



Inclusive Folk

EVALUATION Aug 2022 - July 2023

Introduction

Inclusive Folk, which started in 2020, is an English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) programme supported by John Lyon's Charity.

It sets out to:

- a) improve access to folk music making and dance opportunities for young people with special educational needs and learning disabilities, notably those living in the John Lyon's Charity beneficiary areas in North West London;
- b) develop the skills of folk music educators and SEN education settings in using folk music creatively with disabled young people;
- c) influence change within EFDSS programmes and Cecil Sharp House, to continue to be more inclusive of and accessible to disabled people.

This evaluation has been prepared jointly by English Folk Dance & Song Society (EFDSS) with independent evaluator Andrea Spain. It focuses on the period Aug 2022 - July 2023, within Tranche 2 and 3 of the programme, which continues to December 2023.



Activity Overview

In this period (August 2022 - July 2023), EFDSS have:

- Recruited and supported a fourth Inclusive Folk trainee, Roary Neat.
- Delivered 18 face to face Folk Unlimited (FUN) creative music making sessions on Sunday afternoons at Cecil Sharp House with a full group of young people with severe learning disabilities (SLD), profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), autism, and other complex needs.
- Delivered themed workshop programmes in three educational settings:
 - a) Swiss Cottage School, Camden (2 programmes, Autumn 2022 and Summer 2023).
 - b) The Village School, Brent (Spring 2023).
 - c) Leighton College, Camden, an Elfrida Rathbone education centre for 16-25 year olds (Spring 2023).
- Held Inclusive Folk Festival days at Cecil Sharp House in March 2023, for Leighton College and The Village School students, and in June 2023, for Swiss Cottage students.
- Created and shared one themed resource via the EFDSS website: *A Song and a Dance: using folk arts in inclusive settings*.
- Given a talk about Inclusive Folk and delivered a one-hour national participatory workshop, led by Emmie Ward and trainee, Roary Neat, at the Access Folk Symposium in Sheffield (March 2023).
- Organised and lead a disability workshop during an event organised at Cecil Sharp House to celebrate disabled folk musicians (*Nobody Sings About my Heroes*).
- Hosted Drake Music Technology training, attended by the Inclusive Folk team.
- Hosted a 5-week work experience placement for a learning disabled student.
- Commissioned Roswitha Cheshier to produce a 5 minute film about the Sunday Folk Unlimited workshops.

Evaluation methodology

This evaluation arises from the following activities:

- Independent evaluator observation of Folk Unlimited workshop, June 2023.
- Independent evaluator observation of Inclusive Folk Festival Day, Cecil Sharp House, June 2023.
- Case study interview with Folk Unlimited member and his father (independent evaluator).
- Case study interviews with two staff at Swiss Cottage School (independent evaluator).
- Interviews with Inclusive Folk Tutors (n=3), June - July 2023 (independent evaluator).
- Project Manager Questionnaire (see Appendix).
- Participation data recorded by EFDSS.
- Review of feedback questionnaires completed by staff at partner schools/colleges (n=2).
- Reflective review meeting between Independent Evaluator, EFDSS Education Director and EFDSS Education Manager.

Programme Evaluation

Achievements

During this third phase (Tranche 3) of the programme, Inclusive Folk has achieved:

- Participation in Inclusive Folk workshops in schools by approximately 72 young people.
- Participation in the Folk Unlimited group by a core group of 11 young people. Folk Unlimited has been fully subscribed and in Summer 2023 there was a waiting list for drop-ins when a space became available.
- Relationships of trust with schools/colleges and participants, established in previous years, allowing Inclusive Folk to:
 - a) work with a wider range of young people;
 - b) make stronger links with the wider curriculum;
 - c) further develop interpersonal and musical skills amongst young people.
- Adaptations in approach in order to engage with a more diverse range of young people in school/college settings, including those with moderate, severe and profound multiple learning disabilities, using a range of approaches from the highly sensory to more musically stretching activity.
- Increased opportunities for members of Folk Unlimited to give informal performances, for example to members of the London Youth Folk Ensemble (LYFE), who rehearse at the same time, or to each other in small groups that have worked separately. Individual members of Folk Unlimited sometimes perform to the rest of group, especially on the piano.
- Increased confidence and fluidity in delivery, building on a repertoire of established material as the basis for creative adaptation and differentiation.
- Solutions to ongoing challenges of finding a safe space for instruments in workshops by:
 - a) leaving the most valuable instruments at home and using cheaper versions;
 - b) making use of EFDSS instruments in order to protect those of musicians.
- Increased confidence of Nick Goode, the second core tutor, as a leader in his own right.
- A new film about Folk Unlimited, showcasing what a workshop is like and hearing from participants, their parents and support workers and the lead tutor.
- Sharing of learning from the programme via a national conference. A music service has commissioned CPD for its staff based on *A Song and a Dance* resource.
- Increased participation in other EFDSS youth folk activities by disabled young people, e.g. London Youth Folk Ensemble.

Challenges

- Increased participation has led to a more diverse range of needs amongst Folk Unlimited group members, and difficulties in behavioural management with a larger group. The team have worked together to:
 - a) implement strategies to support new members to the group;
 - b) break into two groups in order to better adapt to the needs of individuals and support participants to work together in different combinations;
 - c) liaise with parents, support workers and a teacher at one of the young people's schools, to discuss what works well in other settings and implement these strategies at Sunday workshops.

Has Folk Unlimited achieved intended outcomes?

Outcome 1

Disabled young people show increased levels of participation in a music and dance activity - positively impacting their personal, social and emotional well-being, skills and confidence.

Indicators:

- Participants show awareness of participating in music-making with others
- Participants increase their range of experiences, knowledge and skills in music and dance
- Participants demonstrate improvements in well-being, personal and social skills and confidence
- An established group of 50% of participants attend Folk Unlimited regularly - including some from partner settings

1. Education settings report that:

- *"They all really loved taking part and many were engaging more than their regular music lessons".*
- *"Three students are now going on to do work experience related to performance/music industry - this contributed to their confidence and interest".*
- *"100% of students participated and all enjoyed it".*
- *"Really lovely music and all the learners really enjoyed it".*

2. In observed sessions, participants show clear awareness of participating in music-making with others. This includes:

- Voluntary use and choice of musical instruments independently or, in some cases, with support.
- Making eye contact and sometimes physical contact with others.
- Dancing - both freely and following choreography independently or, in some cases, with support from carers.
- Turn taking e.g. individual participants leading by making sounds or repeating learnt material in call and response activities.

- Vocalisation, including responding to sung phrases by repeating aspects of pitch, melody, language and/or rhythm.
3. Tutors and parents recognise improved responsiveness and ability in some longer-term members of the Folk Unlimited group. These include:
 - Improved turn taking and team work.
 - Improved ability to follow instructions.
 - A vocal response from a participant who has previously not vocalised.
 4. Tutors report a range of ways they have sought to foster and celebrate the creativity of participants, for example creating space for rapping, encouraging them to share their own cultural interests, offering more able students' opportunities to lead others.
 5. Tutors are consistent and informed in their awareness of the needs of participants and what progress looks like at an individual level. Examples of progress made by participants include:
 - A long-standing participant with PMLD making a vocal response to a musical intervention for the first time.
 - Increase confidence and ability to follow routines and instructions (see Edward Case Study).
 - Increased attention, engagement and ability to retain and recognise simple musical patterns (see Swiss Cottage School Case Study).
 6. Specialist education settings identify the benefits of Inclusive Folk to them and the students. They commented that *"Facilitators were all organised and enthusiastic, and provided a very accessible and interesting experience for our students, well-adjusted to their specific needs."* They noticed that the workshops *"Really helped teachers and teaching assistants to understand what aspects of music they engage most with."*
 7. Of the 12 young people who signed up for at least 1 full term of Folk Unlimited this academic year, 11 enrolled for the following term. 100% of termly participants have attended 50% or more of the sessions available that term.

Outcome 2

Disabled young people are enabled to participate in meaningful experiences with an arts organisation (EFDSS) and its venue (Cecil Sharp House, when possible) via a supportive progression route

Indicators:

- Disabled young people are able to participate in a range of meaningful activities, including work experience, that are tailored to match their interests and needs
- Disabled young people have a stronger presence within EFDSS' programmes including at Cecil Sharp House (when possible); attending courses, events, gigs and being featured in marketing, performances and resources shared online
- Staff continue to review and develop approaches to making EFDSS programmes, activities and procedures more inclusive for disabled young people and adults.

1. Approximately 45 young people from three schools have attended Folk Festival Days at Cecil Sharp House. These involved accessible music and dance activities and were led by the Inclusive Folk team and a guest tutor for the Spring Festival.
 - Swiss Cottage school staff value days at Cecil Sharp House as a positive experience for young people who are able to develop confidence and skills in a new environment. They would be interested in future in attending Cecil Sharp House for weekly sessions and involving more musicians, music and sounds as stimuli to highlight the nature of the building as a music venue.
2. Folk Unlimited performed to a seated audience made up of LYFE members in Summer 2023.
3. EFDSS have continued to organise dance buddies at Youth Ceilidhs to support dancers, particularly those who are autistic.
4. In partnership with schools and carers/support workers, EFDSS set up a five-week work experience placement at Cecil Sharp House in Summer 2023 for one participant who attends the Leighton College. This student also came to the adult Morris Dance class to help with sign in and then ended up joining in.
5. LYFE is welcoming more young people who are disabled. The group includes 2 autistic young people who were members of Folk Unlimited and new members who have joined directly. One young person who is blind and has learning difficulties initially inquired about joining FUN, but decided to try LYFE and has been a committed member since September 2022.
6. One member of LYFE who is autistic and started in Folk Unlimited, talked to his mum about his musical journey in order for her to write an article to feature in the summer edition of the EDS Magazine. It features words he has spoken and shares his thoughts and views.

Outcome 3

Increased numbers of folk music educators, performing arts tutors, school and college staff are enabled to use folk music and dance creatively with disabled young people in formal and informal learning and participation

Indicators:

- Trainees and volunteers recruited to work on the SEND programme
- Music leaders and carers report increased knowledge and confidence in working musically with disabled young people
- Music leaders demonstrate skills in providing inclusive folk music learning for disabled young people
- School and college teachers report benefits for inclusion of folk music and dance in their learning programmes
- Teachers, educators and folk practitioners attend CPD sessions and access new resources

1. Interviewed school staff praise the level of expertise and knowledge of working with young people with SEN/D demonstrated by EFDSS staff. They particularly value:

- The genuine interest in and understanding of different needs demonstrated and the extent to which the team adapt their approach in response.
 - Embedding inclusive approaches like visual welcome signs and timetables, coloured name badges to identify different groups, without needing to be asked.
2. The 2023 Inclusive Folk trainee has found their time with the programme hugely valuable and is making plans to use the skills they have learned to work musically with disabled young people in their home town of Oxford, as well as seeking work with organisations like EFDSS. See Roary Case Study.
 3. A recommendation of the Tranche 2 evaluation was that Nick Goode, the second core team member, be supported to develop his confidence in leading sessions independently in order mitigate the risk of relying on one lead tutor and contribute to the sustainability and potential growth of this work. It is clear that excellent progress has been made towards this goal and Nick was observed to skilfully and confidently:
 - a) lead a Folk Unlimited session on his own, when lead tutor Emmie Ward was absent;
 - b) co-lead the Inclusive Folk Festival Day;
 - c) demonstrate excellent awareness and knowledge of session planning and delivery in interviews.

Nick brings a different but complementary style of leadership, which participants clearly enjoy and adds to the programme. He reports enjoying his role and feeling very well supported by Programme Manager, Charlotte Turner, to plan and deliver in Emmie's absence. He also reports significant learning from working alongside Emmie, and describes leading in ways that he would not have before. This has included adjusting to a more experiential approach, rather than working to goals and targets as in formal classroom teaching. This has influenced his wider work as a supply teacher.

4. Specialist education settings comment how they *"learnt a lot of new techniques and songs."*
5. A total of approximately 44 practitioners have participated in CPD sessions between July 2022 and July 2023. These include:
 - Emmie Ward and Charlotte Turner giving a presentation about Inclusive Folk at the Access Folk Symposium in Sheffield in February 2023.
 - Emmie Ward, Roary Neat and Charlotte Turner delivering a 1-hour sensory workshop at the Access Folk Symposium for attendees to actively demonstrate the work of the project.
 - Drake Music Technology training attended by the Inclusive Folk team (Spring Term 2023).
6. One online resource (video + booklet format) to inspire session planning by teachers, parents and carers has been created and there is CPD planned for music teachers in a London music borough in January 2024 based on this resource:
 - *A Song and a Dance* - Viewed 208 times since December 2022 (as of July 2023).

Folk Unlimited Member Case Study: Edward

Edward enjoys being musical

His favourite part of Folk Unlimited is singing folk songs. He feels confident when he is being musical and enjoys leading and taking solos in the group. His favourite instruments are washboard, ukelele and drums and he particularly enjoys singing into a microphone.

Edward has taken part in musical activities from a young age, including being in a band at school. He also takes part in dance groups twice a week. Edward is 23 and his Dad has noticed that he is becoming eligible for fewer activities as he gets older.

Finding Folk Unlimited

Edward and his family were told about Folk Unlimited by Leighton College, an Inclusive Folk partner. This was during Covid 19 and Folk Unlimited was a way to be musical and with others during lockdowns. He now attends regularly at Cecil Sharp House with a friend.



Edward describes Folk Unlimited as 'great', 'generous' and 'lovely'.

Edward and his Dad agree that, as an ensemble member, he has improved his skills at making music with others, working in a group and listening / taking turns. His Dad has also noticed that he has become better at following instructions.

Folk Unlimited 'feels very special'

Edward's Dad has not encountered anything else like it and he and Edward cannot think of anything they would like to change. The mixed ability nature of the group is particularly unusual and has allowed Edward the experience of being one of the more able members, helping to grow his confidence, leadership skills and understanding of the needs of others. There are strong social connections and a warm, supportive bond amongst members. It feels as if everyone is an equal participant and any challenges that arise from the different individual needs of members are handled very well. Edward's Dad appreciates the excellent communication established between families, the EFDSS managers and group leaders, who work with parents to identify and respond to individual needs. *"We really hope Folk Unlimited is able to continue in future"*.

Inclusive Folk Case Study: Swiss Cottage School

Swiss Cottage School is a special school that works in partnership to ensure pupils 'thrive as visible valued members of society'. Pupils include young people with mild to severe or profound learning disability. Inclusive Folk is one of three music partnerships that support the school to extend their curriculum and help pupils develop skills. Each year Inclusive Folk offers a number of class groups workshops over the course of a half term.

"Inclusive folk extends the diversity of approaches and repertoire our pupils experience, hearing new instruments and meeting new people. Many pupils are non-verbal, and it's a chance to use their voices, as well as assist motor skills and musical understanding" (Thiago, Higher Level Teaching Assistant and music leader.)

Staff also value the opportunity to bring students to Cecil Sharp House for Folk Festival Days as a new experience and goal to work towards.



Adapting to the needs of each class

In 2022-23 Inclusive Folk has delivered sensory based sessions on the theme 'London' with a class with profound disability.

"The sensory activity was done well with appropriate props, assistive technology, smells and sounds. Some students can be sleepy, have visual or hearing impairment, but in the sessions were really alert, responding to the live musical instruments. One can be very disengaged and walk

around but really liked the cello, sitting next to the musician and listening. The tutors adapted well to the group's needs, ensuring they did not get overwhelmed." (Holly, Higher Level Teaching Assistant and music teacher.)

A post-16 class with moderate to severe disability has also taken part. This group are more verbal and able to pick up patterns and instructions. Different themes for each session helped to sustain interest and sessions allowed for plenty of vocalising, copying musical phrases.

"The students were tentative at first but are now confident and coming out of their shell. The easy patterns and simple structures of folk music have been helpful and some pupils have shown unexpected abilities." (Holly)

Building a relationship of trust

The school enjoys working with EFDSS due to their understanding of the needs of learning disabled young people and the care and interest demonstrated by the team. *"Visiting musicians with this level of prior experience can be hard to find"* (Thiago). *"It's great that workshops are set up to be inclusive without us having to explain"* (Holly). Details such as providing a PECS¹ timetable and signage for the Folk Festival are appreciated and support pupils' independence. The school also appreciates EFDSS for their *"very accommodating"* approach. *"Teacher workload is a lot and it can be hard to get back to people but EFDSS are really nice and keep following up."* (Thiago).

Knowledge exchange

Inclusive Folk workshops are an opportunity for school staff to observe how other practitioners work and how their pupils respond. Staff continue to use rhythmic motifs that pupils like and approaches to structuring activities in their own music lessons, as well as re-using repertoire. This is particularly valuable because *"it can be difficult to find appropriate resources for SEN/D music teaching"*.

Looking forward

Staff from the school would like to see the relationship with EFDSS grow in future. Opportunities include:

- Working for longer and more consistently with classes, to achieve specific developmental targets.
- More regular sessions at Cecil Sharp House, so the venue becomes more familiar and music lessons are experienced in a different environment.
- Working with classes with more challenging behaviour - who can miss out on opportunities - knowing that EFDSS have the appropriate skills.
- Working with younger pupils, including early years groups.

¹ Picture Exchange Communication System®, or PECS®, allows people to communicate using pictures

Inclusive Folk Trainee Case Study: Roary



Roary is a folk musician who applied to the Inclusive Folk Traineeship to find a deeper connection with other people.

"I knew from experience how important music and dance can be to communication and self-understanding, so really wanted to help other disabled and neurodivergent people to connect in this way."

As someone on the Autistic Spectrum, Roary has faced barriers to employment. They describe EFDSS as 'the most supportive employer I have ever had'. Roary was open about their Autism from the beginning and the Programme Manager was proactive in asking what could be done to ensure the traineeship would work well. This has included meeting with Roary before sessions to help them visualise how everything will work and being available on the phone to provide advice and support when Roary travelled to a training day and had to overcome anxiety and logistical challenges.

Skills and learning

"I've learned how to keep a room of diverse people engaged in an activity and explain things in a clear way. Communication is much more than just words, as the young people I work with communicate in subtle ways. I think this awareness has helped me with my own communication. I've had to learn to pick up tunes quickly and adapt them to suit the needs of different groups."

Roary is pleased to have bonded with individual participants and feels that their own experience of Autism can be helpful in achieving this. One participant that Roary has worked closely with was able to lead others in an activity at a Festival Day, having previously been very withdrawn.

Inclusive creativity

"I thought this would be a cool experience for a year but I have realised that this was the "missing piece" to my work and creative life and that I want to continue this sort of work."

Society can assume that Roary is 'not a people person' and Roary can find it difficult to access opportunities to be creative. Roary describes the Inclusive Folk Traineeship as having allowed them to apply self-knowledge in a creative leadership role. They are keen to do more in future and are currently developing plans for inclusive music opportunities in Oxford.

Key Findings & Recommendations

In its final phase, Inclusive Folk has emerged from the challenges of Covid 19, to achieve full and consistent membership of the Folk Unlimited group. Established relationships with schools and colleges have paid dividends in terms of the musical and personal progress of participants. Families and schools are full of praise for the skill and integrity that EFDSS bring to the programme and are keen for these opportunities to continue.

Key Findings

KF1 Inclusive Folk has demonstrated the need for and value of high quality, accessible folk music experiences for people with complex needs and learning disabilities. Folk music is an ideal participatory genre, due to its simple, memorable structures, its capacity to widen awareness of traditions and histories while fostering a sense of community and inclusion.

KF2 There is clear evidence that Inclusive Folk is achieving across all three of its intended outcomes, most notably by:

- Providing highly accessible and differentiated musical opportunities to young people with a wide range of learning disabilities, including those most profoundly disabled.
- Making Cecil Sharp House, as a music venue and heritage space, open and welcoming to disabled young people.
- Establishing skills, confidence and leadership in inclusive music making with the EFDSS team and wider organisation.
- Sharing skills and learning with others, including partner schools, folk educators and others working in music education.

KF3 Through the investment of the John Lyon's Charity, and commitment of EFDSS, considerable knowledge and skill have been established within the Inclusive Folk team, as well as a valuable set of educational resources. Arts Council England data consistently shows that disabled young people are amongst those least likely to have access to group musical learning opportunities provided by Music Education Hubs and are significantly under-represented in their ensembles, for example. Inclusive Folk's experience of working with learning disabled young people has potential to be of significant value in the wider music education sector, complementing the expertise of organisations like Open Up Music, who specialise in accessible orchestras, and Drake Music, who specialise in accessible music technologies.

KF4 In achieving its original goals, Inclusive Folk has created new potential, for the future, to:

- Further showcase and celebrate the musical enjoyment and participation of those with disabilities within and beyond EFDSS.
- Work for longer and more consistently with young people in schools in order to support a range of developmental outcomes.
- Create opportunities for disabled people aged 25+ to remain musically active.
- Advocate for and share learning about the role of professional musicians in creating musical experiences for disabled people beyond the folk music sector.

Recommendations

R1 It is recommended that EFDSS seek to maintain and, ideally, expand this provision. This might include:

- A larger number of groups / ensemble sessions at Cecil Sharp House on Sundays, potentially with slightly shorter sessions and fewer participants in each group.
- Longer term projects (e.g. 5 - 6 weeks) with classes in schools, leading to performances to the wider school community, parents and carers.
- Further development of activities for disabled people within EFDSS programmes, such as holiday courses, accessible festivals and partnerships with other organisations that connect participants to opportunities.

R2 It is recommended that EFDSS seek to build on and expand its role in sharing resources and offering training to music education hubs, and others, in order to extend benefits to young people with SMLD and PMLD.



Thanks

Thank you to the staff, teachers, tutors and personal assistants who have been generous with their time and made important contributions to this evaluation.

Appendix - Project Manager Questionnaire

Q1. What **health & safety** policies and procedures are in place? How have these been adapted to meet the needs of participants?

EFDSS has a full Health and Safety Policy in place, published on our website to be publicly available and a risk assessment for Cecil Sharp House. Policies can all be found [here](#).

There is a risk assessment in place for Folk Unlimited (FUN) and this is reviewed and updated throughout the year.

All participants' parents/guardians complete an enrolment form to ensure we have the relevant access, medical and emergency contact information to hand and can accommodate participants safely in, and if necessary, out of the building. We have Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) in place in the event of a fire based on the information we receive about each participant and if needed, we talk this through with the support workers. 22 EFDSS staff attended Fire Marshall and Evac Chair training in July this year.

Sometimes products are brought in by the tutors to create a multisensory experience, such as herbs to smell. The tutors tell me what these products are so that I can look at the allergies of the participants. If someone were to be allergic, this product would not be used at all. If no one is allergic, the tutors still ask the guardians/support workers if it is ok to pass the product around to be smelt. We also do this when working with schools.

We are careful when working with participants who are epileptic to ask their support worker what their triggers are. We also avoid using objects that flash.

Individual strategies are put in place for each participant to ensure they are safe, such as having a chill out area if needed, instead of participants become distressed in the circle which could become unsafe.

What **safeguarding and child protection** policies are in place to protect the welfare of young people and staff?

We have a Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy available on our [policy page](#). EFDSS requires all staff and tutors to read this policy before they work with us. We also discuss any safeguarding issues in our planning meetings, briefings and debrief sessions and, where necessary and appropriate, liaise with the parents and support workers of our participants. All tutors, trainees and education staff are DBS checked and on the update service, as per our safeguarding policy. Our 2023 trainee took part in NSPCC Safeguarding Training in February, which was near the start of their traineeship, and they also attended in person safeguarding training, delivered by Brass Bands England BandSafe, at Cecil Sharp House, along with other EFDSS staff, in March 2023.

In addition to our 2 tutors and trainee, an EFDSS enhanced DBS checked employee is always present in the building during sessions. In cases where DBS checks have been delayed or a new one has to be requested, this individual is always supervised by another DBS checked adult.

Q2. How has **pastoral support** been provided for participants (and carers) to meet personal and emotional needs relating to the project?

Before attending Folk Unlimited, parents/guardians complete a Google form which tells us about their young person and this helps us initially find out about them. Once at the sessions, tutors and EFDSS staff regularly chat to the parents/guardians/support workers to keep ensuring we are supporting the participants pastorally as best we can. One participant does not like it when the music stops, and so during the break, their support worker keeps one of the shakers so they can hear this. Another participant finds PECs symbols very reassuring, so we use these. Workshops are well staffed so that tutors can chat to participants and parents/guardians/support workers before, during and after the session. Parents/guardians/support workers have the contact details of the Education Manger (at the bottom of all emails) and if they want to get in contact privately, they can do so, and this has indeed happened, both via email and telephone.

We get to know the participants and their parents/guardians/support workers well and the atmosphere in the room is relaxed; I would hope participants and their parents/guardians/support workers feel all staff are approachable.

When working with school groups, teaching and pastoral staff take an active role and we welcome their expertise and advice when working with the students. Often the tutors will ask the teacher what will work best for the student since they know them so well.

*Q3. How have you sought to gain prior knowledge of participants' musical experience, pastoral care and access needs in order to **inform planning**? How well has this worked?*

We use a Google form sent before each term to find out about the participants needs. For returning members, they only complete the form once a year in September, but they are asked to let us know if the information changes and they are reminded of this at the start of each term. We also chat to participants and their parents/guardians/support workers at the start of the first session, and this can often tell us more, such as finding out one participant writes music to poetry and is a competent piano player. It was through such a conversation that one potential member decided to join LYFE instead of FUN and this is working out very well for them.

After each workshop, there is a debrief and in this we discuss how we can better support participants, both musically and pastorally. Strategies are discussed and these are then implemented, either at the next workshop or, if interim work needs to be actioned between the workshops, I will do this, such as a phone call with a parent. This has worked well and progress has been seen in participants. I feel the Inclusive Folk team are very flexible and have a can-do attitude, which helps when trialling new strategies and ideas.

Before workshops in schools, I meet with the main school contact to hear about the students' needs and how we can best support them. Emmie attends these meetings if she is able to/there is a need to. If she does not attend, I will meet with her separately to talk through what I found out from the teacher. After each workshop in a school, there is a debrief to think about what went well and what needs to be adapted. This is particularly important when working in schools because unlike Sunday workshops, we do not know the students so after the first session, often adaptations need to be made. However, the meeting with the teacher in advance really helps and is very important in informing planning.

*Q4. What expectations have been set for music leaders in relation to the short, medium & long term **planning of activities**? How well have these expectations been met?*

I arrange meetings with the lead tutor and other meetings with the whole team to discuss medium and long term plans. Once these are in place, the tutors are able to plan the Sunday sessions without direct input from me and Emmie emails everyone (myself included) the plan before the session. The team then talk through this plan on Sunday before the participants arrive, to adapt it if need be.

The contracts sent to the tutors each year outline the planning requirements, making it clear the fee for the Sunday workshops includes planning and debrief time. The tutors meet these expectations and I find debrief meetings are productive in discussing participant progress and implementing new strategies and ideas to try. The team are very reflective, and this positive attitude is a real asset.

When planning for schools, the team understand the planning expectations and they also stay for a debrief after the session. The length of this debrief varies depending on the school and how the session went, and the team are flexible about this.

Earlier this year, I had a meeting with the tutor team to discuss their ideas about how the project could grow long term - I am keen to have their input and support.

Q5. How have EFDSS structured the project and supported artists to *monitor, develop & celebrate young people's musical, personal and social achievements?*

EFDSS have set aside plenty of planning time for Folk Unlimited sessions. The tutor team debrief at the end of each session to consider the progress of the participants and what could be introduced in the following session to further support this growth.

The tutor team are fantastic at making sure all participants' achievements are celebrated and they take their time to enable participants to flourish. I remember one session where the team paused an activity to find a better instrument for a participant; to an observer there may have been no need to do this since the participant was playing the instrument, but the tutor team felt they could engage more musically if using a different instrument.

When doing activities where people play or sing solos, everyone gets the opportunity to do this in a supportive way that suits them. This is then celebrated with everyone clapping. We have recently started using the wireless microphone to make this easier to manage.

There is one participant in the group who plays piano and they have been given opportunities to play to everyone at the end during the chill out time. Through this, other participants have become interested in the piano, and this has led to improvising sessions where all participants have improvised to the group. This has then been celebrated with clapping and some participants have taken a bow.

One aim this year was to share our music with LYFE and vice versa. We started this with LYFE playing to FUN and then at the end of the summer term, FUN performed to LYFE which I think the participants enjoyed. One participant had been asking to do this ever since LYFE performed so I am glad this event happened, and FUN were able to share their musical achievements with fellow musicians.

Q6. How have EFDSS structured the project or supported artists to help *young people set their own goals and targets?*

In my view, the participants are not necessarily conscious of their goal setting but they are progressing and this may be more apparent to tutors/parents/guardians/support workers. By

putting supportive strategies in place, the participants are able to develop their musical and social skills.

The FUN group often splits into smaller groups led by a tutor to allow the participants to come up with their own creative ideas. Smaller groups allow participants to develop their leadership skills and have the confidence to suggest ideas, whether this be verbally or by demonstrating a sound. Sometimes a participant will conduct the performance to the other groups.

For some participants, the goal of the term is to be able to join in for the whole session. This was the case for one participant this year, and by using PECs symbols which they used at school, support from their parent, and gradually extending the time the participant joined in, this was achieved.

*Q7. How have you provided information to participants and carers/support workers about **progression routes and 'next step' opportunities**? What have you done to seek out such opportunities?*

We run work experience for learning disabled young people and this academic year we had a student from Leighton College with us for 5 weeks. He had taken part in the workshops we delivered at his college beforehand and was therefore excited to continue to learn more about EFDSS. He worked with a number of departments to allow him to experience a wide range of jobs. Some of the jobs he completed allowed him to put his college work into action, such as going around the building with the caretaker looking at health and safety, which was a module he had studied at college.

We are hoping to build on this offer in the future and perhaps work more closely with Leighton College regarding opportunities we can offer their students.

One of our participants is interested in playing guitar and may sign up to the Sunday Folk Music Workshop that EFDSS run, I have been communicating with his mum about this.

I also let FUN participants and school leaders know about other opportunities they might be interested in, such as concerts and other workshops. We communicate in person in the Sunday sessions but also via email (particularly with schools) and Google Classroom. Some FUN participants came to an inclusive music workshop in May at Cecil Sharp House called 'Nobody Sings About my Heroes'.

*Q8. What time has been included in artist contracts for **reflection & evaluation activity**?*

Have practitioners working in different settings/sessions had contact with each other?

In the tutor contracts, 12 hours of planning and evaluation meeting time is built in, to allow time for reflection. It is also built into their contract that they should be prepared to stay for up to an hour after the FUN sessions for a debrief. This gives plenty of time for us to discuss and share our thoughts.

Practitioners working in different settings communicate over the phone, via email and in Zoom meetings, to ensure reflection takes place. The Inclusive Folk team have had Zoom meetings with guest tutors who join us for Folk Festivals.

Outside of this time, the tutors regular communicate with each other, and ideas are constantly developing organically. During a lunch break at a school for example, we had an ad hoc meeting and came up with ideas for the Folk Festival.

At the end of the Folk Festivals, we have a debrief with everyone who was included - tutors, EFDSS staff, guest tutors, volunteers, to hear everyone's views. I then type up these minutes and look at them before planning the next festival. This year, feedback from the March festival asked for more use of PECs symbols so we ensured we did this for June and this was well received.

*Q9. What supervision has been in place to support the **wellbeing of artists**?*

We have regular conversations and meetings with tutors and the trainee across the term, ensuring there is always time to talk through and address any issues in connection with the sessions. Tutors are fully briefed ahead of workshops and provided with as much participant information and individual access or learning needs as possible to help with planning and the running of engaging and effective workshops. Our trainee has an individual trainee learning plan, and they are encouraged to speak to me about training opportunities they would like to attend. Expected work hours and commitments are outlined in the tutors' contracts and we take care to avoid overwork.

Questionnaire completed by: Charlotte Turner

Job Title/Organisation: Education Manager, EFDSS

Date:18/07/2023

Appendix 2 Photography Credits

Inclusive Folk Festival Day, Cecil Sharp House, Photography by Romana Ashraf - Cover page, pages 2, 12 and 14

Edward taking part in Folk Unlimited, Photography by Brian Slater - page 9

Inclusive Folk tutors at Swiss Cottage School, Photography by Charlotte Turner - page 10