

# Impact and Activity report

A photograph showing a woman with long dark hair, wearing a grey cardigan over a light-colored top, leaning over a piano. She is looking down at an open book with a blue cover that is resting on the piano. A young girl with brown hair, wearing a white cardigan with a pink and green floral pattern and white hair clips, is sitting at the piano and looking at the same book. The piano is dark wood with a red ribbon on the side. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**Music of Life 2015**

**“Music lessons helped James to get through the darkest months of his life after he had a complex operation on his spine and was feeling scared, isolated and anxious... His enthusiasm for singing and music is tremendous and his desire to sing is seemingly tireless”**

James, 13, has cerebral palsy and often spends weeks and months at home when he is too poorly to go to school. Music of Life vocal teacher Claire has been working with James since 2014 helping him build his confidence and expression through music. There have also been significant improvements on his coordination and fine motor skills.

\*Names have been changed to protect identities.

# Key facts for 2015

- ❑ 100% of our students received multiple musical opportunities
- ❑ We developed and sustained a successful school workshops programme
- ❑ We started working with two new music hubs in England
- ❑ We started projects in seven new schools
- ❑ We provided specialist training and guidance to 26 music teachers to support them to teach and work alongside young people with disabilities
- ❑ We provided specialist music training to 60+ teachers at special needs schools who introduced musical activities into their classrooms



**“The head teacher told me that Music of Life has actually changed their school. Instead of fighting or having behavioural problems, the children sing” - Suzzie Vango, Music of Life workshop leader**

# Our year in numbers

We provided **3,070** musical opportunities in 2015

- ✓ **421** one-to-one music lessons
- ✓ **243** Music of Life students
- ✓ **30** choral workshops at Round Oak School in Warwick
- ✓ **48** instrumental and singing workshops at seven primary schools in Liverpool
- ✓ **33** rehearsals and **4** concerts with our students and Guildford Choral
- ✓ **17** young people with disabilities performed as soloists in our concerts and events
- ✓ **7** school choir/ensemble performances
- ✓ **57** journeys in adapted vehicles to take our students to lessons and performances
- ✓ **Over 9,000** people heard Music of Life students perform

## Alice, Sarah's teacher...

**“Teaching Sarah is a huge challenge, but she gains real confidence and calmness from singing. Sarah is currently refusing to go to school and has a lot of things on her mind. I have started to bring song writing into the lessons, as she has been putting her thoughts and feelings into poems, and I think it would be therapeutic for her to put these to music. I feel so lucky to have become close to Sarah and her amazing family.”**

Alice, Music of Life teacher and professional singer

## Ellie, Sarah's mother...

**“Going through her early teens as a blind young person with autism has been a terribly painful and bewildering process for Sarah. She was bullied and badly traumatised at school and she would always turn to her music for comfort. Her singing lessons with Alice have enabled her to make the most of her vocal range, but more importantly, they provided much needed emotional respite from her worries and frustrations. When she sings, she feels in control. This is her music, her life. It's priceless.”**

Ellie, Sarah's (15) mother

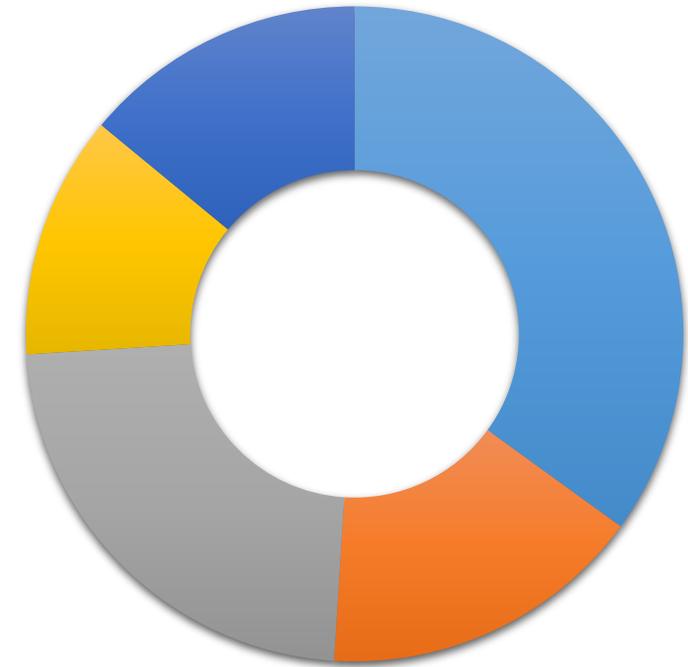
\*Names have been changed to protect identities.

# Our impact



**We use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a rounded analysis of each student's musical, personal, social and medical progress. We take baseline measurements and then termly or annual assessments, depending on the project. All our evaluation tools have been designed specifically for Music of Life.**

**Most commonly selected personal challenges in beneficiaries**



- EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING AND CONFIDENCE
- HEALTH CONDITION
- BEHAVIOUR
- SOCIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

# Musical progress

- **100%** of students made musical progress, from our initial or interim assessment
- **50%** of students having one-to-one lessons moved up **two** levels on a 5-level musical assessment matrix within a year
- **64%** of students having one-to-one lessons passed ABRSM examinations with Merit or Distinction



# What it takes to make progress

“Laura enjoys being able to express heightened emotion through singing and movement and benefits from challenging her self-expression in this way so as not to become frustrated.”

“Felicity now comes to lessons regularly and, by her own evaluation, generally leaves ‘feeling happy’. This is a huge improvement.”

“Lucy finds it difficult to respond to feedback because of her autism. It needs to be very carefully phrased, and it often takes several attempts to get a point across to her in a way she can respond to.”

“Josh is less easily fatigued and demotivated at the idea of having to apply and take on new skills. Having clearly set objectives and lesson times has really motivated him and he is able to do the exercises to improve his voice and performance.”

“Chloe has made extraordinary discoveries about her vocal capacity for self expression by getting in touch with her very strong high register and being introduced to a compelling classical repertoire.”

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**Amari, 13, has been taught by Music of Life drum teacher, Luca, for four years. In September, we have funded Luca to accompany Amari to the weekly rehearsals of a local band. Amari's autism would make it impossible for him to join the group without one-to-one support.**

**“Amari has made a major step this year. Since we joined the local soul band, his musical and social skills have improved greatly. To the point where, when asked at the last minute to play along with the brass and woodwind section in the Christmas concert, he did so outstandingly.**

**“This was a real achievement as Amari doesn't associate the song title to the song or understand the difference between the different sections of a song. So, if the Musical Director asks him to play from the second verse Amari gets confused and frustrated. At this point my role is key in supporting him. He is also easily distracted.**

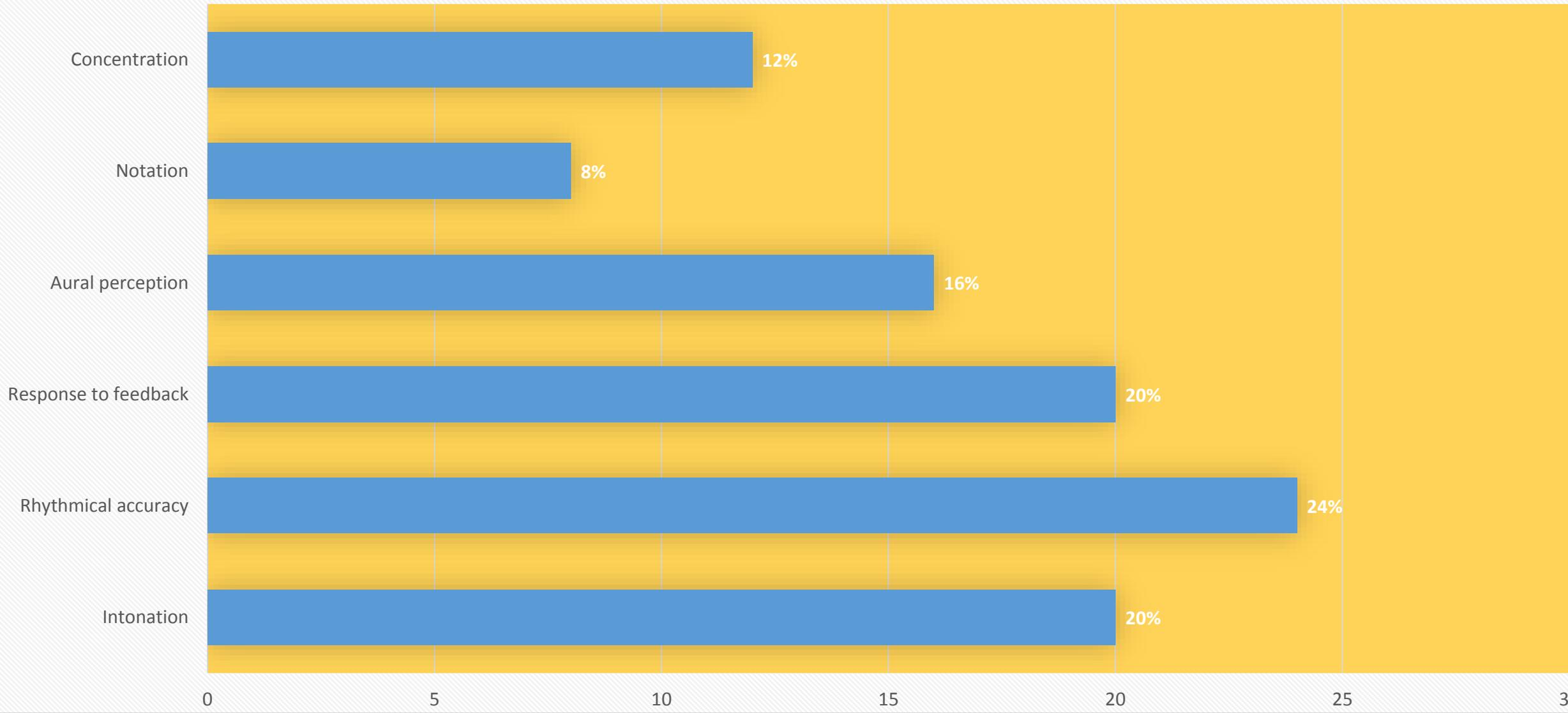
**“My main role is to help keep him focused, not to overplay, to follow dynamics and keep time. Sometimes I also do an extra lesson to run through all the songs.**

**“It's lovely to see that his relationship with the rest of the group has improved too. If someone is off sick, Amari will ask about them. If he is eating a snack will offer some to the other musicians. Amari is gentle and polite and has a good relationship with the MD.”**

**Luca, Music of Life drum teacher**

# Musical progress reported through Annual Teachers' Reports and Beneficiary Assessment Matrix

(this combined data includes 0% improvement in some students in areas restricted by their disability, for example a large number of students cannot read music or concentrate for a long time due to their medical condition)



# It's not all about music



From improved communication skills to positive changes in medical conditions, regular engagement in musical activities makes a profound impact on the daily lives of young people with disabilities

# What students, parents, teachers and workshop leaders say about us

➤ 100% school staff said there were “significant and sustained improvements in behaviour” in students with “considerably lower number of outbreaks of aggressive and challenging behaviours”.

➤ 92% school staff and parents linked our students’ improved academic performance to being part of Music of Life activities

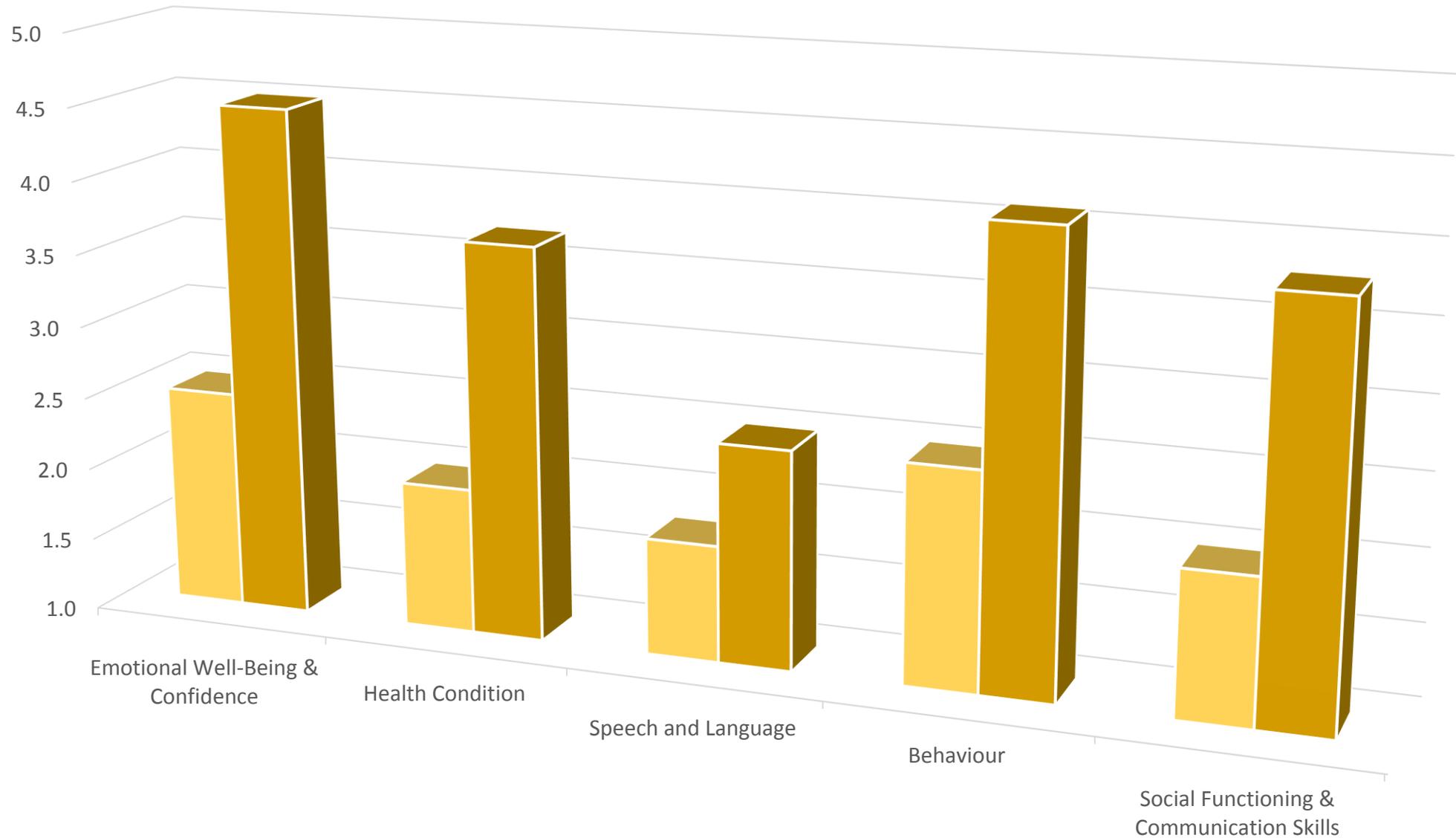
➤ 77% parents and school staff noted improvements in young people’s medical conditions since taking part in Music of Life activities

➤ 86% our students have improved memory and better information processing skills

➤ 98% said Music of Life activities helped reduce our students’ anxiety levels and improve skills like managing emotions and coping with pressure

➤ 95% our students said making music helped them make new friends and made it easier for them to communicate with other people

# Personal development (improvement reported since previous assessment within 12 months)



# Plans for 2016

- **Increase** the number of Music of Life students
- **Work** with music services and music hubs to introduce our school workshops to more special needs schools in Liverpool, Birmingham and London.
- **Continue** our work with existing partners and students to help them achieve their goals.
- **Recruit and train** more teachers and workshop leaders.
- **Widen** the network of partner charities.

