

One parent said:

“My son has always enjoyed listening to music but had never experienced music as a therapy. The sessions allow him to be in total control. He is able to play what he wants, when he wants and how he wants. The independence is totally liberating, as there are very few things in life he is able to control. He is now starting to vocalise and trying to sing along, which is something that I never knew he could do before.”

Ellen, 12, benefits from Music Therapy at St Oswald's. She said:

“I enjoy playing the keyboard because I play it at school and I can practice the songs on the keyboard there. I also enjoy trying new instruments because then if I like the instrument I can keep playing it. Also I like the therapist who runs it because she adapts the instruments if I can't reach or struggle to play it.”

### About Jessie's Fund

**Jessie's Fund** is a UK charity helping seriously ill and disabled children by using music for communication and for therapy. We work with children in hospices and in other settings nationwide, providing a wide range of musical instruments and giving the children access to music-making and to music therapy. To find out more please visit [www.jessiesfund.org.uk](http://www.jessiesfund.org.uk)

We are a registered charity and rely on voluntary donations and legacies to enable us to care for patients and families.

To find out more about our work visit [www.stoswaldsuk.org](http://www.stoswaldsuk.org)

Find us on:



# Music Therapy

at St Oswald's Children and  
Young Adults Service



## Information for parents and Carers

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Registered Charity No. 503386



## How can music help your child?

Nearly everybody responds to music in one way or another, it has a unique power to reach deep inside us. The benefits of music therapy can include:

- Increased self-esteem and confidence
- Decreased pain perception
- Provide emotional expression and support
- Helps us to relax and feel good
- Encourages the child to maintain a sense of control
- Enhanced quality of life and wellbeing



## Music Therapy

Music Therapists are skilled musicians that have been specially trained to help people, at all levels of ability, make music and share in the benefits that music-making can bring.

The sessions act as a safe setting in which difficult or repressed feelings can be expressed and contained. As the children and young adults at St Oswald's can be very limited as to how they move and express themselves, music therapy focuses on what they can do, gives choices and control, and raises self-esteem. Music therapy is a registered profession, regulated by the Health Professions Council ([www.hpc-uk.org](http://www.hpc-uk.org)).

## What happens in a session?

Every session is different. There is usually a song to welcome and close the session; musical activities and games are introduced, and there will be 'on the spot' music to engage the children and young adults spontaneously.

The feelings that emerge in a session can be ones of joy and satisfaction, but they can equally be of anger and frustration. The music therapist is trained to explore and contain these difficult feelings, thereby allowing the children to show emotions that cannot easily be expressed in other ways.

Whatever the level of participation, the child or young adult leads the session. The music therapist facilitates communication through the music, and is skilled in encouraging the child to play using a variety of percussion and tuned instruments.

## Music at home

Musical games and singing with your child can help to extend the benefits of music therapy. Musical toys can be fun - above all it's the *sharing* aspect of music that is important, whether it's singing, playing or listening. Even if your child may seem unresponsive the music will always have an impact.

## Louisa Kelly is the Music Therapist at St Oswald's.

She completed her Masters in Music Therapy in 2011 and has been providing individual music therapy sessions at St Oswald's for the past two years.

Louisa has also worked in a variety of other settings with children and adults with Autism and children with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). She is a folk musician and dancer and enjoys bringing this into the hospice. She also supports the Sibz and Ozzy days (bereavement support for children).



If there's anything you'd like to chat through with Louisa please feel free to get in touch at [louisakelly@stoswaldsuk.org](mailto:louisakelly@stoswaldsuk.org)

## Training

Other members of the care team have attended **Jessie's Fund** courses to encourage more confident use of music in non-musicians, and to increase awareness of how music can be used more effectively with the children in their care.