



Royal Edinburgh Hospital provides acute psychiatric and mental health services. We have been sharing live music there for over 40 years in partnership with Tonic Arts, the arts and health programme run by NHS Lothian Charity.

The programme aims to creatively enhance the patient, staff and visitor experience in NHS Lothian's hospitals, and we are proud to have been a part of this ever since we began sharing live music in Scotland in 1980.

Music in Hospitals & Care visits Canaan and Fairmile, which are Royal Edinburgh Hospital's dementia admission and assessment wards for patients over 65, around once a month. Our musicians share one hour of live music in each ward.

Soprano Daniela Hathaway draws on her extensive experience working with people living with dementia to create an interactive live music experience using percussion, textiles, and small instruments to encourage patients to participate.

"During my sessions I try to connect with the participants in different ways, to make sure they are present in that moment," says

Daniela. "Many of the things I do are singing well-known songs and encouraging them to sing along with me. I will use a variety of props and instruments to get the participants more engaged. I sometimes also do some mindfulness and relaxation at the end. We often finish with a goodbye song singing everyone's names."

Daniela's repertoire ranges from traditional Scottish songs to jazz classics, musical theatre favourites and a moving rendition of Schubert's *Ave Maria*. Daniela was born in Buenos Aires and brings a Latin American flavour to her live music experiences with drum improvisations that captivate patients and staff alike.

Daniela said of her most recent visit to Canaan and Fairmile wards: "It went really well - both staff and patients joined in, were keen to sing all the songs with me and were great at improvising with the drum."

There was a lady that sang very beautifully and would suggest other songs for us to sing. We expanded the music to include *Autumn Leaves*, where we played with real leaves, and everyone connected through the music."

Celebrating inspiring women

In this issue of our newsletter, we are celebrating exceptional women. From our inspiring musicians sharing the healing power of live music with people across the UK who may not otherwise get to experience it, to our dedicated health and care partners and fantastic fundraisers.

Our professional musicians are specially chosen for their blend of musical talent, sensitivity and people skills. To mark International Women's Day earlier this month, we asked two of our musicians in the South of England about their approach to sharing live music in different health and care settings.



Guitarist and banjoist Sathari Kam, who regularly visits neonatal units as part of our Lullaby Hour programme, explains: "For babies, the music has to be gentle – low, soothing tones rather than anything too loud or energetic. Lately, I've been favouring the guitar over the banjo because it has one more string and a softer tone. You can make it sound almost like a harp by plucking it a certain way."

Elkie Jeffery, Music in Hospitals & Care singer and ukulelist, highlights the importance of selecting the right music to engage people and create meaningful experiences for patients, residents, families and staff: "I think a good bit of advice is choosing the right material for the people you're playing to. Working on your repertoire and making sure that you've got a good range of eras, decades and styles."

Read more at mihc.org.uk/iwd-2025.

Moving to music is a natural physiotherapy

March is also Brain Injury Awareness Month, and we have been shining a light on the important role live music plays in patient recovery. It can spark memories, reduce frustration and anxiety, and support physiotherapy by helping to build muscle strength and improve coordination.

Our musicians visit Homerton Hospital's Regional Neurological Rehabilitation Unit (RNRU) in North East London twice a month. Most of the patients on the ward have sustained life-changing traumatic brain injuries, often requiring long-term care and rehabilitation.

Leisure Coordinator Alexis Azcueta has seen first-hand how live music makes a difference:

"Patients who have issues with communication, memory or emotion, I see them singing along. While they often can't form new sentences, they can remember a melody and most of the words to a song. It can be quite emotional for patients as well. It can take them back to different times, a time before their brain injury. It's not necessarily



a bad thing for patients to get emotional like this, it allows them to process their feelings and can even empower them to embrace those emotions."

Residents at Marillac Neurological Care Centre in Essex get similar benefits from the live music shared by Music in Hospitals & Care musicians.

Activities Coordinator, Cathy Gotts, explains: "It brings out so many emotions - it makes them happy, it also calms them. Some of our residents can get quite agitated and some don't leave their room all that often, but they come out for the music."



Musical marathon fundraising

On Sunday 27 April, team Music in Hospitals & Care will once again take part in the London Marathon, running 26.2 miles and raising money to help share the healing power of live music. One of our incredible fundraisers Kate Turner, based in Solihull in the West Midlands, shares why she chose to run for us and what music means to her.

“I think running is just a great way to kind of get away from things and do something for yourself and your own mental health. Around two or three years ago, I began running the occasional half marathon and I thought - I’m in my 40s, if I don’t run a marathon now I never will, and I’ve seen this amazing charity I’d like to raise money for. I was so pleased that I was chosen by Music in Hospitals & Care. To be given one of their places was a real privilege.



I run a Yamaha music school in Solihull, and I thought I could really raise some money through my work. I reached out to Yamaha and they were really supportive, providing prizes for a raffle such as a keyboard and a streaming kit, and they donated £200 directly to my fundraising, which I wasn’t expecting at all. I also got in touch with different companies to get prizes for spa days and a golf experience. The raffle raised around £700 so that was my main fundraising and since then it’s really just been the kindness of people who I’ve spoken to and have been made aware of it through my social media and the music school page, as well as just getting the message out there about the charity.

Learning a new piece of music is a lot like running - you’re constantly reaching new milestones. For me, it’s about escape. I think that’s what drew me to Music in Hospitals & Care in the first place. When you’re going through tough times, having moments where you can forget everything and simply enjoy the music is so important.

My advice for anybody else fundraising is getting the word out there about what the charity does and why you feel it’s a worthy cause, that’s really important. I think that’s why I didn’t want to just to apply to any charity - it had to be something that I believed in. I think in terms of working out how to fundraise, I would definitely get in touch with local businesses and tell them about what you’re doing. If people see how passionate you are about it, I think it makes it a really big difference.”

Christmas appeal

A huge thank you to everyone who donated to our Christmas appeal. We are delighted to have raised a total of £11,312!

The appeal ran from 3 to 10 December and donations up to £3,500 were matched by Big Give to reach our £7,000 target.

The funds raised will help to share more live music with people of all ages in hospital wards, neonatal units, hospices, care homes, day centres and community groups at Christmas and all year round.



“Every response in ICU is special”

Delyth Jenkins, who has been working with us as a musician since 2007, shares live music in intensive care units at Glangwili and Withybush Hospitals through our partnership with Hywel Dda University Health Board in Wales.

“The patients in critical care are seriously ill and their family and loved ones are feeling stressed and emotionally drained. The music helps to relieve that pain, whether it’s physical or emotional.

Every response in ICU is special. It could be eyes opening, a foot moving in time to the music, the gesture of hands going to applaud, or it could be a smile.

One lady who was awake said that she’d had a harpist at her wedding playing a particular song as she walked down the aisle. I asked her if she would like me to play it for her, and she said yes. She was obviously emotional when she heard this music. When I left, she said, “Thank you from the bottom of my heart.”



The harp’s relaxing tones are particularly suited to intensive care units, which can often be a busy, noisy and challenging environment.

“Sometimes people fall asleep when I’m playing,” says Music in Hospitals & Care harpist Margaret Watson. “I see this as a compliment because it means the music is having an effect. Music can take you somewhere else. It takes the brain away from the pain and I think that’s an incredible thing.”

Creating special moments for families through live music



“The music sessions have been impactful and emotional. Children are seen to visibly calm. Complexly poorly children are so relaxed by the sessions that their parents report them sleeping soundly afterwards. Many parents discuss how they struggle to access stimulating therapeutic activities and they often comment that the day has helped to strengthen their own mental wellbeing.”

Reuben’s Retreat respite centre, Glossop

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Address: Unit 40, Enterprise House, 44-46 Terrace Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 2SD

If you would prefer not to receive our newsletter, please get in touch with us 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.

☎ 01932 260810
✉ hello@mihc.org.uk
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