



DIGITAL MUSIC SERVICES DOUBLE DURING LOCKDOWN

- **Music for Dementia reveals how increasing amounts of people are turning to its online resources**
- **As Mental Health Awareness Week begins today, campaign says music is vital in helping to improve and maintain mental wellbeing**

TUESDAY MAY 19, 2020. UK: As millions of people are encouraged to carry out and reflect on an act of kindness this Mental Health Awareness Week, Music for Dementia has found the number of people offering digital music sessions has doubled since lockdown began.

Many of these services are performed out of goodwill, truly embodying the spirit of the message from The Mental Health Foundation.

Music for Dementia - which campaigns for people living with dementia to have free access to music - has seen nearly a 50% increase in the events and services listed on its Musical Map.

From live streamed performances in care homes, to virtual choirs and “dementia discos”, many of the individuals and organisations hosting virtual events are doing so despite financial hardship and worry due to cancelled live events.

The power of music has been proven to uniquely and universally alleviate the symptoms of dementia, improving quality of life by reducing anxiety and feelings of isolation.

Grace Meadows, Campaign Director at Music for Dementia, said: “We know that music plays a valuable role in supporting our mental health and wellbeing, and this is just as important as taking care of our physical health.

“Being socially connected is fundamental to maintaining and sustaining our mental wellbeing.

“Those living with dementia and their carers are experiencing increased social isolation right now, and more than ever, we need to be using the power of music to be connecting with them.”

Among the 41 new events listed on Music for Dementia’s Musical Map is the Forget-Me-Not Chorus, an organisation that supports people with dementia and their families through weekly singing sessions. Since the current health crisis began, the Forget-Me-Not team have adapted their approach, recording a series of virtual rehearsals and connecting with those most isolated by sending personalised and requested performances.

Kate Woolveridge, Artistic Director at Forget-Me-Not Chorus said: “We have been determined to stay in touch with our Forget-me-not family in the community, care homes and hospitals. At this time, more than ever, we need to assure them that they are not forgotten. The weekly virtual singing sessions keep us connected, our choristers supported and offer a musical hug.”

Anne Moffat, has been attending the Forget-Me-Not Chorus online sessions with her mum since lockdown began, she said: “Whilst mum’s world was already shrinking because of dementia, the lockdown has accelerated things as we all stay at home. Her catch-ups with her friends and the people she knows at her weekly groups have halted. The online music rehearsals fix that feeling of being adrift.”

-ENDS-

Notes for Editors

About Music for Dementia Music for Dementia campaigns for people with dementia to have the right to music as part of their care and access music free of charge, wherever they are. We are calling on the music industry, philanthropists, and the health and social care sectors to help make it free and easy for people with dementia to access music.

Music for Dementia has partnered with Live Music Now to launch a new Musical Care Taskforce, which brings together more than 60 leading representatives from across health, social care, dementia and music with the aim to make music an essential element of dementia care. We are also working closely with DCAN which is a newly formed initiative from the Alzheimer’s Society, NHS England and Improvement and the Coalition for Collaborative Care.

In September 2019, we launched our Musical Map – an online interactive map which will become the largest and most comprehensive database of dementia-friendly music services in

the UK.

Music for Dementia - www.musicfordementia2020.com

Musical Map for Dementia - www.musicalmap.co.uk

Practical Musical Guide - <http://musicfordementia2020.com/info/musical-guide.pdf>

About The Utley Foundation The Utley Foundation was founded in 2014 by Neil and Nicky Utley. The Foundation exists to advance social causes and to act as a catalyst for greater funding and wider action for the causes it supports. Music is a personal passion of the founders and trustees and underpins many of the key funding areas of interest to the foundation. The trust has other charitable objectives including Armed Forces Veterans, Children and Overseas Aid.

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