



The impact and value of *Lullaby* in South Wales

Evaluation report

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1 INTRODUCING THE *LULLABY* PROJECT

The *Lullaby* project, as described in this report, was delivered by Live Music Now Cymru in collaboration with Flying Start and Swansea Bay University Health Board with funding from Arts Council Wales between February and May 2022. Three separate cohorts of women took part in the project, in three areas across the Swansea Bay region, including in community settings in Port Talbot and Neath, and on the Perinatal Inpatient Mental Health Unit at Tonna Hospital. Participating women were referred to the project by collaborating health and social care organisations, each supporting women in postnatal and maternal care pathways according to their individual, varied and (in some cases) complex needs.

Pioneered by Carnegie Hall¹ in New York, *Lullaby* brings mothers and families together with professional musicians to write and sing original lullabies for their babies, supporting maternal health, aiding childhood development, and strengthening the bond between parent and child. In New York City, the programme annually reaches approximately 300 women and families in healthcare settings, homeless shelters, foster care settings, high schools, and correctional facilities. Evaluation research on the original Carnegie Hall programme has shown consistent outcomes relating to parents' sense of their own agency, creativity, wellbeing and self-confidence; relationships between parents, children, families and wider communities; and enhanced diversity and inclusion in artistic practice and production.

The three *Lullaby* projects in the Swansea Bay area supported participating women to work with Live Music Now Cymru professional musicians in hour-long sessions over an eight-week period, on a one-to-one basis and as part of group activities with their babies and young children. Participating women co-created lullabies for their babies and families using a range of techniques and branded resources (e.g. *Lullaby* journals), which were then recorded professionally² as keepsakes and performed in public venues, including for example the Princess Royal Theatre in Port Talbot. Celebratory performance events functioned as the 'premiere' for new lullabies, with partners and family members for example often hearing them for the first time.

A research team from Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU), led by Dr Kerry Wilson³ from the Institute of Cultural Capital (ICC) was commissioned by Live Music Now Cymru to undertake the evaluation in January 2022. This extended an existing research partnership between the ICC and Live Music Now North West England team, described in more detail in section 2 below. The evaluation research team also included Dr Clare Maxwell from LJMU's School of Nursing and Allied Health; Jay Mendivil, *Lullaby* Project Manager at Live Music Now Cymru; and Georgina Aasgaard, Doctoral Fellow of the National Institute for Health Research and professional musician/creative health specialist with Live Music Now. Georgina also acted as a mentor for Live Music Now Cymru musicians taking part in the project.

The research team would like to acknowledge and thank all evaluation participants for their time and generosity in contributing to the research, including representatives of collaborating organisations and all participating Live Music Now Cymru professional

¹ <https://www.carnegiehall.org/Education/Programs/Lullaby-Project>

² Recordings of lullabies produced in the Neath project for example are available here: <https://soundcloud.com/livemusicnowlullaby/sets/lmn-wales-lullaby-neath-valleys-project>

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musicians. The team is especially grateful to participating women for their honesty and openness, and for sharing such moving reflections on their experiences as mothers.

2 THE EVALUATION PROCESS

2.1 The *Lullaby* evaluation framework

The evaluation of *Lullaby* in Wales was adapted from a research framework and indicative logic model designed for the pilot *Lullaby* project, developed in consultation with Carnegie Hall and delivered in Cheshire and Merseyside by Live Music Now (September 2021 – June 2022). The research framework was designed in consultation with academics and professional practitioners working in the fields of music education, health psychology, midwifery, health inequalities and mental health during a stakeholder engagement workshop⁴ held in May 2021. Applying a similar evaluation approach across Live Music Now *Lullaby* projects in England and Cymru has helped to ensure the development of a consistent and comparable evidence base on the value of *Lullaby* as a sustainable creative intervention in women's perinatal mental health for health and social care commissioners and stakeholders.

2.2 Evaluation of *Lullaby* in Cymru: aims and objectives

The evaluation of *Lullaby* in Cymru was conducted on a formative basis, aiming to capture the social value of the project to participating women, collaborating services and commissioning bodies. The following specific research objectives (OBs) were 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).

2.3 Evaluation research methods

A mixed-method approach was undertaken, including the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, but prioritising the latter to develop a thorough understanding of the lived experience of participating women and of the subsequent contextual value of *Lullaby* as a creative intervention in women's health and social care. Copies of research instruments (e.g. interview questions) are attached as appendix 1.

In part fulfilment of OB1, a short, 10-item standardised measure of subjective wellbeing, general self-efficacy and parental efficacy was administered in person (using print copies) at the start (baseline), mid and endpoints of the community-based projects in Port Talbot and Neath. Following recommendations made by the evaluation stakeholder advisory

⁴ For more information please see: <https://frontlineculture.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Summary-of-Stakeholder-Engagement-Workshop-Discussion.pdf>

group described above, survey items were adapted from the PERMA wellbeing scale⁵, General Self-efficacy (GSE) and parental self-efficacy (PSOC) scales. As validated measurements used extensively in prior research, a degree of trust can be placed in their reliability and appropriateness in evaluation studies involving (potentially) vulnerable groups. Participants were asked to respond to given questions using an 11-point scale, where 0 = never and 10 = always (see table 1 below). There were 20 survey respondents in total from the community-based projects (12 in Port Talbot; 8 in Neath), with full data sets received (at all three collection points) by 6 respondents (4 in Port Talbot; 2 in Neath). This reflects the *limitations of the survey method*, rather than engagement with the evaluation process per se, particularly when evaluating a creative intervention in community settings (discussed in more detail below in section 6). A summary of available survey data is attached as appendix 2.

On a scale of 0-10:		0=Never					10=Always					
P2	In general, how often do you feel positive?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
E2	In general, to what extent do you feel excited and interested in things?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
R1	To what extent do you receive help and support from others when you need it?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
M3	To what extent do you generally feel you have a sense of direction in your life?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A3	How often are you able to handle your responsibilities?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GSE4	Are you confident that you can deal efficiently with unexpected events?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GSE7	Do you remain calm when facing difficulties?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GSE8	Do you usually find solutions when faced with a problem?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PSOC10	Do you meet your own personal expectations in being a parent?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PSOC15	Do you feel like you have the necessary skills to be a parent?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Table 1: Survey form used in Neath and Port Talbot Lullaby projects

Following discussions with the project team at the outset, an alternative standardised measure was used with participants in the Tonna Hospital project, due to enhanced sensitivities when working with women with more complex mental health concerns and to subsequently alleviate any (unnecessary) additional anxieties. To this end, a 6-item survey was designed for use with this group adapted from the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). Participants were asked to state the extent to which they agreed with given statements on the impact of the *Lullaby* project on indicators of wellbeing including cheerfulness, confidence, interest in new things, feeling good about self, feeling relaxed and optimistic, according to a 5-point scale (see table 2 below). Five completed survey forms were completed and returned by this group, all at the endpoint of the project. All five participants selected *Agree* or *Strongly agree* in response to each question, providing a light-touch illustration of the positive impact of the Tonna Hospital project on the self-reported subjective wellbeing of responding participants.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
After taking part in Lullaby I am feeling more cheerful				1	4
After taking part in Lullaby I am feeling more confident				2	3
After taking part in Lullaby I am feeling interested in new things				2	3
After taking part in Lullaby I am feeling good about myself				3	2

⁵ Based on 5 principles of wellbeing including Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment: <https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/perma wellbeing.pdf>

After taking part in Lullaby I am feeling relaxed				1	4
After taking part in Lullaby I am feeling optimistic				2	3

Table 2: Survey form used in Tonna Hospital Lullaby project (adapted from WEMWBS)

As part of the qualitative data collection process, semi-structured research interviews with volunteer samples of participating women were conducted at the end of each programme (in fulfilment of OBs 1, 3 and 5). Nine participant interviews were undertaken in total, either by telephone or video call (using MS Teams) including 2 from Neath cohort; 5 from Port Talbot; and 2 from Tonna Hospital (one in-patient and one out-patient). Interviews were recorded and fully transcribed, with participant confidentiality assured throughout. Verbatim quotations are used within the report, cited anonymously as participants from the relevant project (e.g. 'Neath/Port Talbot/Tonna Hospital participant'). Participant observation of the project(s) in action was also undertaken (in fulfilment of OB3) by evaluation team members where possible, including celebratory performance events in Neath and Port Talbot. Observation field notes are included in narrative discussion throughout the report.

Semi-structured research interviews were conducted with four participating professional musicians (working across all three projects), at the mid-point of the Port Talbot project in fulfilment of OB2. This was to encourage and enable participating musicians to press the 'pause button' as the project was progressing, and while still in the process of working with participating women, to capture their lived professional experiences in real time. Interviews were again recorded and fully transcribed, with participant confidentiality assured throughout. Verbatim quotations are used within the report, cited anonymously as 'LMN musician'. Musicians leading the Port Talbot project also shared recordings (x 3) of post-session reflective discussions, which have been incorporated into narrative sections of the evaluation report.

Other qualitative data sources were made available to the evaluation team, in fulfilment of OBs 1, 2 and 3 and are again incorporated throughout the report's narrative discussion. These include for example post-session feedback and reflections shared by participating women and musicians via written journals and group post-it note exercises, where appropriate.

Finally, and in fulfilment of OBs 4 and 5, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with representatives from partner health organisations and referral bodies (3 in total). Verbatim quotations are used in the report, cited anonymously as Neath/Port Talbot project partner. A short, supplementary online survey, including open (qualitative) questions was also made available to partner health organisations across the three project sites to enable as many as possible to contribute to the evaluation (6 responses received in total).

3 THE VALUE OF *LULLABY* TO PARTICIPATING WOMEN AND FAMILIES

3.1 Women's subjective wellbeing and PERMA indicators

Findings and discussion on the impact of *Lullaby* on participating women's subjective wellbeing are presented according to the five PERMA principles⁶ of Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment.

Positive Emotion

The capacity for the *Lullaby* project to encourage positive emotions as it progresses is immediately evident in feedback received at the end of individual sessions via group post-it note exercises. When asked to jot down how they felt after one particular session for example (see figure 1 below), participants in the Port Talbot project expressed feelings of pride, cheerfulness and happiness. One Neath participant (interviewee) voluntarily commented on how the post-it note exercises had enabled her to reflect on what each session had meant to her and how this changed throughout the course of the project, from feeling nervous at first for example to feeling happy, cheerful and positive towards the end of the project.

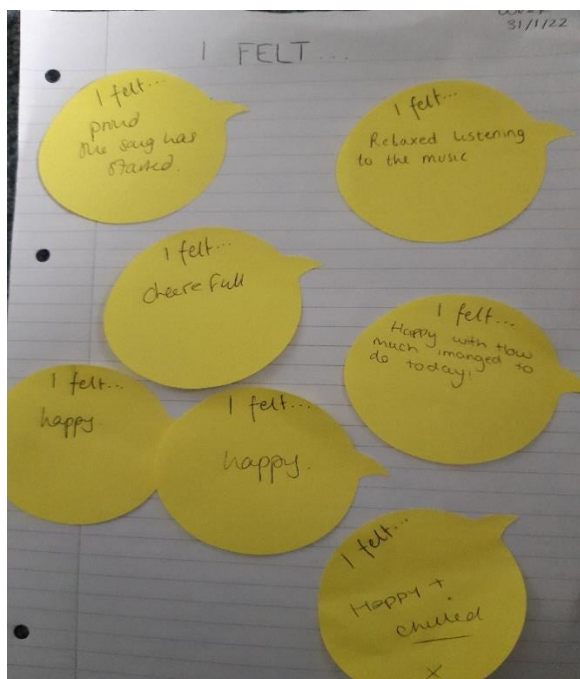


Figure 1: Positive emotions expressed by participants via post-it note feedback activity at end of group *Lullaby* session.

One project partner (Community Nursery Nurse) in Neath attributed this to the 'nurturing environment' offered by the *Lullaby* project and how this is absorbed by participating women and babies, observing that their own "oxytocin levels had gone through the roof!" Another participant from the Port Talbot project commented that the process itself, including prompts in the *Lullaby* journal and exercises during group sessions, encouraged positive thinking, and went on to share that her partner and wider family members had been positive and supportive about her taking part after she had shared these experiences with them. A different participant in the Port Talbot project explained that her lullaby had

⁶ Use of the PERMA scale is also consistent with *Lullaby* research commissioned and undertaken by Carnegie Hall, see for example: <https://www.carnegiehall.org/Education/Programs/Lullaby-Project#research>

taken a different shape to what she had originally intended. She had wanted to express emotions related to challenges she had been experiencing and then perhaps move to a more positive outlook, but the lullaby became wholly positive in the end.

“It was just joyful yesterday, that’s the only way to describe it really, it was very joyful.” Port Talbot project partner [interview]

Throughout all research interview conversations, recurring expressions of genuine gratitude for the opportunity to take part and the enthusiastic advocacy of the project from all interviewees reflects a universally positive emotional response. When asked about advice they would give to other women contemplating taking part, one Port Talbot participant responded “just go for it! Do attend every session because you take such positivity from it.” This was reinforced by participants expressing other positive feelings and intuitive responses to the project, especially with reference to their own sense of inner peace, balance, and restoration.

“It makes you feel positive about your situation... it makes you think about what makes [your child] happy... it brings the positivity out of you.” Port Talbot participant

“At the end of every session, I always felt quite calm and peaceful... if I’d had a rushed morning or was rushing to get there, I would go in feeling quite anxious but then always calm and relaxed coming out you know? So that was nice to feel... learning music makes you feel peaceful and happier.” Port Talbot participant

Responses to the Positive Emotion item included in the short survey used as part of the evaluation process (P2 In general, how often do you feel positive?) indicate moments of ‘peak positivity’ at the midpoint stage of data collection, indicating the impact the *Lullaby* project has on positive emotion in real time.

Engagement

Participants also recurringly describe the project as “something to look forward to.” On the surface, this is quite a simple statement to make in an evaluation of a creative project, but it is a substantial outcome when expressed by women experiencing poor perinatal mental health including inhibiting social anxiety. When discussing levels of active engagement in the project and co-creation of lullabies with professional musicians, one participant expressed surprise and pride in the extent to which they had felt able to express themselves via the tools used in the creative process, after commenting that as a couple with her partner, “we don’t open up to a lot of people .” The *Lullaby* project encourages a deeper level of engagement therefore through enhanced communication and connection through the collaborative creative experience.

Survey results on the question corresponding to engagement (E2 In general, to what extent do you feel excited and interested in things?) are consistent across data collection points, with no noticeable changes. When discussing overcoming any nervousness or apprehension about engaging in the project, one Neath participant described the role and impact of professional musicians:

“... it’s just the nature of the musicians and the atmosphere... it was productive, everything that needed to be done was done but in such a nice, relaxed way and just how friendly everybody was... all the other Mums in the group were lovely but it was the musicians who really put you at ease. They were just a fantastic bunch, I can’t praise them enough. [Baby] absolutely loved all of them!” Neath participant [interview]

One Community Nursery Nurse from Flying Start described participation and engagement from parents as their current biggest challenge in the post-Pandemic period, and went on to say (of the *Lullaby* project) that in her 10-year career of working with families in the community, she had never seen Mums and babies gain so much together in an activity before:

“I honestly think these Mums have been given opportunities that they never would have had without you guys coming in and doing [this]... the benefit they’ve had with the bonding with their children... and actually writing these songs and putting their feelings down... it was so lovely to see the journey they have all been on.”
Neath project partner [interviewee]

Relationships

Survey responses to the PERMA indicator on relationships (R1 To what extent do you receive help and support from others when you need it?) consistently show (relatively) high feelings of support. Research interviews further revealed the significance of relationships and peer networks to women in their perinatal journeys, particularly in terms of emotional as well as practical support. One woman who participated in the Neath project was referred to *Lullaby* by her Health Visitor and spoke very openly about her experiences of loneliness linked to having an unanticipated second child later in life, after being diagnosed with secondary infertility.

“I have to be honest I’ve found [the support] incredibly difficult this time... when I had [older child] all my friends were having children at the same time, and although I still have the same friends, speaking to them about a baby is very different as we’re all going through the teenage years... I’ve struggled with not having friends to go to groups with and with lockdown it was more difficult as well. So I’m grateful to *Lullaby* for the opportunity to meet other Mums and for [baby] as well, it was more socialization for her... It has been more challenging and a bit more lonely this time”. Neath participant [interview]

The social aspects of the project are important therefore in enabling access to wider social networks and alleviating feelings of isolation and loneliness, in some cases. It has had a particularly powerful impact in this context by helping women to understand their own capacity to form and sustain peer relationships and to support one another, with one commenting that it is “such a nice feeling to offer your praise to another mother.” One participant in the Tonna Hospital project (an outpatient) generously shared that part of her motivation to take part in *Lullaby* was to provide peer support for other women staying at the hospital and to reconnect with hospital staff:

“It was nice to see everyone happy there... getting involved and helping each other... if mums needed to get on with writing their lullaby, everyone was hands on, helping with little ones and stuff, you never felt stressed, you always felt chilled and happy there, you know?” Port Talbot participant [interview]

“For me, part of it was just going back to Tonna, I thought it would be quite nice to see some of the staff who I used to see regularly and also to speak to some of the mums, if they wanted to have a chat with me about how I’ve been, to see if that might help them, so I got that out of it.” Tonna Hospital participant [interview]

Seeing the pride and appreciation felt by partners and family members is also encouraging greater communication and connectivity closer to home – reflecting on their celebration performance event, one woman commented “It was nice to see my husband and my Mum enjoying themselves.” Another woman participating in the Port Talbot project included her partner in the writing process, by sharing a journal with him and working on it together at home. *Lullaby* lyrics were then adapted from letters by both mum and dad. Participating women also described the creative impact of the project in improving and enhancing domestic relationships, including with partners in a practical parenting context.

“... to see how important it is to sing and interact... I've always sung to [baby] but my husband... he's not a singer himself so he would always just go 'oh I would rather just read to her, I'll read you can do the singing' but even he now, he's singing the song that we came up with! So it's nice to see that he's taken an interest in that as well”. Neath participant [interview]

Furthermore, the relationships formed between participating women and professional musicians have also been formative to women's experiences of the project, and have set the project apart from other community-based services, as observed by one project partner:

“Being a Lullaby partner... we honestly didn't know what to expect, but after the first session I attended... I was blown away really by how well organised it is by yourselves, the relationships that the musicians build with the parents were just lovely... after the celebration event one of the mums came up to me and said 'do you know what, some of the musicians involved don't have children, they don't work with children, but they're just so natural with the babies'... those relationships were so important and I really commend you guys for that.” Neath project partner

Meaning

The creation of something personally unique and that constitutes a “lifelong gift” for a child has particular resonance and is inherently meaningful to all participating women. The process itself, utilising specially designed tools and resources, created additional meaning and resonance for participating women as a special time for thought and reflection. The *Lullaby* journals for example were described as “special keepsakes” by one Neath participant, with other participants also welcoming the opportunity to have something to take home with them and focus on in more quieter moments, perhaps when children are in bed later in the evening.

“It made you think... it wasn't just quick and easy... you had to think about how you feel about your little one... it was nice to actually think and take time... to think about home life and bring that into the song...making memories that way was nice.” Port Talbot participant [interview]

“Where else do you get the opportunity to be around all the live instruments as we were, to get to make something so personal to you and your child that you can share and hopefully take forward to generations as well... that opportunity to create something that's just ours... was really special.” Neath participant [interview]

“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”. Tonna Hospital participant [interview]

Survey results relating to meaning (M3 To what extent do you generally feel you have a sense of direction in your life?) are comparatively low for some responding women (ranging from 1-5 and 2-4, where 0 = never and 10 = always⁷), indicating the potential for *Lullaby* to encourage and incentivise participating women to feel more purposefully engaged in their own personal development, especially given its relative impact in boosting confidence, self-awareness and sense of accomplishment, which is described in more detail throughout following sections.

Accomplishment

All women who contributed to the evaluation via research interview described an enormous sense of accomplishment through the equitable, genuinely collaborative partnerships with professional musicians and co-creation of professional-standard, original pieces of music. This sense of accomplishment is emphasised at the recording and public performance stages of the project and the renewed confidence this instils in participating women. When asked to name up to three main benefits of taking part in *Lullaby* during research interview conversations, 'confidence' was the most common initial response:

"I think it was very important for us (as musicians) to stress that we did not expect any soloistic singing, or level of musicianship at all from the mums! I really wanted to ensure that they knew this was a safe space and that no one would judge each other at all for their singing voice or songs they sing to their babies already!" Live Music Now musician [reflective journal entry]

"If you had asked me at the start would I get up and sing [at public event] I would have said no way, not a chance... the project gave me the confidence by the end and I think it was the musicians as well, especially [named musician]... even on the day I was still nervous but after chatting to her...I think the confidence came from the group as I wouldn't have done it otherwise... The confidence you think you haven't got, you will find it in the end, you know!". Neath participant [interview]

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

Participating women mostly rate themselves highly in the item relating to accomplishment in survey results (A3 How often are you able to handle your responsibilities?). Project partners emphasised the impressive, empowering qualities of the project during research interviews:

"When you stood back towards the end of each session and looked at the mums working with musicians, at the musical instruments, you just thought wow... what an amazing achievement." Neath project partner

3.2 Women's agency and parental self-efficacy

Women undoubtedly re-gain a sense of their own personal capabilities and resourcefulness as a result of taking part in *Lullaby*, with the rediscovery of self being a discernible outcome. This includes the reignition of creative interests and realisation, perhaps for the first time, of own creative potential. This in turn has encouraged enhanced

⁷ For a full description of scales used, please refer to section 2.3 Evaluation research methods (page 4).

perspective-taking and a re-evaluation, in some cases, of circumstances and environments that have previously felt quite limiting. In terms of agency and broader practical decision-making, this manifests in choosing to use and take part in additional community services and opportunities to support women's own wellbeing and ongoing recovery, including health promotion activities provided by Flying Start (discussed in more detail in section 5 below).

"...because I used to do choir when I was younger, I enjoyed that I could create something and sing as well... especially at the end when I got to sing the lullaby at the little concert, it gave me a bit of a confidence boost... particularly for me because I had been through such a rough time at the beginning with [baby]... it was nice to put some aspect of that into the lullaby and just get things out and get them on paper in a nice way, if that makes sense? It was cathartic I suppose is what I'm trying to say. I like music and it was nice to be able to sing, it just gives your self-esteem a bit of a boost." Tonna Hospital participant [interview]

The short survey used as part of the evaluation process in Neath and Port Talbot community settings contained three items adapted from the General Self Efficacy Scale⁸ (GSE4 Are you confident that you can deal efficiently with unexpected events?; GSE7 Do you remain calm when facing difficulties?; and GSE8 Do you usually find solutions when faced with a problem?) and two items adapted from the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (PSOC10 Do you meet your own personal expectations in being a parent?; and PSOC15 Do you feel like you have the necessary skills to be a parent?). Noticeable survey results⁹ include a significant rise at the midpoint for one participating woman with regards to confidence in dealing with unexpected events (5-9-4); marked improvement for another participant in remaining calm when facing difficulties (5-10-10); and again, at the midpoint for one participating woman with regards to meeting personal expectations of being a parent (5-10-4) and feeling like they have the necessary skills to be a parent (4-10-6).

High midpoint scores suggest real momentum for participating women as the *Lullaby* project progresses and they continue to engage in the creative process. It is not possible however to attribute any noted changes directly to the *Lullaby* project, as survey data does not account for other circumstances and conditions affecting respondents' experiences and self-reporting. Qualitative data is more useful therefore in helping to understand the attributable impact of the project. There were moments for example in the *Lullaby* process that participating women commented on and shared as being particularly powerful in improving their sense of agency, responsibility, and purpose.

"It was writing the letter... I took it home and I really wanted to give time to think about it... and not just write about now, I looked into the future for [baby] as well... that was emotional and a few people like my Mum and Mother-in-law that I read my letter to... everybody was welling up and I couldn't believe how much it hit me... to actually sit there and handwrite a letter to her... yes you have your hopes and aspirations for them and you think about that, but you never put it down on paper... it's something that she can have and look back at in the future and it's personal from me to her". Neath participant [interview]

⁸ For more information please see <https://measure.whatworkswellbeing.org/measures-bank/gse/>

⁹ Results presented and discussed as X-X-X indicate baseline, mid and endpoint scores for individual participants.

Women gave particularly emotive descriptions of how *Lullaby* had directly improved and enhanced connections with their children through the creative experience.

“That personal bond between the two of us is definitely stronger... it’s our song, [baby] definitely recognises the song. So I’ve always sung You are my Sunshine, but to sing my own words now, to that rhythm... it’s the last thing I sing to her now before she goes to bed so it’s a lovely bonding process”. Neath participant [interview]

The extent to which participating women now feel able to represent and promote the project, and enthusiastically encourage others to take part, is also illustrative of improved confidence and agency, especially for those who were nervous to begin with about the creative process. The sense that all individual women’s creative contributions are valuable, based on their personal relevance and significance, is reflective of the impact of the project on participating women’s self-worth and resilience.

“... just do it! Don’t worry about little things... I know some people might be apprehensive about the writing... I know some mums who say oh God I could never sit down and write like that... but it’s not there to be judged it’s there to express how you’re feeling, and see the lullaby come from that... whatever you put down, with the help and guidance of the musicians you will get where you need to be... it just comes from the heart... it doesn’t have to be perfect, word for word, it just comes from how *you* feel, there’s no right or wrong”. Neath participant [interview]

“It was also interesting to note that some of the mothers had developed in confidence and were keen to take charge of the instrumentation for their lullabies. I feel this is so important as it ensures that their lullaby is truly their own and not just a product of 'us musicians'. Having the confidence to say to a musician 'I would like it to sound like this...' is wonderful and also makes me feel like we are allowing our participants to express themselves fully without restraint!” Live Music Now musician [reflective journal entry]

In terms of parental self-efficacy, the 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. This is often represented in lullaby lyrics – as evidence of the heuristic impact of the project – and effectively distinguishes the project from other community-based activities, including lifestyle-inspired baby groups (e.g. baby yoga) or sessions offering practical information, guidance and support (e.g. family nutrition). This is explored further in the next section, which focuses on individual women’s experiences of taking part in the *Lullaby* project.

3.3 *Lullaby* in context: understanding distance travelled

It has been important throughout the evaluation process to consider the impact of *Lullaby* on participants *in context*, particularly in relation to understanding each woman’s motivation to take part to begin with, their subsequent capacity for change and the unique contribution of *Lullaby* as a creative intervention in their individual and deeply personal maternal journeys. The stories of three different participating women are shared below as pen portraits (using pseudonyms) to personalise evaluation findings and illustrate these considerations.

Kate's story: Social anxiety and wellbeing

Kate is a young first-time Mum in her early twenties, originally referred to the *Lullaby* project in Port Talbot by her Health Visitor. In her research interview, Kate described how she has suffered with overwhelming anxiety in adolescence and early adulthood. She has also been supporting her partner of 8 years (baby's father) through their own anxiety and depression. Kate had experienced a traumatic journey to motherhood, having miscarried in her first pregnancy - described as "heart-breaking" - and then additional trauma through complications with her second pregnancy and childbirth during the pandemic, including attending appointments alone and then having to take turns with her partner to visit and stay with their newborn during an extended stay in hospital.

Due to their ongoing shared experiences of depression and anxiety, Kate and her partner tend to avoid socialising and live quite self-contained lifestyles. She described wanting things to be different for her child, especially after the disruption of pandemic safety measures and successive lockdowns. When asked about her personal reasons for participating in *Lullaby*, she trusted the recommendation from her Health Visitor and thought it seemed different to other baby groups in providing time and space for Mums too. She commented on feeling "appreciated" by this and openly acknowledged the need for support for her own mental health, particularly with reference to feeling self-conscious and vulnerable in social spaces:

"I don't go anywhere... I forget about myself... I constantly judge myself before anyone else can judge me."

Kate described experiencing step-changes in her personal wellbeing throughout the *Lullaby* project, reflecting on the *empowering* value of *Lullaby* as a creative, social space, both for herself and baby. For an anxious young woman who routinely avoids social situations, the project has provided an invaluable boost to her own self-confidence, both personally and as a new mother, through the support and encouragement received by professional musicians and other Mums participating in the project. She gave a moving example of her baby taking their first steps during one of the sessions and everyone cheering and clapping along, a moment that clearly resonated with her and meant so much. The fulfilment gained by working collaboratively with professional musicians to compose a professionally produced, unique lullaby was especially powerful for Kate.:

"[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."



Kate described her lullaby, written in Welsh and English, as a tribute to her Welsh-speaking father and as a ‘snapshot in time,’ referring directly to her feelings for her baby when they were born and when composing the lullaby itself.

Sarah's story: Motherhood and self-efficacy

Reflecting the different circumstances of women taking part in the *Lullaby* project, Sarah is an older first-time Mum who had her first child, somewhat unexpectedly, in her early forties and quite soon after meeting her partner, which she described as a “whirlwind relationship and then [we] quickly became three”. Sarah comes from a small family with older nieces and nephews, has a limited support network and no peers with babies or small children. She described herself as leading a very simple life, which was rocked by the arrival of a baby, and described her subsequent journey as a new Mum as “full of self-doubt”. She was still working in a para-professional role, mostly from home following the pandemic, and explained that she was “digging deep” to look after baby and “keep [my] relationship going.”

Sarah was referred to the Neath *Lullaby* project by her health visitor. She explained that she had tried playgroups before but found it difficult to engage in them and quickly retreated, as they were “very cliquy.” 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].” Sarah very earnestly explained that she had pushed herself out of her introverted comfort zone so that her baby could have a more varied lifestyle with more opportunities:

“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 him to have a different life to the one I have led... I pushed myself to come to session 1 and I’m so glad I did”.

When asked about her reasons for wanting to participate in *Lullaby*, particularly after bad experiences of other social activities designed for Mums and families, she explained that she had researched *Lullaby* online first and gave it careful consideration! Its positive, international reputation as a professional music project sparked Sarah’s curiosity:

“I thought, wow, what a hell of an opportunity to work with professional musicians... and I was intrigued really”.

Without any real prompting during the research interview, Sarah openly acknowledged that taking part in *Lullaby* had been beneficial to her mental health and wellbeing. Having previously described herself as a loner, Sarah uses emotive phrases when reflecting on her experience of taking part, describing it as fun and of feeling a sense of belonging that she missed when the project was over. As the conversation progressed, Sarah shared quite profound and deeply personal reflections on what Motherhood means to her based on her own early childhood experiences, her relationship with her own mother, how the *Lullaby* experience had shaped her understanding of 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

Stephanie took part in the project at Tonna Hospital, as an in-patient with the mother and baby unit experiencing serious clinical postnatal depression, following a previous 4-week hospital stay in another area. She is a 42-year-old research scientist with a 6-month-old baby staying with her at the hospital and an 8-year old child staying at home with Dad. Stephanie was very self-aware of the experience of separation, especially from her older child and between her two children as siblings.

Stephanie arrived at the unit in time for the last 3 weeks of the project, and really wanted to join in precisely because it is a musical project and after hearing the professional musicians performing:

“I love the harp; I find it a really emotional instrument.”

Stephanie had played tenor horn to grade 6 as a teenager and sang in a choir - she was reminded of that experience and saw the project as an opportunity to re-connect with her creative self. She also recognised and acknowledged the potential benefits for baby too:

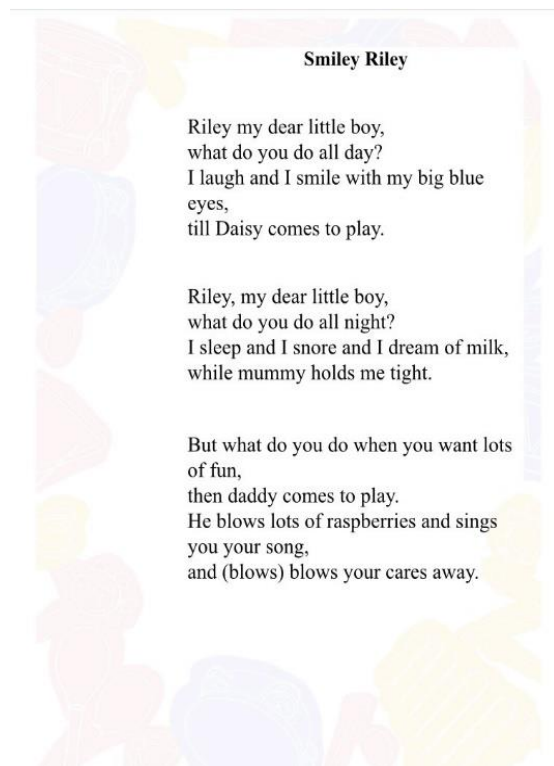
“...music is really good for babies... I play him classical Mozart and I’m always singing to him”.

She reflected on her experience of “debilitating anxiety” but saw the empowering benefits of stepping out of her comfort zone and “believing in” herself. In the research interview

conducted on MS Teams, Stephanie moves from being quite still, lethargic almost, and reserved to visibly more animated and cheerful when talking about *Lullaby*, especially when reflecting on the experience of collaborating with professional musicians. She describes it as being a hopeful experience, referring to meeting a former resident through the project who is now doing well. Stephanie felt motivated throughout and “very proud” of herself, especially for singing live at the performance event.

“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... 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”.

“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!”



The *Lullaby* project became a cathartic experience through musical expression for Stephanie – lyrics explicitly consider her baby's time in hospital with her and implicitly reflect her own feelings of separation, reunion, recovery and renewal.

These pen portraits, considered alongside other evaluation data, highlight the project's potential to impact on different women in diverse ways. Impact can mean comparative baby steps for some, especially younger women referred through the Flying Start collaboration, and seismic shifts for others, including older women previously daunted by the prospect of unexpected first-time motherhood and those experiencing severe perinatal

mental health challenges. All are equally powerful and valuable, relative to the life stage, maturity, and personal circumstances of different participating women.

Individual stories also help us to consider the unique value of creativity to different women when compared to other types of intervention. This is evident of course not just in the professional quality of the lullabies produced, but in their expressive, profoundly meaningful lyrical content. As such, *Lullaby* is far more than a recreational wellbeing activity as per other community groups and social projects designed for women and families. Most significantly, it does not induce the stigma of failure and/or inadequacy associated with other group parenting activities and interventions, which can seem quite performative in their promotion of 'good parenting' and motherhood. *Lullaby* acts as a leveller in giving all participating women both private (one-to-one) and shared spaces to be open about their parental fears, anxieties and experiences, with professional musicians, supporting health and social care workers and just as significantly, each other.

3.4 Families and intergenerational impact

Although not a specific objective and therefore focus of the evaluation, the chosen methodological approach has enabled the observation of other incidental impacts, particularly in relation to the value of the *Lullaby* project to wider family members on an intergenerational basis, which are worth noting. During participant observation of the Port Talbot celebratory performance event for example, a mother of one of the younger participating women referred through Flying Start (baby's Grandmother) was visibly impacted herself by her daughter's involvement with and achievements on the project. In conversation with one of the evaluation team afterwards, she shared the worry that she had experienced through her daughter becoming such a young mother, and how reassured she felt by their willingness and commitment to the *Lullaby* project in relation to developing her own skills and confidence, as well as her maternal relationship with her own daughter. It was a moving conversation and the impact on her was visible in her body language and facial expressions.

The *Lullaby* project has also impacted positively on child development and wellbeing, through the provision of a uniquely accessible and engaging creative space, as evidenced in Kate's story (pen portrait above) and reiterated by other participating women as follows:

"... because of lockdown, if you had met [baby] a few months before, she was completely different, she wouldn't have gone to anybody else... so to see her in that group... she was quite happy, she was going off, she was really getting involved. So yeah, it was the musicians, it was the atmosphere, it was how it was set up, it was just brilliant." Neath participant [interview]

"I hadn't realised before how much he [baby] enjoys music... if I put the TV on, he doesn't really respond... but if you play live music, he actually pays attention." Port Talbot participant [interview]

"The music was very important, [baby] absolutely loves music and to see the instruments up close and how relaxed everybody was as well, letting the babies, especially the older ones, toddle and explore the instruments... you would never get the opportunity to do that elsewhere." Neath participant [interview]

Live Music Now professional musicians also had a unique perspective on the extended impact of the project on babies and families, including the extent of parent-child bonding, child development through creativity and access and exposure to specialist instruments like the harp, and the shared sense of achievement and celebration with partners and wider family members. Musicians attribute these impacts to the person-centred approach used when working with participating women and families. In the next section, we consider the impact of the *Lullaby* project and this person-centred creative work on professional musicians themselves.

4 THE IMPACT OF LULLABY ON PARTICIPATING PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS

Musicians taking part in the *Lullaby* project are all highly trained, experienced Live Music Now professional artists, with experience therefore of working on varied programmes in community settings, which was sometimes compared to therapeutic work although none of the participating musicians are registered music therapists. Different work practices and interventions range from participatory workshops, solo and small ensemble to orchestral performances, working with vulnerable groups including sexual violence survivors.

4.1 Workplace wellbeing and emotional labour

When asked about the *human* skills needed and practised to be a *Lullaby* musician, identifying participants' needs, building trust, intuition, listening and remaining neutral featured strongly in interview discussions. A significant amount of care and compassion is practised by Live Music Now musicians working on the *Lullaby* project. Even at the most basic level, time and care is taken to sensitively get to know participating women 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”. Live Music Now musician [interview]

Working with women with complex emotional needs on the *Lullaby* project however has been challenging at times for Live Music Now musicians, which has impacted on musicians' confidence in real time within the sessions and how they then recover and be prepared for the next session. Musicians describe needing high levels of emotional resilience. Having other musicians in the room as personal and professional peers, and social workers accompanying relevant mums for support, has been crucial:

“[Live Music Now musician] struggled to work with [mum], who is significantly depressed. She's unengaged, doesn't make eye contact, and doesn't answer questions about [baby]. We know that she didn't want the baby, but that it was too late to do anything about it. She attends with a support worker, who does a lot of the talking on her behalf. [Live Music Now musician] did really well, and concentrated on music making with the baby, and even came up with a rough structure for the lullaby based on baby's reactions. But [Live Music Now musician] said it was the hardest thing that she's had to do, so we will swap mums next week. We will also try and get more information about mum from her support worker.” Live Music Now musician [reflective journal entry]

“I was glad that we had the opportunity to have a debrief after this session as I felt quite emotionally disturbed and sad seeing a mother be so disinterested and apathetic towards her own child... I left the session feeling emotionally drained and was glad to have someone to talk about it with when I got home. It made me realise the importance of almost ‘protecting’ yourself during a project like this.” Live Music Now musician [reflective journal entry]

The fact that all musicians in the Swansea Bay projects were women seems to have influenced the creative process and collaborative relationships, in some cases, with

musicians for example establishing empathic connections through their own experiences of pregnancy and motherhood.

“I have learnt that I like providing an ear for someone who needs to talk, especially being a mother myself, I feel I can relate to some aspects.” Live Music Now musician [reflective journal entry]

This can effectively function as a leveller for professional musicians and participating women and helps to establish trust within the creative partnership. There is a risk attached here however for professional musicians, who may prefer to separate professional and private lives, or be inadvertently affected by participating mums’ circumstances and any reminders of and associations with own traumatic or difficult experiences. It should not be a given therefore that professional musicians will have enhanced empathic connections with participants in the *Lullaby* project simply by virtue of also being women.

4.2 Professional development and learning

When asked about the *musical* skills needed and practised to be a *Lullaby* musician, common responses included song writing, composition, flexibility, versatility, peer learning, teamwork and collaboration. Themes of reciprocity and respect feature prominently in musicians’ reflections on the professional experience and practice of working with participating women on the *Lullaby* project. Although classically trained, some professional musicians were relatively new to composition for example and described a very organic process of genuinely creating the lullabies together, whereby skills are developed collaboratively and in unison with Mums. This reinforces the sense of equality and respect felt by participating women and emphasises the pastoral and interpersonal qualities inherent to the success of the project.

Further to the *human* skills appraisal made by Live Music Now musicians above, it is important to subsequently note that all women participating in evaluation research interviews commented on the impact of musicians’ personal qualities in enabling them to overcome any initial worries or apprehensions, for example, and/or in encouraging and supporting them as the project progressed. Linking back to section 3.1, they were frequently described as kind, friendly and “so lovely.” This is a crucial factor in relation to the human resource management of creative health projects such as *Lullaby*, emphasising the fact that not all professional musicians and artists are ideally suited to this type of work.

“One of the mums was initially quite shy and didn’t want to engage as much during the hello song however by the end of the session we had a great chat about where she was from and we swapped childhood stories, as it turns out we grew up not far from one another. She then told me she was really looking forward to starting [to write] her lullaby and was looking forward to next week.” Live Music Now musician [reflective journal entry]

The more interpersonal elements of working on the *Lullaby* project are also described by professional musicians as the most rewarding, including getting to know new people and “creating connections and intimacy” with people through music. Feeling trusted and “part of a mother’s journey” was also described as particularly impactful, through bonding with both mothers and babies and supporting the bonding process between mother and child. There is inevitably an inter-relationship however with the given challenges of this type of work, including exposure in a public space to new professional practices of composition and song writing, and associated techniques, when not an expert; the pressures of time

management in a fixed project schedule; the financial challenge of freelance work on short-term projects; and coping with the emotional impact of the *Lullaby* project.

4.3 Peer support and mentoring

The extent of emotional labour involved in the *Lullaby* project can impact on professional musicians' own emotional security and wellbeing (as discussed above) and needs higher levels of peer support and shared reflective practice. Debrief discussions between musicians following each session for example have helped in this context, along with providing the space to reflect on and share one another's individual approaches in the session, which is especially valuable when working with groups of women with varying complex needs and inconsistent participation patterns week on week:

“... 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.” Live Music Now musician [interview]

Access to mentors has also been an invaluable support structure for musicians working on the *Lullaby* project, both in terms of managing the emotional labour involved but also in relation to artistic practice and professional development:

“Our mentor was with us today. I mentioned at the beginning of the session that I didn't know where to start writing the music, so she worked with myself and one mother. She gave me a clear plan as to how we should write the melody and it's much clearer for me now. I previously didn't know where to start but I'm confident to do it on my own now.” Live Music Now musician [reflective journal entry]

5 WHY IT WORKS: KEY OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC CHARACTERISTICS

The formative evaluation approach has enabled the identification of several strategic and operational characteristics, which contribute to *Lullaby's* impact and value and are therefore (potentially) conditional to its ongoing sustainability and success as a creative intervention in women's health care and wider community-based support systems for women and families.

The quality of the **collaborative networks** underpinning *Lullaby* in Cymru and effectiveness of **cross-sector working** are important conditions to consider when thinking about the project's adaptability and sustainability. Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) for example has an arts and heritage team working across SBUHB services, supporting its work in alignment with health priorities in the region, including mental health and suicide prevention. The team includes a Music and Health facilitator, himself an experienced professional musician (singer and drummer), who was a key point of contact in bringing the collaboration together. Local relevance and value, including responsiveness to situated need, complementarity with and contribution to existing assets and infrastructure, are significant prerequisites therefore in the planning and coordination of creative health projects.

"I knew the project was going to be valuable... it's such a dream project and amazing concept... using the research backing it, I always knew it was going to work as long as we could get the participants. When I went to one of the sessions it was just unbelievable to see the reaction from the participants, really... and to see the musicians and just how supportive the whole environment felt... the need is great, especially with Covid... to give birth throughout this pandemic, especially if you're from a disadvantaged background." SBUHB project partner

"From an NHS perspective, especially in Tonna... when I was there it was still a relatively new unit, they didn't have a lot of projects... Mums from further away can be there for a long time and it is quite daunting when you're there... to have that project in the unit, to have something to look forward to every week that you know you're going to be doing, is really useful and I think it works really well on mother and baby units, definitely." Tonna Hospital participant [interview]

The collaboration with Flying Start in particular has had significant mutually beneficial outcomes. Professional musicians commented on the benefits of practical support provided by Flying Start staff (e.g. Community Nursery Nurses) during group sessions, particularly in relation to helping younger participating women to stay engaged and in helping to care for accompanying babies and young children. This practical support also extended beyond the creative sessions, with health workers organising transport for example, to and from community venues for participating women. Flying Start staff, as evidenced throughout the report, were instrumental to begin with in making referrals and encouraging and motivating women to participate. Only one of the women interviewed mentioned learning of the project through other social networks, including a recommendation from a friend's sister who had already taken part in *Lullaby*.

"My health visitor forced me into it! She knows I've had a lot going on so she volunteers me for everything." Port Talbot participant [interview]

One Community Nursery Nurse described how they had still attended a *Lullaby* session when on annual leave, because she herself valued the sessions so much:

“You get to really speak to the Mums and spend time with the babies, which you know, we don’t really get to do usually when we’re in and out of houses... I would say it’s quality time we spend with them in that hour... and getting to know yourselves and the musicians... it was really special. Really, really special.” Neath project partner

Other Flying Start staff were unanimous in their own appraisal (via online survey form) of the value added to their core health promotion services, which are based in the most deprived areas of Wales, 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.”

Significantly, project partners also described the value of *Lullaby* to their own wellbeing in the post-pandemic period during research interviews, reflecting the theme of reciprocity introduced by professional musicians above:

“We’ve had a hard two years as well... we’ve navigated new situations doing phone calls from home and things... for our own wellbeing, to be involved in something like that, it made me feel more valued in my role... the mums would speak to you in the group about things which maybe they wouldn’t speak to you about over the phone... it makes you feel like you’re giving a bit more back to them... it was lovely.” Neath project partner

The **reputation and credibility** of *Lullaby* as an established, international creative health intervention and ‘brand’ has undoubtedly helped to inspire and motivate some participating women to take part, as evidenced in Sarah’s Story (pen portrait) above and reiterated by another participant in the Neath project:

“I Googled the project and saw what happened in Liverpool... it looked absolutely amazing so I jumped at the opportunity to take part”. Neath participant [interview]

The considered **strategic leadership** of Live Music Now in their flexible adaptation of the programme, in full consultation and collaboration with Carnegie Hall and a range of cross-sector stakeholders, has played an integral role in the effective delivery of the project in Swansea Bay. Project management structures, including dedicated roles and the practical contributions of Live Music Now Cymru staff, have also been significant. The most important strategic and operational asset however is the **professional musicians** themselves. Evaluators have been careful throughout to always describe participating artists precisely as *professional musicians*. Participating women unequivocally attribute the impact of the project to their experiences of collaborating with professional musicians and the equitable creative relationships formed with them. The investment required therefore to pay professional musicians is needed to ensure the ongoing sustainability and real world impact of the project.

Practical troubleshooting and recommendations

From an operational perspective, practical recommendations have emerged from qualitative evaluation data concerning the future design and delivery of the *Lullaby* project. One participating woman from the Port Talbot project struggled to engage with printed or

text-based resources (including journal) due to reading difficulties, so future versions of the project may need to be more mindful of access requirements, with different formats available. From another diversity perspective, the opportunity to work in the Welsh language was valued and appreciated by relevant participating women, especially in enhancing the emotional connection of the project to their wider family's cultural heritage.

Musicians frequently comment on finding it difficult to hear in community venue spaces due to acoustics in the room and the number of conversations happening at the same time, as musicians try to work on a one to one basis with participating women. Consideration should be given therefore to practical logistics in physical spaces when structuring the project around group sessions. Other recommendations made by Live Music Now musicians during evaluation research interviews include having clear guidelines on the roles of different organisations and professionals, including musicians, project managers and healthcare staff, to avoid any blurring of boundaries and duplication of effort. In the preparation stages, consideration should be given to the timing of training, including creating sufficient space for pre-project work on composition skills and related creative ideas and practice. Other planning considerations include scheduling around other professional responsibilities, especially when working with freelance musicians.

Other practical recommendations from project partners include sharing 'the paperwork' (e.g. any evaluation forms) via email to participating women after group sessions, rather than trying to complete when participants are getting ready to leave, possibly feeding babies etc. Circulating a digital survey would also assist and streamline data collection and storage. Project partners also recommended more opportunities to include other parents and caregivers. This was described as important for babies' social development and communication skills, and in encouraging more women to participate who may be reluctant to join in alone.

Please see attached logic model (appendix 3) for a summary of relevant *inputs, outputs and outcomes*.

6 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the clear emerging value and impact of the project to all concerned, it is recommended that Live Music Now continues to actively promote and develop *Lullaby* as a creative, community asset to health and social care services, especially given its relevance and contribution to priority agendas in women's maternal services and perinatal health care specifically, but also to wider public health policy narratives surrounding place-based, preventative, asset-based strategies and approaches.

An ongoing commitment to research and building a *Lullaby* evidence base will be integral to this mission. Live Music Now has already shown a progressive attitude to evaluation research, by making sure that it was part of the development process in the early days of Live Music Now adopting *Lullaby* in consultation and collaboration with Carnegie Hall. In the case of the Swansea Bay projects described in this report, limited funding was available for the commissioned evaluation budget, hence the process being dependent upon support from the Live Music Now team for data collection. It is worth reflecting therefore on the evaluation's methodological effectiveness and limitations thus far, and to consider the most useful approach to evaluation in the future.

With reference to available quantitative data and use of the survey method, this is useful only in a limited illustrative capacity as part of a mixed-method study. The volume and quality of data collected does not facilitate any meaningful analysis of project impact based on this method alone. The minimal return of full datasets at baseline, mid and endpoints of each project also reflects the difficulties of administering this method in a creative project with potentially vulnerable groups. It can be disruptive to the creative process and inappropriate to introduce explicit references to mental health and wellbeing with groups referred to creative health projects.

The methodological strength of this evaluation process has been the qualitative approach, including interviews with participating women, professional musicians, and project partners. The depth of engagement and contribution is itself indicative of the impact of the project, participating women's care and respect for *Lullaby* and Live Music Now and of musicians' professional conscientiousness. Additional ethnographic engagement with the project via participant observation has also been useful. To fully appreciate the impact of creative health programmes, it is often valuable for the researcher to *feel* this themselves. This enables a more confident and informed narrative description of the project and its value. The impact in the room during celebratory *Lullaby* performance events is often palpable and therefore easier to understand, especially when given the opportunity to engage in conversation with wider family members not formally engaged in the evaluation process. It is recommended therefore that a qualitative approach be prioritised in any future evaluation research on the *Lullaby* project and associated creative health initiatives by Live Music Now.

Returning to advice and guidance given by the research stakeholder advisory group described in 'The Evaluation Process' section above, it also recommended that a social return on investment (SROI¹⁰) analysis be undertaken to evidence the cost benefit of the

¹⁰ SROI analysis combines methodologically rigorous qualitative indicators of social value and financial proxy measures, to illustrate the economic cost benefit of cultural activities for commissioners and cross-sector stakeholders. The [Public Services \(Social Value\) Act 2013](#) legally requires public bodies to consider how the services they commission and procure might improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area. Understanding the social value created by public and voluntary services helps to ensure that services are delivering not only value for money, but that the impact of this work extends beyond the activity or programme being delivered. In the context of ongoing evaluation of *Lullaby*

Lullaby project to future commissioning health and social care services, as per the 3-tier evaluation framework shown in figure 2 below. In a research interview, the SBUHB project partner expressed a preference for clinical outcomes (e.g. reduced hospital stays) that evidence transparent cost savings to the NHS. Such outcomes however are widely recognised as ambitious and difficult to measure for community-based creative health interventions that do not have substantive (longitudinal) underpinning research programmes. SROI analysis presents a credible and manageable alternative approach, which would evidence the cost benefit of investing in *Lullaby* as a high quality, professional creative health intervention based on outcomes identified so far and the social value generated for local health economies. An accompanying, independent evaluation research programme of this standard will ensure the extension and continuation of a consistently reliable and useful evidence base.

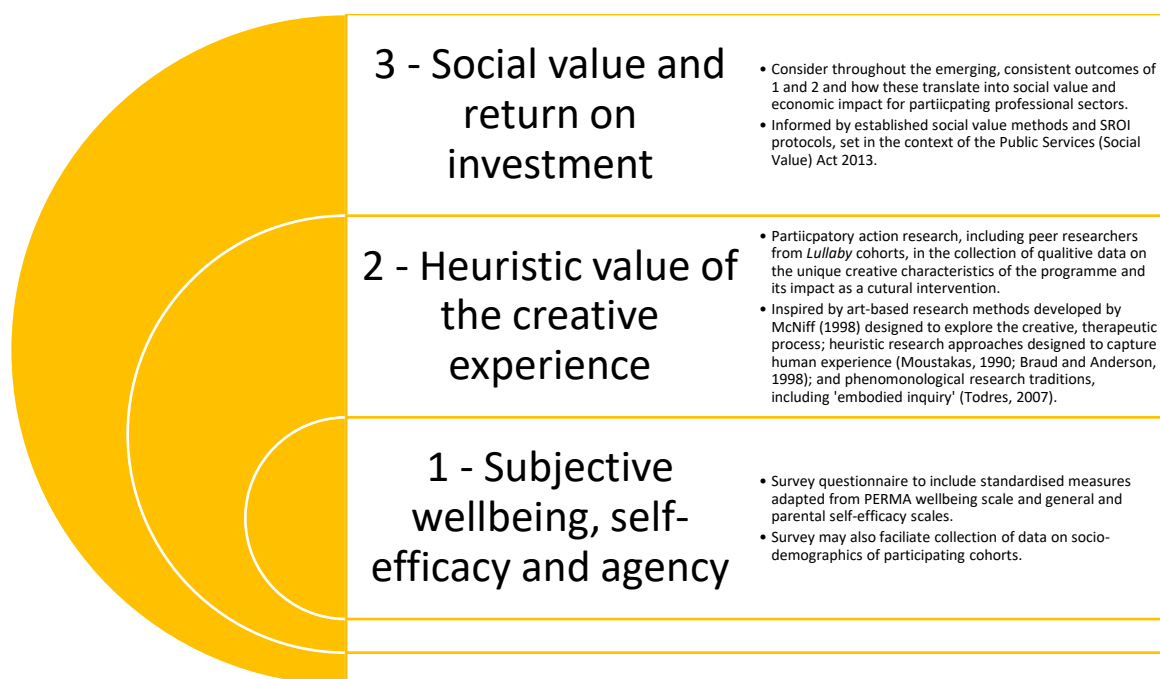


Figure 2: Recommended 3-tier Lullaby evaluation framework

A more holistic approach to evaluation, adopting this 3-tier framework, will undoubtedly help to position and promote *Lullaby's* strategic advantages to health and social care collaborators and commissioners. It may also be useful to frame the advantages offered by *Lullaby*, as a cross-sector collaborative initiative, with two core messages that speak to current strategic narratives in both health care and cultural (arts) policy communities.

projects in Wales, SROI analysis should ideally include identification of recurring indicators of social value from data collected throughout the evaluation process, which are then reviewed, refined and grouped thematically during a stakeholder workshop towards the end of the project. The total cost of the programme is then compared to financial proxies relating to interventions that would expect to have similar outcomes, to show that for every £1 invested in the project, £x amount of social value is generated immediately and over a projected period (e.g. up to five years after the project).

Lullaby as a familial community space

The equitable creative partnerships between participating women and professional musicians, along with the welcoming communal spaces offered by the *Lullaby* project, facilitate genuine feelings of belonging and ontological security beyond the usual risk-assessed ‘safe’ spaces often described in research on creative health and participatory arts practice. This speaks directly to the place-based emphasis in contemporary creative health policy and practice¹¹. Live Music Now is ideally placed to play a strategic leadership role in this area of sector development, given its organisational credibility, local responsiveness and the effective collaborative infrastructures inherent to *Lullaby*'s situated impact and success.

Professionalism and creative health

This is also especially true in relation to another parallel area of creative health strategic priorities regarding musician/artist support, continuing professional development and ‘practising well’ in the creative health field. *Lullaby* is an exemplar of caring and *careful* professional practice in creative health and of Live Music Now's leadership in the field. Continued dialogue and knowledge exchange, which is framed by such priority strategic development agendas for both health and social care AND arts and cultural sectors (under the creative health umbrella) is recommended. This includes public engagement activities like the *Lullaby* webinar hosted by Live Music Now Cymru in June 2022, promoting *Lullaby* as a model for strengthening localised creative economies and preventative public health strategies and infrastructures.

¹¹ See for example work by the What Works Centre for Wellbeing on the social value of place-based arts and culture: <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/resources/the-social-value-of-place-based-arts-and-culture-rapid-review-and-synthesis/>

APPENDICES

1 Research instruments

2 Survey data

3 Logic model