



Sound Out!

Music Making for Female Carers

Project Report



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport



SPIRIT OF 2012
INVESTING IN HAPPINESS



Our Company and Our Work

[Jack Drum Arts](#) is a Community Interest Company based in Crook, County Durham, providing high-quality cultural and social opportunities for the local community and wider region through a range of artistic activities including theatre, music-making, visual arts, and digital media.

Sound Out! was one of ten national programmes supported by Spirit of 2012's 'Carers' Music Fund', running from September 2019-June 2021.

[Spirit of 2012](#) is the London 2012 legacy funder, building sustainable social legacies from the inspiration of events. It invests to improve how people feel about themselves, other people and their communities.

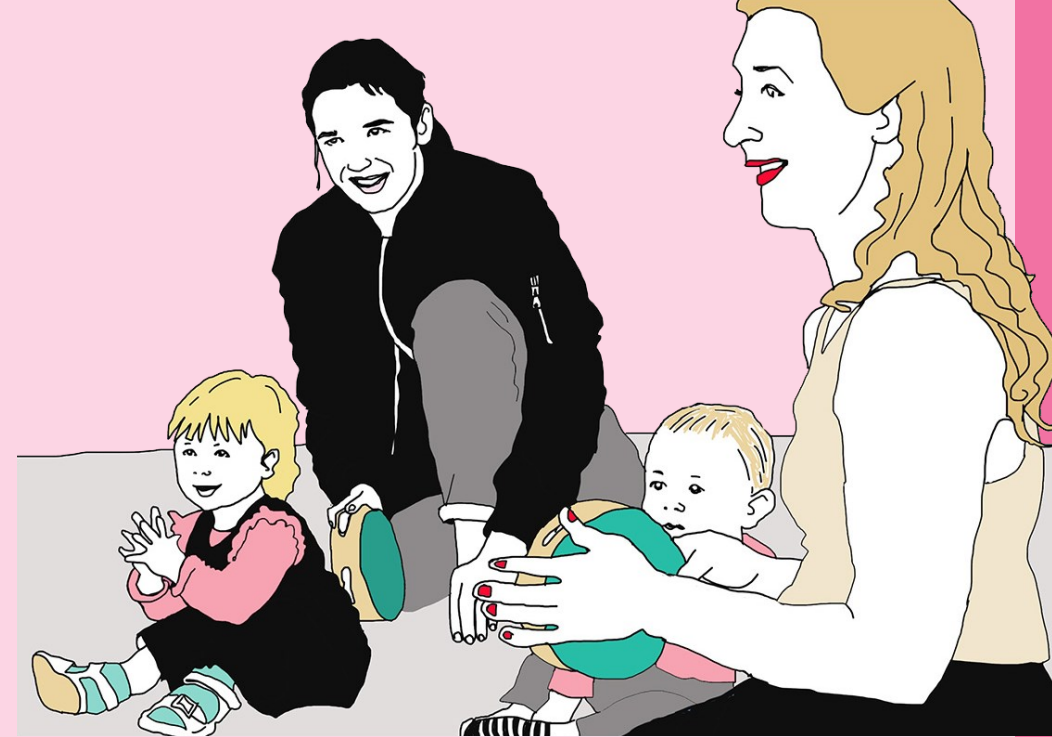
Sound Out! Aims

- Increase the wellbeing of participants through active music making
- Reduce social isolation and/or loneliness amongst carers
- Increase carers' self-esteem or sense of potential
- Form a self-sustaining Legacy Group
- Support participants into music leadership
- Improve company practice, implementing learning to make activities accessible to, and supportive of, female carers



Courses

- Community Singing
- Song Writing
- Samba Drumming
- Electronic Music Making
- Ukulele
- New Mums Music Making
- Drumming, Movement and Mindfulness



During the project timeframe, the Covid-19 pandemic struck, halting the provision of our courses. Following consultation with our Board, Sound Out! courses were moved online until it was safe for groups to meet again in-person later in the year.

This shift proved successful - many carers who would have been unable to attend in-person music making sessions were able to attend online sessions via Zoom, from their homes or gardens.

Participant feedback from across the programme was overwhelmingly positive, reaffirming the values and objectives at the heart of Jack Drum Arts' ethos.

'A lot of the time you might get fobbed off, especially a free course for carers, it's easy to end up in a room with someone's nephew who once looked at a guitar, and that high-quality delivery from Jack Drum Arts helped everybody feel valued and worthy.'

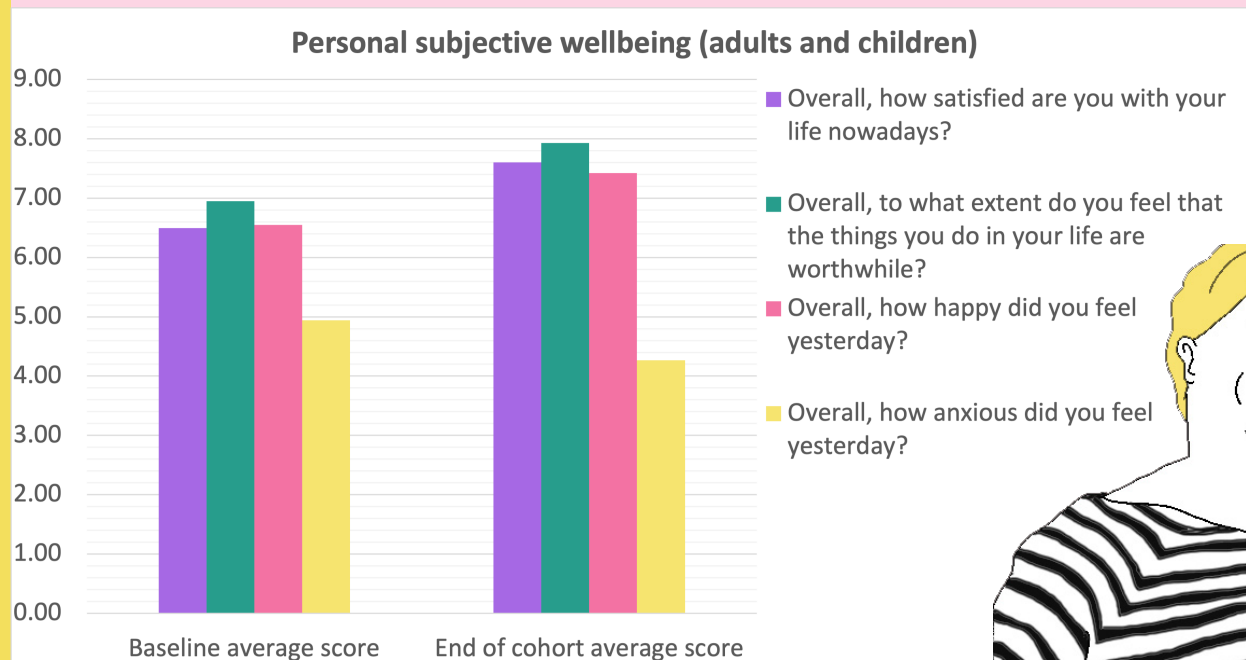
Impacts on Wellbeing

'It's valuing you as an individual, it's not looking at you as the carer, wife, nurse, mother, whatever. It's looking at you and at your needs and abilities, your happiness.'

Carers UK reported that by October 2020 74% of carers felt exhausted and worn out, and 64% felt that their mental health had worsened.

Across all Sound Out! courses, participants with the greatest caring responsibilities and most in need of emotional support gained most benefit, experiencing the courses as caring, nurturing and supportive.

Participants reported increases in life satisfaction and individual happiness, and reductions in anxiety levels following participation in a 12-week Sound Out! course.



'Sometimes you just need somebody to hold that space for you, to say this is the time we are going to do this.'



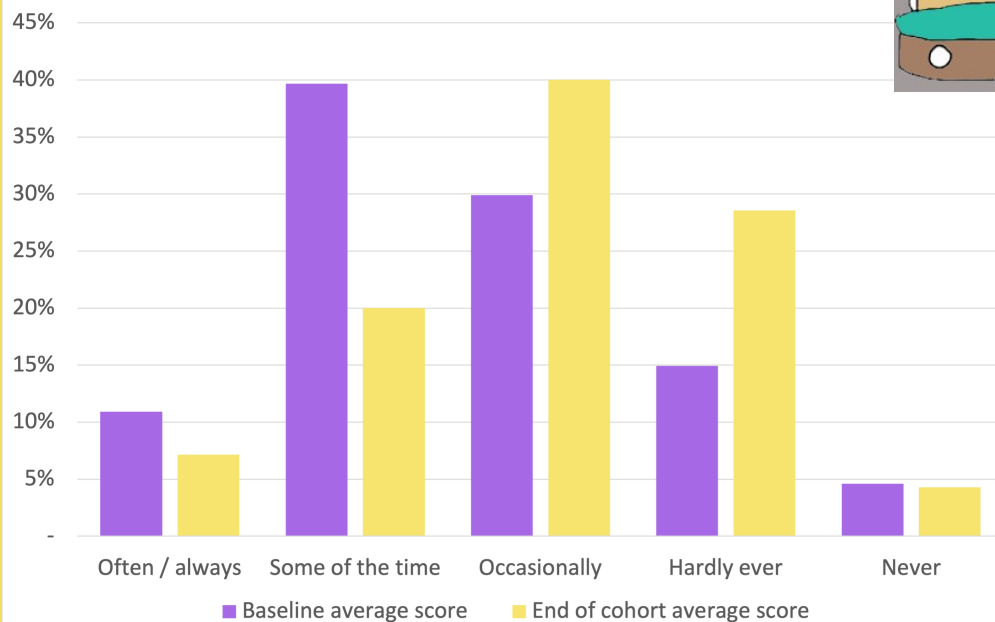
Impacts on Loneliness

While loneliness rose across the UK population during 2020, participants in the Sound Out! programme experienced a positive change in their personal lives.

In our courses, those reporting feeling lonely 'some of the time' fell from 40% to 20% and 'hardly ever' rose from 15% to 30%.



How often do you feel lonely?



'It's just something to look forward to in the week, it's a very long week and that one hour was our only social outing. We haven't seen wider family or anybody during this time, just my Mam and Dad, so it's been a lonely time.'

Participants reported feeling they had 'people who could help them' and 'people they could socialise with', evidencing the beneficial aspects to collective music-making, and the potential of the arts as a tool for social and community cohesion and the fostering of supportive environments.

Legacy

180 female carers participated in the project. Although most were from the north east, some joined our sessions from as far afield as Scotland, Dorset and Somerset, and will continue to access Jack Drum Arts activities via Zoom.

The Sound Out! Legacy Group ran from Sept 2020—May 2021, and developed into an intermediate Ukulele group, reflecting the success of our Online Ukulele courses. The group composed, recorded and produced two songs:

[I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas](#) - A cover of the 1950s classic by Gloria Gaynor

[What World?](#) - An original composition

A new Jack Drum Ukulele Ensemble will begin regular sessions in September 2021, continuing the work of the Sound Out! Legacy Group.

Jack Drum Arts has recently secured further funding to run five 12-week music making courses for both male and female carers until summer 2022.

*'Thank you for opening my heart to
the joy of music and the Ukulele!'*





Thanks to:

Our wonderful [participants](#), who provide incredible care for their loved ones every day.

Spirit of 2012, [Durham County Carers Support](#), Carers UK, DCC Humanities Dept, [Sam Slatcher](#), Jack Burton, [Rachel Purcell](#), [Katumba](#), [Cat Myers](#), [Bridie Jackson](#), [Sinead Florence Livingston](#), [Emma Boor](#), [Jan Bee Brown](#) & [Laura Emerson Roberts](#)

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