

# Human Right to Cultural Life



## A Slice\* about Room for Music

\* Over 20 different strands of work took place between March and October 2022 as part of Rights Made Real Phase 2. Each of these strands was situated under one of 4 Human Rights. This Slice offers a slice of insight into one of those strands.

# HUMAN RIGHT TO CULTURAL LIFE

## A Slice about Room for Music

The Room for Music opportunity was a collaboration between musicians from the charity, Music in Hospitals & Care and the Rights Made Real Project. Two care homes took part in this opportunity. Each care home worked with the Music in Hospitals & Care music delivery team and was assigned a musician. The musicians shared music on 6 occasions in each care home.

Each care home invited specific staff to be involved and come alongside the musician. These staff tended to be activities staff and/or wellbeing enablers. This helped to orientate the musician to the environment and to the people living in the care home. There were opportunities for staff, the musicians and the Charity to share their reflections at 2 online reflective sessions led by the learning partners for the Rights Made Real programme.

During the visits, which lasted up to 2.5hrs, individual musicians played for a group of residents, for example in the lounge and other spaces in the home. They also had time to engage in one-to-one or small group music sessions with residents who are in their bedroom, or prefer not to be in large group settings.

### Creating Connections with the Right to Personal Expression and Principles from the National Care Standards

Some key elements of this opportunity connected with the right to cultural life and the Care Standards Principles were:

- Supporting people throughout the care home to express themselves through music and moving beyond the idea of 'a concert' to offering individual experiences, including one-to-one music experiences in people's own room
- Creating opportunities for collaborative music making, for example, taking part through percussion/tapping to develop some shared ownership of the music session.
- Raising awareness of the fact that engagement with music can take many forms (including sitting quietly with eyes closed) and evoke a range of emotions – not just happiness and to develop confidence to go with these emotions.

# What we've Heard

Stories from staff and musicians about the learning and impact of the room for music opportunity

“One gentleman who was not able to communicate fully with words had a visit from the musician in his room. We wondered if the musician would ‘get anywhere’ with the man as he had not necessarily shown an interest in music previously. We noticed the beautiful approach that the musician had – sitting alongside the man, trying to engage verbally, and playing snippets from some songs to see if and how they connected. The musician was gentle and keen to learn what music might connect. He asked the man if he liked the band Oasis and the man responded positively. The musician played this to him. The man’s face lit up. A range of emotions were visible – both smiles and tears. They may have been happy tears, reflective tears, tears related to some memories. We think the man felt so special to have a live performance just for him. After this it created a buzz in the home for conversation about music. People were going into the man’s room and talking about it with him. This gave a new and different focus of conversation in the home which was nice”.

“A resident was approaching end of life, the musician visited his room, his wife was there- and he played a song from their wedding day. His wife moved up towards the top of the bed, and lay her head beside her husbands as they listened to their song together”



“In one care home, we noticed how the musician would not necessarily ask what songs they liked – often people cannot remember names of tunes. Rather they may play a couple of chords or sing a few lines and the resident may join in or maybe sing a different song which the musician would then try to go along with. This felt more like doing music with the person rather than on or for. It was different from a sit down performance. The musician might sit beside individuals, get up and walk about and noticed residents may follow her. So combining music with movement seemed to be valuable”.

“The musician played soft music with a gentle tone to her voice- some residents were tapping, others had their eyes closed, and others joined in. There was one residents whose eyes were closed, and I didn’t know if she was asleep. The musician started singing a song that I had never heard before, and seemed to really connect with this resident- she kept her eyes closed, and mouthed along to the lyrics- she seemed to be blissfully lost in the song. Sometimes the afternoon can be a time when residents appear restless, and sometimes distressed- when the musician was there it was such a different afternoon in the lounge- there was a real calmness and ease”.

## 1 Thing you Might Want to Do

Check out the 'Personalised Musical Moments Resource' to read more about musicians offering one-to-one, small group personalised musical moments.

Click here or visit [www.rightsmadereal.org.uk](http://www.rightsmadereal.org.uk) Resources- Right to Cultural Life Resources

## Something you Might want to Ask or Think more About

What did you like in the stories above?

Have you or someone you know done something a little bit similar?

What has thinking about these stories sparked in you?

