

Evaluation of National Lottery Support – Summary



Playlist
for Life

About the study

Playlist for Life is a music and dementia charity working to promote the use of personally meaningful music. Their vision is for everyone with dementia to have a unique, personalised playlist and that everyone who loves or cares for them knows how to use it.

The charity supports a network of community Help Points, runs training for health and care professionals and provides information about playlists to the wider public.

In 2019 Playlist for Life were awarded funding of £1.6m from the National Lottery Communities Fund to build the organisation's capacity and reach. This supported additional staff capacity including Local Organisers deployed in communities across the UK. It also helped the charity to deliver awareness-raising campaigns and develop partnerships with key organisations including major charities, care providers, academic institutions and public services.

This evaluation presents the main achievements of this activity, based on a review of documentation and monitoring information, surveys of local partners and consultations with staff and external stakeholders.

Grassroots activity

As a result of local networking and partnerships with key organisations, information about personally meaningful music and support with playlists is available right across the UK.

The number of registered Playlist for Life Help Points has increased from 400 to 2,200.

Playlist for Life Help Points can be found at 1,600 library venues, including mobile services in rural communities.

The charity had to adapt quickly to the changing circumstances presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, moving their training offer online, improving the accessibility of materials and getting relevant information out to organisations and community members.

The Help Points have displayed and distributed lots of materials and provided advice and support to people with dementia, carers and professionals. Many people have accessed information and resources direct from Local Organisers and Help Points, or attended Playlist for Life talks, webinars and training.

Help Points have reached an estimated 93,000 people across the country, with 45,500 people attending talks and webinars.

There is also evidence from partners that they have shared Playlist for Life materials and communicated information on the benefits of personalised music, helping its incorporation in existing support groups and activities.

85% of local partners felt they had a better understanding of how music can help people with dementia¹, and 78% have increased their use of music.

Local activity has helped to lay the groundwork for higher-level engagement with key partner organisations as well as cementing Playlist for Life's profile and influence in policy and practice circles.



Awareness and influence

Playlist for Life has supported lots of campaigns, achieving notable media coverage and social media engagement.

Over this period there have been 37,591 downloads of resources that support people to make a playlist and 8,482 new followers on social media.



This is helping to generate more positive, hopeful discussions around dementia through examples of personally-meaningful music boosting the wellbeing of people affected by dementia, improving relationships and reducing the anxiety, stress and isolation that affect many people.

Communications activity has supported Playlist for Life's work in communities, including the dissemination of campaign information via partners and local media. Feedback and requests from the Communities team (and network of Help Points) have helped to ensure information tools are as relevant and useful as possible.

1. For practical examples please see <https://www.playlistforlife.org.uk/real-life-stories/>

Sustainability

The National Lottery funding has helped Playlist for Life develop an extensive network of dedicated and committed partners across the country, many of whom have excellent local knowledge and networks across key organisations and support providers.

The Local Organisers were seen as a positive presence and played a key role in developing relationships, so it will be important to maintain this momentum and reach in the future. Playlist for Life is working to maintain connections with Help Points and partners through provision of information, advice and materials they can use themselves, e-learning, newsletters and drop-in sessions.

The funding has enabled Playlist for Life to have greater involvement in the development of policy (for example via the Scottish Government Dementia Policy Group and development of the National Dementia Strategy).

“We see them as trailblazers, as innovators and as expert voices in this field, and we would certainly go to them”

The charity is also more able to influence the way that care is provided, via partnerships with care providers (principally through training and accreditation) but also with academic institutions, large charities and mainstream public services. The charity's strategic priorities are to:

- 1. Continue working in communities - sustain and grow the Help Point network through strategic partnerships**
- 2. Reach more diverse communities – particularly under-served and under-represented communities**
- 3. Influence national policy and practice - to drive change and integrate playlists in public policy**
- 4. Expand evaluation processes - to identify improvements and share best practice**
- 5. Expand training for health and care professionals - cascading learning through partnerships**

