





Sharing joy through live music

Composing the future; 2023-2028



MUSIC IN HOSPITALS & CARE
Joy through live music





Foreword

In 2023, our 75th anniversary year, we launched our three-year strategy. Composing our future through to 2026. As we reflect on our achievements and learnings, we are taking the opportunity to update our strategy and go one step further. Helping us extend our composition through to 2028.

As a legacy of the Entertainments National Services Association, who shared live music with wounded service people in military hospitals; to sharing live music with people of all ages living with mental and physical health problems within health and care and the community. There have been thousands of moments of joy, laughter, singing, fingers tapping and all kinds of participation and expression in that time.

Our updated strategy outlines how we will move closer to our vision: everyone can access and experience the joy of live music. We believe music is universal; it breaks down barriers. Together we continue will share live music to make sure people in hospitals and care enjoy a better quality of life and improved health outcomes.

We are still on a journey of recovery – both financially and in our ability to share live music, having only returned in the last year to some places we could not access during the pandemic. We are continuing to build on our evidence-based approach to demonstrating the impact of our live music. We took a significant step forward in this area, in the first year of our strategy, by updating our theory of change and creating our evaluation framework. Through this, we will continue to build our clear and credible voice in the music and health sector to share our expertise in live music.

Importantly, you will notice we have put equal emphasis on some areas that were previously identified in the original version of our strategy. These are a focus on equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility as a pivotal aim to help us move forward. You may also remember we talked about investing in our systems and infrastructure. We believe this is crucial and by realising our organisational capability, our digital transformation will accelerate our process in this strategy.

For over 75 years we have shared meaningful live music experiences with people who could not otherwise experience them and we will keep going until everyone can – irrespective of their health or wellbeing. I hope you enjoy reading about our plans for the future of our live music.



Barbara Osborne
Chief Executive



Maureen Hall
Chair

Our composition

We are looking forward to new opportunities to create and compose our piece of music. But we cannot do it alone. Throughout the course of this document you will see how each element comes together and the role we all play in this musical composition.

Our pulse

The heartbeat of the composition that sets the direction of the piece of music.

Vision, mission and purpose

Our rhythm

The pattern of pulses that keeps time for the other elements of the composition.

Theory of Change

Long term ambition: People in hospitals and care enjoy a better quality of life and improved health outcomes.

A composition of music

The combination of the pulse, rhythm, melody, structure, texture and harmonies working together as one.

Our strategy

Our melody

A collection of musical tones that combine together to make the main tune.

Our melody will help us achieve our long-term ambition and is in three parts:

Impact **Voice**
Recovery **EDIA**
Organisational capability

Our structure

The way the elements are arranged to support the overall composition.

Resources
Governance
Infrastructure
Financial planning

Our texture

The effect of the different layers of sound in a piece of music and their relationship.

Evaluation framework
Awareness of our live music
Financial performance
Individuals' experience

Our harmony

Individual sounds or notes played at the same time to complement each other.

How you can help

Composing our strategy

Our strategy will help us achieve our long-term ambition – to make sure people in hospitals and care enjoy a better quality of life and improved health outcomes. Our melody throughout the strategy is in five parts:

Impact - Understanding and demonstrating the impact of our live music – proving the difference we make.

Voice - Elevating our profile and being a visible voice in music and health.

Recovery - Ensuring financial stability and sustainable music delivery.

EDIA - Equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility: understanding and reflecting the communities we work with and those we aim to work with.

Organisational capability - Build the skills, knowledge, information, processes and activities, roles and structure, systems and technology that we depend on.

Developing our strategy

Our strategy was formed reviewing our four long-term strategic aspirations shared by our staff and trustees. These were an aim to be:

- A leading provider of live music in health and care. This speaks to our recovery throughout our strategy and also in having a visible voice in the music and health sector.
- The music charity of choice that is recognised as an expert in music and health. Our value in sharing high quality live music experiences showcases our expertise. Through increasing our profile in the sector and with potential donors and funders through the lens of demonstrating our impact, we aim to achieve this within the strategy.
- Diverse and inclusive organisation that reflects the communities we work in. Equality, diversity and inclusion flows through the strategy and is an important part of the foundations to ensure everyone can access the healing power of live music.

Our final aspiration was to ensure people in health and care enjoy a better quality of life and improved health outcomes. This became the guiding force behind our strategy and is the longer-term ambition in our Theory of Change that was initially developed in 2021.

By mapping backwards, we have identified the pre-conditions and actions required so we can be clear about the steps we need to take to work towards achieving this. This has shaped our strategic ambition.

Key achievements

In 2025/26 we shared:

1,584 hours
of live music

in 290 health and care settings

reaching over **37,457** patients, residents, service users, visitors and staff

Health and care staff rated the music:

4.9 out of 5 benefits to patients (97% gave 5/5)

4.9 out of 5 benefits to staff

in hospitals...

889 hours
in **128 settings** including 131 hours ICU Hear® and 82 hours Lullaby Hour

Staff reported that **60%** of patients felt more connected to others and loved ones

...and **28%** experienced less physical pain

in hospices...

48 hours
in **8 settings**

Staff reported that **56%** of patients felt more connected to each other and their loved ones

... and **50%** were able to express themselves more during a challenging time

in community settings...

284 hours
in **67 settings**

We shared **88 hours** of music in community settings for people living with dementia

...and **184 hours** of live music designed to improve overall wellbeing

Staff reported that **59%** of service users expressed themselves more

...and **49%** experienced less stress after the music

in care homes...

364 hours
in **87 settings**

Staff reported that **71%** of residents were less bored and **52%** expressed themselves more

...and we shared over **217 hours** of music for those experiencing dementia

Milestones

To keep track of progress in achieving our goals, a new performance management framework has been created for the whole organisation, consisting of milestones and key performance indicators (KPIs). These form the focus of staff activity for the year and are reported against the five pillars of the strategy quarterly to the Board. This enables both staff and trustees to see progress in a balanced way across the whole organisation.

We are proud of what we have achieved since launching our strategy. As a small organisation, we are agile and able to implement change quickly. We are ambitious and have lots more to do, but each of our decisions along the way have been informed by learnings and the voice of staff, volunteers, musicians and people we work with.

Impact:

- Completed our UK-wide 'Music for Mental Health & Wellbeing' project, funded by Peter Sowerby Foundation, which highlighted the impact of live music for people in inpatient mental health spaces and enabled us to develop new, creative feedback methodologies.
- Appled learnings from our research partnership with the Edinburgh Centre for Research into the Experience of Dementia around creative evaluation methods and understanding the specific outcomes forpeople living with dementia.
- Delivered a full year of our new evaluation framework across all areas of live music, identifying any potential evidence gaps in our outcomes.
- Developed two new Live Music Development Manager roles, focusing on programmes and operations.
- Delivered a review of our programmes of live music to inform future activity and demonstrate our impact.



Voice:

- Delivered our year-long celebration communications for our 75th anniversary, which informed our approach to our new communication strategic plan to increase engagement and awareness.
- Created and shared a video to showcase our vision, mission and purpose through our live music experiences.
- Completed spokesperson mapping and provided training to have geographically dispersed media representatives.
- Implemented communications journeys for our professional musicians, depending on their level and area of involvement in our live music; to ensure they are engaged and that their voice is heard and can influence in all areas of the charity.





EDIA:

- Revised our vision, mission and purpose working with our staff, trustees, musicians and health and care partners to reflect their voice in this work.
- Joined Black Talent on Board and hosted two participants as shadow trustees.
- Developed an Inclusive Language Guide to support employees and volunteers (including trustees) to communicate in a respectful and inclusive way, and boost confidence in discussing EDIA issues.
- Registered as a Real Living Wage Employer to formalise our existing commitment and compliance.
- Strengthened our use of EDIA data and evidence to better understand where we are now, set future targets and evidence the impact our actions have made.

Recovery:

- Delivered our BBC Radio 4 appeal voiced by BBC Radio DJ Mark Radcliffe, raising £30,369.
- Established annual Big Give Christmas and Arts for Impact apppeals, consistently achieving our targets for match-funding.
- Implemented findings from our review of individual giving to continue to diversify and grow unrestricted income.
- Continued to raise more unrestricted income and work towards a full cost recovery model, showing the true cost of high-quality live music to our funders.
- Expanded and strengthened our relationships with health and care partners to generate vital income to share live music.

Organisational capability:

- Onboarded a new IT provider to support our move to cloud-based storage and systems.
- Launched our new CRM, realising the reporting capabilities of our new systems to support how we monitor the successful delivery of our organisational strategy.
- Implemented a new website that connects with music lovers and shares the impact our of live music.
- Established a baseline of our organisation's carbon emissions to inform future action to reduce and implement an action plan.

Our pulse
Vision, mission and purpose

Our vision, mission and purpose were developed with the support of donors, volunteers, musicians, health and care professionals, staff and trustees. They represent who we are as a community and where we all want to go.



Vision

Everyone can access and experience the joy of live music.

Mission

We take care to create connections and shared, meaningful live music experiences for people in hospitals and care.





Purpose

Live music makes people feel more alive. It makes us human.

Our vision demonstrates a future state that we are aiming towards and our strategy helps get us closer to it. Our mission continues to showcase what we do and the invaluable experiences our staff, musicians and health and care professionals create when they come together through live music.

Finally, our purpose anchors us and reminds us why we are here. It is the pulse at the heart of the organisation to keep us going. In creating our purpose, we reflected on common themes that came up when talking to people who experience and create our live music.

We found there were two: live music and the reaction or emotion it creates. Reactions and emotions were – happy, joyful and positive. They also reflected that live music has the ability to make us cry, bring back memories and reflections that are not always positive. Overwhelmingly it makes us feel and the ability to feel humanises us and others around us. As our musicians do every day when they share live music. From this our purpose statement was created.

Our rhythm Theory of change

In 2023/24 we revised our Theory of Change with input from from our staff, musicians, trustees, and those who experience our live music.

This version explores how change happens in different settings, understanding that one size doesn't fit all. It helps us adapt our programmes to have the greatest possible impact in the different contexts we work in - from community, to care home, to ICU. The theory of change shows the ultimate impact we aim to create through how we work and what we do.

Vision

Everyone can access and experience the joy of live music.

Why do we share live music?

Live music makes us feel more alive. It makes us human.

1. How we work

We create meaningful live music experiences.

We are person-centred

- Engage staff, health and care partners, people experiencing our live music and freelance musicians

We work together

- Build and grow relationships with health and care settings
- Raise money and awareness to engage people who love music

We understand and learn

- Seek feedback and review our live music to show the difference it makes
- Continue to be inclusive and reflect the communities we work with

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Theory of Change

2. What we do

Share live music with people in hospitals and care where it has the greatest impact, including those with:

- Dementia
- Mental health problems
- Serious illness
- Greater health inequalities

3. Outcomes

People...

- engage with and access live music
- connect with who they are through live music including their memories and cultural identity
- are more able to communicate and feel more confident

Live music...

- creates connections with others, allowing patients and residents to be seen as people
- eases pain and stress, which can support recovery
- is embedded in health and care

Musicians...

- are supported to develop further creative skills and peer learn
- play in spaces that their commercial careers don't usually allow them to
- feel passionate about sharing live music and the impact they make

Impact

People in hospitals and care enjoy a better quality of life and improved health outcomes.

Our melody

Aim 1: Impact

Understanding and demonstrating the impact of our live music – proving the difference we make.

Why are we focusing on it?

- We understand the importance and tangible benefits of embedding live music as a regular part of people's health care plans and treatment. We view access to live music as a necessity not a nicety.
- Through a consultation process we established priority areas for sharing live music where we know our musicians have the greatest impact for the person experiencing the live music. These are people living with dementia, mental health problems, serious illness and in areas with greater health inequalities. We aim to further develop the evidence base around the impact of live music on these people.
- We know live music improves people's quality of life through over 75 years of experience and stories, but we need to go further to achieve our longer-term ambitions. Therefore, we see impact as an integral part of how we prove and improve our practice.
- A data driven detailed evidence base will further enable us to work in partnership with other organisations in the field of arts in health.

Key challenges

Changing attitudes and available funding. There are differing attitudes and level of understanding in health around the importance and value of engaging in cultural and creative activity. We need to remove barriers by clearly articulating the impact our live music has, in a way which is beneficial to decision makers. The more definitive and tangible our impact, the easier it is to evidence support in a challenging funding climate within health and social care.

Collaboration and partnerships play an important role in helping move forward as a sector. Our work with the Edinburgh Centre for Research on the Experience of Dementia (ECRED) is a recent example of this as part of a wider piece of research looking at how people with dementia engage with the arts.

What does success look like by 2028?

Our live music. We will continue to share our live music with people who cannot otherwise experience it. Creating unique moments and life affirming impact through our personalised live music experiences and specialist live music programmes. Ultimately aiming to tackle health inequalities and barriers to access.

Musicians engagement. Deepening engagement with our network of professional freelance musicians so that we can continue to share high quality live music. Enable them to the have the time and skills to be part of the evaluation process, developing our effective voice.

A better quality of life. Apply our learning around impact outcomes to programme design, creating new live music experiences which engage and positively impact physical and mental health outcomes. Demonstrating better quality of life through cultural engagement.

Health and care partnerships. Partnerships that enable us to deliver live music in a sustainable and impactful way. Creating a regular geographically dispersed model of our live music delivery that we can continue to deliver and develop despite external economic factors.

Aim 2: Voice



Elevating our profile and being a visible voice in music and health.

Why are we focusing on it?

- Collectively we have a stronger and louder voice – we know our supporters, musicians, staff, trustees and health and care professionals believe in our vision and mission. We are here to make that possible together.
- We need to focus on elevating our profile to ensure more people know about the impact of live music and to ensure we can realise our vision so everyone can access and experience the joy of live music.
- We recognise the power live music has to transcend barriers and bring communities together. Our voice is needed to make our work relevant to everyone who needs it.
- Through greater awareness of live music, we can create stronger partnerships and ensure more people can access the creativity and joy of live music no matter their health and wellbeing.

Key challenges

Reaching and engaging new audiences. More people are recognising the benefits of music to their health. As a data driven organisation, we will deliver our communications in a targeted and informed way to engage more music lovers. But we face an ever-competing market, where we will need to adapt our communications to ensure they effectively cut-through. In a similar way, this challenge is also present in the capacity of health and social care and the rising presence of a number of different art forms to support patient and resident wellbeing.

Our voice aim allows us to broadcast the specific impact of our live music alongside individual stories to help create a personal connection and overcome these challenges.

What does success look like by 2028?

Increasing access to live music. Through greater awareness and an elevated profile, we aim to engage more health and care partners and increase access to live music. Our voice is the vehicle for sharing our impact.

Brand recognition. It is essential to helping people access our live music and also in creating more awareness of the impact it creates. This helps referral pathways and leads to ensuring Music in Hospitals & Care can continue to represent the important difference live music makes in health and care.

Reflect the communities we work with. Through sharing individual stories and findings on the impact of live music and continuing to have a voice as part of vital research and decision making about music and health; we will represent the voices that make up our communities and also ensure we are a represented voice in the community of music and health.

Engaging content. We will continue to demonstrate the difference live music has on someone in health and care. Our content will be diverse and accessible. We aim to bring a live music experience to life for our supporters and funders. Through this, we can generate greater awareness and genuine engagement.

Aim 3: Recovery



Ensuring financial stability and sustainable music delivery.

Why are we focusing on it?

- We are diversifying our income through a mix of fundraising activities, our investment portfolio and public and private funding sources working with health and care partners. This will help us recover and build future financial stability.
- The pandemic had a significant effect on our income streams. We were unable to share live music and therefore our existing largest income streams – contributions from health and care and grants from trusts and foundations – almost stopped overnight. These income streams are recovering, but we need to also diversify to ensure future resilience.
- Our strategy requires investment to ensure we can reach our long-term ambition and move closer to our vision. We need to recover and build sustainable income to ensure we deliver on our aspirations and ensure there isn't an overreliance on one area of income.
- We recognise the current economic challenges facing the sector and the benefits of partnerships which allow access to new income streams through collaboration, creating affordability and sustainability.

Key challenges

Current financial climate. The current financial climate creates many potential challenges. Many people are experiencing the cost of living crisis, which can affect the potential amount they can afford to give. Rising inflation and interest can have a negative effective on our investment portfolio. This has also increased costs for us and other organisations we work with. When energy bills increase for health and social care, but budgets may not have increased reflective of this, there is an increased risk of cutting costs elsewhere.

Against this climate, we have built our recovery to focus on how we also diversify our income to ensure there isn't an overreliance on one area of income.

What does success look like by 2028?

Remove funding gap. We recover our income to ensure we have what need to deliver within the year and to invest in our future resilience and ambitions. This includes working with our investment managers to achieve our strategic vision and to mitigate for potential future financial challenges. We will continue to review our approach to the reserves policy to hold the correct level depending on criteria and needs of the organisation at the time.

Established new income streams. Successfully diversify our income to include new income streams, such as corporate fundraising and individual giving, that ensure future financial resilience in the event of an existing income stream decline or inability to deliver due to external factors. This also encompasses income streams that increase our unrestricted income and all income streams delivering a good return on investment.

Sustainable live music. Working with health and care partners to secure more formal service level agreements and seeking out different sources of funding through demonstrating the value and impact of our live music and building long term partnerships with decision makers.

Aim 4: EDIA



Equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility: understanding and reflecting the communities we work with and those we aim to work with.

Why are we focusing on it?

- Accessibility is core to our vision; we are working towards a world where everyone can access and experience the joy of live music, irrespective of their health and wellbeing. Music is universal; it transcends barriers, brings communities together and promotes social cohesion.
- We believe the pursuit of greater equality and diversity across everything we do offers a creative opportunity to make our work relevant to everyone who needs it. We also see a focus on diversity as an opportunity to create an environment where we understand, recognise, value and respect differences to the benefit of everyone.
- To ensure the impact of our live music is effectively realised, we are continuously in pursuit of greater equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility for all the people we work with, those that support us and the staff, volunteers and professional musicians who deliver our work.

Key challenges

Wider influence on pathways into the sector. We have taken a number of steps over the last few years to help attract a wider talent pool into the charity sector. We also have long standing relationships with educational institutions and partners to promote music and health as a career to musicians. Whilst we continue to broaden avenues to recruit staff, trustees and musicians, we are aware that within these sectors/communities, there is a wider challenge of addressing pathways to these careers earlier on. We cannot change this on our own, but we will continue to work in partnership and offer accessible and inclusive recruitment processes to contribute to this change.

What does success look like by 2028?

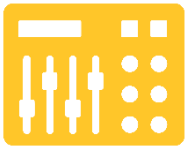
Inclusive and accessible live music. We continue to work with people from a diverse range of backgrounds, countries and communities living with different health and wellbeing challenges. Our live music reflects, and enables people to experience, different needs, tastes and cultures.

Engagement, belonging and effective voice. Through fostering an empowering environment and culture where our people can say they belong to an organisation that truly values equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility. We can formalise and build on feedback processes and opportunities for all staff and freelance musicians to feed in new ideas and practices to our organisation development. Inclusive behaviours will exist in all aspects of the organisation to ensure that any barriers to participation are addressed and minimised where possible.

Learning and understanding. This isn't just about delivering training. Equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility will be an ongoing and organisation wide learning conversation. Where we can provide rich opportunities for people to learn together and to apply their understanding.

Policies, practices and data. All of our organisational policies and working practices are assessed through a lens of equality, diversity, accessibility and inclusion from fair and inclusive recruitment, to accessible technology. We will use EDIA data and feedback to continue to make further improvements to our practices.

Aim 5: Organisational capabilities



Build the skills, knowledge, information, processes and activities, roles and structure, systems and technology that we depend on.

Why are we focusing on it?

- Integral to our success is the investment we are making in digital transformation. This involves replacing legacy databases with modern cloud-based systems, embedding new outsourced IT management, and optimising available technologies whether new and existing across our business processes.
- Our organisational capability is also about looking beyond the lifetime of this strategy, making sure we are progressing towards our vision and greater outcomes for humanity as a whole – such as our environmental responsibility.

Key challenges

Managing change and business as usual. Like many organisations going through a period of change to realise the potential organisational capability required to deliver our future ways of working, we have to balance our business as usual operations with the processes and project management. Where possible we have offered secondments within the organisation to support major system change, like our CRM project. We also plan operationally to minimise disruptions.

What does success look like by 2028?

Increasing data maturity. Standard operating procedures and controls are in place to maintain the consistency and quality of data and information captured on our systems. Our core data sets effectively support impact and evaluation measurement, as well as reporting to funders and other stakeholders. We are using data to provide insights and analytics to support business planning, understand our performance and aide decision making. Where appropriate data and information is being shared and utilized effectively across different teams and processes.

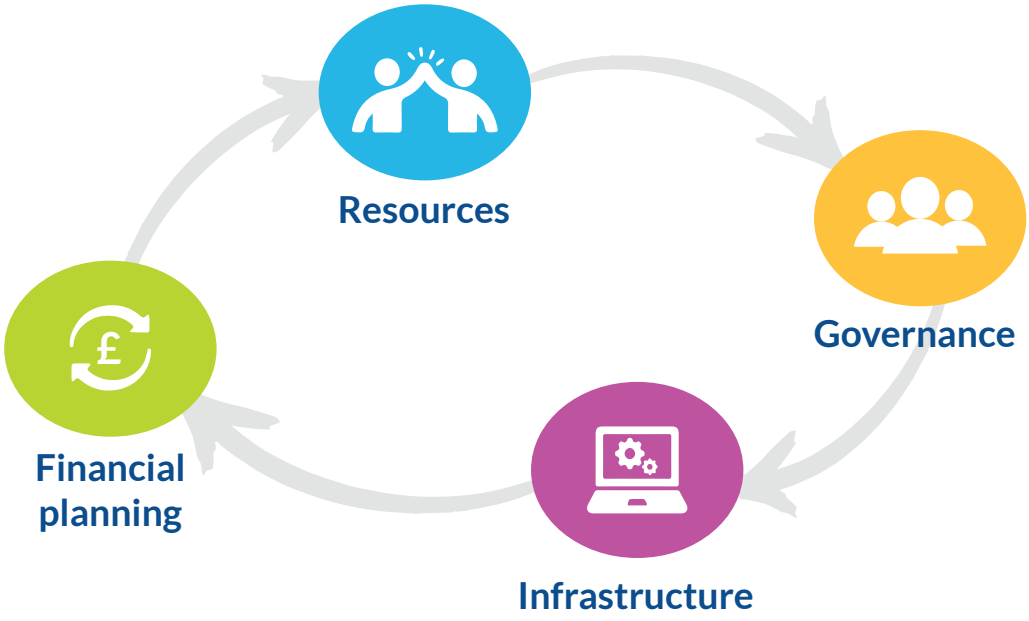
Strengthening relationships and communications. Our new CRM systems will help us to strengthen customer relationships and communications, enabled by a single true view of customer data. This will allow us to provide a more personalised and consistent experience for people engaging with Music in Hospitals & Care. Through building on our automated journeys, teams will have more time to spend on managing relationships, instead of manual data entry. There will be greater segmentation to create more accurate targeted communications to increase the impact of campaigns and appeals.

Operating more efficiently and effectively. Changes to our finance system, HR system and a move from physical servers held in our Walton-on-Thames office to cloud based systems will allow us to work more effectively and efficiently. We also anticipate realising the cost savings of these efficiencies, such as closing our Walton-on-Thames office. All of this will be supported by updated and relevant policies and processes for effective information governance, IT security and compliance with data protection.

Contributing to the wider picture. We have a role to play in helping meet Scotland's net zero target by 2045 and UK target by 2050. In the lifetime of this strategy, we will have taken significant steps to reduce our emissions and developed our creative practice and process to influence partners.

Our structure

Our foundations are critical to the successful delivery of the strategy. Without our people and the right systems and infrastructure, we will not achieve our long-term ambition.



Our texture

How we will measure the change

We have a long way to go to reach our long-term ambition – for people in health and care to enjoy a better quality of life and improved health outcomes. But we will be keeping time in the following ways:

Evaluation and feedback framework - Enabling us to better demonstrate the specific outcomes relevant to each programme of live music and the impact on the people experiencing it.

Awareness of live music in health and care - We will monitor both the brand awareness of Music in Hospitals & Care with our key audiences and also start to understand public attitudes and understanding of live music in health and care.

Our financial performance - We will track our financial performance through monitoring and measuring our diverse income streams against our strategic goals and delivery.

Individuals' experience - The foundation to our success is ensuring our staff, musicians and the people we share live music with feel supported and have a positive experience with Music in Hospitals & Care.

Our harmony
How you can help



We cannot compose our strategy without all the essential people who create the harmony. Our musicians, health and care professionals, staff, trustees, supporters and volunteers. Why don't you join them too and help to keep the music playing?



Donate:
Make a donation today and share the gift of live music.

mihc.org.uk/donate



Sign up to our newsletter:
Stay up to date on our progress throughout the strategy and find out more about the benefits of live music.

mihc.org.uk/newsletter-signup



Spread the word:
Share our impact and strategy on social media or with friends, family or colleagues.

mihc.org.uk/our-impact



Give regularly:
Help more people experience the joy of live music by signing up to become a Friend from as little as £5 a month.

mihc.org.uk/friends



Fund us:
Generous funding from charitable trusts and foundations makes our live music possible.

mihc.org.uk/become-a-funder



Leave a legacy:
Make a gift in your Will to help ensure we can continue sharing the healing power of live music for the next 75 years and beyond.

mihc.org.uk/leave-a-legacy

Music in Hospitals & Care is a charity that improves the health and wellbeing of children and adults through the healing power of live music.

Every year, our professional musicians share live music with people from across the UK, who may not otherwise get to experience it. This includes those who are living with dementia, have mental health problems, or are seriously ill.

Our specially-created live music experiences unlock all kinds of emotions – from joy to loss, pleasure to nostalgia. They improve people's mental, physical and emotional health. And they help people feel more connected to each other.

Only with your support will we help more people benefit from the healing power of live music.









MUSIC IN HOSPITALS & CARE
Joy through live music

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Music in Hospitals & Care is a registered charity in England & Wales 1051659 and in Scotland SC038864
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