

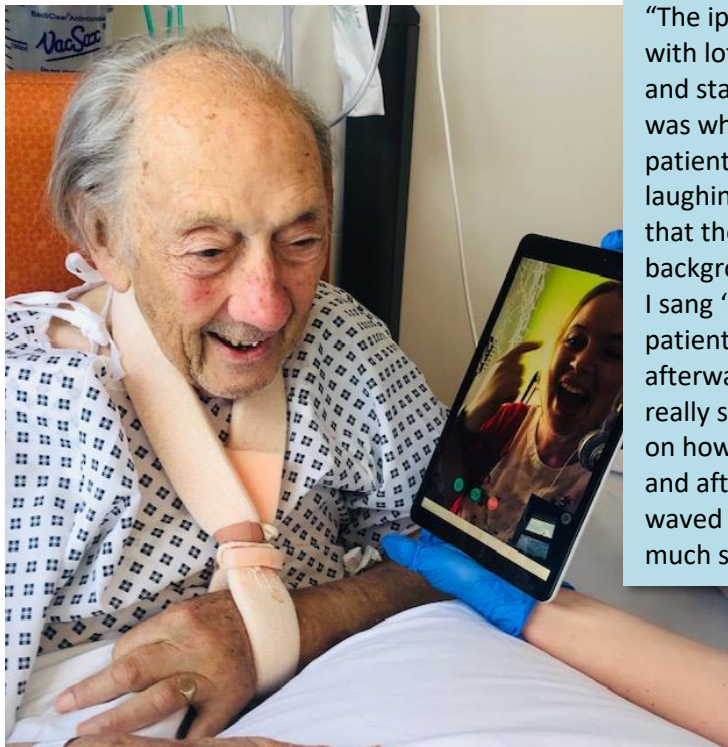
Case studies: How have culture and creativity been supporting people in health, care and other institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Project: Music on Wards

Organisation: Oxford Hospitals Charity

Region: South East

Designed for: Older people and those living with dementia in hospital



“The iPad concerts went really well today with lots of lovely comments from patients and staff. One of the stand out moments was when I was playing a Beatles song to a patient and I could see the man smiling and laughing. After the song finishes, he told me that the nurses were dancing in the background which he seemed delighted by! I sang ‘Somewhere over the rainbow’ for a patient in 7B and the nurse told me afterwards that the lady had been feeling really sad earlier in the day and commented on how much happier she looked during and after the music. The lady smiled and waved at me after the song and said how much she enjoyed it.”

Image credit: iPad concert by musician Kate Wilkinson being enjoyed by a patient on CMU ward at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford. Photo credit: Sarah Saunders

Introduction

Artlink, the arts programme for Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) funded by Oxford Hospitals Charity (www.ouh.nhs.uk/artlink).

Artlink uses the arts to support patient and staff health and wellbeing at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, John Radcliffe and Churchill hospitals in Oxford and the Horton General Hospital in Banbury. Our Music on Wards project delivers personalised live streamed one-to-one music performances to hospital patients. The music performed is tailored to the musical tastes of each patient. The musicians – Kate Wilkinson and Tristan Pate - also chat to the patients after the performance, which often includes some brief reminiscence after memories are triggered by the music.

The musicians mainly play on wards with older patients – including Complex Medical Unit wards, Stroke ward and Transfer Lounge at the John Radcliffe Hospital; Renal Dialysis at the Churchill Hospital and Gerontology wards and the Trauma ward at the Horton General Hospital.

Kate is a soprano and multi-instrumentalist – including clarinet, saxophone and ukulele - who can play a wide range of music – from Mozart arias, jazz standards and songs from musicals to jazz standards and Abba and Coldplay. She has extensive experience of working in care homes and health settings, and with working with older people and those with dementia.

Tristan is an acoustic guitarist who can sing/play a wide variety of popular music, ranging from songs from the musicals to 50s/60s Rock N Roll, Country and Western, jazz standards, folk and traditional songs. He also has extensive experience of work in the care sector.

Funders

Oxford Hospitals Charity and CDAN (Creative Dementia Arts Network) with funding from St Michael's and All Saints Charity and Oxford Community Foundation

Partners

We are working with CDAN (Creative Dementia Arts Network) on part of the concert programme at the Horton General Hospital. Kate Wilkinson is CDAN Music Lead.

Who is it for?

Hospital patients, particularly older patients and those with dementia

Are these people you have worked with before, or new participants?

Both

How many people took/are taking part?

This is ongoing work with two musicians playing online concerts to around 40-50 patients each week, with the music also impacting on neighbouring patients, friends and family visiting and staff working on the wards – so probably a total of 80 – 100 people each week.

Where is it happening?

Most patients live in Oxfordshire but some come from further afield

For how long has it been happening?

The work began on 4 May 2020 and is ongoing

What were/are the main outputs?

Online 1:1 concerts for hospital patients, allowing online face to face direct communication between musician and patient and music requests from the patient.

What outcomes were/are you aiming for?

The project is designed to support hospital patients who currently receive limited visits from friends and family (one visitor for an hour a day) and are bored and particularly anxious at this time. The music sessions have been developed to lift spirits, counter boredom, help stress and anxiety and bring something positive onto wards. Having someone to communicate with who is not wearing a mask and can smile and talk about something other than their illness is really valuable for patients. For those with dementia, the music is calming and can bring back memories of happy times.

Have you adapted existing work to make this happen? If so, how?

Yes, we have adapted our live music on wards programme to live online concerts for patients. A member of staff on each ward is identified as the facilitator of the programme; he/she is responsible for contacting the musician and connecting the iPad at a specified time. The staff member introduces

the music programme to patients and takes the iPad to the patient's bedside so they can view the musician's performance and interact directly with the musician.

Does your work support people who identify with one or more of the protected characteristics¹?

The music programme is for all patients. We don't have details on each participant so can't comment on whether this applies. However, we know the majority of the patients, especially older patients, are frail and many have co morbid conditions and moderate to severe disabilities.

Evaluation & Feedback

It's difficult to develop any formal evaluation at this time when access to hospital is limited and staff are busy. However we have gathered a large amount of informal feedback through the musician and staff contacts on each ward. This has been overwhelmingly positive. Staff have included the concerts in their own evaluation of activities for older patients – [see attached](#).

What is your own impression of how it has worked? What have been the challenges and successes for you?

The main challenge is finding the right staff contact on the ward to introduce the musician and take the iPad round to patients. The project requires a staff member to devote their time to supporting the project and this is much easier on some wards than others. Once the project is established on a ward and staff see the benefits to patients this becomes much easier.

The successes have been so gratifying. The music lifts the mood of the patient the musician is playing to but also carries to other patients in a bed bay and to staff who sometimes dance and sing along. At this juncture when there are so many stresses for patients and staff it does much to bring enjoyment and pleasure and the responses have been overwhelmingly positive. The music can change the mood in a ward for some hours after the performance.

Are you reaching more people/fewer people/different people?

We're reaching many of the same groups of patients as we did with live concerts but in a more intimate way.

What new skills have you or your colleagues had to develop to deliver this work?

The musicians have adapted and expanded their repertoire of music performed, as it became evident that working on a one-to-one basis, where music is tailored to individuals' tastes, meant that a much wider selection of music from different genres and eras is required. The musicians have had to adapt their communication and delivery, due to the challenges of working virtually, where the staff on the wards are effectively acting as their hands and ears.

What would you say has made this project possible?

The project could not have gone ahead without considerable partnership work between the OUH's Arts Coordinator (funded by Oxford Hospitals Charity), the John Radcliffe Hospital's Memory Nurse and the musician Kate Wilkinson working collaboratively to find an effective way of moving live concerts on line. The first concerts were on Complex Medicine wards with older patients. When we found we could work successfully here we were able to extend the project to other wards and hospitals and bring in further musicians. The programme required considerable work from everyone involved to make it happen successfully.

¹ Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation (Equalities Act 2010).

A catalyst to the project was the fact that OUH gave each ward 2 iPads/tablets so that patients could communicate with their friends and families during lockdown.

This programme is much more dependent on additional staff support than live concerts so the fact that staff see the benefits and ward managers therefore ask staff to support the concerts as part of their work has been crucial to the programme's success.

The project has been financially supported by Oxford Hospitals Charity and CDAN. Enhanced support from CDAN (with whom Kate Wilkinson works as music lead) made it possible to extend the project to the Horton hospital. We are working with CDAN on an evaluation of the programme.

What would have made it easier?

It would have been easier if we had been able to train staff on wards so that they could gain the specific skills required to successfully deliver the programme, rather than having to learn and adapt 'on the job'. However, the fact that we couldn't go onto wards and were developing something new meant that we had to take a trial-and-error approach and work it out as we went along.

Further information

www.ouh.nhs.uk/artlink/music