

MUSIC THERAPIST:

“Hello, hello, hello, hello..” singing

Stephen: My name is Stephen Sandford and I'm head of Music Therapy within Paediatrics at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital in London. We've had a music therapy service within the hospital for about fifteen years now. We take referrals from paediatricians, doctors, psychologists, OT's, physios, looking at the needs of children in relation to their communication needs, their social needs, emotional needs, developed mental needs and we work with the child and the family where there may also be associated needs such as post-natal depressions, substance abuse, problems with attachment with a child and we help facilitate improvements in those areas.

“Up and down...” singing

We all have music in our lives, it surrounds us, it fuels us, it helps us make connections with other people, it gives enjoyment and it's a fuel for life music you could put it like that. What music therapists do is take that raw power that music has and use it within clinical contexts to help support physical, mental well-being.

Charlotte: I'm Charlotte Mellor, an early year's music therapist. Well, as a music therapist, I offer a variety of different services, and they range from group music therapy, individual music therapy, music therapy assessments and also help promote early intervention groups. Some of the service users who may attend these groups are referred into this service so they may have a history of post-natal depression, maybe drug and alcohol misuse, domestic violence. There also maybe difficulties between the attachment between themselves and their babies.

'Shake, Natter and Roll' is a new and exciting multi-disciplinary health promotion early intervention service which supports and targets parents and young children in the early year's settings. So ten parents are referred into the service and they attend the group with their babies aged between eight weeks and six months and they attend a six-week block of treatment, and the aim of it really is to enhance and facilitate communication and physical development and bonding between them and their baby. For the children particularly with additional needs or complex needs music can provide that avenue of communication for them, it can make those links them. For those service users who access the help promotion early intervention services the music there can facilitate and encourage parents to build healthy and sensitive bonds between their children and themselves.

They offer an informal setting where you can spend one hour with your child and there is different activities all packed within that one hour that improve their communication and their rhythm and their speech as well as physiotherapy, and then on top of that we have visitors that come in, health professionals that drop in, like dietitians, speech and language therapists that all contribute extra to the music therapy sessions, so we get one hundred and ten per cent.

One of the things we hear from our medical colleagues is that when they see a child in music therapy or view a music therapy session they see not just what a child can't do but they also see a child's potential in a much more rounded way, and the impact of seeing a child's potential in the context of very significant needs, developed mental needs, can pay big dividends to a family who are struggling to accommodate and come to terms with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder, lifelong conditions that they will have to manage.

Music therapy was the light bulb moment for me as a musician in terms of me finding a career that made a difference both to myself and had a tangible benefit to others around me.

As a musician, I find it very rewarding to use music in a therapeutic means as over the years I've really noticed how it can make such positive change.

"Thank you for making music today!" - singing