


ARTICLE

Working musically with care-experienced children and their families in the early years

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Abstract

Living within state care can have detrimental effects on children's development, as substantial research has proposed. Recognising how music-making may support children's social, emotional and personal development, many cultural organisations have begun developing music projects that work specifically with care-experienced children. Although evaluation has detailed the various benefits these projects may have, there has been little research into the approaches employed by the facilitators who deliver these projects. With this in mind, this article examines a community music project that focused on foster family music-making. It explores the facilitators' social pedagogical approach to music-making and the benefits participants report they have gained from the project, both to themselves and the children in their care.

Keywords: Care-Experienced Children; Early Years; Community Music; Social Pedagogy

Introduction

The numbers of children entering state care have been increasing in many countries. For instance, a study concerning the number of children in care within the United States revealed a 12% increase between the years 2012 and 2017, with numbers expected to grow (Meinhofer & Angleró-Díaz, 2019). Likewise, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2020) reported that in 2020, 46,000 children were in 'out-of-home care' and in the state's care, demonstrating a 7% increase across the period 2016 to 2020. A report by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (hereafter NSPCC), a charity dedicated to the protection of children in the UK, indicates that the UK has seen a 10% increase year-on-year in the number of children entering state-provided care, most often foster care, since 2010 (NSPCC, 2021a).

Recognising the challenges that living in the state-provided care system may have for children (Forrester et al., 2009; Simkiss, 2012), many arts and cultural institutions have developed arts and cultural activities that work specifically with this population of children. A prime example is the UK charity Youth Music, established in 1999 and dedicated to financially supporting music projects for children and young people. This charity funds several music programmes that work with care-experienced children and the key adults in their lives.

External funding provided by charities such as Youth Music often requires evaluation highlighting the outcomes achieved through such projects. As a result, many evaluation reports attempt to describe the benefits that such projects may bring to care-experienced children. However, these benefits need to be taken with some caution because project evaluations often rely on descriptions of what is gained based on self-reporting by project participants, rather than robust methods carried out by independent evaluators (Baker, Bull & Taylor, 2018). Furthermore, with an emphasis on demonstrating benefit as a tokenism to demonstrate 'value for money' (Belfiore, 2004), many evaluation reports fail to address the process taken to achieve these goals and, more specifically, the approaches that music facilitators were employing. As a result, details

around the process taken to achieve these benefits are often vague or missing, meaning that substantial knowledge that could support the development of future projects is lost. Thus, the specific interest in this article is around process rather than outcome.

In this article, I critically examine an early childhood music-making project that worked with foster families. The project was called *Loud and Clear* and based at the Sage Gateshead, a large music centre located in North East England. I specifically looked at the pedagogical approaches adopted by the music facilitators in the weekly sessions and the benefits that the project participants reported they have gained, both as participating adults and the children in their care. A case study strategy (Yin, 2003) was used to study the project. Across the case study, various methods were employed, including participatory observations, focus groups and one-to-one interviews with music facilitators and participants.

Guiding this study were three questions:

- What pedagogical approaches do music facilitators use when delivering a music programme for 0- to 4-year-olds working with foster families?
- How do these approaches support inclusive whole foster family music-making opportunities?
- What are the benefits of employing such approaches for children and the key adult in their lives?

I take a community music perspective to explore the findings within this study, hence my decision to use the term music facilitator. Higgins (2012) describes community music as an ‘active intervention between a music leader or facilitator and participants’ (p.13) built on the foundations of social justice and cultural democracy. Community music has been described as a crucible for social transformation, emancipation and empowerment (Higgins, 2012; Gibson, 2020). In the UK, many community music projects have focused on working with children and young people described as living in challenging circumstances and care-experienced children fall within such a definition (Deane & Mullen, 2013; Humphrey, 2020). Many of these projects aim to provide an empowering or transformational experience that enables children to develop personal, social and musical skills. Thus, in my view, the *Loud and Clear* programme, emphasising both personal and musical outcomes for care-experienced children, is a form of community music activity.

Before setting out the conceptual framework, I will first outline the *Loud and Clear* project in more detail.

The Loud and Clear early years programme

The *Loud and Clear* programme was established in 2009 and is run by the Sage Gateshead working in partnership with Newcastle and Gateshead Local Authorities (Governmental organisations responsible for public services in respective areas) and Adopt North-East and Adoption Tees Valley (regional adoption agencies). The programme has expanded over the years and now delivers four distinct projects. The different project strands work with children living in foster care and with children who have recently been adopted or are going through the adoption process across the ages of birth to 7 years.

The programme has several aims, including embedding learning and effective practice in host and partner organisations through sharing musical practice, improving the personal, social and emotional development of young children and building the emotional bonds between care-experienced children and their foster/adoptive parents through the medium of music-making (Mooney & Young, 2012). Music facilitators employ a social pedagogical approach to achieve these aims which has the child’s personal, social and educational needs at the core of the sessions.

Each *Loud and Clear* programme delivers a weekly session during school term time. Two music facilitators deliver the sessions that run for up to 90 minutes. The session time includes opportunities for a ‘snack break’ that is crucial for supporting the social elements of the session and reinforcing the frameworks of social pedagogical practice (Humphrey & Mooney, 2021). Activities in the session are based on supporting the children in developing their language and numeracy and increased awareness and knowledge of the natural world. These are key areas of the national curriculum for early childhood in England (EYFS, 2021). Research has highlighted the detrimental effect that living in care may have on children’s educational development, specifically in areas such as English and Maths (Simkiss, 2012; DFE, 2020). These findings provide the rationale in support of the facilitators’ decision to develop activities that support children in their educational development through music-making.

I selected the *Loud and Clear* foster family learning sessions for this study because it is the longest running strand within the programme. It therefore provides a unique perspective into the approaches facilitators employ when working with care-experienced children and their foster carers. In this next section, I outline the conceptual framework.

Conceptual framework

There are three areas that I have selected to focus on to construct the conceptual framework: social pedagogy, attachment theory and music-making. Each of these areas was chosen as they are key features to the *Loud and Clear* model (Mooney & Young, 2012) and are prominent features in studies of the lives of care-experienced children and social work.

Social pedagogy

According to Cameron and Moss (2011), social pedagogy is often drawn upon by individuals working with care-experienced children as a valuable pedagogical approach because it focuses not only on the educational needs of the children but also on their social and personal needs (Cameron & Moss, 2011). By focusing on the child’s educational and personal needs, Cameron and Moss suggest that individuals begin recognising the child as a ‘whole person and thereby begin playing a critical role in supporting the child in their development’ (Cameron & Moss, 2011, p.9). The key adults in the child’s life begin to play a critical role and the children can begin recognising themselves as being in a dyadic relationship built on the grounds of trust and openness.

Berridge and colleagues (2010, p.130) found that training residential home workers in social pedagogical practice could enable workers to support the children’s emotional needs more effectively, thus helping the children prepare for life after leaving the care system. At the centre of this pedagogical approach lies the idea of the *Common Third*, a concept that describes how a child and adult partake in a joint activity together and, as such, both develop stronger bonds (Cameron & Moss, 2011; Hatton, 2020).

Chambers and Petrie (2009) adapted the *Common Third* into the *Heads, Hearts and Hands* framework to support creative practitioners in developing their practice according to a social pedagogical model. The framework suggests that adults should work with children with their head (using the knowledge they have of the child to create sessions that will support the child), heart (bringing their emotions to the work as well as considering that of the child’s) and their hands (the actual doing of the activity). By employing the principles of the *Heads, Hearts and Hands* approach within their practice, Chambers and Petrie suggest that creative practitioners may create an experience that supports them in developing relationships with the young people they are working with and enables them to create meaningful and creative experiences. A report that evaluated the first 2 years of the *Loud and Clear* programme describes the ‘Learning Framework for Artistic Pedagogues’ as a key framework used in developing the project (Mooney & Young, 2012).

Attachment theory

Attachment theory is often drawn on in studies of childhood development. However, the theory has many critics regarding its failure to recognise hereditary factors and the influence of social and cultural development on the implications of attachment formation (Slater, 2007; Fitzgerald, 2021). One of the significant criticisms surrounding attachment theory is that there is an implication that babies will attach themselves to only one dominant figure, usually a mother figure, whereas studies have shown that babies can be securely attached to several key figures in their lives (Slater, 2007).

Although there is much criticism, the attachment theory theorising of Bowlby (1988), Ainsworth (1979) and Main, Caplan and Cassidy (1985) still holds relevance in many studies regarding care-experienced children today. Bowlby (1988) highlights how attachments formed at the beginning stages of the child's life could form the stepping stones for future attachments. Main and co-authors (1985) highlight four different types of attachments: (1) secure, (2) anxious-avoidant, (3) anxious ambivalent and (4) disorganised. The theory proposes that forming a secure attachment with a solid foundation supports the child in exploring and learning about the physical and emotional world.

The UK charity, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) estimates that over 60% of the children are in care due to abuse or neglect (NSPCC, 2021b). This points towards an insecure attachment between the child and their birth parent (Main et al., 1985). As knowledge of the importance of developing attachments within care-experienced children's lives has evolved, the UK government has offered relevant training to the children's workforce staff to support the formation of attachments, such as social pedagogy training (Berridge et al., 2010).

Music-making

Some studies have focused on the benefits of music-making for care-experienced children (Stafford, Whitewood & Fleming, 2007; Salkeld, Oldfield & Flowe 2008; Deane & Mullen, 2013). For instance, taking the ideas of attachment first, a Youth Music evidence review (Dillon, 2010) into the implications that engaging in music-making may offer care-experienced children described how engaging in joint music-making enabled young people to form attachments with their carers. *Creative Vocals* was one of the projects identified within the Youth Music report in which participants were encouraged to use lyrics as a way of expressing themselves. Through the activity of inviting carers to join in with the sessions, the music-making became a 'leveller,' where there was a space for communication between the carers and children, helping the children to develop their voice (Dillon, 2010: 20). Similarly, Salkeld, Oldfield and Flowe (2008) highlighted how, when working with care-experienced young children, music-making could be used as a form of non-verbal communication that could support the attachment process between adult and child.

Focusing on the idea of joint interaction through music-making, Williams and colleagues (2015) described how joint music-making between parent and young children led to opportunities for 'active cooperation, turn taking and immediate feedback between parent and child, that supported child's self-regulatory system and social development' (Williams et al., 2015: 112). For instance, this research team noted how shared musical activity supported children aged 2 to 3 years in developing their pre-social skills, including language and numeracy skills and emotional regulation, which were critical in their childhood development. Other studies have highlighted similar findings when considering how joint family music-making may be helpful for children living with special educational needs or in challenging circumstances such as state care (Oldfield, 2006; Nicholson et al., 2008; Mooney & Young, 2012).

I now outline the methodological approaches employed within this study.

7 Female Carers	5 Children	Facilitators 2 Female Facilitators- both of whom have been working on the programme since 2009.
4 Long term Carers (33-65 years old)	2 Females (2-5 years old): 1 - Long term foster care 1 - Short term foster care	
1 Family member (13 years old)	3 Males 2- Long term foster care 1- Short term foster care	
3 Short term Carers (28-55 years old)		

Figure 1. Sample of participants.

Methods

Ethical approval for this study was granted by York St John University after a thorough review of ethical consent procedures. Consent forms were provided to all participants (facilitators and project participants) before beginning data collection, outlining the aims and objects of the research and what their involvement would entail. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions or raise any concerns before data collection began. Due to the sensitive nature of some of the narratives, the data transcribed from focus groups, interviews and participatory observations were anonymised with pseudonyms. (All of the names in this article are pseudonyms.) Additionally, all recordings were stored on password-protected devices in line with data protection and later destroyed once they had been analysed.

As mentioned earlier in this article, I employed a case study strategy (Yin, 2003) through which I carried out participatory observations, focus groups and one-to-one interviews with both music facilitators and participants attending the project.

Participatory observations were undertaken over 8 sessions. Field notes were recorded with pencil and paper throughout the observations and were later written up digitally. When conducting the observations, I paid specific attention to the activities being used in the sessions and how the music facilitators worked with the group, alongside the participants' responses in the sessions.

Focus groups were undertaken during one of the Loud and Clear sessions. Robson describes narrative research as a 'research approach that focuses on the stories that people use to understand and describe aspects of their lives' (Robson, 2011: 374). Hence, it was believed that employing a narrative research approach in this case study could enable insights to emerge regarding the participants' experiences of attending a music project. The focus group involved 7 carers (see Figure 1), and it began with an initiating question, asking what had led members to attend the project. Follow-up questions were determined in response to the carers' conversations. The focus group discussion was recorded on a dictaphone and transcribed by hand.

Thematic analysis was undertaken on the transcription guided by Robson's coding process (2011: 149). This involved coding parts of the transcript that appeared to be talking around the participants' experience, the music facilitators' approach or the benefits of attending the project. Any repeated codes became emerging themes within the research that could be explored further in the one-to-one interviews. Some of the emerging themes included: carers' desire to socialise with other carers as a rationale for choosing to attend the group, a feeling of increased engagement in music and seeing the project as being musically beneficial for the children.

One-to-one interviews were used to gather further details concerning the participants' experiences of attending the project. Likewise, one to-one interviews were also undertaken with the facilitators, gathering their thoughts on their approaches and how they adapted the session to meet participants' needs. The interviews adopted a semi-standardised approach, allowing freedom to adjust to the participants' responses (Robson, 2011). These interviews were recorded and transcribed, removing any confidential information to ensure anonymity. Thematic analysis was

undertaken on these interviews following the same coding procedure developed to analyse the focus group.

Figure 1. details the sample of participants involved in this study. All of the adult participants were female, including the facilitators. Two carers had been attending the project for several years, bringing along each of their foster children at one stage or another. The other 5 carers had been attending the project for a matter of months.

Five care-experienced children were attending the project, of which there was a mix between those deemed as being in long-term foster care and those in short-term foster care. Long-term foster care is an expectation that the child will remain in foster placement throughout their childhood or until they leave the care system when reaching adulthood. However, this is not to say that the child will remain with the same foster family, only that there is an expectation that they will be in some form of care through their childhood (Fostering Network, [undated](#)). In contrast, short-term foster care is temporary and can vary from an emergency overnight placement to stay in a placement order for 2 years. Local authorities usually use short-term placements while legal case proceedings are ongoing (Capstone Foster Care, [undated](#)).

Findings

Music facilitators' narratives

This section will begin to highlight the findings of the research, which are then explored and further discussed alongside the prominent themes emerging from the conceptual framework. I will begin by exploring the music facilitators' narratives.

Approaches to practice

Music facilitators described how employing a social pedagogical approach when delivering *Loud and Clear* meant recognising that the music-making happening within the sessions could become a secondary feature to the opportunities for socialisation. Reflecting on their experience of working with foster carers, facilitators perceived that the opportunity to socialise with other carers was probably a benefit that drew carers to attend the project in the first place. For Casey, one of the music facilitators, providing a space for socialisation was vital for helping to develop a supportive environment between carers which she believed could be lacking in other environments

'But they get ostracised if they go to regular groups, if someone finds out that they are not their parent and are their carer they treat them differently... Which... I don't... it's beyond me, so I think to have a group where they are all in the same boat kind of thing and they all understand about the fostering system as well, so they can talk to each other and compare notes if you know what I mean. Rant and vent their frustration'

[Casey, Music Facilitator]

Music facilitators developed an opportunity for socialisation within the session by incorporating a snack/break time where carers could chat with one another, and the children could interact with one another.

The sessions used a range of activities involving a range of resources to generate playful musical activity such as large pieces of lycra, puppets and cuddly toys (predominately wild animals and farmyard animals). The music facilitators believed that the majority of activities used in the session were primarily based around song-writing, with children and carers directly inputting their ideas into the song. By employing a song-writing approach, music facilitators presumed that a sense of ownership would be developed in the session by enabling participants to feel that they are having their voices heard and acknowledged. In the participatory observations undertaken,

there were several opportunities in each session for participants to take ownership and have their ideas incorporated into a song. For example, one activity involved a song where children chose soft toy animals from a bag to be included in a 'down in the jungle' song. Each child and carer described what the animal was and its noise. The facilitators then adapted these lines into the song lyrics.

Often, the music facilitators would repeat the same activities the next week, adding in small developments (change the tempo, dynamics), providing participants with a different musical experience and the opportunity to develop and enhance their musical skills. Both music facilitators believed that repeated activities were a standard approach in early years music practice that could be useful for helping children to feel ownership, control and more confidence in the skills they develop and to increase their overall engagement.

Finally, the music facilitators spoke in detail about the importance of providing activities that the children and adults could join in together. This was considered critical to the project's approach, enabling foster carers and the child in their care to interact and engage with one another and enhance their bond. Across the sessions observed, there were never any occasions where I witnessed a carer sitting away from the music-making. Instead, facilitators would look towards the carers in the room to help scaffold the activity by inputting their ideas, such as the child's favourite song or what dance moves they could do next when dancing with the child in the movement section.

Potential benefits of attending the project

Given that the music facilitators are responsible for delivering the project, it was somewhat unsurprising that there was an element of bias in their descriptions of the project as having numerous benefits. The development of musical skills was noted as one of the most significant benefits, with facilitators noting how children and carers were developing their musical skills through engaging in the project. For instance, facilitators described children as having developed their singing and engagement in music-making, with one participant standing out in particular:

'When Abigail goes to school, she sings the songs; she tells people; she conducts; she does all the things, even though she has probably been once or twice in the last year. She . . . cause her carers still do it at home with them as well which is important. So, it's not just a case of she remembers it off when she came; she's doing it at home still which is really important. It's just part of their life.'

[Casey, Music Facilitator]

Selma, one of the music facilitators, described how she believed the project was about increasing the levels of music-making within the homes of care-experienced children. This was achieved in Abigail's case. Within the sessions, carers would often give feedback to music facilitators about how they had tried to use or develop activities at home based on what they had done in the session and how their child had responded. Carers would report on specific developments in the child's engagement, musical skill or personal and social skill development.

Carers' narratives

The following section will begin exploring the carers' narratives, specifically focusing on why they began attending the project and the benefits they believed they and the children in their care had gained.

Reasons for attending Loud and Clear

Carers gave several reasons for why they had begun attending the sessions. Their primary reason was to socialise with other foster carers. Several carers described having negative experiences when attending other parent and children's groups, often facing awkward questions or judgement about the child's challenging behaviour they may be displaying that led to them feeling unwelcomed within the group

'Everybody presumes they are your grandchildren, and you think . . . especially if they are kicking off, they are always like I'm glad she's not mine. And you want to say actually they are a looked after child . . . where at least here everybody understands that.'

(Lynn, Foster Carer)

By socialising with other foster carers, members described feeling supported in their work.

Additionally, it was noted from the carers how the sessions provided a unique experience for the children to see and play educational percussion (egg shakers, castanets, guiros were predominantly seen to be used in the participatory observations). For instance, Karen, a foster carer, commented how she believed her foster children had probably 'never seen the instruments, never mind being given a chance to play them'. Thus, the project, by emphasising instrument exploration, supported the children in this unique experience.

Surprisingly, only a small number of the group stated that their reason for attending the group was for the music or to provide a musical experience for the children. One reason for this may be that many carers actively spoke about using music in their home environment even before attending the sessions. Hence, this was not a feature that the carers believed the children would miss while in their care.

Benefits of attending the project

The carers described several benefits that they believed the project offered to themselves and the children. One of the most prominent was the increased engagement in music that the children displayed after attending the project for several weeks. Many carers shared how the children would go home and replicate activities and songs from the sessions. Similarly, the carers themselves described feeling more confident at joining in with the music at home, having experienced the songs and activities in the session. Carers reflected in the focus group on their past experiences of playing instruments or being in bands while in school. However, upon leaving school, many of the carers had stopped participating in music-making and believed they would now struggle to remember how to play an instrument. Since attending the group, several carers were encouraged by seeing the facilitators play instruments to retry learning an instrument to use with the children.

Another notable benefit was the sense of structure and routine that the project supported the children to develop. Carers described how attending the session became part of the children's weekly routine and that they found that the children responded to the music at home when engaging in everyday activities such as tidying up or having a bath.

'All of them . . . to get them in the bath . . . we've adapted them . . . Casey's adapted them for us to use, to fit with what we are doing. You know when we are walking on the beach we will do 'we walk, we walk, we walk, and we stop.' Yeah, that's probably the most important.'

(Donna, Foster Carer)

In the next section, I will begin to discuss the emerging findings using the conceptual lens outlined at the beginning of this article

Discussion

The findings reveal several different ways that the *Loud and Clear* Foster Family learning integrated social pedagogical practice and the benefits that emerged from employing such approaches.

Research has suggested that care-experienced children can often find it challenging to develop meaningful attachments with foster carers and adoptive parents (Hughes, 2000; Simkiss, 2012). Hence, social pedagogy, focusing on facilitating relationships and bonds through joint social interaction, or as explained in an early section as the *Common Third* (Hatton, 2020), has become a cornerstone approach to children's support services in working with care-experienced children (Berridge et al., 2010). Findings from this case study demonstrate how music facilitators on *Loud and Clear* employed the notion of the *Common Third* in their practice to support carers and children in developing their bonds with one another. For instance, there were several opportunities for children and their carers to sing, play and dance together in *Loud and Clear*. Similarly, the fact that carers also reported how they were using music in the homes to build structure and routine for the children and develop bonds also clearly highlights the benefits that carers believed music-making might have in their lives. Attachment and routine are two areas care-experienced children often miss (Forrester et al., 2009; Simkiss, 2012).

However, developing a structure and routine is not only highlighted as being critical for care-experienced children but for all children. Blatchford and colleagues (2012) propose that developing a sense of structure and routine is critical for supporting children's learning and development in the early years. One reason for this is because it supports children in feeling more in control of their environment and enables them to feel safe and secure (Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Centre, undated). Music facilitators described themselves as aware of the importance of routine-making in the early years and the criticalness of routine building in supporting foster carers working with the children at home. Hence, they employed a range of repertoire that they would often repeat but changed the lyrics to fit that activity to demonstrate how songs could be adapted and used in the child's every day. A prime example was using a 'tidy up song' that was repeated several times, with the words being adapted to fit with what the children were tidying at that specific moment.

As social pedagogical practice is centred around socialisation, it became apparent how employing such an approach within *Loud and Clear* became effective for helping carers develop a support network. Aware of the discrimination that carers could face from other groups, facilitators implemented a snack break believing that this could play a pivotal point for carers to interact with one another. Hughes (2000) notes that having a support network for carers and adoptive parents is vital for helping overcome any challenges they may be facing within their unique position (Hughes, 2000: 213). Research by Ottaway and Selwyn (2016) suggests that foster carers need support from other carers to delay or prevent any feeling of 'blocked care' where foster carers feel unable to form loving and empathetic relationships with the child, leading to placement breakdowns. Thus, emphasising that social time is just as crucial as the music-making within *Loud and Clear* enables the carers to gain a sense of support where they can gain advice, talk through the various stages of looked after care and feel a sense of belonging.

Engaging in a music-making project also supported the children and carers to increase their musical engagement. For example, four carers described learning musical instruments after attending the sessions, something they may have never thought of doing prior to attending *Loud and Clear*. Similarly, the children were seen to be developing a range of musical skills. One child was seen to be developing their pulse keeping and sense of rhythm whilst observing the sessions over several weeks. Furthermore, the carer noted how they began engaging more in music-making at home since attending the sessions, playing instruments and singing. Carers believed that attending the sessions was helping the child increase their confidence through having the opportunity to have their voice heard and being encouraged to contribute by the

facilitators. Findings from this case study regarding the increased musical engagement resonate with the reports from earlier projects that have worked with care-experienced children (Dillon, 2010).

Examining this from a broader perspective, studies have highlighted how the singing of lullabies and nursery rhymes by a child's parents are often the first songs the children will hear and form the basis for future musical engagement, language acquisition, relationships and knowledge of how the world is formed (Levitin, 2010; Williams et al., 2015). However, for many of the children attending *Loud and Clear*, these early musical moments were missing in their lives. One carer described in the one-to-one interview how when they first began singing to the children, they looked uneasy. However, through attending a music project for several months and having a familiar figure who engaged in singing, the children were seen to be far more engaged and often asked for carers to sing to them daily. Therefore, increasing the child's engagement in music-making within this case was beneficial for providing an opportunity for communication between the child and their support network, where attachments and language acquisition could be developed.

Although these findings illustrate the potential benefits of a social pedagogical approach in a music project with foster families, it is not possible to claim that the findings would be replicated in other, similar projects due to the small sample size. Further research could be conducted to examine and compare the benefits of similar groups working with parents/carers and children that are employing a social pedagogical approach. Furthermore, further research could be carried out to explore other ways in which social pedagogical practice is being employed in musical practice to support practitioners in their knowledge of this specific approach.

Final summary

By examining the *Loud and Clear* case study, we can understand how social pedagogical practice may be integrated into music programmes that work with the whole family and the various benefits that this may have for both carers and care-experienced children. When employing a social pedagogical approach, facilitators must recognise and support the different dimensions of such an approach. First as a pedagogy for group development, ensuring that there are activities and opportunities for socialising. Recognising that by eliciting opportunities for socialisation, groups may build a sense of togetherness and comradery that they lack within their lives. Second, developing activities that concentrate on the musical skill development of both the group and individual levels supports increased musical engagement for both children and adults. Whilst also highlighting how music-making activities could be a medium for relationship development between foster carer and child, so dyadic relationships are generated through the music.

Acknowledgements. I thank the carers and music facilitators of *Loud and Clear* who have given up their time to take part in the study.

Competing interests. Ryan is employed at Sage Gateshead where the focus of this research was undertaken.

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Cite this article: David Humphrey R (2022). Working musically with care-experienced children and their families in the early years. *British Journal of Music Education* **39**, 302–313. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026505172200033X>