



Inclusive Music: evaluating the impact of Paragon's *Play On* programme on the lives of young people with additional support needs and their families

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Contents

Introduction	1
Paragon and Play On	2
Methodology	4
Findings	6
Play On Model	6
Music	8
Performance	10
Pedagogy	10
Development of Transferable Life Skills	12
Confidence	12
Identity	13
Independence	15
Socialisation and Communication	15
Motivation and Achievement	17
Impact on Family Life	18
Future Development	20
References	22

Figures and Tables

Figure 1	Ages of Play On Students	3
Figure 2	Source of Information about Play On Classes	3
Figure 3	Data Collection Tool used with the Play On Students	4
Figure 4	Elements of Play On Model	6
Figure 5	What Do Parents/Carers Do During Play On Classes?	18
Table 1	Student to Staff Numbers in Play On	2
Table 2	Study Participants	4
Table 3	Future Development	21

Introduction

This report contributes to a developing evidence base on the arts and wellbeing and specifically the impact that learning music has on the lives of children with additional support needs (ASN). The report discusses the outcomes of engaging in musical experiences that are inclusive, supportive and creative. In doing so it highlights that there is a growing demand for inclusive music classes for children and young people and that ways to increase provision need to be identified and implemented.

For the majority of children without ASN opportunities to learn a musical instrument exist both in and out of school, with the main barriers to participation being financial and/or individual choice, for example, children deciding they don't want to learn a musical instrument. The factors influencing whether or not a child with ASN learns to play a musical instrument are significantly different, with cost and choice becoming secondary to the very limited availability of inclusive and accessible music tuition. The work of Paragon and specifically the Play On programme is addressing this unequal provision by creating musical opportunities for children with ASN to enable them to engage in activities that are available to the non-disabled population.

The project aims for this study were to evaluate Paragon's Play On music programme in relation to its impact on the lives of the programme participants (children and young people) with ASN and their families. Play On's inclusive approach to teaching music was also explored. Discussion between the researchers and Paragon staff led to the study addressing impact on the lives of the Play On students in relation to fundamental life skills within three key areas: confidence, independence and motivation. The findings from the study are multiple and varied, however in essence the involvement of children and young people with ASN in inclusive musical experiences appears to have a positive impact in these three areas. The Play On approach to music is highlighted as a conduit through which the children and young people are valued and supported to develop skills that they can transfer to other areas of their lives.

This study comes at a significant time of change and innovation within education and the social services in Scotland with recent policy and legislation placing the rights of the child, personalisation, independence and inclusion at the centre of professional practice (Scottish Government, 2008, 2013). The aim being to enable every child to lead a meaningful and fulfilling life and to be supported, where necessary, to allow this to become a reality. The work of Paragon, through their Play On programme, this study reveals, is a good example of a voluntary organisation that is inclusive and places the child at the centre of their practice.

Paragon and Play On

Paragon was established in 1980 as a contemporary music ensemble commissioning and performing new music by Scottish composers. By 1991 the company's focus shifted towards becoming an inclusive music and arts organisation dedicated to bringing people together through music, dance and theatre. By 2005, under the guidance of founding member and now Creative Director, Ninian Perry, Paragon focused its aims on transforming people's lives through participatory music and the arts. This is achieved when practice is grounded in equality and a democratic approach where everyone is listened to and involved in the experience of music making. This ethos guides every aspect of the work of Paragon as they create opportunities that are:



- accessible
- inclusive
- immersive.

Following the publication of a study by Moscardini, Barron and Wilson (2012) that highlighted the very limited provision and access to musical tuition for children with ASN within mainstream schools, the company established the Play On programme as a means to address this inequity in access to music tuition.

Play On is a fun, inclusive way to learn a musical instrument and meet new friends. Young people (6-20 yrs) with additional support needs can access this unique opportunity to learn a musical instrument, make up their own music in a group and play in performances. Aspiring students who want to take their interest further can learn at a more advanced level. Whatever their interest or ability, Play On gives students the chance to be immersed in high quality music training. Family members of any age can join in too and experience the fun of playing music in a supportive and fun atmosphere.

(<http://paragon-music.org/programmes/play-on/>)

The inclusive teaching style that is used for Play On teaching requires a high staff to student ratio. During each session students are involved in different activities; some are group based whilst many receive one-to-one tuition. Staffing levels are high to ensure the needs of each individual are met at each session and that programme outcomes are achieved. Whilst the numbers of students attending Play On varies from week to week Table 1 provides an insight into the total numbers enrolled in Play On and staffing numbers.

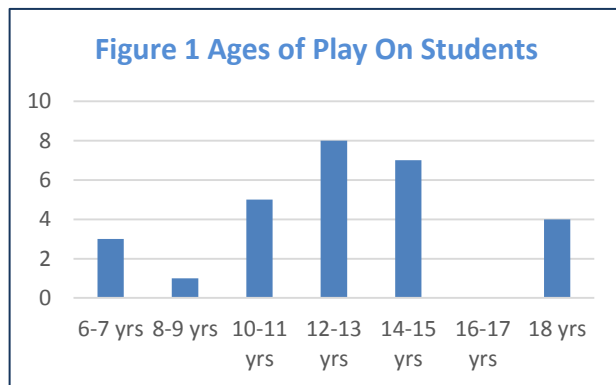
Table 1 Student to Staff Numbers in Play On

Source: Paragon

Play On Students	No.	Play On Staff	No.
Total Number of Children and Young People enrolled in Play In	28	Average Number of Tutors per session	9
Total Number of Siblings attending Play On	9	Average Number of Volunteers per session	3
		Average Number of Support Staff per session	4
Total Number of participants that may attend a session	37	Average Number of Staff per session	16

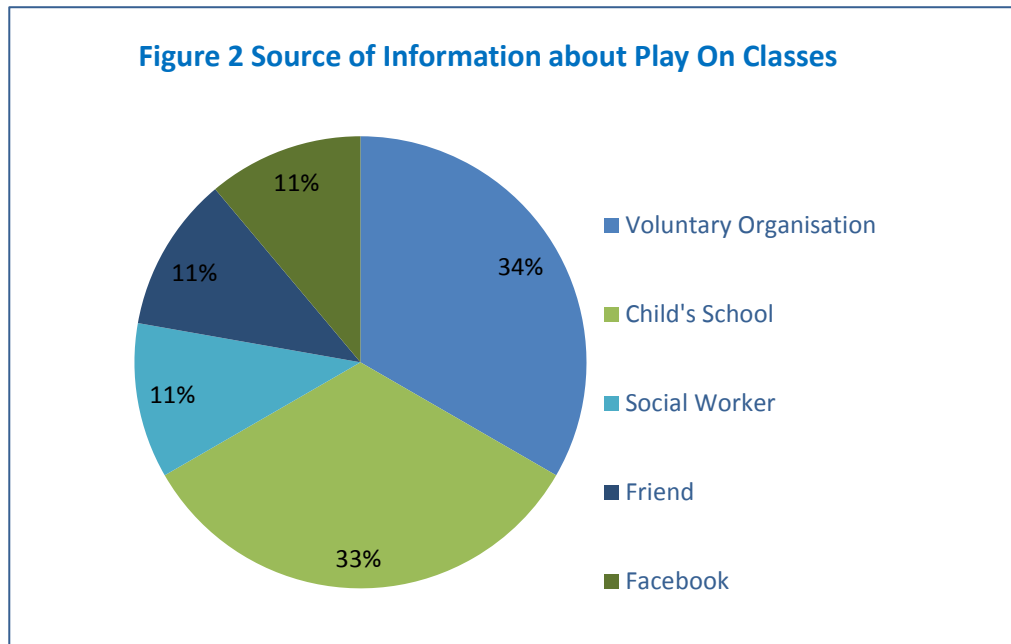
There are currently twenty eight children and young people enrolled for Play On classes, although attendance varies from week to week. The students are predominantly male (71%); there is no explanation for this higher ratio of boys : girls. Siblings and other family members are encouraged to join in the classes and interestingly there are more sisters (75%) attending classes with their sibling than brothers. The children and young people attending Play On range in age from 6 to 18 years of age with the majority of students being clustered around 10 to 15 years (Figure 1).

Source: Paragon



The voluntary sector (and in particular, Paragon's partners, ENABLE) and schools are important sources of information about Play On. Less significant as a conduit for information are social workers (Figure 2).

Source: Parent/Carer Questionnaire



Methodology

The researchers worked collaboratively with the Play On staff to develop the research aims and methods for data collection. Over a period of four months the researchers spent time observing and talking to the children and young people participating in the Play On classes, their parents/carers and Paragon staff/volunteers. They also watched the Play On musicians performing in public at the Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA), Glasgow. During the project the terminology used to discuss the children and young people involved in the project varied greatly; this was partly due to the wide range of ages. For the purposes of this report the word *students* will be used to describe children or young people who partake in Play On classes.

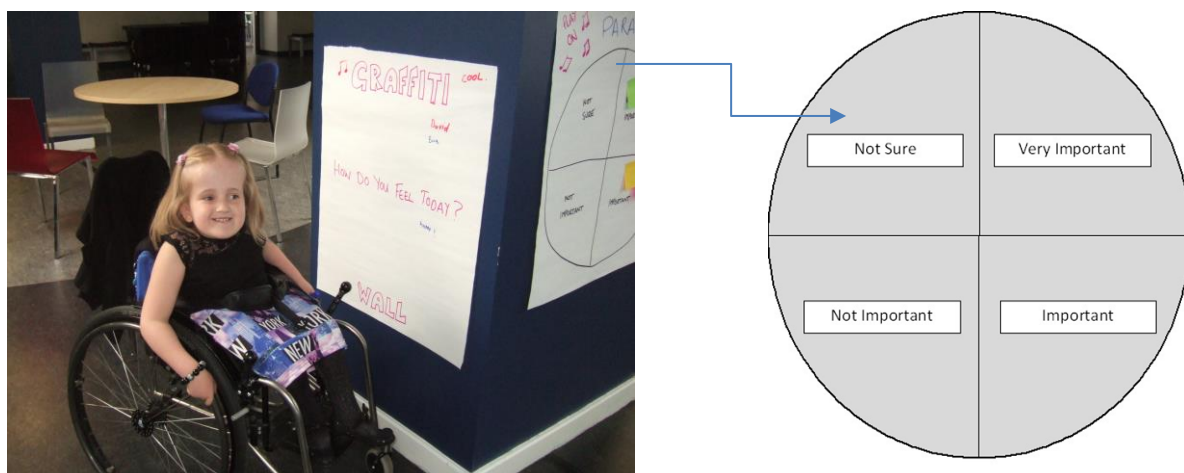
Data were collected from three groups: the students, their parents and carers and the Play On staff and volunteers. Different methods for data collection were developed for each group that took account of their specific needs, their involvement with Play On and gave an insight into diverse perspectives and experiences. Data on student and staff numbers were received from Paragon.

Table 2 Study Participants

Students	8
Parents and Carers	11
Play On Staff and Volunteers	7

Students – a method of data collection was designed that could be integrated into the students’ Play On classes without disrupting their learning and that would be accessible for the children and young people across a wide range of ages and ASN. A set of visual representations of a Likert-Scale were created in large-scale poster format. Each poster denoted three micro-systems: Play On classes, home and school. Using a set of colour-coded post-its, representing *music*, *confidence*, and *independence*, the participants were asked to indicate how they felt about each. A ‘Graffiti Wall’ was also created that enabled the students to write comments about how they were feeling that day at Play On (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Data Collection Tool used with the Play On Students



As the students moved between activities during the morning workshop the tutors supported them in speaking to the researchers and participating in the study. Qualitative notes were made on the comments made by the students. Eight out of the twelve students in attendance chose to talk to the researchers about their experience of Play On. The researchers also spent time observing the

students during two Saturday morning Play On sessions and in one public performance at the CCA, Glasgow.

Parents and Carers - for the parents and carers a questionnaire was designed that could be completed online or as a hard copy during Play On sessions, allowing flexibility for completion. The questionnaire covered topics ranging from why their child started attending Play On, what they do during the classes, to the impact of the classes on their child's confidence and independence, as well as the impact on family life. In total eleven parents completed the questionnaire.

Play On staff/volunteers focus group – a focus group with seven Play On staff and volunteers was held prior to a staff meeting. The focus group created an opportunity for the group to discuss their inclusive approach to teaching music as well as reflect on the impact of the classes on the students. Future developments for the Play On project were also discussed.

All of the data were brought together and analysed collectively using thematic analysis to identify key themes, ideas and concepts within the data. The voices of the study participants can be 'heard' throughout this report through the use of quotations.

Ethical approval for the study was provided by the University of Dundee Ethics Committee (UREC). The researchers explained to participants that their involvement in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without any consequences.

Findings

A coherent message that emerged consistently throughout the study findings was that the approach to music that is being developed and practiced through Play On is leading to positive outcomes for all involved. The classes create a 'safe' environment where the students are valued, supported, encouraged and praised. An environment which is, in the words of one of the parents, 'truly inclusive' and which opens up opportunities for the students to thrive and develop musically as well as develop key transferable life skills.

When asked, all the parents/carers responded positively to the statement that their 'child looks forward to attending Play On classes' and the 'classes are an important part of my child's life' with additional comments being added such as:

***He loves them (Play On classes).
He appears to be happier.***

***These classes are vital to my son.
Nice to see kid happy.***

The findings from this study provide an insight into these comments and are presented under the following three headings:

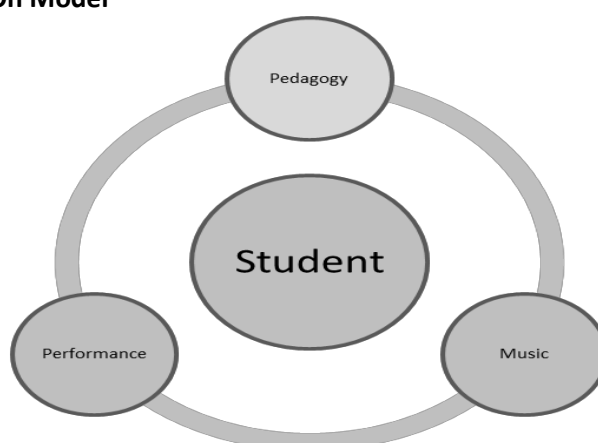
- Play On Model
- Development of Transferable Life Skills
- Impact on Family Life.

The limitations of this small scale study prevent a causative link to be identified between inclusive music classes and social outcomes, however, what the study does suggest is that children and young people with ASN involved in this study have a love of music and music making, and their ASN are not a barrier to them developing and exploring their creativity.

Play On Model

The vision of Paragon that is embedded in the Play On programme is for the arts and specifically music to be accessible, inclusive and immersive to all. What is evident from observing the Play On sessions and performances is that the tutors teach this ethos through music and use this as the way to communicate with their students. Both the student and tutor share the common language of music. The Play On approach is in essence a template for working with others in a democratic, non-hierarchical way where everyone is listened to and involved in shaping musical journeys. The findings from this study point to three key elements that constitute the Play On Model: music, performance and pedagogy with the student being central to the how each of these three elements is practised and experienced.

Figure 4 Elements of Play On Model





Music

Music is the kernel of the Play On experience, allowing for the students to explore and develop their identity as a musician which is facilitated through, what one tutor described as, 'a culture of inclusion'. This 'culture of inclusion' allows for all students, irrespective of their ability, to take part and be immersed in music, to play music and, importantly, to enjoy music. Music is core to every session and every student is treated and respected as a musician in their own right. This means that although each tutor is aware of each individual's ASN, this knowledge is secondary to that concerning the development of musical skills and musicality in each student.

These [Play On classes] are more inclusive as my son's disability takes a back seat to his ability and interest – music is the first common purpose, disability way back (parent)

For the Play On staff music is understood in a holistic way that moves beyond traditional teaching methods to engage and build a broader foundation to music; based on good communication and listening skills. One tutor pointed out how his approach to teaching is 'not really about learning a musical instrument it's about discovering the music inside you and knowing how to listen. It's working on other skills but using music as a tool to make that happen.' What is evident from this and other comments made during the focus group with Play On tutors is the breadth and depth of the tutors' musical knowledge, coupled with a confidence to be creative and to take risks that enables the children to be immersed in a holistic musical experience.

Rather than Play On simply being another club for the students to attend, this study highlights that the students are being attracted to Play On through a real interest in music that they were unable to pursue elsewhere. The parent/carer questionnaire generated data on the reasons for children starting Play On classes with the role of music being significant for 87%, with the other 13% choosing Play On classes as it was 'something new to try'. The majority of parents stated that it was their child's interest in music that had been the catalyst for introducing them to the classes, rather than parents wanting their child to learn music. These data are supported by comments made by the tutors:

Students come along for different reasons. Some come for the music, some come for socialisation and some are brought along because their parents think it's a good idea for them, so there are a variety reasons as to why they attend. I think the majority of reasons is because its music (tutor)

Once a member of Play On, parents noted that their child was both more interested in music (including listening to music, buying music and attending concerts) and that music was now an important part of their child's life. The following quote from one of the students captures what he particularly likes about Play On.

I like the different experiences (offered by Play On classes) to try out different instruments like the big bass – I like the sound – I like the loud sounds (student)

For many of the parents Play On was seen as providing a space for their child to be creative in a way that wasn't possible in other environments.

*He has a platform for expressing himself (parent)
He has responded well to finding new ways to express himself through music (parent)*

Creativity is encouraged rather than perfection and tutors are always positive and celebrate all ability no matter how big or small they are successful musically.

(Parent)



Performance

Performance is integral to the Play On programme, taking the form of small-scale opportunities at the end of the weekly workshops to large scale, public opportunities, that have included the Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA), Glasgow to a performance at the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh. Performance is a key component of being a musician, and an emphasis is placed on this in Play On. As the staff group have become more aware of the benefits to the students in relation to achievement, confidence and identity; performance is now fundamental and integral to the Play On model.

The tutors discussed how the notion of performance in Play On contrasted with the conventions attached to traditional musical performances and they discussed how the Play On approach requires creativity, flexibility and a touch of risk.

...you don't know what you're going into ... but it's turning that into a good experience and a positive experience for the musician (tutor)

...within the culture of Play On the musician is totally supported to do something even if it is only a note. For some young people that is their ability and literally if we get one note that is a massive gain, huge (tutor)

The tutors talked of how, during a performance, they respond to the students and provide, where necessary, improvised musical accompaniment to create a coherent sound which boosts the confidence of the student and creates an overall sense of achievement. Achievement and performance are intimately connected in the Play On experience and that achievement ranges from managing to play one note, for others it is about playing together in an ensemble piece. What is evident from the data is that the students enjoy performing. The tutors see this on a weekly basis and at heightened levels after a public performance. Whilst one parent noted that their child was not keen on performing, for the majority of the Play On students it was something that they looked forward to with eager anticipation. For example, the staff talked of the 'sense of joy that these young people had from the opportunity to perform in front of an invited audience' at the Scottish Parliament. The parents also noted the pleasure their child gets from performing.

My child gets to perform in his own right and I found out he enjoys performing in front of an audience (parent)

They loved the applause (parent)

Play On performances have given primary care-givers and close family members an opportunity to view the students in a different light, helping them to build the students' confidence and identity as a musician. Whilst small scale performances for family and friends enable the students to present their musical skills to a familiar and supportive audience; larger public performances create alternative opportunities and challenges as audiences new to inclusive music renegotiate established understandings of disability and questions of who can play music and who is/can be a musician.

Pedagogy

All involved with Play On quickly learn the structure of the Saturday morning 10am-1pm workshops. The sessions start with an initial assembly providing an opportunity to say 'hello', welcome new students, highlight any news and to discuss arrangements for who is working with who and where during the morning. Following this, individual and group learning run in parallel for the main part of the session, with a mid-morning break. The session ends with everyone coming back together for a final performance; this plenary provides the opportunity for the students to share what they have

achieved during the morning with their peers, parents/carers and tutors. This tried and tested structure is repeated week after week. However, within each of the composite parts of this structure there is scope for flexibility, creativity and risk taking, allowing tutors to be responsive to the individual needs of the students. At the core of Play On teaching is the student. A distinction was made during the focus group between placing the 'student at the centre' of Play On teaching and the 'student leading' the sessions. It was noted that it is the latter that is a 'really significant' component of Play On.

This student-led approach entails tutors being open to new ways of working, to be 'explorative' and innovative. This requires a re-examination of the relationship between the tutor and the student, as both tutor and student come to the sessions as musicians and as equals. The musical skill and expertise of the tutor are essential but are balanced out by what the student brings with them to each session and their needs at any specific moment. In order for this to succeed, the ability to be flexible and creative is important and tutors achieve this by having confidence in themselves as musicians and teachers to diverge from established teaching methods. Balanced with tutors creativity and flexibility is an element of risk taking or as one tutor put it they need to have 'courage' to 'respond to what the child offers you and go with it'. This approach is fundamentally inclusive as it allows for tutors to respond to individual needs and interests. All this creativity, flexibility and risk takes place in an environment that prioritises the development of effective and supportive relationships between tutors and students, and their parents, to ensure that students feel safe and secure at all times.

Tutors' Creativity, Flexibility and Risk

You kind of have to have a bit of guts to go OK I'm kind of leaving this up to you, I'm going to assist you and work with you rather than work for you in making a piece of music – which is the risk aspect.... So yeah it's made me realise that there are three skills I need: I need to be confident, I need to be able to respond to a situation and go with it and work with them (students) and keep the momentum going and keep it interesting and keep them engaged in the work rather than pile on a lot of other stuff that could make them feel that they don't own whatever it is they're making or creating it then becomes me and pleasing the tutor and it's not about that.

With the younger group (6-10 years) the workshops are designed to create a story from which we place music on top and then we retell that story musically. So the young people are using imagination, really using a lot creativity, to come up with a story they can retell and really own and author. Rather than us the tutors coming into the session and feeding techniques, it is much more of an exploration.

I would suggest that anything we do, be it at the beginning or the end or the Play On activities are totally based around creativity. We start with a blank canvas and by the end you've got a memorable product, be it Donkey, Africa or the Play On theme. You know based around two notes you can build a really impressive musical sound which is super.

Having discussed the Play On approach to teaching music the next session examines how this approach is impacting on the lives of the Play On students in relation to the development of transferable life skills. The final section shifts the focus to look at the impact of Play On on family life.

Development of Transferable Life Skills

Central to any child's healthy development is the nurturing of key life skills within a safe and supportive environment. This study's findings suggest that Play On is facilitating for the development of key transferable life skills in its students. Whilst definitions and understandings vary as to what these different skills mean to individual students, realistic parameters are set for expectations and achievements to ensure that the students are challenged and rewarded in equal measure. The following section focuses on five interconnected life skills that have emerged as salient from the data:

- Confidence
- Identity
- Independence
- Socialisation and Communication
- Motivation and Achievement

Confidence

Life constantly throws up new challenges; how these are embraced and responded to shapes who we are as individuals and in the process can build resilience and confidence. Yet too often children with ASN are denied the opportunity to face new challenges, to overcome emotional hurdles or to learn how to handle new situations. Play On facilitates for the students to be a part of these everyday experiences and in doing so helps to build their confidence from the first stages of participation.

When the parents and carers were asked how their child felt about starting Play On classes or returning to classes after a break, key words that emerged time and again were 'excited' 'nervous' and 'anxious'. One parent explained their child's anxiety in relation to the way they had been treated when attending previous clubs:

He was looking forward to it [Play On], but wary as every other club he has attended he hasn't enjoyed as he was treated like a much younger child (parent)

Another parent noted that whilst their child was 'excited' they 'learnt to deal with the apprehension.' As mentioned earlier, performance is central to the Play On experience and exposes the students to further emotional challenges. Being supported to manage these situations is evidently developing the confidence of the students and it would appear that Play On is building resilience and helping to prepare them to better cope with change more generally in their lives. As one parent noted, they perceived a greater willingness in their child 'to try new things since starting Play On.'

Overall the narratives of the study participants highlighted that Play On is impacting positively on the self-esteem and confidence of the students. For the parents and carers it was evidently reassuring for them to see their child thriving, talking about themselves 'in a positive way' and feeling 'more confident'. One parent usefully captured the essence of what that sense of being more confident meant for her son.

My son stands taller when he's there (parent)

Some parents recounted the challenges their child had encountered in trying to access music tuition in mainstream/specialist schools and contrasted this with the child's Play On experience.

He felt frustrated by the musical standard of the choir and musical class at the special school he attends, although with good heart he tries. He became a bit apathetic and negative and was withdrawing. He has had positive experiences of a mainstream school choir but was not able to do all the same concerts, tour, etc as other children in the choir. He had no access to mainstream music classes. His sense of self-worth and confidence have flourished with Play On (parent)

The staff perceived confidence as being a 'tangible outcome' for the students. They recounted how they see their students' levels of confidence being raised on a weekly basis through their engagement in music and especially in the weekly end of session performance in front of the other students, staff and parents/carers. The students also talked of feeling more confident, and all but one (who said they weren't sure), communicated that they felt 'very confident' or 'confident' whilst at Play On.

They (Play On classes) have been good for developing my confidence – I feel more confident here (student).

Throughout the data references were made to examples of small but significant things that are developing the students' confidence and a sense of belonging, such as the child being 'welcomed by name' and tutors 'genuinely caring and taking the time to talk.'

Identity

One of the first impressions of Play On for an observer, is that music is the unifying factor and it was evident that it is music that becomes the dominant aspect of the young people's identity whilst they are in Play On classes. We all have multi-layered identities that are complex and fluid, in other words identities are not fixed, singular or unchanging. However, some aspects of our identities can remain hidden whilst others become more dominant, influencing how we perceive others and how others perceive us. Disability all too often dominates a disabled person's identity, with negative repercussions with regard to how they perceive themselves and how others perceive them. What was refreshing and very positive about the Play On experience was to see the Play On environment creating a space where the students' disabled identities could be challenged and replaced with more positive ones that importantly included being a 'musician':

... it's not a condition specific identity it's an identity of being a musician, everyone is a musician (tutor)

The development of the students' multi-layered identities also connects with them feeling positive about themselves and having role models demonstrating ways to value, support and treat people no matter who they are or their ASN. The following quotes from parents and carers provide an insight into how they see Play On impacting on the development of their child's identity; that is an identity that challenges established conceptions of disability.

He has developed more through Play On than any other activity he has really developed a sense of identity (parent)

I have found watching him participate very moving and he is able to express a creative side and get a very positive view of himself, also model himself on the tutors socially and musically (parent)

Tutors play a significant role in creating a space for the nurturing of these more positive identities through the way they treat their students, as equals and through the use of a non-judgemental approach. During the tutors focus group connections were made between identity and a sense of belonging and 'feeling part of something' that allows for other aspects of the students' identities that may be suppressed in other spaces to come to the fore and flourish.



Independence

When asked about the impact of Play On on the students' independence, similarities in the different adult perspectives can be found. This, we would argue, demonstrates that there is a close relationship between the parents/carers and staff/volunteers and evidences that there is an open and reciprocal dialogue between them. The following quote is taken from the staff/volunteer focus group, however, one of the parents also referred to her son asking to stay at class on his own without her.

The sense of independence that it gives young people ... and it can be the smallest of things. One young guy just asked his mum to leave him in the lessons, because he knows it is a safe place where he can be on an equal level with his peers and with the tutors. And she actually said this is the first time he's ever asked, it is actually one of the only projects he wants to come back to but it's also the first time he's ever asked to be alone in a lesson and he is happy to be alone without her there (tutor)

Other examples that emerged as illustrating how attending Play On is impacting on the independence of the children and young people included one of the students now travelling alone by taxi to the classes whilst another no longer relies on his parent to speak to tutors on his behalf:

I would say that he has become more independent as he is keen to speak directly to tutors and musicians instead of looking to me to speak for him (parent)

Most young people of similar age would probably rather stay at an activity on their own without a parent and most would probably rather travel on their own. However these are 'firsts' for Play On teenagers and something is therefore unique about their experience at Play On that is building both their confidence and independence. True integration and inclusion built around social justice should make these scenarios the norm and as more inclusive activities, such as Play On are made available for children and young people with ASN there is potential to transpose the 'unique' into the 'norm'.

Socialisation and Communication

We see some of the young people engaging in social interaction and loving that aspect of it (tutor)

As with any club or activity for children and young people the social dimension of the group is important, and it is no different with Play On. However, for the participants and their families this aspect of participation holds particular significance.

He is more confident in communication and mixing with other people (parent)
Play On is a very positive experience that has helped him with peer and adult communication (parent)

Parents saw the impact of Play On resonating in other areas of their child's social lives. Some of the children attend the same school and whilst they did not know each other previously through their school, the Play On connection has led to them spending time together both in and out of school, something that the parents noted would not have happened previously. Within the home environment families are finding that since attending Play On their child has an area of interest and topic for conversation which they enjoy sharing with other family members.

In addition to socialising with their peers, the students are also learning to socialise with adults. The music tutors are a central part of the overall learning experience for the Play On students, not just in relation to learning music, but in the way they treat and support the students and build a 'relationship' with them. This was highlighted in the narratives of the parents where the word 'relationship' kept reappearing,

He has built a relationship with the musicians (parent)

He has a relationship with tutors and they work with his ability (parent)

He is comfortable to be there and has a good relationship with the music tutors (parent)

From the perspective of the tutors their teaching method is reciprocal, they work with the children as an equal in a democratic way that is dependent on establishing a trusting relationship:

Yeah it's always giving and taking from each other a reciprocal thing (tutor)

The foundation upon which socialisation occurs is communication and listening to what others are saying. This is something that the Play On tutors focus on in the early stages of working with new students. The following quotes from Play On tutors demonstrate how the staff group use music as a conduit, as a tool to develop communication and other skills in preparation for entering into the world of music, and/or the development of skills that can be transferred to other areas of the students' lives.

I'm working on communication. I'm trying to build the principle skill in music and that is listening. So how do you do that? You have to demonstrate that, and you have to listen yourself, and if they can see you listening and you are listening genuinely to who they are as people then they will listen to you. Then you've established the opportunity for them to start trying new ideas, new sounds and discover new ways of learning about music. So it's not really about learning a musical instrument it's about discovering the music inside you and knowing how to listen. It's working on other skills but using music as a tool to make that happen.

There are many musical ways through which you can communicate, you don't have to speak in language, you can speak in other ways. If everything you do through communicating you are aware of its musical content then they are learning music. (Tutors)



Motivation and Achievement

All too often children with ASN lack motivation through long term goals for them being set at a very low level. Rather than making choices based on what they would prefer to do such children too often end up doing what others expect children with ASN should do. Such a culture is not conducive to raising motivational levels. In Play On, intrinsic motivation is developed by tutors responding to, and working with the varying different needs of each student at each session. It was encouraging for the parents to observe how Play On was helping to motivate their child not only to practice their instrument at home, but also to raise their expectations and motivate them to think about a more positive future for themselves.

His motivation has been low and he was getting quite despondent about life. But now he increasingly wants to gain good proficiency in other areas to the best of his ability (parent)

The prominent role of performance within the Play On experience is also helping to motivate the students. After a successful performance the students are enthusiastic and keen to perform again.

...the young people really took a lot from that experience and came back to Play On and feeling like they can have that experience again in the future (tutor)

Parents also noted how other professionals in their child's lives had commented on improvements in concentration and motivation, these included school teachers, club leaders and social workers.

His social worker noticed he was more motivated and together and discussed what he did there (Play On) (parent).

The sense of achievement that the students gain from being a part of Play On is crucial to the tutors. This was highlighted in the focus group as one of the most important impacts on the students. In particular, the sense of achievement was, the tutors argued, encapsulated through regular performances. The tutors used their performance at the Scottish Parliament as a good example of how they set high but achievable expectations for the students. They noted the sense of achievement that accompanied the success of such a 'big event' and recounted the joy and pride of the students after the performance with comments such as that was 'one of the greatest nights of my life' emerging in the students' conversations. Success and achievement is measured, valued and supported at Play On relative to each and every student.

He feels this is a big achievement in his life. (Parent)

I think a sense of pride is important ... and it can be smallest achievement but for all participants: parents/carers and especially the child, young person, it's great, you can't measure that you really can't, I mean what price can you put on a smile – that's the way that I equate it (tutor).

He is valued and praised and allowed to shine musically without having to suppress his disability as he would in a mainstream setting (parent).



Impact on Family Life

The involvement of the whole family in the Play On experience is fundamental to the programme. There is a recognition that there are not many activities that families can share and do together with a child with ASN. Play On opens up a space where families can spend time together with parents and/or siblings being encouraged to join in the classes if they want to.

I look forward to attending with my son and I love seeing his expression of music and joy
(parent)

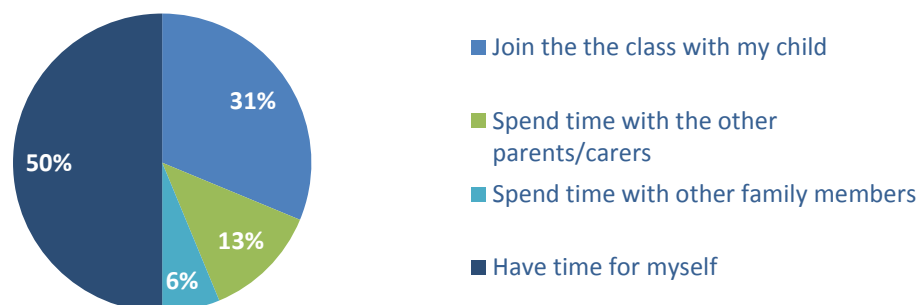
It is something that I also look forward to as I can watch my son thrive in a positive and caring environment (parent)

The fact that siblings can come along as well means that they can bond over that and share. It's not just an activity for the child with ASN it's something they can share with other family members (tutor)

Only a small percentage of parents chose to join in the Play On classes with their child (Figure 5) although a higher number of siblings participate in the classes. Some of the parents chose to spend the three hour workshop with other Play On parents/carers, and noted that they have made a 'bunch of new friends' and appreciate having the time to talk to others who 'understand your perspective'.

Source: Parent/Carer Questionnaire

Figure 5 What Do Parents/Carers Do During Play On Classes?





Talking with other parents/carers has been good and meeting the other young people. There is sense of community and proper integration (parent)

The largest percentage of parents/carers (50%) chose to have some time to themselves and as one tutor noted,

... there is a sense of respite for parents and carers to have some time to themselves which is super to see and it's super to see at the end of the session parents come in and want to view what their children have been doing (tutor)

The impact of Play On on family life extends beyond the Saturday morning sessions and into the family home with reports of improved relationships between parents and child, and between the child and their siblings.

I can look forward to his enjoyment of Saturday mornings and sharing his positive experience as something he brings back to the family. Helped me to relax a bit and have time for younger siblings. Siblings have viewed their elder brother in a new way and are proud of his achievement (especially when he performed at CCA). It has helped family relationships and dynamic and brought a lot of joy. The family feels a bit more balanced (parent)

Play On has led to conversation and music entering into the family home with all of the parents saying that their child talks about the classes at home and in doing so they are able to contribute to family discussions.

Expresses himself more and confident to discuss Play On with family (parent)

Parents are also involved in encouraging their child to practice their music at home, with the result being that the family enjoy listening and being a part of what their child is doing and in some cases there are health benefits to practising:

He now practices drumming at home to relax (parent)

Future Development

This report has provided an insight into the social impact of Paragon's Play On programme and in doing so has highlighted that there is a market for inclusive music activities for children and young people with ASN; and a need to open up opportunities that are the 'norm' for non-disabled children and young people. Table 3 offers an insight into areas that this study has identified for the development and expansion of both the Play On programme and the Play On model as a basis from which a more fundamental shift in the provision and availability of inclusive music tuition can be made. The areas for development and current challenges fall under the broad umbrella of 'capacity' and as such cannot be disentangled from a discussion on funding. However, it was never the intention for this report to engage in that discussion, other than to note that Table 3 should be read with an understanding that funding is central to achieving sustained change in inclusive music practice.

It's going to come to a point where I'm going to have to start turning people away... Just the fact that we don't have the staff ratio to support the numbers of students and also we don't have the space facility (tutor)

I think the hope is that we see some of the students composing their own music. One young person is now getting regular support composing his own music and that is really exciting. There is a chance for compositions to be made and nurtured and brought back, tried out and started again.... you want the young people to carry on making music and having the chance to do that (tutor).



Table 3 Future Developments

	Areas for Development	Current Challenges
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of Play On students. • Introduce age specific tuition. • Introduce ability specific tuition to accommodate to progress students that are ready and want to take their music to a higher level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing demand for new children/young people to join Play On is stretching current capacity: funding, staff and premises. • Increasing numbers of students attending Play On is raising the question over the long term viability of the current practice of teaching all ages together in one session. • Identifying new ways to market the Play On programme more widely with the support of other professionals and services, including social work and education.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of trained Play On staff and volunteers. • Develop a training programme in inclusive music practice for Play On staff as well external practitioners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Play On model is dependent on a high staff: student ratio. • The availability of suitably qualified staff is a determinant of increasing student capacity.
Play On Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways to disseminate and market the Play On model to other practitioners: 'there just isn't anything like it. It's just hoping that the actual model of practice will spread so it's not the only one so that there are other services other activities out there.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness, understanding and knowledge of inclusive music and its benefits.
Premises/ Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify suitable premises that will allow for the expansion of the Play On programme into new and different geographical areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play On teaching involves one-to-one and group teaching sessions running in parallel. The programme therefore requires a large number of accessible rooms that are in close proximity. • The Play On programme is currently held in one (non-permanent) location in the centre of Glasgow. As the Play On students are drawn from a wide geographical area accessing the venue requires some students to undertake long weekly journeys. • The availability of suitable premises is a determinant of increasing capacity (students and staff). • The geographical spread of students creates challenges for the students to socialise outside of Play On.

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