



Since 2023, professional musicians from Music in Hospitals & Care have been sharing live music with Carmarthen Breakthro', a charity supporting children aged 4-18 with physical and learning disabilities in Carmarthenshire.

Music in Hospitals & Care musician Chris Knibbs explains how he adapts each live music experience to suit the group's energy: "For a young group like this, we increase the speed of the music. They've got loads of energy and they want to use it. I usually take the instrument up, not playing it, so that they can touch it and then move it a little bit. They can feel the vibrations and they're in control."

The live music is tailored to support communication, confidence and wellbeing for the children and young people. Musician Holly Robinson, a fiddle player with Music in Hospitals & Care who plays with Chris, highlights how even the choice of instrument and style is considered with care.

"We think carefully about the music we're going to bring, and make sure we've got a mix of lively stuff, but also some gentler stuff," says Holly. "We may do some things that are familiar, possibly do some Welsh tunes that they've learned in school. If we're bringing percussion instruments, we can offer soft beaters just to bring the volume down a bit."

Emyr Baynon, Carmarthen Breakthro' Coordinator, adds: "I think the work that Music in Hospitals & Care does is phenomenal. Some of the children we support are non verbal or have sensory issues. Chris and Holly really do appreciate the needs of the children, so if somebody isn't particularly interested or keen in participating but is enjoying the music and just sitting back to enjoy, they will respect that."

"You can see how the children light up with the music, engaging in their own way, whether it's through dancing, clapping, or simply soaking in the atmosphere," says Chloe Baker, Music in Hospitals & Care's Live Music Coordinator for Wales. "Live music helps create a shared space where everyone is included and valued, which is exactly what Breakthro' is all about."

Our musicians have been amazing at adapting their approach; sharing their instruments, inviting the children into the music at their own pace, and using sensory elements to make it fully accessible and engaging."

For many of the children at Carmarthen Breakthro', this is their first experience of live music in a care setting. Whether it's through singing, dancing, tapping along, or simply listening, music opens up new ways to connect and communicate.

Songbirds and Rock 'n' Roll stars delight in Didsbury

The sound of melodic finger-picking, strumming and singing filled the air at Fletcher Moss Gardens in South Manchester on Sunday 20 July for the annual Didsbury Guitar Trail. The weather didn't dampen spirits as the local community turned out to enjoy some live music and enter the popular raffle for a chance to win their own acoustic guitar.

With rain forecasted and one of the hotly anticipated Oasis comeback shows taking place in Manchester on the same day, the team really had to *Roll With It* but pulled off another excellent day.

Now in its 16th year, this much-loved local event continues to grow as a grassroots initiative led by volunteers and local musicians, featuring a diverse programme of music throughout the day. Seasoned guitarists and passionate amateurs alike take their places in the alpine gardens to create a truly unique walking trail for visitors, before gathering on the terrace for acts on the main stage in the afternoon.

At the heart of the event is Philip Dylak, a local musician turned organiser who has been involved in every aspect of the event over the years. "I've done everything in the Didsbury Guitar Trail," Philip says. "I started as a performer, then played the main stage and now I help organise the whole thing. It's grown into something really special."

What sets this event apart is its authenticity and inclusive spirit. "You hear someone playing a song you like and think, I like that, I'll donate money to the charity. I don't know of anybody else doing anything quite like it," Philip explains.

Among the musicians supporting the event year after year is Chris Layhe, founding member and bass player of Liverpool band The Icicle Works, who had hits in the 1980s. Chris has a long association with Music in Hospitals & Care, having been both a musician and supporter over the years.

"Music has an incredible way of uniting us, whether it's on stage or in a hospital," says Chris. "To bring that spirit out into the community at the Guitar Trail is a real privilege. You see people connect through music in a very genuine way and you're helping a great cause at the same time."

The Guitar Trail is a reminder of how community-led events can bring people together and make a real difference. "It's not dependent on the internet," says Philip. "You can leave your phone at home and have a good old fashioned day out."

The event is very safe, very enjoyable, and suitable for all ages. It's a chance to hear a wide range of music in a beautiful location, and to support a charity doing important work."

We are so grateful to the dedicated organisers of this fantastic community event and thrilled to have raised over £900 to help share the healing power of live music.

If you are interested in hosting a community fundraising event, please visit mihc.org.uk/get-involved/fundraise to get ideas, download your free fundraising pack and find out how we can support you.



Summer fun for young patients in London

In July, we were delighted to be invited to a summer garden party for children at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The day was filled with sunshine, live music, and fun activities for the children and their families.

The event was organised by the dedicated team from the hospital's school room, which supports young patients' education during their treatment on the Safari children's ward. Their work plays a pivotal role in helping children continue their learning and re-integrate back into their home schools after they've been discharged. The team supports children with a wide range of medical conditions, including injuries and life-limiting illnesses.

Event organiser and Teaching Assistant, Carly Fordham, explains: "We've built up such a nice relationship with Music in Hospitals & Care and we're so thankful. We have a lot of young children at the moment with complex needs, so it's just nice that they can have something a bit different than just sitting in bed all day.

"In the environment that we are in, it can be very scary for young children. All the procedures that they're going through. The doctors, the nurses, it can be really difficult. So we like to engage with them, support their wellbeing and offer a bit of escapism. Something like live music, everybody needs. It's nice for the children, it brings so much joy to them, you can see a lot of reactions on their faces."

Our talented musician Steve Barbé brought the music to life with nursery rhymes, classic favourites and upbeat summer songs. He was also joined by musicians from the charity



Spread a Smile, and together they filled the space with beautiful harmonies.

Steve explains: "I love this work partly because I like a variety of music and tend to play slightly different music for each audience. I find anything lively tends to work for children. Today we went into space, we went underwater, and we sang about birds and butterflies."

Events like this provide a wonderful opportunity to witness first-hand the valuable role that live music plays in supporting children's wellbeing and offering comfort and connection for families during what is often a difficult time in hospital.



VE Day 80th anniversary

During the warm weather in May, veterans at Sight Scotland's Linburn Centre in Wilkieston, West Lothian, also enjoyed some outdoor live music to commemorate VE Day. We were honoured to have multi-instrumentalists A Fyne Pear representing Music in Hospitals & Care and sharing poignant live music on this significant anniversary, which marks the 80 years anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. Singer and guitarist Jason Sweeney also visited The Craigneuk Centre in Wishaw for our first live music with Veterans Community Lanarkshire.



Sharing joy with Northern Ireland Hospice

Singer and guitarist Edelle McMahon has been working with us in Northern Ireland since 2018, and began sharing the joy of live music with people at Belfast's Northern Ireland Hospice in 2021.

Edelle's live music experiences involve moving from room to room, allowing her to connect with one person or family at a time and adapt to each individual's needs.

Edelle explains: "Every single door I stop on is like a performance for one, and it is very personal. The acoustics in the hospice are incredible. You are walking through this beautiful corridor with high slanted ceilings, and the sound just fills the space. But more than that, it is the emotional connection that matters. Families are often in tears. If it is a song someone truly loves or one that awakens a memory, it can be a really moving moment."

Edelle's repertoire spans 1940s ballads, hymns, modern pop and even heavy metal, allowing her to connect with people of all ages by playing the music that resonates most with them.

Edelle adds: "I once learned a Metallica song because I knew someone would still be there the following week and I wanted to play it for him. You never know what you're going to get at the hospice."

The hospice staff are a vital part of this work. Their insights have helped her approach each room with care and consideration,



understanding that not everyone may want to listen in that moment.

"The nurses are angels. Sometimes they say, 'not that room tonight, they have had a rough day,' or they will come and say, 'can you play something by this artist, they are really looking forward to it.' They see the difference it makes, and I think that brings something to them as well." Edelle adds.

The live music offers something meaningful to patients receiving respite or palliative care and brings real value to their families.

Edelle adds: "Being able to give someone near the end of their life that little bit of something pretty, something moving, something meaningful or a memory for the whole family to take away with them is very worthwhile.

It's a small thing, but it's something I can give them, and I feel very privileged to be able to."

Music in Hospitals & Care is a registered charity in England and Wales no. 1051659 and SC038864 in Scotland

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