


A scenic view of a stone arch bridge over a river in autumn. The bridge is a simple stone arch, and the water is calm, reflecting the bridge and the surrounding trees. The trees are in various shades of green, yellow, and orange, indicating the fall season. The sky is overcast and hazy. In the foreground, there are ripples in the water, likely from raindrops, and some fallen leaves are scattered on the surface. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

# Making Bridges With Music





**Make Bridges with Music 2017** was a creative music making project between the younger and older generation.

This project brought together older and younger people using music as a way of bridging and connecting the generations and explored what the very young and the very old could learn from and offer each other in a shared and supportive space.

The project was funded primarily by Awards For All with contributions from Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Doorstep Arts, Torbay Mayors Fund, The Great Places Scheme, Devon Community Foundation, Torbay Childminders & participating care homes.

There are two phases to the project:

- Creative sessions with old and young people rolled out in the summer of 2017
- Artistic responses to be performed publicly in November 2017

## **Who was involved?**

The project comprised of 6 music sessions in 3 residential care homes, these were:

- Warberries Nursing Home, Torquay
- Pendennis Care Home, Paignton
- Bethesda Care Home, Torquay

The project involved Torbay Childminders bringing early years children in to these three residential care homes on a weekly basis for six weeks to explore music and song writing with Hugh Nankivell & Steve Sowden experienced community artists (working with Doorstep Arts and The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra).

Each session was filmed and documented and the project was written up as a case study by Claudia Bladon a research assistant from Plymouth University; this is due to be released shortly.

## **What were the aims of the project?**

Across the UK generations are often divided through the segregated model of residential care and day care for the young, with each generation often having little or no contact with the other; with this reduction in the extended family a vital connection between generations is being lost.

- To help both generations to develop new and different relationships, improving participants social and emotional wellbeing.
- To explore and present the mutual benefits of intergenerational learning using music as the shared experience and the bridge between generations.
- To reduce isolation for the elderly based within residential care by bringing the community to them and in doing so improve community cohesion and break down the barriers between the old and the young
- To improve participants sense of self worth and self esteem for older and younger alike as they come together to support each other through music.
- To create CPD opportunities for care home staff and childminders
- To create new music for the community and beyond.

## **What had to be thought about?**

- What settings could be involved that could offer a space big enough to hold everyone and offer enough room to be creative in.
- Who would be invited to participate and should medical health such as dementia, preclude people?
- Who could bring children easily to the venues & be in a position to support the children appropriately?
- Creating risk assessments for both ages covering safeguarding, space, venue, activities, furniture i.e. tables and walkers etc.
- Timing of sessions and how long they lasted and how often, to ensure that everyone was actively engaged.
- Consents for participants to be involved in the project so that information about the project could be shared publicly.



What happened?







## **What difference did bringing the ages together make?**

Research methods included the Arts Observational Scale (ArtsObs); feedback from residents and children after the music sessions, telephone interviews with childminders, 4 face-to-face interviews with care home staff members and 1 focus group with the intervention team.

## **What did the research evidence?**

- Across settings mood changes registering satisfaction and happiness increased across sessions in both sets of participants.
- In terms of relaxation, the intervention had a positive effect, with participants showing at least two evident signs of relaxation across sessions.
- The intervention had a positive effect on young children. Children remained involved throughout the sessions across settings; two thirds of the children showed an increase in their happiness levels after the music sessions. Childminders reported that some of the children were speaking more, had developed strategies to connect with post-verbal people, developed connections with residents, took more risks, learnt new music repertoire, learnt to collaborate with a unique team (old and young) and learnt about boundaries.



## Evidence continued...

- The intervention provided elderly people with opportunities to learn, be inspired, be physically active and be motivated. They provided a sense of purpose and gave the space for support workers and residents to interact as equals.
- Care Home staff reported that interactive music and arts sessions are effective in increasing self-worth and wellbeing in the elderly. In contrast to performances, interactive music-making sessions offer participants opportunity to be active and engaged in the music-making process.
- Six case studies provided additional qualitative evidence of positive effects on the social and emotional wellbeing on elderly participants and young children.
- The intergenerational sessions provided a conduit for musical heritage, young children were exposed to old songs and nursery rhymes; likewise, the elderly population were exposed to new songs and games.

In summary, this intergenerational music intervention achieved key aims. It promoted learning, wellbeing and interactions beyond participants' social spheres. The intervention produced new musical outcomes for participants and also identified CPD opportunities for support care workers and childminders.

## How will this be developed within Torbay?

Lorraine George (Early Years Childcare Development Worker) is currently in the USA researching co-located care ie nurseries based within residential care homes. This has been funded by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust.

On her return she will be looking for interested care homes to engage with childminders, nurseries and pre-schools, to develop small scale projects around gardening, exercise, craft activities etc.

Funding is being sought to extend the 'Making Bridges with Music' project in 2018 and deliver it in more residential homes within the bay. If you would like to find out more about the project and watch the filming that took place, public performances are being held on:

- Friday 17th November 4.30pm - All Saints Church Hall, Torre
- Saturday 18th November - 7.30pm Paignton - Methodist Church Hall

If you would like to be involved in any aspect of intergenerational learning either regular visits from early years settings or the Music Project, please email Lorraine on [lorraine.george@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:lorraine.george@torbay.gov.uk)