



Gordon first began going to The Friendship Cabin in Fife in August 2021 when he was struggling with depression. He hadn't spoken a word to anyone for quite some time, and combined with the family issues he was dealing with, he had started to think that life was worthless.

"I wasn't coping. My life seemed to be going nowhere and I didn't know what to do about it," says Gordon. "My sons had moved away from Fife so I hardly saw them. I've been a carer for my mum for the last 15 years and things were getting on top of me. I wanted to get out into the community to speak to people and make new friends but I didn't know where to begin."

Gordon was put in touch with The Friendship Cabin, a community group based in Glenrothes that helps to improve the independence and quality of life of local residents.

"It was hard work for the first few weeks and I didn't think it was for me. I didn't feel I was fitting in with people and it was a real struggle. But I decided to keep at it.

I started getting involved, chatting to people at the group, which was a big change for me. But the biggest improvement happened when Music in Hospitals & Care's musician David Hood visited the group and I really enjoyed it. It brought back happy childhood memories and it really lifted my spirits. I'm a different person today thanks to the music.

I used to play the accordion when I was younger and played the drums in a band, so I can keep a beat. David really helped bring me out of myself and I found that being there, singing and dancing with everyone, was so good for my mental health. It calms me down.

The music has really helped me to forget my worries and cope much better. It brought back my confidence and really improved my mood. It has changed my life. My mum even comes along to The Friendship Cabin once a week now and enjoys the music too."

Gordon's story was featured in six Scottish newspapers in December as part of our 75th celebrations and to raise awareness of our live music at Christmas.

75 years of joy through live music

We have had a fantastic time celebrating our 75th anniversary with you. Thank you so much for your support throughout this important year.

We kicked things off with a special event at the Senedd parliament building in Cardiff, where our musicians demonstrated the music they share in different health and care settings.

In April we launched the first of three new resources - conversation starter cue cards for staff and family members to explore topics around music with a person they care for. During Mental Health Awareness Week we shared an animation around music for mindfulness, and on Arts in Care Homes Day our partners received a guide to make their own percussion instrument.

Over the summer we celebrated the amazing health and care settings we work with. Special live music took place across the UK in hospitals, hospices, care homes, day centres, special schools and in the community. We also launched our new three-year strategy to help us achieve our long term ambition for people in hospitals and care to enjoy a better quality of life and improved health outcomes.

13 November marked the date of the first meeting in 1947 that would lead to the



creation of the charity the following year. On this day we took the time to thank some of our amazing supporters, musicians, funders and health and care partners with 240 phone calls and 410 emails, including a special video message from one of our trustees.

This coincided with the launch of our BBC Radio 4 appeal with Mark Radcliffe, who has a personal connection to music for health and wellbeing having recovered from throat and neck cancer and witnessed his mother with dementia still singing after losing other forms of communication.

We are so grateful to everyone who donated to the appeal and delighted to announce that it raised £30,369 in total to help share the healing power of live music.

Building new partnerships

Several exciting programmes were launched in 2023 with new groups of all ages. Following the success of our live music for hearing impaired babies and toddlers in Manchester, a group for pre-school children in Stalybridge have had visits from our musicians every half term. Families have enjoyed seeing their little ones interacting with the instruments.



In Northern Ireland we embarked on a three year project with two health and social care trusts to explore regular programmes of live music and the benefits this can have for patients and staff. 20 hours of live music have been shared in the first year of the project across four settings for older people living with dementia and adults with drug and alcohol problems. One patient said that they had the “best day, all I did was laughed and smiled” and another said that it “made my anxiety reduce. It was good for my mood and made me relaxed.”



Voices of Music in Hospitals & Care

Laura Stephenson has been working with us in the South of England since 1986. She most recently performed at our Festive MusicalTea event in Walton-on-Thames.

“The first live music I did was at a mental health hospital called St Francis in Sussex. It was an Elizabethan programme and we actually got dressed up in costumes. So that was quite an induction!

The power of music is incredible. I hear families say they can't believe it because their father has disappeared, but then he'll be singing all the words of a song they didn't even know he knew.

I've loved the work and found it incredibly humbling and extraordinary. More than in any other way of making music, you have to give the best of yourself. You are thinking of other people all the way through and you really want to take them away for a while. That's such an incredible thing to be able to be a part of.



As the artist you're merely the vehicle for the music. You bring your own interpretation, but you're just passing it on really. Something that we all share in is the music. You're the vehicle through which it goes, but the participants are all having an influence and make a difference. I often find it quite difficult to do a regular concert then because I'm so used to really interacting with the audience. And that's the loveliest thing about it really.”



Roy Jones first became involved with Music in Hospitals & Care when he was ScottishPower Foundation's Community Manager for Wales and North West England. He has been volunteering with us since 2016.

“Being a volunteer ambassador has involved helping to raise awareness of the charity,

fundraising and going along to live music. In the beginning I went to observe quite a few new musicians, which was really good. More recently I have attended community events such as for the Co-op Local Community Fund in Wrexham and Chester.

Whilst at the Scottish Power Foundation I also went to a few launch events for programmes they funded. I remember one in Newtown in Mid Wales specifically. There were quite a few people just sitting around in the room, their faces totally blank. But as soon as the musician started singing, it was as if a light had just been switched on.

One gentleman had previously been in a Male Voice Choir and suddenly he just burst into song. And that was the time I think it came home to me that music can open doors that have been shut for a long time. It was quite profound. And it may not have lasted for long, but in that moment they just came alive. That's the real impact of Music in Hospitals & Care.”



Make a difference in 2024

There are lots of exciting fundraising opportunities for you to get involved in this year and help share the healing power of live music.

You can make it your own by hosting a quiz, bake sale, organising a raffle or combining all three! Whatever works for you.

Our new fundraising pack is full of top tips and information to make your fundraising activity a success. Visit mihc.org.uk/fundraising-pack to download yours today. Do contact us at hello@mihc.org.uk to let us know about your brilliant ideas and how we can support you.

We also have spaces in a range of events happening across the UK throughout 2024. Visit mihc.org.uk/challenge-events to find out more. You can pick from challenges including 5k and 10k runs, inflatable courses, marathons and even bungee jumps!



Thank you to everyone who has signed up for our 200,000 steps in February Facebook challenge. If you or someone you know is planning some longer walks this month then it's not too late to sign up. Visit our Facebook page facebook.com/MiHCUK to join the group and start your journey.

Music in Hospitals & Care on the news



We were delighted to be featured on ITV Wales at Pen-y-Bont Care Home, ITV London at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and ITV Granada at Age UK Trafford in December. The news teams spoke to people enjoying the music, our staff and musicians Nick Russell (pictured), Paul Kerr and Will Allen.

You can watch the features on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/c/MiHCUK

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If you would prefer not to receive our newsletter please get in touch with us at the above address to let us know. We value your support and would like to keep you informed of how you can help share the healing power of live music.

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