

Evaluating *Lullaby* in Wales: The value of creativity in women's perinatal mental health

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Today's presentation

Introducing the *Lullaby* project

Evaluation research objectives & methods

Three pen portraits of participating women

Summary and discussion of key outcomes across the three cohorts

- Subjective wellbeing using PERMA indicators
- Self-efficacy and agency

Reflections from professional musicians

Reflections from partner health and social care organisations

Reflections on evaluation approach

Key messages and learning outcomes

Draft *Lullaby* logic model



Introducing the *Lullaby* project

- Pioneered and developed by [Carnegie Hall](#) (CH) in New York to improve maternal wellbeing, parent-child bonding and early child development.
- Adapted and developed by lead arts organisation [Live Music Now](#) (LMN) in UK, under mentorship of CH, originally for pilot programme in NW England in 2020/21 with funding from NHS Women's Health and Maternity Partnership (Improving Me), with particular focus on perinatal mental health.
- Commissioned by [Arts Council Wales](#) to deliver [Lullaby project in Swansea Bay](#) area (community settings in Neath and Port Talbot; and Tonna Hospital specialist perinatal mental health Mother and Baby Unit)
- Follows social prescribing model, with women referred via partner health and social care services:
 - [Flying Start](#)
 - [Swansea Bay University Health Board](#)
- Paired with professional musicians from LMN to write, record and perform an original, personalised lullaby for their babies – see short [videos](#)!
- Three cohorts participated in one-to-one and/or group sessions over an 8-week period (January - June 2022).
- Using specially designed, branded resources, women may start for example by writing a letter to their baby, which then forms the lyrics of the lullaby.
- Evaluation framework and logic model developed collaboratively, including [stakeholder engagement workshop](#), in early 2021 (creating consistent/comparable evidence base across all research sites).
- Progressive approach to evaluation research by LMN, funders and project partners has enabled a formative consideration of 'what works' in parallel with delivery of the project.

Evaluation research objectives

Conducted on formative basis and considered throughout:

- The impact of *Lullaby* in Swansea Bay on participating Mums' **subjective wellbeing, self-efficacy and agency** (OB1);
- The impact of the programme on participating musicians' **professional wellbeing, job satisfaction and career development** (OB2);
- The heuristic experience and **value of music making** and creativity in perinatal care (OB3);
- The **added value** created for participating partner organisations and the local **health and social care environment** (OB4);
- Recommendations on the **future delivery and sustainability** of *Lullaby* as a creative intervention in women's health care (OB5).

Evaluation research methods

- Short **standardised measures** of subjective wellbeing (adapted from PERMA wellbeing scale and WEMWBS), general self-efficacy (GSE) and parental self-efficacy (PSOC), administered in person at start (baseline), mid and end-points of each programme (OB1);
- Semi-structured **research interviews** with volunteer sample of participating **Mums**, conducted at end of each programme (OBs 1, 3 and 5).
- Semi-structured **research interviews** with all participating **professional musicians**, conducted at mid-point of each programme (OB2);
- Post-session **feedback and reflective (qualitative) data** collected from participating Mums and musicians via written diaries/journals and group post-it note exercises, where appropriate (OBs 1, 2 and 3);
- Participant **observation** of group sessions and public events, where appropriate e.g. *Lullaby* performance events (OB3);
- Semi-structured **interviews** (plus short online survey) with representatives from **partner health organisations** and referral bodies (OBs 4 and 5).

Lullaby in context: understanding distance travelled for participating women

- Kate's story: Social anxiety and wellbeing
- Sarah's story: Motherhood and self-efficacy
- Stephanie's story: Music-making and mental health

Kate's story: Social anxiety and wellbeing

About Kate

Suffered with overwhelming anxiety in adolescence and early adulthood.

Supporting partner of 8 years through their own anxiety and depression.

Traumatic journey to Motherhood: miscarried in first pregnancy – described as “heart-breaking” - and then experienced trauma through pregnancy and childbirth during pandemic.

Reasons for taking part

As a couple, tend not to socialise but conscious of wanting baby to have different experiences, especially after lifting of Covid restrictions.

Referred to programme by health worker and thought it seemed different to other “baby groups” in providing “us time” for Mums too – felt appreciated and it was “nice to be thought of”. Acknowledged need for support for own mental health: “I don’t go anywhere, I forget about myself... I constantly judge myself before anyone else can judge me”.

Kate's Lullaby journey

Step-change in all survey indicators but especially ‘feeling positive’ and ‘having a sense of direction in life’.

During interview, Kate reflects on the **empowering** value of *Lullaby* as a creative, social space, both for self and baby, with professional musicians and other Mums.

- “[Baby] was coming on so, so well and it was nice that **everyone was noticing** as well... and to form bonds like that”.
- “I don’t take compliments well, so when I have [professional musicians] telling me how well I’m doing, how lovely [baby] is, I’m doubting myself 10 times over... so it was a **confidence builder** just to believe in myself... I’m able to do anything if I really put my mind to it”.
- “Being taught by someone who is in that industry, telling you that you’ve got something that’s good, that **boosts you** a little bit... [the lullaby] is meaningful to you... it’s from your heart”.



Sarah's story: Motherhood and self-efficacy

About Sarah

Had first child in early forties – “whirlwind relationship and [we] quickly became 3”.

Small family and support network – older nieces/nephews.

“I lead a very simple life and always have”.

Working from home and “digging deep” to look after baby and “keep relationship going”. Describes her journey as a mum as “full of self-doubt”.

Reasons for taking part

Referred by health visitor. Had tried playgroups before but found it difficult to engage – “very cliquey” - and retreated from them. “*Lullaby* came at the right time for us”.

“I’ve always been a bit of a loner and I always will be, but I’m trying not to be because of [baby]... I want to him to have a different life to the one I have led”.

Researched *Lullaby* online first – gave it careful consideration! “I thought, wow, what a hell of an opportunity to work with professional musicians... and I was intrigued really”.

As a socially reserved and cautious person, Sarah spoke of wanting to “push herself through” any anxieties she may have and “do things for [baby]”.

“I pushed myself to come to session 1 and I’m so glad I did”.

Sarah's *Lullaby* journey

The positive experience of *Lullaby*, which Sarah openly acknowledges was beneficial to her mental health, has prompted personal (quite profound) reflection on what Motherhood means, the influence of parental responsibility on a child's social development, and the type of Mother Sarah wants to be:

- “I was **welcomed with warmth** and friendly faces... it helped that all the Mums were starting on same journey”.
- “It was **fun**, it was different and new... and I found out that my voice isn't that bad!”
- “I came out feeling supported, **feeling part of something**... I do miss it, I miss having [it] to focus on... I did come to a few sessions where I was feeling quite emotional but actually it did cheer [me] up”.
- “When my mother was bringing us up none of this stuff was available.. I asked my Mother if she sung to me as a child and she looked at me as if I had four heads. I just think **how different parenting has become** since I was small”.
- “My parents didn't take me to groups or anything like that and I don't want him to look back when he's older and think ‘Christ, my Mum didn't do anything with me’.... I want him to have the **confidence to try new things** and not be super clingy”.
- “I want him to see a **happy Mum**”.

Stephanie's story: Music-making and mental health

About Stephanie

Experiencing serious clinical postnatal depression as in-patient at Mother and Baby unit, following previous 4-week hospital stay in another area.

42 year old research scientist with 6 month old baby staying with her and 8 year old child at home with Dad. Very self-aware of experience of separation, especially from older child and between siblings.

Reasons for taking part

Arrived at unit in time for last 3 weeks of programme, really wanted to join in *specifically* as it is a musical project: "I love the harp, I find it a really emotional instrument". Played tenor horn to grade 6 as a teenager and sang in a choir and was reminded of that experience.

The social and musical aspects of the programme were considered to be important for baby too: "music is really good for babies, I play him classical Mozart and I'm always singing to him".

Had experienced "debilitating anxiety" but saw empowering benefits of stepping out of comfort zone and "believing in self".

Stephanie's Lullaby journey

Strong sense of **cathartic release** through musical expression for Stephanie – lyrics reflect consideration of baby's experience of being in the unit. In interview conducted on Teams, Stephanie moves from being quite still, lethargic almost, and reserved to **visibly more animated and cheerful** when talking about *Lullaby*, especially experience of collaborating with professional musician.

She describes it as being a **hopeful experience**, referring to meeting a former resident though the project who is now doing well, felt **motivated** throughout and "**very proud**" of herself, especially for singing at performance event.

- "I love interacting with [baby] and I love music... I just think it was beneficial for both of us really. That chance to make a special recording for him is something that we'll have forever. It's **really special**".
- "I never envisaged it would be as amazing as it was... I was amazed when I went on the first day how special it was... All of us came together and made something really nice out of what is not really a great situation... it's **a positive out of a negativity** of feeling so rubbish, you know".
- "I found it all kind of **came together naturally** really, with the letter [writing] and the song... I really enjoyed it and thought I definitely have to get to the point where I'm recording the song. I was **in the zone!**"
- "For a moment in those sessions I felt like a **normal mum**... it gave me a nice feeling where I could almost forget about stuff".

Smiley Riley

Riley my dear little boy,
what do you do all day?
I laugh and I smile with my big blue
eyes,
till Daisy comes to play.

Riley, my dear little boy,
what do you do all night?
I sleep and I snore and I dream of milk,
while mummy holds me tight.

But what do you do when you want lots
of fun,
then daddy comes to play.
He blows lots of raspberries and sings
you your song,
and (blows) blows your cares away.

Summary of headline evaluation findings

- *Lullaby* and women's subjective wellbeing
- *Lullaby* and women's self-efficacy and agency
- Reflections from professional musicians
- Reflections from partner health & social care services

Lullaby and women's subjective wellbeing

Positive emotion

Feeling 'proud', 'relaxed', 'cheerful' and 'happy' at end of individual sessions.

Expression of genuine gratitude and enthusiastic advocacy of programme in interviews reflects positive emotional response.

Engagement

"Something to look forward to..." is a simple but powerful, recurring statement.

"We don't open up to a lot of people" – power of creative expression in encouraging openness, communication and deeper level of engagement.

Relationships

"Such a nice feeling to offer your praise to another Mother" – establishing and understanding own capacity for peer relationships and their significance.

"It was nice to see my husband and my Mum enjoying themselves" – enhanced pride and connectivity felt, especially via performance events, with wider family members.

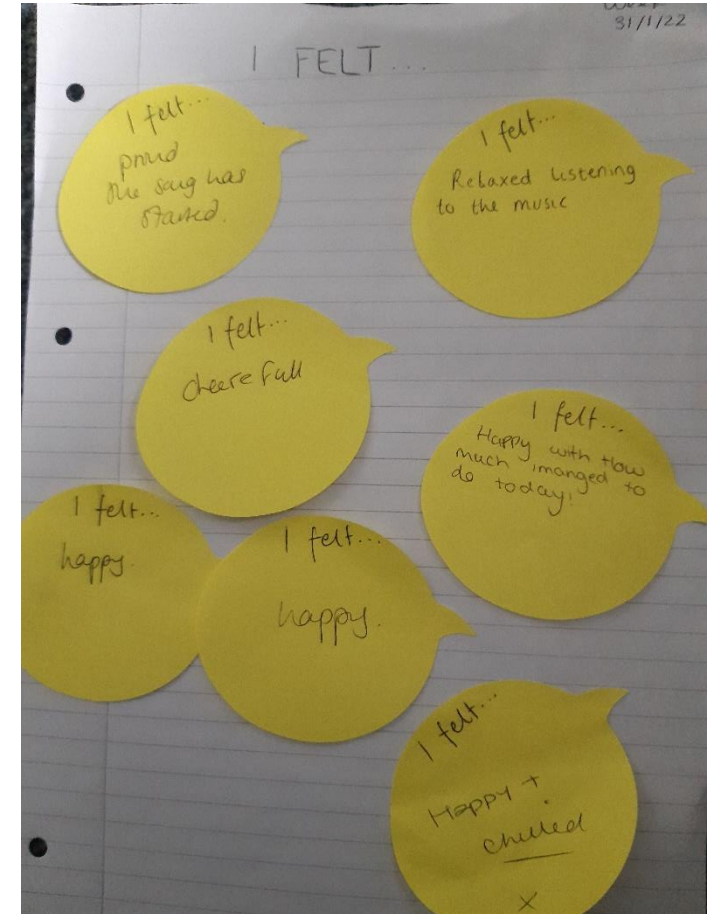
Meaning

Creation of something personally unique and that constitutes a "lifelong gift" for a child has particular resonance and is inherently meaningful.

Accomplishment

Enormous sense of accomplishment achieved via the equitable partnerships with professional musicians and co-creation of professional-standard, original pieces of music.

Emphasised at the recording and public performance stages of the project.



Lullaby and women's self-efficacy and agency

Personal capacity and resourcefulness

Rediscovery of self an important outcome (e.g. re-igniting creative interests and realising own creative potential).

Health partners describe more participation and engagement with other opportunities and resources.

Improvements in perceived confidence to 'deal efficiently with unexpected events' (GSE4).

Managing expectations of self and others

Experience encourages perspective-taking on own capabilities and of circumstances and environments that have previously felt quite limiting.

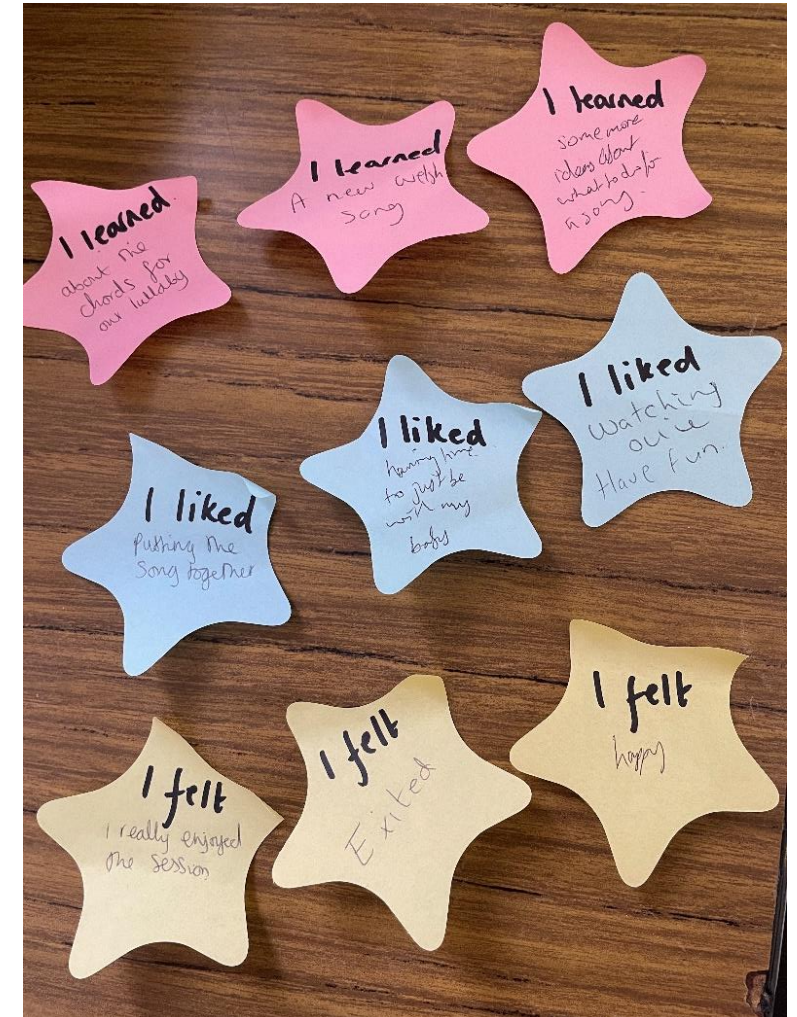
Improvements in meeting of 'own personal expectations in being a parent' (PSOC10).

Confidence and 'maternal maturity'

"The confidence the [professional] musicians give you is unreal... they believe in you 100%".

Confidence gained through the creative experience inspires an almost philosophical consideration of the type of Mother participating women aspire to be and of the lives they want their children to have – often represented in lullaby lyrics.

Distinguishes programme from other community activities, e.g. lifestyle-inspired baby groups or sessions offering practical guidance and support (e.g. family nutrition).



Reflections from professional musicians

Reciprocity and respect

Although classically trained, some professional musicians were relatively new to composition and describe a very organic process of creating the lullabies together, whereby skills are developed collaboratively and in unison with Mums.

Care and compassion

Time and care is taken to sensitively get to know Mums and understand how their personal experiences affect their creative engagement with the programme.

“[she said] ‘I’m feeling really proud... I’m going to invite all my family to the celebration’. She said she used to sing in school [but] was bullied after so she never sang again, but she’s got a very pretty voice and I think she’s really looking forward to performing in the celebration [and] on the recording”.

Equality and trust

The sharing of life experiences, particularly between women, also acts as a leveller for professional musicians and Mums and helps to establish trust within the creative partnership (e.g. pregnancy).

Emotional labour and wellbeing

Can impact on professional musicians’ own emotional security and wellbeing and needs higher levels of peer support and reflective practice, for example in debrief discussions:

“... it really helps, it kind of grounds you after the session and you realise that some of the feelings you [have] been having, your fellow musicians have also been having as well, so you can share the problems together”.



Reflections from partner health & social care services

- Collaboration with Flying Start (FS) has had **mutually beneficial** outcomes.
- Professional musicians commented on the benefits of **practical support** provided by FS staff (e.g. Community Nursery Nurses) during sessions.
- FS staff were instrumental in making referrals and encouraging/motivating Mums to participate.
- Unanimous in their own appraisal of the value added to FS services by *Lullaby* as a creative programme:
 - “It was a wonderful experience , to watch the **parents growing in confidence** over the weeks and parents and babies bonding over the love of music and song”.
 - “It was such a relaxing group, I’ve **never seen the mums and babies so content**”.
 - “*Lullaby* should be run in as many venues as possible as it’s amazing to see the **positive impact on mums’ and babies’ wellbeing**”.

Reflections on evaluation approach

Appropriateness and usefulness of quantitative approaches

- Available data useful to illustrate impact in mixed-method study
- Mindful of disruption to creative process
- Standardised methods include potentially triggering questions in mental health recovery

The practice and value of qualitative approaches

- Participation and engagement levels can be difficult to secure
- Affects data volume and quality in programme evaluation
- Engagement is reflective in itself, in both cases, of significance and value of *Lullaby* to women interviewed

The significance of participant observation

- Impact in room is often palpable - important for researcher to feel that too
- Enables conversations with extended community (e.g. family members)
- Observational field notes woven into evaluation analysis are useful in narrating impact

Key messages and learning outcomes

Lullaby as a familial space

- Equitable creative partnerships with professional musicians;
- Welcoming communal, physical spaces;
- Creates genuine feeling of belonging and ontological security beyond risk assessed facilitation of 'safe' spaces.

Professionalism and creative health

- Highly skilled and qualified *professional* musicians enabling a high-quality experience;
- Provenance, reputation and professional credibility of the project is significant;
- This distinction deserves ethical assessment and promotion of cost benefit and true (social) return on investment;
- Strengthening localised creative economies, as well as preventive public health strategies and infrastructure.



Draft *Lullaby* logic model

Inputs →	Activities →	Outputs →	Outcomes	
			Short term	Long term
<p>Funding and infrastructural support for programme of creative activities.</p> <p>Memorandum of understanding between partner organisations including code of practice.</p> <p>Dedicated staff and programme team, including co-ordinator post and evaluation research support.</p> <p>Referral and practical delivery support in communities.</p> <p>Stakeholder advice and advocacy forum (e.g. advisory group).</p>	<p>Creative process of writing and producing original lullabies.</p> <p>Skilled facilitation of creative sessions, including pastoral support and care for participants.</p> <p>Professional development support for musicians and facilitators.</p> <p>Creative communication and promotion of programme activities.</p> <p>Sustainability planning and LMN organisational strategy.</p>	<p>Number of creative sessions.</p> <p>Number of original creative productions.</p> <p>Number of cohorts and individual participants.</p> <p>New professional networks and (potential) partners for programme expansion.</p> <p>Media coverage and creative promotion (e.g. programme website; videos; social media; news coverage).</p>	<p>Self-reported improvements in subjective wellbeing of participating women.</p> <p>Self-reported improvements in work-related wellbeing of participating professionals (e.g. job satisfaction).</p> <p>Improvements in social connectedness across personal and professional networks.</p> <p>Enhanced levels of trust in public services and institutions.</p> <p>Evidence of increased sense of agency (independent choice and control) for participating women.</p>	<p>Developmental outcomes for women, babies and young children (e.g. language and communication skills, literacy skills and formal educational outcomes).</p> <p>Behavioural changes in engagement with and use of public services and institutions.</p> <p>Staff retention, career development and progression in participating cultural and clinical workforce(s).</p> <p>Enhanced recognition and value of creative interventions in formal training of medical students and allied health professionals.</p> <p>Evidence of cost benefit and return on investment for commissioning health and social care services.</p>

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