



Music Strategy



MHA Music Strategy
2021-2024



Our purpose

In April 2019, MHA launched a new five year strategy outlining how we would support people to live later life well. Our strategy has four key areas to enable us to achieve this including:

- MHA in the Community
- MHA Enhancing Later Life
- MHA People
- MHA Fit for the Future

The Music Strategy builds upon the content discussed in MHA's strategy to ensure we are able to enhance later life through best use of music. The aim of the Music Strategy is to guide us over the next three years to ensure we achieve our mission, values and vision.

Our Mission

As a charity, our mission is to enable people to live later life well.

Our Values

Inspired by our Methodist roots, we:

Respect every person, treating them with dignity

Nurture mind, body and spirit

Inspire the best in each other

Our Vision

By 2024, we will have increased the quality, impact and reach of our services by connecting our communities and realising our potential as One MHA.

Introduction

Music is a key part of our holistic approach to care and support at MHA, enabling people to live later life well. We are proud of our Music Therapy service and wish to build on this, as well as appreciating how music plays an important part in all of our lives. Music has the power to evoke many different emotions and memories: the songs we used to dance to, and the ones we might still be dancing to; the bands that we followed; music that inspired us; music that helped us through celebrations as well as sad times; and music that moves us and gives us meaning.

This strategy sets out commitments on how music enables residents and members to live later life well, as well as how music plays an important role for family members, colleagues and engagement with the wider community.



We recognise that music covers a whole variety of genres and needs to be person centred; our Music Therapy service has the potential for greater impact across all our services; smart speakers and platforms provide a wealth of advantages including the use of personalised playlists; music plays an important part in the general atmosphere in homes and schemes. Music can be a catalyst for facilitating community amongst residents, members, colleagues, families and friends; communal singing, whether as part of a choir or in worship, can lift our souls; and music has the power to cross cultures and communities to further enable us to be One MHA and a part of the wider community.

Development of the strategy

All our commitments are based on what residents, members, families and colleagues have told us is important to them. We gathered this information through surveys and focus groups. Our commitments also align with recent research from:

Dementia and Music, International Longevity Centre (Bowell, S. and Bamford, S.M., 2018. What Would Life Be - Without a Song or a Dance, What are We?) Our commitments to offering the best possible music provision, care and support

Our commitments to offering the best possible music provision, care and support

Commitment one

We will ensure that music is used effectively, to enhance mind, body and spirit, ensuring it is person-centred.

Commitment two

We will grow the music therapy service, ensuring it is used to its best effect across the full range of MHA services.

Commitment three

We will ensure all our services have access to high quality music, digitally and in person.

Commitment four

We will use music as part of our holistic approach in supporting colleagues and relatives.

Commitment five

We will use music to further engage the wider community, deepening existing and new relationships, as One MHA.

Commitment one

We will ensure that music is used effectively to enhance mind, body and spirit, ensuring it is person-centred.

- Particular music can help you connect with your spirituality and beliefs and we will therefore support you in this through communal singing, access to digital communities and other musical experiences that facilitate connection.
- Particular music can help you connect with your culture and community and we will therefore support you in this by providing different in-person musical experiences for residents and members.

“It lifts my spirits and my mood. It brings back happy memories, reminding me of my late husband.”

Resident

“I’ve loved music from when I was a child. It gives you a lift when you are down and helps me if I feel the onset of depression.”

Resident

“I sometimes use music when I pray.”

Family member

“Mother has always enjoyed a range of music preferences, playing of certain types may help her to link with associated memories and stimulate brain functioning.”

Family member

“I consider music is an important part of my role, not only in singalongs and for worship, but as a talking point with tenants and family members.”

MHA Retirement Living Chaplain



- There is increasing evidence of the positive impact of music for a person living with dementia. In our homes and our schemes, if you can no longer tell us, we will ask those closest to you about your current and past musical preferences and how music can best support you. In communities, we will explore ways to expand the therapeutic benefits of music to members who are living with dementia.
- We will ensure that the music used is in accordance with individual preferences by gathering information about personal musical tastes, including this in resident’s care plans and providing varied genres of music during activities in communities.
- We will remain mindful and respect that musical preferences are individual and may change over time, and for some music isn’t always enjoyable.
- We recognise that music can evoke positive and negative memories, with the potential for joy and the potential for distress. We will do everything we can to be aware of your changing needs and make adjustments accordingly.

What does the research say?


“Music is among those lifestyle choices that may reduce stress, protect against disease, and manage pain.”

“Music plays an important role in creating social bonds.”

(Chanda & Levitin, 2013).

Commitment two

We will grow the Music therapy service, ensuring it is used to its best effect across the full range of MHA services.

- Music therapists will work with colleagues providing assessment and advice and develop support plans to assist residents and members in the provision of daily, person centred care across MHA.
 - We aim to increase the current provision of music therapy within MHA care homes in order to offer music therapy to every resident identified as having a need for it.
 - We will explore how music therapy can be utilised within Retirement Living and MHA Communities, where necessary innovating new ways of operating in order to meet the needs within Retirement Living and MHA Communities schemes.
 - We will ensure that best practice guidance from Music Therapists are shared across One MHA to provide greater benefit.
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- Funding will be sought for an advisory role to offer training for colleagues, support plans for residents and members and to use music as a tool to promote wellbeing and independence.
 - We will provide training and support for colleagues across MHA in the use of music in end of life care.
 - We are committed to ongoing research to evidence the benefits of music in everyday life.

“If the Music Therapy Department can come up with any ideas or resources to develop what I am trying to do, I would be most grateful.”

MHA Retirement Living chaplain

“Music Therapy is a jewel in the crown of MHA, because of its physical, mental and spiritual effects on residents. It generates happiness, calmness, a sense of wellbeing and increases the appetites of some.”

MHA Retirement Living chaplain

“I think it is important to develop more music and Music Therapy as it makes such a difference.”

Colleague

What does the research say?

“Music therapy improves cognitive function in people living with dementia, as well as quality of life and long-term depression.”

(Moreno-Marles et al, 2020).

“Significant improvements in verbal fluency occurred after music therapy, with significant reductions in anxiety, depression, and apathy.”

(Lam et al, 2020).

Commitment three

We will ensure all our services have access to appropriate and high quality music, digitally and in person.

- Homes will be provided with smart speakers and a subscription service, alongside appropriate training in order to allow for greater choice and flexibility of music.
- Appropriate equipment will be sourced for use in communities, to allow for greater choice and flexibility of music.
- We will ensure that you, with the support of colleagues, are confident in the use of musical equipment and platforms, including your preferred medium (e.g. vinyl, CD, digital).

“Maybe have a bit more music and less television.”

Family member

“Updated equipment – smart TV in the lounge would be great.”

Resident

“I don’t have a radio, or cd player as I’d find them difficult to use.”

Resident

“We use Alexa a lot now to play songs requested by our residents.”

Colleague

“Everyone’s mood is brighter after one of your [entertainer] visits.”

MHA community manager



- We will create individual playlists suited to your needs.
- We will ensure colleagues are trained in how radio, TV and other technological devices enhance communal areas and are used to support you appropriately.
- In all our homes and schemes, live music will be regularly evaluated in order to ensure that the quality of music is appropriate and beneficial for residents.

What does the research say?

“A growing body of work is investigating how smart speakers can optimise opportunities for healthy ageing among older adults.”

(Choi et al, 2020).



Commitment four

We will use music as part of our holistic approach in supporting colleagues and family members.

- We recognise the positive impact that music has for colleagues and visitors in homes and schemes and we will endeavour to build on this, paying attention to ambience and background noise.
- Some colleagues may want to be involved in musical activities but do not have the time to do so, therefore we will endeavour to allow for this, where it would improve the residents' experience and the morale of colleagues.
- Family members and friends should be able to enjoy musical activities with residents and members at services, events and through digital communities, allowing for further involvement in the life of MHA.
- We will ensure that a resident or member living with dementia has the opportunity for further support from colleagues or family members to engage them in musical activities that can support them.
- We will be considerate of residents, members, colleagues and visitors regarding the environmental use of music, being aware of hearing and sensory impairments.

"It creates a positive atmosphere and sense of morale."

Colleague

"We have karaoke days and some residents join in and dance with the staff."

Colleague

"I would if my role allowed the time to."

Colleague

"Yes always, as taking part in the singing is part of me being a good carer."

Colleague

What does the research say?

"When delivered effectively, music gives carers and loved ones an avenue through which to sustain relationships and share experiences."

(Bowell et al, 2018).

Commitment five

We will use music to further engage the wider community, deepening existing and new relationships, as One MHA.

- We recognise how important music is in fostering a sense of community.
- We will encourage musical activities such as choirs and music groups involving residents, members, colleagues, volunteers and families as part of One MHA.
- We will connect with other organisations through musical activity, to enhance the life of the home or scheme, and the community in which it is situated.
- We will collaborate and build relationships within the wider community with organisations such as schools, churches, local artists, and other local care homes and schemes, in the provision of musical events, internally and externally.

“It’s enjoyable and keeps me more in touch with other people. Helps me join in and be part of the party.”

Resident

“[They] enjoy the social aspect rather than the music.”

Relative

“I love music. I am in a singing group.”

Resident

What does the research say?

“Music can bring people in from outside and connect the residents with the wider community.”

Noble (2017).





In times of a health emergency, such as a pandemic

- COVID-19 has taught us a lot and we will use this experience if facing other similar obstacles in the future.
- We will offer you opportunities to speak with your family and friends through the use of technology, when they are unable to visit; whether this is due to a pandemic or other factors such as distance.
- We will continue to lobby government to provide the necessary resources to allow your family members to visit safely, including routine testing and PPE.
- We will offer you Music Therapy over the internet, if it is not feasible in person.
- We will provide musical resources for events in your home or scheme to mark the death of a resident, for those unable to attend the funeral.
- We will provide appropriate music during this time.
- We will provide guidance and look for alternatives for when restrictions do not allow for communal singing such as worship and choirs.



“[if] it were not for music I feel [a few residents] would not have made it through.”

Colleague

“[music] has improved interaction between residents and staff in the absence of family presence.”

Colleague

“Music Therapy was used in the home during the COVID-19 pandemic to help lift the spirits of both residents and staff.”

Music Therapist

Implementing the strategy

All our hopes and aspirations for the implementation of the music strategy are reliant on continued fundraising and the generosity of the public, relatives and staff. We are extremely grateful for all the support we receive from the various trusts, organisations and continuing fundraising efforts. We acknowledge that the execution and promotion of this strategy is the key to its success. This is why we will be introducing a number of new initiatives, including:

- Seeking funding for an advisory role in music; as well as charitable appeals regarding digital devices required for accessing music.
- Providing case studies to promote Music Therapy and presenting at key conferences.
- Launching a pilot scheme using smart speakers in 16 homes and schemes in accordance with streaming rules and regulations.
- Creating and reviewing individualised playlists that reflect musical choices taking into account one's background, culture and spirituality in accordance with the Music Choice and Preference Policy.
- Utilising our online internal network, Workplace, to share best musical practice and ideas across MHA.
- Collaborating with academic and industrial partners to obtain research grants to explore research opportunities and generate evidence for the benefits of music and music therapy.
- Working with the Fundraising and Corporate Affairs teams to use research evidence to develop campaigns to influence policy making and seek further funding to increase our provision of music therapy.
- Developing a system for assessing needs for music therapy services within retirement living and MHA Communities together with advising how music therapy can be delivered by other colleagues.



Implementing the strategy (continued)

- Working in conjunction with the Digital Care Plan project, ensuring that when digital care plans are being considered and developed, that musical preferences are part of this along with a structure for including music therapy within this new platform for planning and recording.
- Alignment to the Dementia and End of Life Care strategy and consideration of what part Music Therapy and music use in general has to plan within the newly developing Nursing Strategy.
- Providing training, resources and guidance for colleagues (eg. activity coordinators and care staff) to use music during daily activities and end of life care.
- Providing training in the use of musical equipment and digital platforms in order to support best practice of music across home and schemes, including in communal areas and the use of live music.
- Improving opportunities for family members to join in musical events, worship and other musical activity, including those living with dementia, through regular communications.
- Delivering musical events and activities, both internally and externally, in collaboration with local organisations and partners.
- Partnering across One MHA to share in musical events and activities, including choirs and groups.





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Notes

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