



## **Parkhaven: The Beeches 2023**

### **Music sessions for The Beeches care home**

Report for Parkhaven Trust

#### **Introduction**

This project was funded by a grant Parkhaven Trust received from the PH Holt Foundation and delivered by Live Music Now musicians, Elfair Dyer (harp) and Ste Forshaw (guitar/vocals) to support residents at The Beeches living with dementia. The musicians visited 3 units within The Beeches care home facilities over 10 weeks, between February - April 2023. The sessions aimed to support service users by performing a variety of music, encouraging participation and taking requests.

The dates of the sessions were as follows:

- 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd February
- 1st, 8th and 29th March
- 5th, 19th and 26th April
- (Ste's solo visits) 17th and 24th May

- Sessions took place in 3 units; Oak, Elm and Ash wing.
- Up to 15 service users in each unit were present for the sessions.

[Consented photos from the sessions can be viewed here.](#)

#### **Evaluation**

Musicians were asked to complete reflective diaries throughout the project to assess the outcomes of the sessions. Moreover, a member of the staff care team from each unit was asked to participate in a phone interview with Live Music Now, to assess the impact of the project for their residents. Three members of staff participated in the interview feedback, while further comments were also captured by Live Music Now from the staff and residents present during the March sessions.

Key findings from the interviews included:

- 1) Supporting residents' mood, engagement and relationships**

Where 5 was the highest level of impact, all three respondents scored 5 for the improvement of mood and engagement in residents who attended the sessions. For the improvement of relationships, respondents scored 4-5.

Respondents reported the impact on mood, engagement and relationships as 'significant,' 'huge' and 'positive,' with two observing some of their non-verbal and less mobile residents to be 'getting involved and singing' or 'moving their legs and having a dance' which was not typical behaviour for them.

Two respondents noted that it was the first time they had witnessed residents engage in that way, in comparison to other acts who had previously visited the facility; one individual resident, who was previously in a band, was seen to be 'singing a lot more' following the sessions. Moreover, 3-4 residents from Elm wing, who were described as 'difficult to engage' were seen to be getting involved and engaging with the musicians by singing or moving to the music.

*'To see the change in people's faces, and the families [reactions]... and to see those who have got up who usually choose not to walk, moving their legs and having a dance - it had a real positive effect on our unit... After [the musicians] had gone, it was a lovely atmosphere - it set the tone for the day... It was also great for the staff, they've really enjoyed being involved'* - (Sam, Elm wing).

*"I didn't feel well this morning, but now I do! The music brings you back to life!"* (Resident, aged 90).

*'In the morning, once we say the musicians are coming there is a change in the mood – they are excited!'* (Staff member, The Beeches)

## **2) Supporting staff understanding, confidence and skills**

In terms of staff development, all three respondents scored 5 out of 5 for the improvement of their understanding, confidence and skills through participating in the residency.

One respondent noted that the musicians had shown them 'a different way to approach music with residents' when using music as a tool in Dementia care and mentioned that they are 'now using techniques the musicians used with them,' in-turn bringing in more music-based activity.

A respondent noted that the staff had seen 'a great impact in dementia' following the sessions, stating that they'd never witnessed such a strong impact from a visiting act previously, which demonstrated the significance of music.

Furthermore, it was noted that, following the sessions, staff now noticeably instigate music playing more often, utilising instruments such as tambourines and shakers, for residents to interact with. Song requests are also being taken frequently, so that residents can choose songs they would like to hear. One respondent claimed it was difficult for the staff to replicate what the musicians had done in the sessions, but they are 'more mindful of it' and are trying to incorporate music where they can.

When asked how the music impacted their own moods, respondents expressed that seeing the residents happy had a positive impact on their moods, with one respondent reflecting that they had tried to always ensure that their work schedule allowed for them to attend the sessions.

All three respondents responded 'yes' when asked whether taking part in the residency had increased the regularity, effectiveness and status of live music activities happening in the care home.

*'The staff have witnessed firsthand the impact music can make – they were all buzzing... it's had a real positive impact on staff... It's boosted staff moral – if the staff are having a hard morning, we say let's have a sing and a dance.'* (Sam, Elm wing)

*'The music lifts us all when we're seeing the residents happy' (Sharon, Ash wing).*

*'I love having the musicians in on a Wednesday. The job is very hard and the music helps my mental health. It helps me feel more positive and productive' (Staff member, The Beeches).*

### **3) Supporting mental health and wellbeing**

Following the sessions, respondents noted a positive change in atmosphere within the care home. The music was said to have increased happiness, lifted spirits and engaged families, as well as staff and residents. One respondent described an instance where a resident and his visiting Wife were able to connect through the music, by holding hands and expressing compassion towards one another.

The musicians also noted the change in energy throughout the sessions; *'We were pleasantly surprised – the room changed during the session and more energy in the room when we left'* (Elfair Dyer, LMN Musician). The musicians also recalled a resident who requested 'Over the Rainbow,' which evoked an emotional response.

*'[The residents] love music and tapping their feet – it makes them all happy and lifts spirits... Once the music comes on, they get up and use their energy – it's good to get them moving, and the staff will dance with them'* (Sharon, Ash wing).

*'It was amazing to see the residents during the sessions and the way they engaged – it was such a positive thing to see'* (Respondent 2, EMI Nursing, Oak wing).

*'The staff have seen a great impact in dementia. We've never witnessed an act that has come in and had such an impact. It's been fantastic – everyone's upset because they had to leave.'* (Sam, Elm wing).

*'After the music session, dinner time is much easier because they are relaxed and upbeat. We'll carry on the singing during dinner'* (Staff member, The Beeches).

### **Review of the project model (10 weeks)**

The project consisted of 10 x 30-minute music sessions for each household unit, across a 10-week period in Spring 2023. The sessions were led by two Live Music Now musicians, Ste Forshaw and Elfair Dyer, and, as aforementioned, aimed to support service users by performing a variety of music, encouraging participation and taking requests. Ste Forshaw also delivered 2 extra solo visits individually, with an additional set of funds.

Overall, the project demonstrated a worthwhile experience for the residents and staff members at The Beeches care home, as well as the musicians themselves.

- *'It was a joy to visit The Beeches, it was a lovely residency for us. Over the 10 weeks, we felt that we all got to know each other better and we saw more and more participation in the sessions over the course of the residency. Staff also enjoyed and appreciated the music!'* (Elfair Dyer, LMN Musician)
- *'Over the course of the 10 weeks the engagement from residents grew and grew. We built relationships and saw meaningful musical and social outcomes in the form of dancing, singing, playing percussion and happy conversations'* (Ste Forshaw, LMN Musician).

- *'The musicians are fantastic. They interact so much with the residents and remember their names. Ste takes his guitar around and involves everyone. They are very responsive and gentle too.'* (Staff member, The Beeches)
- *'We miss [the musicians]! I miss my Wednesdays and want them back! The whole package has been brilliant – everybody's benefited, and families have loved it – they've seen the impact it's had on our service users and they ask when are they coming back in?'* – (Sam, Elm wing)

Thank you for inviting Live Music Now to deliver sessions at The Beeches; our musicians had a fantastic time working with the staff and residents, and were impressed by the levels of engagement.

Live Music Now  
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