

# **NEW NOTE KEY CHANGERS**

**Autumn 2022 Evaluation**

## Foreword

As we began to emerge out of the pandemic, I consulted the musicians within New Note Orchestra to create a three-year strategy.

In August 2021 we went through our aims, goals, and ambitions. The orchestra musicians were keen to develop our outreach work and over the next few months I wrote up a pilot programme called the New Note Key Changers.

The musicians were trained by Graham Dowdell, an expert in community music practices. New Note then supported them during a six-week placement in an organisation that helps the homeless. The Key Changers developed a practical understanding of the grammar of community music and new skills around rhythm, harmony, and form. They were taught about ethical practice, giving and receiving feedback, and enabling safe spaces. Alongside this they expertly encouraged and steered a range of conversations around recovery, homelessness, and mental health within the groups they facilitated.

This was the first time an organisation has trained and supported people with lived experience of addiction to become the next generation of community music leaders. This pilot exceeded our expectations.

You can read more about the experiences of the orchestra members in our blog...

[Key Changers - New Note brings music to the community.](#)

**Molly Mathieson**

**New Note Projects Founder and Chief Exec**

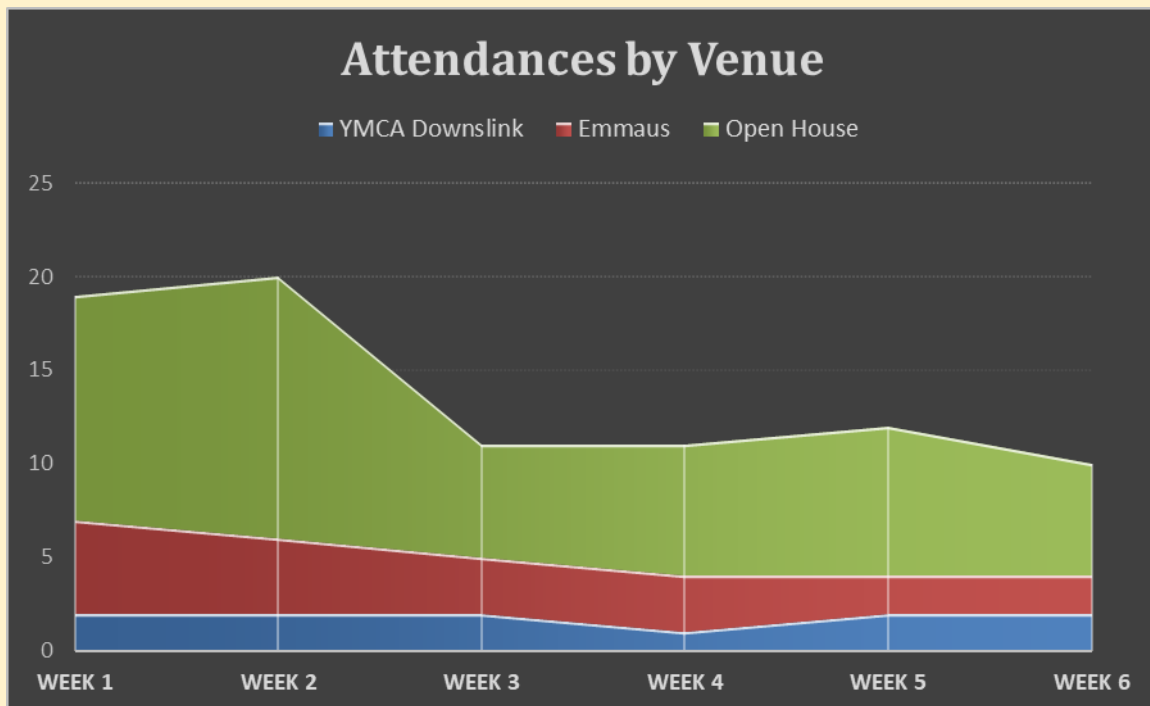
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## Section 1: Workshop Attendance

Following a successful pilot of New Note Key Changers in July 2022 (attended by eight people), three New Note Orchestra members delivered:

**18 sessions**  
Across **3 community venues**  
Attended by **31 individuals**  
A total of **83 attendances** (footfall)



*An outbreak of Covid at the Open House impacted attendance numbers from Week 3*

**58% attended more than 1 session**  
**45% attended more than 2 sessions**  
**26% attended more than 3 sessions**  
**4 people attended all sessions available to them**

## Barriers to Engagement

Visitors and residents of the workshop venues often face multiple barriers to engagement with group activities, including experiences of homelessness, substance addiction, trauma, English as a second language and learning difficulties. And so, despite a low turnout in some workshops, both the facilitators and service managers thought the engagement was good.

*“...it was one of our more well-attended workshops. The people who participated wouldn't necessarily go to other workshops but they did really engage with these. There were one or two individuals who hadn't previously engaged with any form of workshops or groups at all” - Service Manager*

*“I know there weren't many people who came [to the workshops] but they came and that's an achievement in itself, the fact that they went 'I will prioritise this over more destructive behaviours” – Service Manager*

Service managers appreciated how New Note Key Changers might add value to their existing programme of activities, they recognised how important music and creativity was for people to 'ignite interest in the world...and their own lives', and 'help people express themselves'. However, they described the difficulties they often face in communicating with service users, and to convince people not to fear joining a musical workshop.

*“There were at least another 8 people who looked through the window and you could see them thinking 'oh, what's happening there' but they just weren't ready there and then to join in.” – Service Manager*

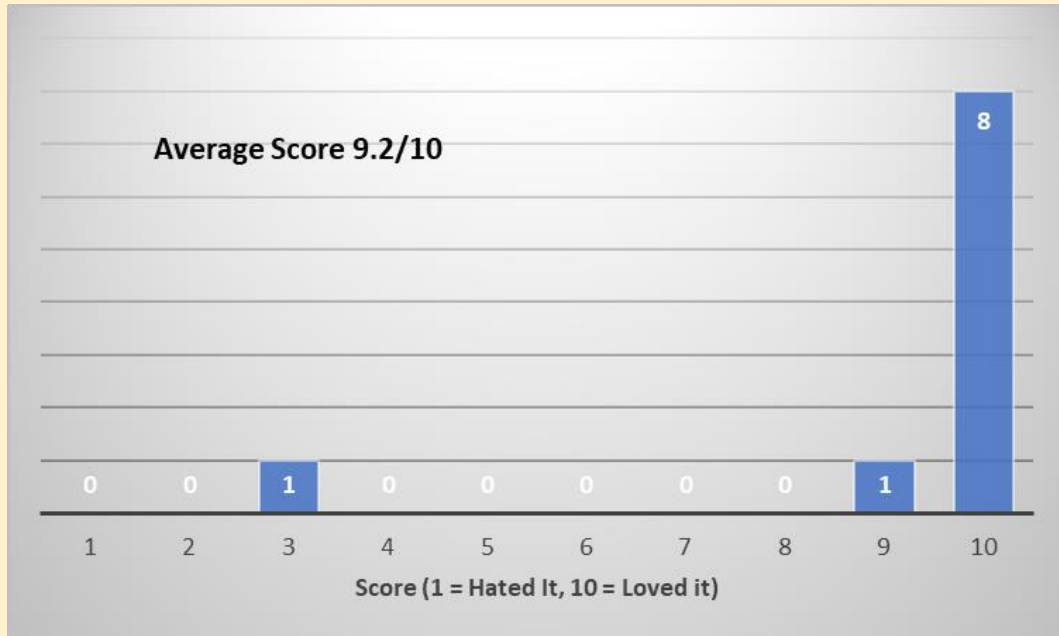
However, once participants had decided to join the workshop, there were many examples of people quickly gaining confidence and engaging with the facilitators.

*“Initially, this guy was saying 'I don't have a musical bone in my body, I don't really play but am happy to sit in the room and talk... By the end, he was looking forward to the sessions, was willing to trust us and go with our suggestions for things to do together and was participating in little improvisations, playing along with songs.” - Facilitator*

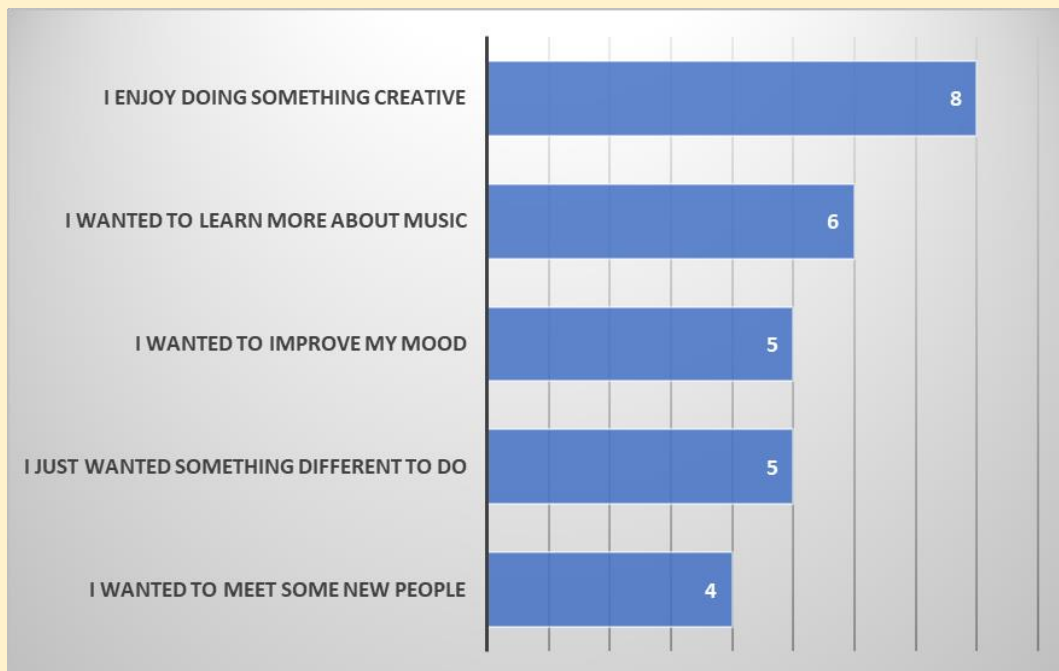
## Section 2: Participant Feedback

Participants were asked to complete a short survey to provide feedback on their experiences. Ten responses were received in total (one third of participants).

### 1) On a scale of 1-10, how enjoyable was the Key Changers course for you?

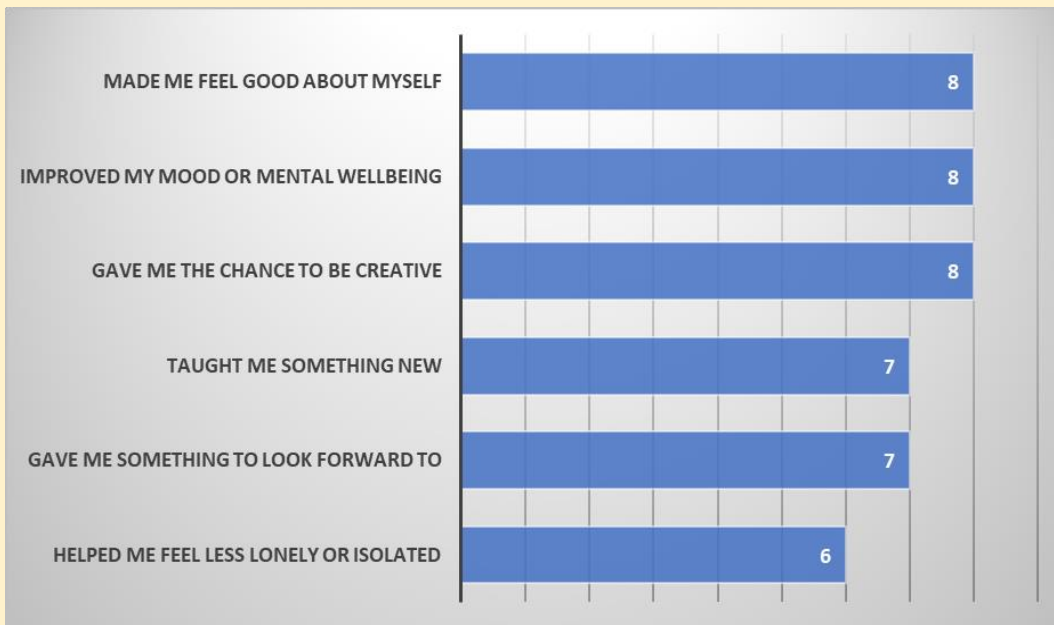


### 2) Why did you agree to take part in the Key Changers course?



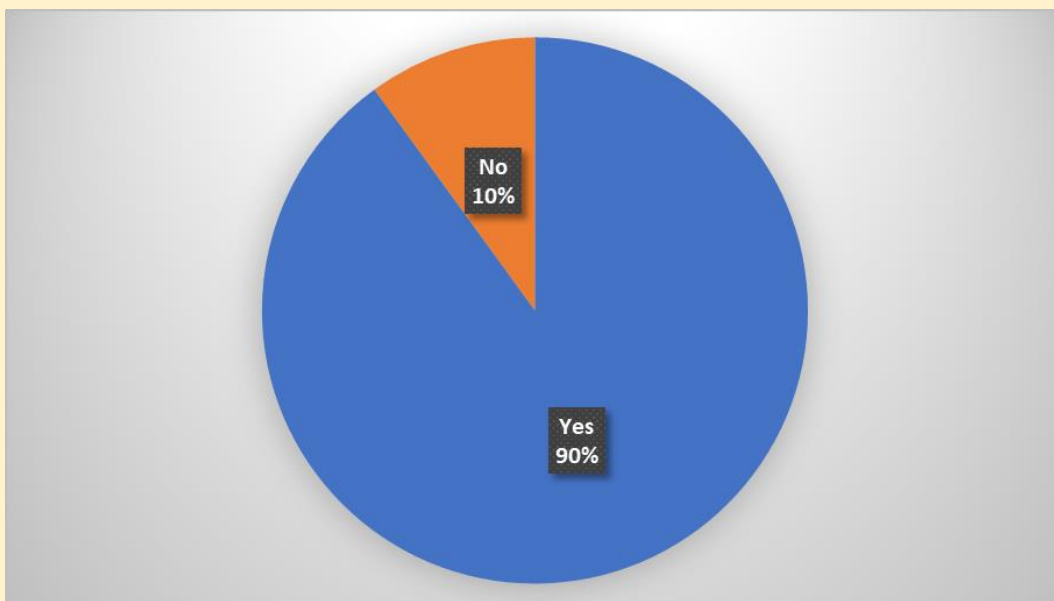
**Other responses:** 'To improve my possibilities'; 'Helps my shoulder injury'; 'I was nosey'; 'It was lively'; 'I've enjoyed other activities here before'.

**3) How do you think the Key Changers course helped?**

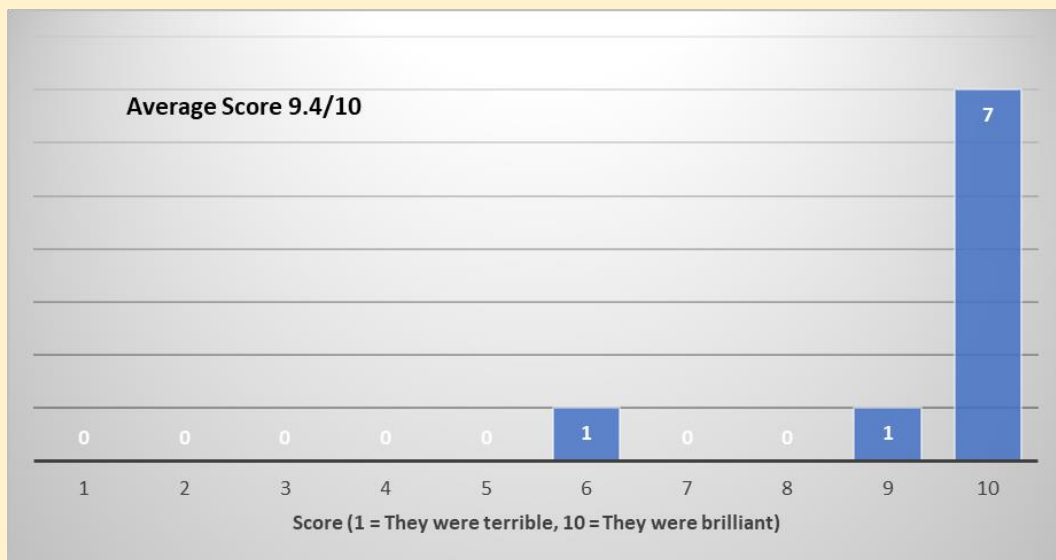


**Other responses:** 'Could shout without getting told off'; 'Fun and fantastic'; 'Gave me back some direction'; 'Great to learn new songs and about instruments'; 'Learnt basic guitar skills, my first time making music'; 'Made me realise I want to pursue it further'; 'Taught me how to listen, follow orders, and take part in a group environment'.

**4) Did the course encourage you to do more creative activities in future?**



**5) On a scale of 1-10, how well did the course leader run the sessions?**



**6) Do you have any further comments for the course leader?**

- Amazing, really enjoyed it, best part of the week
- Be nice to see you again
- Calm, enthusiastic, flexible
- Continue, please come back
- Flexible, dedicated, professional
- Patient, good teachers

**7) Do you have any further comments about the course in general?**

- Carry on!
- Excellent course, would recommend
- Good sessions, a laugh, good to learn to play and learn rhythms
- I might attend in future
- I want you to come back
- Would like to continue
- Would like to learn more



## Section 3: Impact

On completion of a six-week run of workshops at each of the three venues, testimonials were gathered from each facilitator and venue manager. A qualitative analysis was conducted to draw insights into the impact Key Changers had on participants, facilitators, and the services being offered at each venue.

### Facilitators

The facilitators had only completed a short course in community music facilitation, and so described their own challenges in knowing how to plan for each session, changing their delivery style to keep people's attention, and staying positive when faced with a low turnout. However, the experience was mostly positive for them.

*"...it was hard work at times [delivering the workshops] but it was lots and lots of fun." – Facilitator*

They reported feeling a sense of achievement, an increase in confidence, and learning a wide range of new skills.

*"...that for me was the biggest thing, to grow my skills and my confidence enough to be able to deliver these courses. That was what was important to me." – Facilitator*

There was strong appreciation for the value of human connection in the testimonials, several people spoke of 'reaching one person being worth the effort', and the advantage their own lived experience gave them in gaining trust and communicating with empathy.

All facilitators were keen to continue developing the Key Changers programme and already have ideas for content of future workshops. They expressed an interest in more training and possibly becoming mentors for the next group of facilitators. There was also an appreciation for how the skills and experience they had gained during the programme would be useful to them for future career opportunities.

*"Coming from such a dark history and stepping into the light and developing these skills and seeing a potential future for me on the horizon is all very novel for me...So to see some form of future, even if it's still very nebulous, is lifechanging" – Facilitator*

*“It’s been a real gift to have this opportunity to try something that’s new...I’m curious to see where it leads and I’m excited about the potential of it.” – Facilitator*

## Service Managers

There was a general appreciation for the quality of service from New Note. The logistics of delivering weekly workshops went smoothly, and they found the facilitators to be professional, welcoming, and able to communicate with understanding and empathy.

*“From my perspective there were no challenges involved in staging the workshops, it was amazing. The fabulous bit is that New Note brought along all the instruments, even down to things like the music sheet stands, everything came with them which was great.” – Service Manager*

*“The way the workshops were done was just perfect...The way [New Note] delivered them brought down a lot of barriers...The fun way in which they delivered them created positive emotions and a creative distraction for people.” – Service Manager*

Service managers spoke of the excitement surrounding the workshops, participants were ‘enthused’, and ‘couldn’t wait for the next session’.

*“The workshops were fun, interesting and happy. People forget to have fun and they don’t know that they’ve got these talents and interests and they need to come together...they need to have fun together.” – Service Manager*

All Service Managers reported seeing a noticeable improvement in participant's confidence and self-esteem and a wide range of other positive changes.

- ✓ Seeming happier and smiling more
- ✓ Being more open with people
- ✓ Starting a new relationship
- ✓ Improved presentation
- ✓ Reduced Police involvement
- ✓ Going on to teach someone else musical skills
- ✓ Actively incorporating creativity as part of recovery
- ✓ Better engagement with services

All services expressed a desire for New Note to return for further workshops, with one service asking for a longer run of sessions to give more time to encourage engagement.

*“There’s no doubt that we’d consider running them again. They helped [the participants] physically, with mental health, and emotionally on different levels. People felt like they were taking part in something and being purposeful.” – Service Manager*

## Conclusions

As the first outreach project for New Note Projects, Key Changers was an extraordinary success. New Note members learnt a range of new skills and gained the confidence to use them. The newly acquired musical exercises and facilitation skills are transferable to benefit the charity's other projects and has prompted the facilitators to explore new career opportunities.

Evaluations for previous New Note projects have consistently communicated the power of music to bring communities together, increase confidence, and give people a new sense of identity which is not defined by the barriers they face. However, there were some additional unexpected benefits seen from the Key Changers workshops including reductions in Police involvement, and improving engagement with support services.

Feedback from participants and Service Managers showed that Key Changers was enjoyable, well organised, and effective in using music to improve wellbeing. All involved were keen to participate in another series of Key Changers workshops.

New Note must now use the learning from this evaluation to build strategies for improving engagement in future workshops, such as a greater emphasis on word-of-mouth promotion and longer-term placements.