

The following was written by carer Rebecca Ogden to support *Now Hear This!* in a grant funding application to Portishead Town Council. Some personal information has been redacted for privacy reasons.

"Firstly, I am thankful for the opportunity to support any grants or funding applications for the provision to continue and expand the incredible music sessions run by Laura. I feel very lucky to have been supporting an adult (who I will refer to as G) with long standing learning and health disabilities to attend a weekly group that is currently taking place at The Hub & Methodist Church in Portishead High Street.

My immediate reaction to hear that G was going to attend a music group was that I was not convinced that G would be able to participate, this would not be of any benefit and possibly just ticking boxes to include adults with disabilities in local communities. How wrong could I be? - Very wrong on every level and concept.

What do I see in weekly group sessions?

Everyone is welcome.

G has learnt to play a variety of well know songs with various instruments, including "Eastenders" theme tune no mistaking that.

G is very proud of herself and says this "I am very proud".

G has improved her self-esteem.

G has improved her listening skills.

G is a valued member of a group that all need each other to make music together.

G values each member of her music making group.

G and other members in session are smiling and happy.

G has an understanding of how music is made.

All group members can follow non-verbal instructions to make loud or quiet sounds.

Feel good endorphins fill the room.

Support workers are learning to make music too.

Support workers are very proud of the group members.

A general comradery within the session.

Group members encourage their support workers to make music.

Support workers are tuning in to the group members and finding other ways to communicate.

Why is The Beacon Hub/Methodist Church a great venue?

Disabled access, parking & toilets.

Centre of the community allowing disabled adults to be seen.

The café encourages everyone to come in with reasonably priced refreshments.

The "chatty café" encourages people to arrive alone with the guarantee of someone to talk to.

A couple of the group members arrive early to "volunteer" at the chatty café.

The acoustics in the church are brilliant for music.

The ambience in the church is kind, reflective and restful.

There is good space in the church to allow for wheelchairs, room to move if you have mobility difficulties and space to be as close or far away from others to suit your needs.

Space to store instruments and allow the group members to have such a wide range of music making genre.

What are the benefits of a 1:1 session?

Laura is able to tune into student without the distractions that a group has.

Student is able to tune into Laura without group distractions.

Laura is able to gain a better understanding of individual learning styles and can use this in group session.

Student needs less or no input from support worker, huge step of independence that they possibly have very little opportunity to experience.

Student is able to progress at own pace and Laura can adapt to this.

Laura has the chance to explore wider music styles with student.

Laura is able to make personal connections with student (eg Eastenders theme tune)

My hope is that Laura will be able to continue with her vision to make music so accessible and enjoyable to EVERYONE I am really amazed by the results that I have witnessed from these sessions so far and believe that given the funding and suitable venue the sky is the limit."