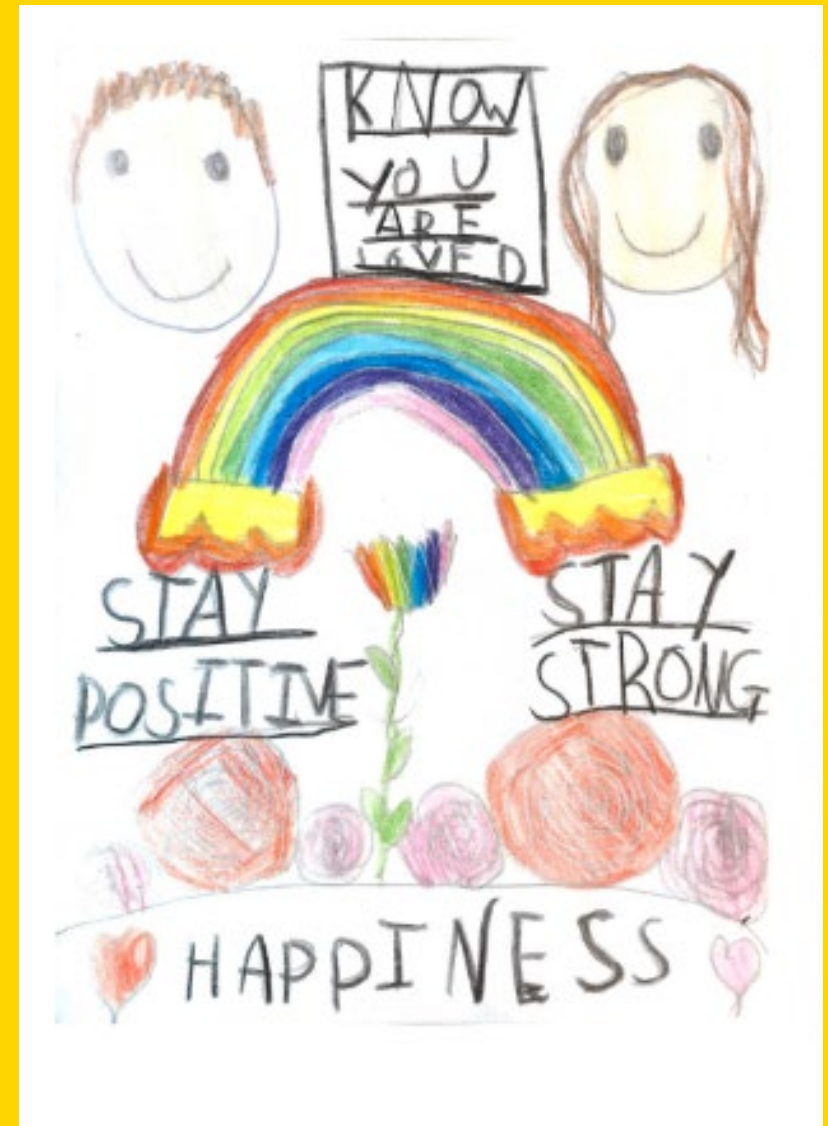


# Intergenerational Music Making: Covid Response

## Evaluation Report

December 2020



# A note from Charlotte Miller, Director of Intergenerational Music Making

The publishing of this report seems timely as I sit here writing this opening statement in yet again another lockdown. This time, lockdown three is upon us all and we again find ourselves here in these uncertain times of reshaping and adjusting our plans for the months ahead. As I take time to pause and re read this research piece I cannot help but feel thankful for the opportunity IMM has been given in carrying out our projects. Looking back over the past few months, reflecting and evaluating what we have delivered and the impact it has had on communities. This report will help shape how we now plan for the coming months and future ahead.

Thanks must go to a number of incredible people who have generously given their time, skill and support in creating this research piece. I would like to thank Dr Karen Gray for her expertise, energy and skill in working with us and the intergenerational communities whom have taken part in the projects. Thank you to The Utleay Foundation for funding this important piece of research and for believing in the work we do and the impact it is having on those particularly living with dementia. I feel very blessed to work in a music organization with a team who have shown such passion, drive, determination and flexibility in their work, especially during such a turbulent and challenging time. Special thanks to IMM's Programme Lead Emily who has been a great support throughout the whole pandemic. It is the residents, children, families, care staff, activity co-ordinators, care home managers, carers, NHS staff, music teachers and orchestral players whom we have worked with over the past few months who were and are at the centre of this research and a huge thank you to them for being part of something so special.

At IMM our primary purpose of working in the arts utilizes music to bring together schools, care homes, hospitals and universities, creating innovative music projects to improve wellbeing, mental health, tackle loneliness and help integrate local communities. Since the covid outbreak we have been unable to offer the artistic, face to face intergenerational creative interventions these groups rely on. It was vital for us to approach the pandemic creatively, continuing to encourage our clients to be creative and ensure that they were supported emotionally, mentally and physically during these challenging time.

This research piece presents how we adapted our projects during lockdown one and two (covers the period of March – October 2020) to meet these new circumstances. We moved our practice online to create an inclusive, stimulating and creative artistic space for people of all ages, offered an abundance of on/offline music/art resources and therapy.

We seized this time of interruption to rebuild and tell a different story. Early on, we realised it was vital to engage and empower communities as equal partners in creating and maintaining their health and wellbeing. Social isolation and loneliness are nothing new to Intergenerational Music Making but now more than ever, we believe the arts possesses transformative power, bringing people together in ways we could not have foreseen.

Since March, we have listened to our existing intergenerational communities and new ones that have emerged through the pandemic. Through these community conversations, think-tanks, steering groups, surveys, composition co-produced song writing sessions plus linking into home schooling programmes, using the arts to hear the voices of the younger generation.

# A note from Charlotte Miller, Director of Intergenerational Music Making

We have been determined to play a pivotal role in sustaining and connecting our communities and in December 2020 we launched a national intergenerational programme, Together with Music [www.togetherwithmusic.org.uk](http://www.togetherwithmusic.org.uk). In partnership with Care England, TwM aims to embed and sustain intergenerational connections throughout the UK, linking care homes with local schools using music to start a new conversation. Through TwM, we see vast opportunities to embed cross-sectorial relationships as well as creating jobs, training and volunteer opportunities. This programme will empower and amplify voices of community members giving them the skills and tools to be self sufficient and integrate in their community.

We are incredibly passionate about encouraging a culture of participation, fostering positive relationships in a holistic and creative way, focusing on people and their communities to ensure the success and sustainability of strong, intergenerational neighbourhoods.

I hope this report and our work will inspire and impact others to connect and bring people of all ages together through music and the arts especially during this challenging time and beyond. Please do sign up at [www.togetherwithmusic.org](http://www.togetherwithmusic.org) to get involved and get connected. We want to hear and share your music, your song and your voice.

#itstartswithasong

Thank you,

**Charlotte**  
**Director of Intergenerational Music Making**  
**Music Therapist, Bmus TCM, MA NRMTc**



immusicuk



"As you grow older,  
you will discover that  
you have two hands,  
one for helping yourself,  
the other for helping  
others."

- Audrey Hepburn

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# Summary of Evaluation Findings

This independent evaluation of the work of Intergenerational Music Making (IMM) demonstrates that virtual or remote intergenerational creative activities enabled older and younger people to maintain existing valued connections and to create new ones during the COVID-19 pandemic. Importantly, it also helps us to understand what might make future similar activities successful.

Intergenerational Music Making specialises in running intergenerational music therapy projects, training, workshops and events. During the pandemic it adapted its activities and widened its audience. Projects encouraged participants from different generations to engage creatively with each other, through making and sharing music, pictures and poems using a variety of media. The aims of this response work were to support and encourage community connection and to enhance individual wellbeing during a time of crisis and isolation.



# Summary of Evaluation Findings

## Key findings

Qualitative stakeholder interviews and analysis for this evaluation tell us that:

- Creative activities provided opportunities for both older and younger people to express and share emotions, explore their experiences of the pandemic and to connect with others.
- Participants reported feeling happier as a result of taking part.
- The activities that were most valued by participants involved structured and active exchanges of personally meaningful stories and music

The evaluation suggests that facilitators for successful virtual or remote intergenerational creative activity will include:

- Projects that are simple and easily communicated and understood.
- Digital or physical media chosen to reflect the individual circumstances and needs of participants.
- Structured and sustained projects involving reciprocal exchanges over time.
- Arts providers working with collaborators who provide complementary skills and resources.
- Time spent in training and building relationships with mediators for activity such as care staff, educators and family members.
- Virtual or blended environments encouraging both creative activity and meaningful social interaction.

## What this means

Sustained intergenerational interactions and exchanges involving creative activity have potential to overcome generational barriers and to break down ageist stereotypes as well as to improve wellbeing, even when conducted virtually or remotely. Activities of this kind would have a role to play in building a more inclusive society during our recovery from the pandemic.

# Introduction

**Intergenerational Music Making (IMM) is a Surrey-based organisation specialising in running intergenerational music therapy projects, training, workshops and events.**

During the COVID-19 global pandemic IMM has adapted and innovated, delivering its work in a variety of formats and to a widened audience. Its activities during 2020 aimed to support older people, NHS staff, families, children, young people, encouraging community connection and creating intergenerational relationships and interactions to enhance the wellbeing of all those involved.

There were, of course, challenges in connecting with vulnerable and isolated groups and individuals during the pandemic. Participants and project stakeholders, including educators and professional carers, were also unable to access vital and familiar sources of creative activity and social interaction outside their homes and communities.

The primary challenge faced by IMM in adapting their practice during this time was how to establish meaningful reciprocal interactions, build relationship and community, and support participant wellbeing through creative activity, when much of this work had to be delivered remotely or in virtual environments.



# Introduction

## About this Evaluation

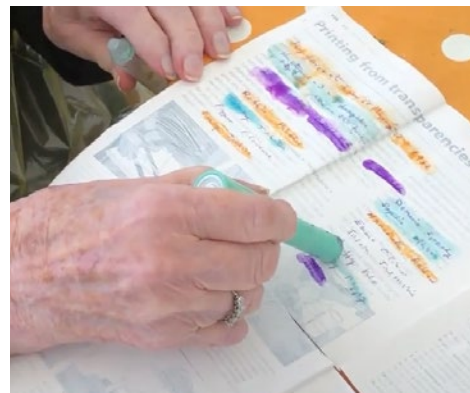
In order to reflect on its activities and process, and to support sustainable future provision of intergenerational music and creative practice, IMM commissioned an independent evaluation of its activities from March – October 2020. This was conducted by freelance evaluator and researcher, Dr Karen Gray. It was funded through Music for Dementia, the national campaign to highlight the value and importance of music in dementia care.

- This retrospective and mainly qualitative evaluation is based on analysis of in-depth semi-structured interviews with ten project stakeholders, alongside existing documentary and monitoring data. The aims and evaluation questions were to:
- Document and describe the activities that have taken place: *What has been delivered, and who has been involved?*
- Understand and communicate the experiences of stakeholders participating in, and delivering activities during the pandemic: *What have been the experiences of those involved?*

- Identify the barriers and facilitators for the success and effectiveness of activities: *What do stakeholders feel has worked, what has not worked, and why?*

Interviewees were purposively selected to provide a representative sample of different stakeholder types. They included younger and older people participants in creative activities, carers, educators, creative partners, family members, activity facilitators and members of the IMM team. Interviews were conducted on Zoom or in person by the evaluator or by members of the IMM team. They were audio-recorded and transcribed. An ethics process supported research, and verbal consent was recorded. Quotations are anonymised in reporting.

Transcriptions were managed and coded using qualitative analysis software, and simple inductive thematic analysis used to explore participant experience and identify the barriers and facilitators to practice.



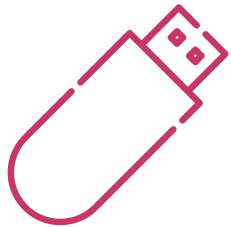


# About the Projects

This evaluation considers the COVID response work carried out by IMM between March – October 2020. Alongside standalone projects, IMM supported creative practitioners and existing project partners to remain connected while activities were suspended. They visited older people participants, provided resources for care home staff and carers and facilitated online training for 25 arts practitioners and care home staff in delivering intergenerational projects on and off-line.

From March 2020, the team created a 'Folder Full of Love' in response to lockdown and the increasing isolation, lack of activity and interaction being experienced by care home residents. Resources were collated on a Google drive. These were sourced on an ad-hoc basis or commissioned through IMM's network of creative and education partners and included video workshops, professional performances and artwork created by young people. The IMM team emailed the link to care homes and saved digital content to a USB stick for distribution in person.

## A Folder Full of Love



### **28 memory sticks**

were sent directly to care homes/ hospital wards



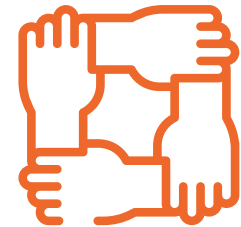
### **Google drive link**

was shared over 150 times



### We received **278 music videos**

that have been created by children (including classical performances, original songs, dances, poetry and art work)



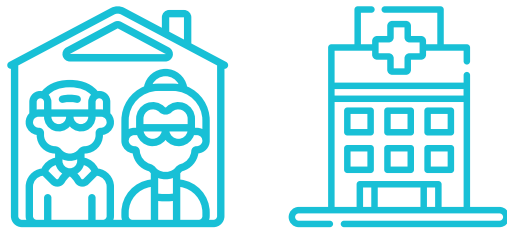
### **7 Freelance artists**

supported their work alongside ours

# About the Projects

## A Folder Full of Love

April 2020 saw the beginning of a new partnership with online literacy and creative education specialists Night Zookeeper. The 'Letter to a Keyworker' project involved young people using the Night Zookeeper platform to link with IMM contacts in hospitals, fire-stations, shops and care homes. In 'Caring Stars', young people were encouraged to create poetry and illustrations that would spread positive messages to health and care workers. Over 253 were submitted, and a selection were printed to rigorous health and safety standards and exhibited in 32 health and care settings.



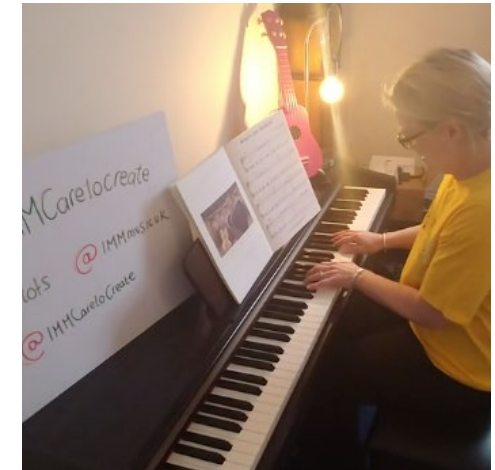
**25 care homes**  
and **7 hospitals**  
that spanned across the  
England and Scotland



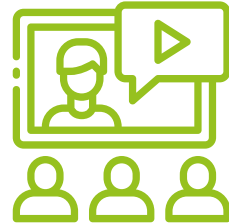
# About the Projects

## Care to Create online hub

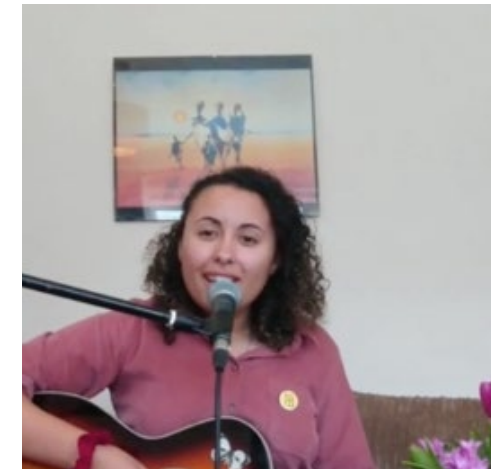
IMM launched its Care to Create online hub in June 2020 with a live free family fun weekend of online creative activities attended by 300 people. Care to Create links local artists and creative practitioners offering creative, educational or performance-based content with those in the community who might benefit from it. It offers three pathways for interaction: Get Creative includes prompts, resources and enablers for creative health and wellbeing activity; Get Support provides information and avenues for individuals wishing to find out about music therapy; Get Involved encourages different kinds of community participation.



**Arts for All**  
weekend reached reached  
**687 people**



**Traffic through website** was **454**  
between June - September



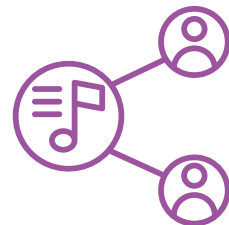
# About the Projects

## Musical Conversations

This project was developed in partnership with care provider MHA and the Chineke! Junior Orchestra, an ensemble founded with the aim of creating opportunities for emerging and established Asian, Black and ethnically diverse musicians aged between 11-22 years. This was a new collaboration brokered during COVID. Through a private Facebook group, care home residents were connected with Chineke! young musicians in order to request, share and play favourite songs and pieces of music.



**78 people**  
in the  
**Facebook**  
group community



Over  
**30 musical**  
**exchanges**



**im m**

MY NAME IS \_\_\_\_\_

MY AGE IS \_\_\_\_\_

MY FAVOURITE SONG IS \_\_\_\_\_

BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_

**CHINEKE!**  
FOUNDATION

**#MUSICALCONVERSATIONS**

# About the Projects

## Who I Am

Taking place over three weeks in the summer, this was IMM's only face to face project delivered in a care home during the pandemic. Three creative practitioners supported by the IMM team took four care home residents on a creative journey, using different art forms, with the culmination being the co-creation of an original piece of music. Challenges included working outside in a marquee in poor weather and complying with social distancing and necessary COVID-secure hygiene requirements.



**7 Care homes**  
involved



**260 downloads**  
of 'I Found Home' -  
original song



# You make me feel so young: A Portrait of Colin

Taking part in intergenerational sessions with IMM helped Colin to take up writing again – something he loved doing before losing his sight in 2016. He was able to share stories and his love of poetry with new young friends, including 11-year old Izzy. They would recite to each other, confide in one another and once the project had come to end, Izzy and her parents continued to visit him in the care home where he lives.

At the start of 2020, and inspired by his time involved in this project, Colin began to write a book of poetry. Breaking from the usual rules, he created a unique style of verse he calls 'Venture Poetry'.

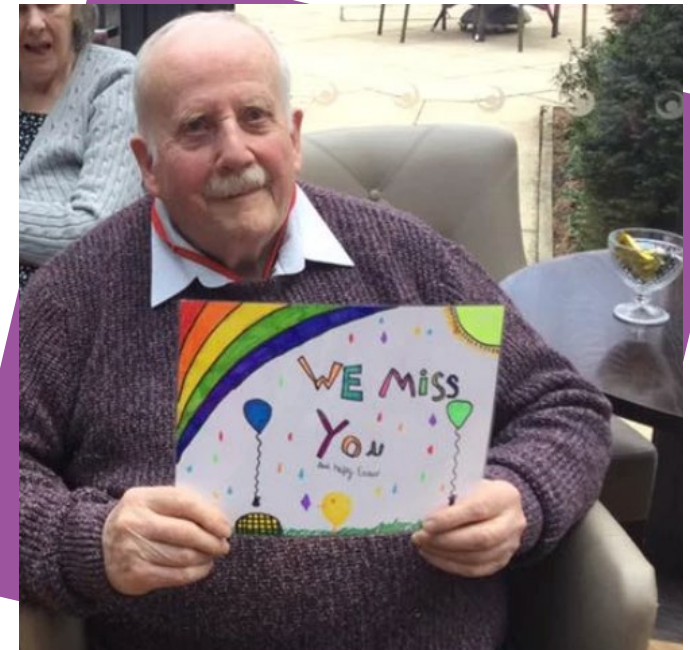
**Colin:** *That was part of the inspiration. I wrote my very first bit of poetry for the inspiration of those of that time. Shall I tell it to you?*

**Interviewer:** *Please do. Please do.*

**Colin:** *At Silvermere, we come to share. The old and the young with a song to be sung and a verse to rehearse showing the world a way to address the problem of stress. That's the first bit I had ever written!*

Lockdown has been frustrating for Colin. He likes to have 'a project' – something meaningful to occupy his time – and it has been hard for people to find time to help him with his poetry. He is desperate to share his ideas with others, including teachers and children at the local primary school, for whom he is developing lesson plans based around the new style of writing.

During lockdown Colin and his young friends kept in touch using FaceTime. He and a young Chineke! Orchestra musician exchanged messages as part of the Musical Conversations project, including a specially recorded version of his favourite song – Frank Sinatra's 'You make me feel so young'.



# The Evidence Background

The benefits of taking part in programmes that link younger and older people are well established. Reported outcomes for older people, including those living with dementia, include increased physical and cognitive activity and engagement as well as improvements in mood, health and wellbeing.

Younger people taking part have been shown to develop greater empathy with those from other generations, accompanied by an increased sense of community responsibility, increased self-worth, and enhanced awareness around ageing and conditions such as dementia.

Programmes may also increase feelings of belonging and reduce feelings of social isolation by creating reciprocal social bonds between participants (Martins et al., 2019; Gerritzen et al., 2019; Detmer et al., Galbraith et al., 2015).

It is common for intergenerational programmes to include shared recreational creative activities, including music, as a means to encourage interactions. There is surprisingly little evidence available for intergenerational music therapy programmes (Clements-Cortés, 2019), despite the growing understanding around the beneficial effects of music therapy for a range of conditions.

It is often suggested that the type of programme and the activities included in it may be less a determining factor in its success than the structure and processes through which contact and relationships between generations are established and managed (Martins et al., 2019; Belgrave, M, 2011). Careful planning and equal involvement of the generations, an activity and aim that is meaningful for all, and opportunities for continuity have been found important (Vieria & Sousa, 2016).

The length of a programme and the consistency of its interactions affect whether meaningful relationships can develop between participants (David et al., 2018). Knowledge-building and training for both participants and facilitators is helpful, as is dementia education when people living with the condition are involved (Gualano et al., 2018; Galbraith et al., 2015).

To date there has been little research around the effectiveness of virtual or blended intergenerational music programmes. A combination of virtual and live interactions within a project may be effective in enhancing quality of life among older adults (Belgrave & Keown, 2018). Music-based mobile applications have also been recommended as a means to address digital literacy in older adults, and for enhancing interactions with intergenerational contacts (Detmer et al., 2019).

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), 91% of all adults in the UK had recently used the internet when surveyed in 2019. Recent internet use in the 65-74 years age group increased from 52% in 2011 to 83% in 2019. Of the 4 million adults who had never used the internet, more than half were aged 75+ and more of these were women than men. However, when compared with other groups, women aged 65-74 years, showed the highest percentage point increase in recent internet use (ONS, 2019).

There is further scope for exploring ways in which technology might be used in promoting contact and beneficial connections between the generations (Canedo-Garcia et al, 2017). Experiences during COVID are likely to generate further interest in this.

# Evaluation Findings: Experience

The work delivered by IMM during COVID enabled older and younger people to maintain existing valued connections and to create new ones. These extended beyond the restrictions and lockdowns. Participants were supported to make contact through a variety of media in ways they felt as beneficial for their wellbeing. The most successful activities involved active and reciprocal exchanges of stories, music, and other content with personal meaning, and those which enabled demonstration of feelings of mutual responsibility and care for others within and beyond their own communities.





# Evaluation Findings: Experience

## Creating and maintaining connections

### Impacts of Covid

Professional carers observed deterioration in the wellbeing, and the cognitive and physical health of older people in their care during the pandemic. They attributed these to a loss of regular structured activities and of social interaction. They described attempts to keep older people in their care safe and happy while their time, energy and resources were stretched. Connections to the outside world were restricted. While they recognised technology as useful, it was not seen as a satisfactory replacement for physical contact. Some older people interviewed described feelings of abandonment and disconnection.

For younger people, the pandemic had disrupted routines, sometimes leaving them frustrated at not being able to see friends and family. Some told us that it had fuelled a desire to actively connect with and support others through creative activity.

*I wanted to write something that I thought lots of people would listen to and it would make them happy because they were going through the same thing.*

YOUNG PERSON, MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS



Creative practitioners faced threats to their own mental wellbeing as well as to their livelihood. Adapting their practice in innovative ways required extra investment in time, and sometimes the acquisition of new skills and resources. For the IMM team, it was particularly painful to see the impact of isolation on individuals living within the communities with whom they worked.



***“It is nice to know they still care”***

As traditional doors to arts and cultural participation and to social interaction closed, older people previously involved in IMM projects, whether resident in the community or in care homes, expressed feelings of loss:

*And then he was stopped from coming because of the lockdown. And so I had five months of virtually nothing.*

CARE HOME RESIDENT

*Everything sort of came full stop. Not just with IMM, but with all the well, the other groups, the church, the ukulele evenings. I mean I think its three, four clubs. All of those evenings ended.*

CARER OF SOMEONE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

# Evaluation Findings: Experience

## Creating and maintaining connections

These feelings were understood and appreciated by the young participants:

*“I did think about it when lockdown happened, that these people were stuck in the big home but not able to see anyone because they were too old.”* - YOUNG PERSON, MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS

Nevertheless, IMM projects and resources enabled participants to maintain contact with each other. For care home residents, for example, letters from young friends or FaceTime calls meant that there was some continuity for previously developed relationships, even if face-to-face interaction had to stop.

*“We have been sent lots of cards and pictures which I have put in my room and it is nice to know they still care as I felt a little abandoned when it first started.”* - OLDER PERSON, CARE HOME RESIDENT

Manifesting connection through tangible, physical objects such as a printed picture or a handwritten letter may have been of particular importance for older people, including those living with dementia.

*“There was a chap in one of the care homes, he was living with dementia and he had taken one of these pictures and he’d put it up next to his bed. And every morning he got up and he read through this poem. And so for him, again, it was sort of a reminder that there was someone who cared enough to, you know, create something for him.”* - IMM TEAM MEMBER

*“One small thing that makes a huge difference”*

Projects such as Caring Stars and Musical Conversations gave participants a chance to exercise and demonstrate social responsibility through their actions – to show they cared about others.

*“Life has changed, but we’re fine. And because we’re fine, we have to celebrate the fact that, you know, everything’s okay with us. And if you can, just one small thing makes a huge difference to someone else.”* - FAMILY MEMBER, MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS

Through the collaborative projects with Night Zookeeper, young people were encouraged to consider communities beyond their own homes and streets:

*“...even just knowing the addresses was a huge thing for the kids just to know that they were looking it up on Google Maps and finding out where it was and find they were interested in finding out where the other exhibitions were and noting it down.”* - CREATIVE PARTNER

Interactions had the potential for effects that ‘rippled’ out into hospital and care communities, but also more widely. For example, Night Zookeeper reported a parent hosting an exhibition of works created by the young people in the windows of a village shop, a focal point for people on their lockdown walks.

# Evaluation Findings: Experience

## Creating and maintaining connections

Participants found the experience most emotionally satisfying when activities were reciprocal or personally meaningful:

*"I love music for a number of reasons, but the main reasons are how it makes me feel and how I can show those emotions to other people. So playing for people and getting my favourite song back as well, it was one of the things I think music is really about, it just seemed great to do."* - YOUNG PERSON, MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS

*"...it's nice when you know the people who's playing the music, it matters that bit more, especially when you haven't seen them for months."* - CARER OF SOMEONE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

During lockdown there were limited opportunities for sharing stories across the generations, an activity, participants reported as enjoyable and which promoted positive generational attitudes:

*"I miss talking to the children and telling them stories about my life"* - CARE HOME RESIDENT

*"...it was so cool hearing all the stories from the old men about the war and what they had done with their lives"* - YOUNG PERSON, MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS

IMM projects were able to sustain elements of this activity in virtual environments. For example, Night Zookeeper projects enabled young people to write about their own experiences and Musical Conversations inspired participants to exchange musical histories.



# Evaluation Findings: Experience

## Enhancing wellbeing

Participants reported feeling happier as a result of engaging in and sharing creative activities with others. The young people interviewed described activities such as playing a musical instrument or singing, practising and developing technical and musical skills, or crafting a poem and seeing their words in print as helping to build self-esteem and confidence. Creative activity was described by some as a means to express emotions, and perhaps even to regulate them during difficult times.

***“It made me feel really happy”***



For the young people from the Chineke Orchestra, sharing a love of music and their skills with others was clearly enjoyable:

***“I loved that I was able to share my music with these people, and the fact that they really liked it made me feel really happy.”*** - YOUNG PERSON, MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS

It provided an opportunity for demonstrating and developing musical skills when the opportunities to play together in person were limited, and for building confidence in performance.

***“I also played my trumpet and filmed it as I wanted to show them how much better I was getting.”*** - YOUNG PERSON, MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS

Sharing the end product of creative activity was motivational. Watching a video of their intergenerational partner listening to their side of the ‘musical conversation’, seeing images of their Caring Stars poems and prints being exhibited, or participating in a broadcast event, were high points for the young people involved.

***“It is so cool! IMM got my song on the BBC isolation podcast and I was interviewed which means loads of people heard it and hopefully liked it!”*** YOUNG PERSON, MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS

***“...the kids were all over the moon. Any way to be chosen to be exhibited at all or to just have the opportunity to be exhibited. We saw high numbers of engagement with them.”*** - CREATIVE PARTNER

Such events may have taken on particular importance during lockdown when regular opportunities for performance or celebration of skills were limited.



***“it gave them a voice”***

In its COVID projects, IMM created opportunities through which creativity became itself a medium for emotional self-expression:

***“I just feel really there’s only so much that people can say in words and in such a troubling time, really. Music felt like the best way to get this out really.”*** - YOUNG PERSON, MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS

# Evaluation Findings: Experience

## Enhancing wellbeing

Creating a short rhyming poem, or writing a letter thanking a key worker became tools through which young people could explore their own experiences and thoughts:

*“...it gave them a voice and a platform to talk to and about how they were feeling.”* - CREATIVE PARTNER

Facilitators found that creative approaches blending wellbeing and creativity elements in a safe and non-judgemental environment, such as an art journaling workshop, were helpful in enabling this:

*“I got lots of different elements within the workshop to sort of break out from that inner critic. And I think that’s probably what people liked.”* - ARTIST FACILITATOR

One of the older people who had previously taken part in IMM activities explained how approaching poetry writing without being worried that he was doing it ‘right’ had spurred him on to greater creativity.

*“But you know, something very special happens when you just let go, doesn’t it? You just let your mind go. You don’t have to stick to the rules.”* - OLDER PERSON, MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS

Professional carers reported that the activities delivered by IMM also provided a useful starting point for sustained and meaningful interaction and conversation with the older people in their care.



# Evaluation Findings: Barriers and Facilitators to Practice

While many of IMM's activities achieved their aims, reflecting on the barriers and challenges they experienced helps to highlight which elements of successful practice might be useful in building sustainable solutions for them and for other providers of similar activity in future.

It was challenging to support the IMM contracted staff and its network of commissioned freelance practitioners through periods of isolation, direct threats their livelihoods, health and wellbeing. Navigating these demands required vigilance and responsiveness to changing conditions and individual circumstances.



# Evaluation Findings: Barriers and Facilitators to Practice

## What was difficult?

### One-way interactions

In common with many other organisations, IMM's first response to the pandemic was to seek ways of providing its clients and partners in care homes and communities with digital resources for independent use at home. They created and commissioned these through partners and freelance creatives and therapists. While some practitioners had moved quickly to creating digital content, others found it more difficult to adapt their practice, and may have lacked the skills and resources to easily do so. Creative practitioners reported spending time planning and creating digital content for less reward than they would previously have received.

IMM provided multiple points of access to digital content for its clients. The team hand-delivered USB sticks, and offered online provision first through a Google drive and then the dedicated Care to Create web pages. They also created and delivered printed resources. Simply getting content into places where it could be useful was logistically and technically difficult, as well as time-consuming.

While of good quality, most of the resources created enable only one-way interactions with recorded content. It was therefore very difficult for IMM to assess their effectiveness.

In their pre-COVID practice, IMM described a carefully structured process during which space and time is created within which social interactions take place and relationships to build:

*“...those moments after the music making, with the tea and biscuits, those little nuggets happen and take place between the elders and the children. So, all of that we couldn't do.” -*

IMM TEAM MEMBER

Important social and other interactions could not happen easily when recorded content was viewed. During COVID, participants felt the loss of these moments keenly:

*“...obviously there it isn't the same connection, literally watching somebody on a video. Obviously, this is sort of like nowhere near as good an experience, obviously. It wasn't just the listening to or playing along with the music or the singing, it was all the other social interaction that those involved with the IMM group and with the Sunflower Cafe, are groups that [person with dementia] is now missing out on.” -*

PROFESSIONAL CARER OF PERSON LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

# Evaluation Findings: Barriers and Facilitators to Practice

## What was difficult?

### The difficulty with technology

Participants had widely differing levels of knowledge, skills, and access to technology. As one of the creative practitioners interviewed commented, facilitating successful connections in virtual environments requires facilitators to have experience and skill, and for participants to be familiar with the technology and comfortable engaging with it.

While younger people reported enjoying learning new skills, even they sometimes found it difficult to do everything online. Digital tools such as FaceTime or Zoom had been used successfully by some older people to keep in contact with friends and family. However, others found them challenging, unrewarding, or unsuitable for complex activity such as making and enjoying music together.

*“...honestly, it's just not the same. I just don't get anything from it. We can't keep pace with the music. He can't interact with people.”* -  
CARER OF PERSON LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

Carers noted that physical factors such as poor hearing or eyesight, as well as limited cognitive capacity, compromised some people's ability to engage with technology. People living with dementia did not always understand that something on a screen was 'live' or that a two-way conversation was possible, meaning that they treated it as pre-recorded.

*“...it has been this balance, hasn't it, trying not to force this whole digital thing on people that don't understand and don't really need to. But then finding ways to stay connected is quite tricky...”* -  
ACTIVITY CO-ORDINATOR

Early attempts by IMM to create a phone 'buddying' system as an alternative to contact through other kinds of technology proved logistically difficult to implement and uptake for them was poor.

It was commonly agreed that the benefits of being physically present in a room with other people were not possible to replicate using only the technology available:

*“...there's nothing like face to face, you know, nuances and reading and understanding what's going on in the room a bit better.”* -  
CREATIVE PRACTITIONER



# Evaluation Findings: Barriers and Facilitators to Practice

## What worked well?

### Collaboration and mediators

The partnership with digital literacy and education innovator, Night Zookeeper, gave two IMM projects a safe and trusted digital infrastructure through which to manage access to younger people participants and support their creativity online. For Night Zookeeper, the extension from the digital into the physical world of care homes and hospitals, as well as the distribution of participants work in print, were also new and rewarding aspects of this work.

In collaborative projects, IMM ensured their partners understood the fundamentals of intergenerational practice, including awareness around ageing and conditions such as dementia.

“The children and the residents know what intergenerational is, know why it’s important. Understand, you know, a bit more about why they get involved. And I think that’s where the magic happens, because there’s an inherent sort of understanding behind it.” IMM team member

This meant that educators and family members could – in turn – pass this knowledge on to participants.



**“The teacher said it was important to think about people in our community who may be lonely, and I thought of Rosie and John and Jean in the home that were not allowed any visitors.” - YOUNG PERSON, MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS**

**“...we’ve had lots of conversations about the fact that music can touch people so deeply even when everything else is at sea...” - FAMILY MEMBER, MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS**

# Evaluation Findings: Barriers and Facilitators to Practice

## What worked well?

### A clear, simple and safe offer

Professional carers are key mediators for intergenerational practice. However, the available time and resources to support activity were severely stretched during the pandemic, as one of the older people who had been exchanging letters with young friends noted:

*“I’ve still got a few letters to write. I just you know, with only an hour a week I can’t get help from anybody.” -*

OLDER PERSON PARTICIPANT

Under these circumstances, care staff appreciated when activities had a clear and attractive premise, as with Musical Conversations.

*“...it was really lovely to have something already created, already set up with form that was really easy or quick to use [...] For the staff, it was really simple and easy because we knew exactly what we needed to provide.” -* ACTIVITY CO-ORDINATOR

Family members also appreciated the simplicity of the exchange:

*“And it’s such a simple thing, someone says ‘oh I’d like you to play this song’ and it’s such a gift to be able to give someone, to make them remember that they’re not forgotten, that there are people out there who still care.” -*

FAMILY MEMBER, MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS

The ‘conversation’ videos created were short and personal and had sustained value for care staff:

*“... that child talking to them, saying, ‘Hello, Barbara, I’m playing your favourite song’. And that that was a really good thing because they didn’t have to have any memory of the previous conversation that occurred [...]. And we played it to them a couple of times as well. And each time it is kind of new for them.” -*

ACTIVITY CO-ORDINATOR)

Interviewees emphasised the importance of including real ‘tangible’ elements alongside the virtual when working with older people or in health or care settings where staff and resident access to technology can be limited. One carer interviewed suggested that he would have liked activities to have been delivered in outdoor as well as in digital spaces.

Interviewees reported IMM as providing what felt a safe and COVID-secure environment for face-to-face activity when it was possible, and facilitators worked hard to ensure that participants felt comfortable and safe in virtual environments.

# Evaluation Findings: Barriers and Facilitators to Practice

## What worked well?

### Meaning and personalisation

Access to high quality recorded music for entertainment purposes is now very easy. Following the initial period in which they pulled together or signposted resources for their existing clients, IMM's aim during the pandemic was instead to provide wider access to musical content and activity intended to actively build relationships and support the personhood and wellbeing of those involved.

The simplest of routes used for this was through the creation of personalised videos or recordings for individuals or individual groups.

*"...there's a [video] more specifically aimed at [named person living with dementia] to cheer him up and he did very much enjoy that"* -  
CARER OF PERSON LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

*"[The activity co-ordinator] will sit and play me some music and I can tell it has been sung by someone else, not the original person but that makes it all the more joyful!"* -  
OLDER PERSON PARTICIPANT

Individual music sessions delivered live into care homes on Zoom enabled facilitators to connect directly with participants, meaning care staff or residents could shout out requests or facilitators could encourage and speak to a resident by name.



# Evaluation Findings: Barriers and Facilitators to Practice

## What worked well?

### Building in structure and reciprocity

However, it was through structured approaches involving active creative work, as well as its reception ('watching' or viewing it) that more meaningful sustained engagement was achieved, with the potential for higher levels of wellbeing benefit for participants:

*"...there's a reason, a reason why people get involved. [...] And I think that's the difference between just providing a worksheet or a song for someone to listen to. - IMM TEAM MEMBER*

The length of project and its follow-up activities as well its structure, may be significant in enabling activity providers to achieve their goals. As one of the elders put it:

*"That's all I wanted. I wanted a project." - OLDER PERSON PARTICIPANT*

Building in opportunity for reciprocal interactions within remotely delivered activity extended the benefits further. In the projects involving Night Zookeeper there was a continuing process of engagement, partly facilitated by the digital infrastructure of the Night Zookeeper site, partly by the relationships IMM had with care homes and healthcare settings: so, the children received a brief to inspire creativity at home, submitted their work and received feedback, and then selected work was distributed online as well as in printed form for exhibition in the wards or in care homes.

A flow of activity backwards and forwards in digital and physical spaces presented multiple opportunities and reasons to engage with the project, and connections that could be sustained and nourished over time.

In Musical Conversations the reciprocity was more direct and personal, care staff and family members were encouraged to film the receipt of personalised videos so that these films could in turn be shared back to the young people. This also meant that the collaborating partners were able to capture and evaluate responses, helping them understand better how to best facilitate future activity and potentially to understand its effects. These activities may have been helpful in encouraging some young people participants to engage with the project over longer periods.

And finally, the 'Who I am' project demonstrated that a small group of care home residents could safely participate in and benefit from facilitated creative activity involving multiple artforms applied in a structured process over a three-week period and in person under COVID-secure conditions.

# Conclusions and Implications for Future Practice

During COVID, IMM's sustained intergenerational interactions and exchanges were able to support inclusion for individuals, deliver reported wellbeing benefits, and promote active social citizenship during a period of crisis and isolation, even when delivered in virtual or blended environments.

Because such activities retain the potential to overcome generational barriers and to break down ageist stereotypes, they may have an important role to play in promoting a more inclusive society as the world recovers from the pandemic.

To be effective, remote or virtual intergenerational creative activities need a clear and simple premise. The digital or physical media used should reflect the individual and contextual circumstances and needs of those involved.

Structured projects encouraging reciprocal and personal engagement over a sustained period of time are likely to have the potential to deliver greater wellbeing and other benefits for participants, including supporting the personhood of young and older people.

When innovating or adapting intergenerational practice to remote or virtual settings, creative providers will benefit from working with collaborators who can provide complementary skills, resources, and a trusted or familiar, and safe environment in which participants can engage.

Identifying effective means for training and building relationships with mediators such as care staff and family members who can support participants to understand and take part in activity will be essential to effective delivery of remote practice. Ensuring that these kinds of understandings are in place has previously been shown to be essential for successful intergenerational practice.

Understanding how to deliver activity in a mix of physical and virtual settings when safe, and which kinds of activities work best for which participants and in which environments should be a focus for future practice and research. This should include exploration of how to enable mutual and meaningful social interaction as well as to facilitate creative activity.



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# References

## Organisations mentioned in this report:

**Intergenerational Music Making:** [www.imm-music.com](http://www.imm-music.com)

**Night Zookeeper:** <https://www.nightzookeeper.com/>

**Chineke! Junior Orchestra:** <https://www.chineke.org/chineke-junior-orchestra>

**Methodist Homes (MHA):** <https://www.mha.org.uk/>

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**Karen Gray (Evaluator):** [kcrgray@gmail.com](mailto:kcrgray@gmail.com)



### MISSION STATEMENT

Together with Music is a virtual, intergenerational campaign that will build connections between care homes, residents, older people and their local schools and youth groups.

Through music and the act of music making, we aim to raise awareness, establish strong networks and in turn, tackle loneliness, isolation and promote sustainable socialising for those most vulnerable especially during the winter months when so many are feeling isolated and disconnected – and beyond when we can meet again!

This campaign will encourage community partnerships and empower care staff, teachers and community members to play an active role in their neighbourhoods.

Through connection and collaboration, we will build strong, creative and resilient communities, whilst offering both the young and the old opportunities to explore, develop and come together with music. It starts with a song!



### HOW TO GET INVOLVED

-  **Step 1:** Register your organisation & become a TwM member!
-  **Step 2:** Await your membership approval and introduction email from your TwM Connector.
-  **Step 3:** Access your profile and share your song!

**LAUNCH PARTNERS:**    

**SPONSORED BY:**   

**SUPPORT IN KIND:** Power Change, Cool Care, Independent Age, Oomph!

 Twitter - @IntergenTwM  
 Facebook - @IntergenTwM  
 Instagram - @IntergenTwM

For more information contact:  
[hello@togetherwithmusic.org.uk](mailto:hello@togetherwithmusic.org.uk)  
[www.togetherwithmusic.org.uk](http://www.togetherwithmusic.org.uk)

# We want to hear from you ...

This project has only captured the work Intergenerational Music Making has been carrying out over the past few months. We are aware that many other organisations and communities are keen to or are already establishing intergenerational creative connections. We want to hear about your projects and initiatives in your community. Here at IMM we are passionate about working in partnership and collaboration so please do get in touch and together we can bring more groups together to empower, enable and evolve.

## Please do get in touch to connect:

E: [info@imm-music.com](mailto:info@imm-music.com)

W: [www.imm-music.com](http://www.imm-music.com)

E: [hello@togetherwithmusic.org.uk](mailto:hello@togetherwithmusic.org.uk)

W: [www.togetherwithmusic.org.uk](http://www.togetherwithmusic.org.uk)

## Socials:

Facebook: @IntergenTwM / <https://www.facebook.com/IntergenTwM>

Twitter: @IntergenTwM / <https://twitter.com/IntergenTwM>

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Lanesborough School, Guildford

Gordons School, Surrey

Avery Homes

FOTE

Anchor Care Homes

Caring Homes Group

MHA

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Sophie Mawhinney

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Oomph!

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Frimley Hospital, NHS

St Peter's Hospital, NHS

Royal Surrey Hospital, NHS

British Association of Music Therapy

Church of the Good Shepherd, Pyrford

Pyrford Primary School, Surrey

# Quotes...

***“It is always so important to bring generations together and the IMM ‘Making Musical Bridges’ project sounds like a fantastic way of doing so.”*** - THE RT HON ANNE MILTON MP, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR GUILDFORD, MINISTER OF STATE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS AND SKILLS

***“Intergenerational Music Making seems like an amazing initiative and we were delighted to learn about it”.*** - HORTENSE HUMEAU, PROJECT ASSISTANT, JO COX FOUNDATION

***“Half the time I don’t know if I’m coming or going but when I’m here with the children in the music I know I’m supposed to be here and I know where I am”.*** - ANNIE, CARE HOME RESIDENT LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

***“The sessions were MIND BLOWING!!! I loved visiting the elderly each week and especially after the music we sat and talked with them whilst having some juice and a biscuit”.*** - YEAR 7 STUDENT

***“There’s something about having children on site which makes residents feel more human and gives them permission to care about others. It boosts their confidence and feeling of self-worth, when I tell them the children are coming their faces light up”.***  
- FOTE ACTIVITY CO-ORDINATOR

***“This is a fantastic initiative to support patients, carers and their families when they feel most vulnerable. The therapeutic impact of art and poetry is well known, and we’re delighted to be supporting this project across Surrey”.*** - NEIL SELBY, NORTH WEST SURREY, COMMISSIONING MANAGER FRAILTY AND INTEGRATED CARE

***“Care homes are especially mindful of the need to consider the emotional and spiritual well-being of residents whilst restrictions are in place to protect them from Covid-19. This project will bring a ray of sunshine to thousands of lives and help counter feelings of isolation during the winter months”.*** - QUOTE FROM PROFESSOR MARTIN GREEN, CEO CARE ENGLAND

***“This is great and such a lovely idea! ..... I have already received some lovely words and pictures via IMM and all are enjoying receiving them, please keep them coming and thank you”.***  
- DR EMMA WILKINSON, CONSULTANT GERIATRICIAN AT ST. PETER’S HOSPITAL

***“Please see the photos of the lovely poems by Isabella, Attia and William. They have brightened up our ward and both the patients and staff love them. Thank you very much and hopefully we will see you soon”.*** - TYLER HART AT FRIMLEY HOSPITAL, NHS



***“I am going to miss our weekly meetings, I always love seeing the children and singing with them, it was the highlight of my week... In the words of Frank Sinatra.. They make me feel so young!”***

- COLIN, AGE 90, RESIDENT AT SILVERMERE CARE HOME



# Please click on these links to hear and see the projects in action

**March - October 2020 IMM in action**

<https://vimeo.com/453772171>

**Musical Conversations with the Chineke! Junior Orchestra**

<https://vimeo.com/461759111/8055581a88>

**I've Found Home, original Song written by Oldhall residents**

<https://vimeo.com/460914240>

**Care to Create Best Bits**

<https://vimeo.com/432788943>

**Over the Hedge**

<https://vimeo.com/496227548>

**12 Days of Christmas - An Intergenerational IMM Christmas**

songwriting challenge <https://vimeo.com/487860255>

**Colin's Poem**

<https://vimeo.com/482557602>

**It starts with a song**

<https://vimeo.com/500448704>

**TwM and IMM Christmas Concert**

<https://youtu.be/pLU2nfd6Ew>





**Thank you!**

**Charlotte Miller**

[www.imm-music.com](http://www.imm-music.com)

[www.togetherwithmusic.org.uk](http://www.togetherwithmusic.org.uk)





**WARM-UPS.**  
**HELLO SONG**  
An activity using call and response. All you do is follow my hand gestures and what I sing.  
SING!  
"READY?  
HOW ARE YOU? (SING NOW AND SING)  
SING NAME, SINGING NAME, DOING NAME, DOING AND HOW ARE YOU?  
SING NAME, SINGING NAME, DOING NAME, DOING AND HOW ARE YOU?

