overall, 74% of mentees recorded a positive improvement in the combined score for agency.

In addition to the agency and musical skills questions, participants were asked at the end of the programme to reflect on and score additional skills obtained, the results can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Completers Additional Skills Gained

| Completers Additional Skills Gained | N | Mean Score | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Learned to work with others | 220 | 6.25 | 1.35 |
| Turned up on time | 222 | 5.99 | 1.66 |
| Respect others views | 222 | 6.56 | 1.28 |
| Express themselves | 218 | 6.61 | 1.28 |

Table 6 indicates mean scores (out of 8) of 6.3 for learning to work better with people, 6.6 for being able to express themselves, 6.7 for respecting other people's views, and 6 for turning up on time. This indicates that Completers felt they had developed useful skills as a result of their involvement in the programme; most strongly, respect for other people's views and opinions, closely followed by the ability to better express themselves. Generally there were no statistically significant differences in mean scores between those in different challenging circumstances, with the exception of a higher mean score for those who are economically disadvantaged improving on learning to work with others (6.6) and expressing themselves (6.9).

As overall proportions, 89% of mentees felt they had learned to work better with others, 79% felt they were better able to turn up on time, 93% felt they were better able to respect other people's views, and 95% felt they were better able to express themselves.


... the strongest effects of music mentoring have been an improvement in knowledge of opportunities to make music, actual musical ability, and increased levels of overall agency.

# DISCUSSION

The positive findings relating to the Completers' development of musical ability and agency highlights how Youth Music Mentors has been effective at encouraging behavioural change and active citizenship amongst the majority of mentees.

This combination of findings supports the work of Phillip and Spratt (2007), who noted strong evidence for behaviour and attitude change in mentoring programmes with disengaged children and young people. It also supports the findings of Hallam's (2009) review that music making can be particularly effective in re-engaging children and young people in challenging circumstances.

The significant increase in skills and agency also supports Ryan and Deci's (2000) theory of self-determined motivation leading to positive outcomes for individuals. By feeling more in control, and that they have more options to be included, young people are more likely, and more able, to engage in positive social experiences. Authors such as Ferguson (2006) have discussed the methodological difficulties of trying to measure and demonstrate changes in social capital and active citizenship, and it is hoped that the measures provided here make a useful contribution to these studies.

The basic theory being tested in this research is that increased activity, control and the ability to make informed decisions are prerequisites to active citizenship amongst children and young people. The positive results above demonstrate that the mentoring experience goes some way towards increasing children and young people's skills and agency, which can sensibly be considered a positive outcome for the programme. However, what remains to be seen (and is more fully considered by Deane et al. (2011)) is how the programme works to re-engage children and young people from a very diverse range of backgrounds and with a wide variety of needs.

What cannot be addressed by this analysis is how the programme has been delivered differently across sites, or how music has been a tool of engagement for the mentors and mentees taking part. The positive result around increased expressive ability suggests that the function of music in this programme is a crucial one, and that further work is required to identify what music, specifically, contributes to the programme and the experiences of the mentees. The joint improvement in scores of musical ability and agency (both overall and on individual dimensions) suggests a synergy between musical development, knowledge of opportunities to make music and feelings of mastery and increased ability in general. Deane et al. 2011 suggest that the unique 'offer' of music within music based mentoring is what sets it apart from other mentoring schemes, positing that music learning is inherently a process closely entangled with wider personal and social development. The findings above showing improvements in musical communication and expressive ability support this finding and presents further evidence that music making is closely tied to feelings of overall agency, mastery and connectedness. Further work is required to look at the effects of other types of mentoring projects, within which these same measures of agency could be applied for comparative analysis.

Another finding presented above is that a greater number of 'at risk' young people withdrew early from the programme than completed it. Similarly, the improvements in agency amongst those with potentially greater challenges (i.e. those at risk of exclusion) were not as great as the overall population of mentees. Both these findings suggest that music mentoring may be better suited to those young people who are less 'at risk' than others. This echoes findings presented by Phillip and Spratt (2007) and Deane et al. (2011) who both suggest that mentoring can be more successful with children and young people who are 'ready to change' or are in circumstances where access will not provide an additional burden to their lives.

The overall improvements in musical ability, knowledge and agency reported above require suitable resources to enable strong referral, recruitment and retention. There were many reports of how successful engagement in the programme could be achieved with those in extremely challenging circumstances, but that this was an additional burden on resources. This is reflected in the findings showing the lower levels of completion by those in more challenging circumstances. An important caveat, however, is that these children and young people (i.e. looked after children, young offenders, travellers) are often the most transient, which may explain the higher attrition rate amongst this population (Lonie 2010).

A final consideration should be given to the administration of the evaluation tool itself. This study was not (and does not claim to have been) conducted under experimental conditions. Whilst all project co-ordinators were given training and guidance in how to administer the quantitative evaluation tool, there may have been some disparity in how mentors used the questionnaires with mentees. Indeed, two delivery partners were unable to return any completed baseline and follow-up data. The intention of the tool was to provide an indicator of change in musical ability and agency across the population of mentees passing through the programme and there were no statistically significant differences in the profile information of those completing both forms and those not completing any, or completing part of the forms, therefore the findings above can be considered representative of a Completer population.

Nevertheless, it was difficult to control for when and how the questionnaire was completed by the mentees and the findings should be treated with this in mind. Work is on-going within Youth Music and across the research and funding sectors to improve the evidence base upon which project funding decisions are made and better understand the operation and impact of programmes aimed at young people. The process of administering this quantitative evaluation tool has added to the growing knowledge and practice of outcomes measurement, which in itself is a significant development, and work will continue in aiming to strengthen the robustness of evaluation design across programmes of this kind.

This last point also highlights the difficulty of measuring 'distance travelled', 'positive change', or wider impact within programmes aimed at improving complex socio-psychological issues with a youth population, through a medium which is itself complex and diverse (i.e. music). It is, at least, hoped that the empirical findings and theoretical consideration presented here contributes something useful to the charitable organisations, government departments, investors and others across the sector aiming to help young people establish and maintain positive identities, experiences and lives (musical and otherwise).

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