



It makes us happy

Exploring the long term impact of Fischy Music
on primary school age children

September 2018

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"It made us happy as a class and brought us together."

"It made me happy to see all different ages joining in and singing along together at school assemblies,"

'They do stick with you, they're really good songs for learning, like. They make you happy, for one, when you're singing them.'

Many thanks to Christy Ringrose and Sally Jaquet for their invaluable contributions to the research.

1 Executive summary

Background

Fischy Music is a Scottish charity which supports emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing in children through song. The organisation is almost 20 years old, and over that period it has worked with thousands of children and young people - in Scotland, across the UK, and abroad. In May 2018, Fischy Music commissioned research from Simon Jaquet Consultancy Services Ltd to explore the longer term impact of Fischy Music on young people who have experienced the work of the organisation.

The research was divided into three phases: a scoping phase, an online survey, and a series of telephone and face-to-face interviews. The 945 respondents to the online survey were: 79.5% female, 19.5% male, with 1% identifying as neither; aged between 16 and 60+; young adults (who had experienced Fischy Music when at primary school) 40% (no. = 375), teachers 26% (247), ministers or church workers 15% (143), other professionals 7% (65), parents 12% (115); from 30 out of 32 Scottish local authorities), with 13% from outside of Scotland.

Key themes from the research

a) Fun and inclusion as the bedrock to learning

Some of the strongest findings in the research described how much young people enjoyed their experience of Fischy Music. This was backed up by the comments from parents, teachers, and other adults. A notable feature of many of the comments from young people was how often they used phrases such as 'It made me happy'.

The 'democratising' quality of the music helped to ensure that everyone felt included. Young people in particular commented on how it helped create a sense of unity and helped people to feel they belonged - to both the class and to the wider school community. Teachers and other professionals backed this up, recounting instances of how Fischy Music had reinforced the school's values and ethos - in particular where it related to inclusion. The sense of well-being engendered by the musical experience created a 'bedrock' for learning that went well beyond merely the musical.

b) The power of communal singing and actions

Enjoying communal singing lies at the heart of the Fischy Music way of working. This is rooted in a belief that singing can, and should, be open to everyone. Young people, teachers, (and church workers who had worked in the school context) waxed lyrical about the transformative effect of Fischy Music on school assemblies. Most Fischy Music songs have an accompanying set of actions (based on British Sign Language) that participants are encouraged to join in with. Despite a certain youthful Scottish reluctance to participate in activities that could be seen as embarrassing, many of the young people went out of their way to admit to taking part - and enjoying it. One dimension, commented on by teachers, was the influence it had on making the young people more respectful of each other.

c) Confidence and self-worth in children and adults

There was a strong thread of comments from young people, parents and professionals about Fischy Music's ability to build up young people's confidence. Young people who had never sung or performed in public before; teachers who would otherwise 'run a mile' from planning

and leading an assembly; church workers who felt ill equipped to work with children. All these quoted examples of how the particular quality of Fischy Music songs had boosted their confidence and empowered them to venture out into new territory. This was both an individual and a collective confidence.

d) Understanding and expressing emotions

43% of young people responding to the survey recognised that Fischy Music had helped them learn about emotions. Fischy Music has pioneered an approach to this kind of work that is enjoyable and engaging for the majority of pupils, yet, honest, sensitive, and capable of being used to address complex emotional situations. It is a particular hallmark of Fischy Music that it can bring a high degree of authenticity to both 'everyday' emotional problems (such as negotiating the web of peer relationships) and to more challenging situations (such as loss and grief).

e) Resilience in difficult times

Going beyond simply understanding your emotions to being able to build emotional resilience is an important step for children to take. The positive messages about self worth, the value of the individual, and the need to acknowledge difference, which are embedded in Fischy Music songs, support this process. There were many examples of where difficult or challenging situations had been faced with the help of an insight and a memorable tune from a Fischy Music song. Fischy Music songs have been extensively developed to support existing programmes run by organisations such as Place2Be and Seasons for Growth who provide a high degree of long term emotional support for children and young people who have experienced a variety of trauma or disruption in their lives.

f) Nurturing a mature faith in children and adults

Fischy Music has navigated a sometimes difficult path between its work with churches and church groups and its more 'mainstream' work in schools. As an organisation it has worked hard to remain true to its original roots in the church, while operating with integrity and authenticity in the more 'secular' environment. Fischy Music was a breath of fresh air for many young people and their teachers, injecting a blast of energy, active participation, and off-the-wall imagination into school assemblies. Indeed this was the setting most commonly cited by young people (88%) as the context in which they had experienced Fischy Music.

Several young people spoke about how Fischy Music had helped to nurture their Christian faith, not least by providing credible role models who came across as authentic and down to earth. From the church perspective, Fischy Music provided a new way of 'doing business', and was welcomed. Many church workers spoke of how Fischy Music had transformed the way they worked with children and young people, helping them create welcoming and inclusive church communities.

g) Shaping relationships and careers

An unexpected finding in the research was the extent to which young people acknowledged the influence of Fischy Music on how they related to other young people, and in the career choices they had made. 18% said that Fischy Music had played an important role in shaping their relationships with others, and how they get on with them.

Several young people had entered professions (teaching, childcare, children's nursing) where Fischy Music had been both an incentive to apply in the first place (often because of the inadvertent role modelling function of Fischy Music staff), and a source of wisdom and

practical techniques which could be used in their practice. A large proportion of the teachers and church workers who responded had clearly also benefited from Fischy Music in their day to day work with children.

h) Lack of negative comment

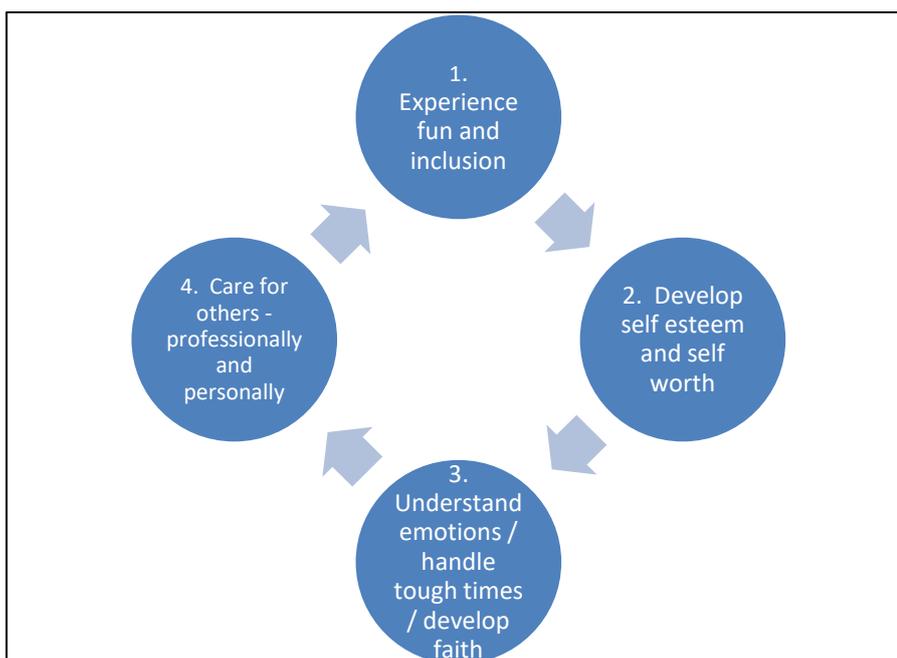
There is a striking absence of substantive negative commentary in the findings. About 5% of the responses by young people to the question about the impact of Fischy Music on them when they were young, contained negative comments such as 'Made me feel the odd one out because I didn't experience the messages in the songs.' For the most part, these negative comments were lighthearted or facetious.

This lack of criticism is probably due in part to the nature of the sample. Young people who did not enjoy the Fischy Music experience would be less likely to complete a survey than those for whom the experience had been beneficial.

i) The Fischy Music cycle

Fischy Music has evolved a relatively sophisticated way of working with children and adults. Its apparent simplicity belies a more refined understanding of effective practice, built on many hard won lessons over several years. This can be described as a learning cycle consisting of the following four key stages

1. **Experience fun and inclusion:** through enjoyable and authentic musical activities.
2. **Develop self esteem and self worth:** through taking active control of the creative process.
3. **Understand emotions / handle tough times / develop faith:** through a process of reflection, drawing on the activities participated in.
4. **Care for others - professionally and personally:** through the practical application of the lessons learnt and the experiences gained. This in turn can lead to others benefiting from fun and inclusion, and so the cycle continues.



Conclusions

There is strong evidence that Fischy Music is able to impact positively on children and young people in the target age group (mainly primary school age) with regard to confidence, emotional maturity, inclusion, authenticity, and faith development. While the extent and depth of this naturally varies, there is powerful evidence that this occurs while children are young, and remains with a significant number of them into adulthood. For many, this is articulated as 'happiness'.

Fischy Music demonstrates an ability to foster an authentic response in children to the joys and challenges of growing up. At an individual level, it can enhance confidence and emotional maturity. At a group level, it is able to help create a sense of 'corporate' and inclusive group identity - effective with both large and small groups.

There are five main ways in which this is evidenced:

- **Confidence:** by participating in enjoyable musical activities, children are valued and encouraged. This fosters their confidence and self worth, and validates their individuality. The importance of enabling them to be happy should never be underestimated.
- **Emotional maturity:** being open to exploring the full palette of emotions experienced by children as they grow up means that nothing is ruled out. Even difficult emotions are 'fair game' as long as they are addressed honestly and with integrity. Emotional intelligence then informs how people relate to and care for each other.
- **Inclusion:** ensuring that everyone is able to participate is axiomatic for Fischy Music. This approach to inclusion impacts on children's musical abilities as much as their wider learning. It also means that the Fischy Music approach works well with vulnerable individuals and groups.
- **Authenticity:** modelling approaches that are honest, realistic, and rooted in the 'lived experience' of what it means to be a child, is central to Fischy Music's work. This entails acknowledging challenges and problems while offering fun, hope, and meaning. It applies to both the method and content of the pedagogic process.
- **Faith:** for some children, Fischy Music clearly supports the development and nurturing of a religious faith. Even for those (probably the majority) for whom this is peripheral to their lives, there is a recognition that this is a legitimate function. The creative interplay between faith and secularism remains an enduring enigma.

2 Introduction

Context

- 2.1 Fischy Music supports emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing in children through song.
- 2.2 The organisation is almost 20 years old. Over that period it has worked with up to 500,000 children in workshops, concerts and other settings - in Scotland, across the UK, and abroad (with over half of Scotland's primary schools using Fischy Music resources). In particular:
 - It has developed 'Songs for Life', an online streaming subscription service consisting of songs for children aged 3-12 - now used by over 500 schools and organisations across the UK and beyond
 - It has helped over 100 groups of children write their own songs
 - its songs and projects have been featured on national TV and media, and its songs have been sung at several high profile national events including a Premiership football match
 - it has trained thousands of adults who work with and care for children, in the use of songs and music for the wellbeing of children
 - it has worked in partnership with organisations such as Place2B, Youth Music Initiative, S.A.M.E., Scottish Government, and programmes such as 'Seasons for Growth'
 - It has been supported by major funders such as Robertson Trust, Big Lottery, Children's Lottery, Young Start and Lloyds TSB Foundation
- 2.3 For ten years, Fischy Music has been committed to gathering evaluation data on the immediate impact of its work. There is now ample evidence of the short term benefits of this, but still relatively little on the extent to which this impact endures over time.
- 2.4 On the occasion of the organisation's 20th birthday, Fischy Music decided it would like to gather evidence of the longer term impact of its work. They were particularly interested in capturing data on two aspects of this:
 - Their broad based 'preventive' work with large groups of children facing the 'everyday' challenges of growing up, such as self esteem, handling emotions, and relationships with peers.
 - Their 'targeted' interventions with smaller groups of children who face more serious challenges - such as a specific trauma, loss, or life event.

Aims of the study

- 2.5 The overall aim of the research was to explore and understand the longer term impact of Fischy Music on young people who have experienced the work of the organisation over a 20 year period.
- 2.6 The objectives were to:
 1. Hear the views and insights of young people who have experienced Fischy Music as part of a 'preventive programme', and also as part of a 'targeted intervention'

2. Hear the views and insights of teachers, parents, and other key professionals
3. Understand Fischy Music's longer term impact on individuals and groups, and to consider the implications for FM's future work

2.7 In addition to these, it was planned that the research would provide content for a series of filmed interviews with young people and for a publication celebrating 20 years of Fischy Music.

The report

2.8 This report focuses primarily on the impact - short, medium, and long term - of the work of Fischy Music. It analyses this through the eyes of those who were children when they experienced Fischy Music (and are now young adults), primary school teachers, church workers (including ministers and lay workers), and parents.

2.9 The research itself embraced a range of further issues (for example the useage and value of Fischy Music resources). These may be covered in later reports.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 The research was divided into three phases: a scoping phase; an online survey; and a series of telephone and face-to-face interviews.

Scoping

- 3.2 This was an opportunity to explore some key questions with informants who knew Fischy Music, and who understood the 'terrain'. The data gathered would inform the shape and approach of the main research. We interviewed three primary school head teachers, one DHT, a senior teaching fellow (Educational Leadership and Learning) at Edinburgh University, and two staff from Seasons for Growth.
- 3.3 The principal themes to emerge from the scoping were:
- Interviewees thought it a worthwhile exercise, but recognised the challenges of gathering reliable data covering a twenty year period.
 - They supported the outline research framework, exploring perspectives from 'then' (ie the time of intervention) and now, as well as the impact on both young people themselves and their peers.
 - The starting point for the research needed to be the Fischy Music songs.
 - There was broad agreement on a two stage process - an online survey, and follow-up interviews and focus groups.
 - Key audiences for the research were: young adults (18+) who had experienced Fischy Music when at primary school; teachers; other professionals; 'Seasons for Growth' staff; trainers, Area Coordinators and Companions; church staff (ministers, youth workers etc); parents.
 - Fischy Music would publicise and promote the research, directly contacting schools (and other settings) where it had worked, and through targeted social media.
 - Interviewees were happy to 'pilot' the survey.

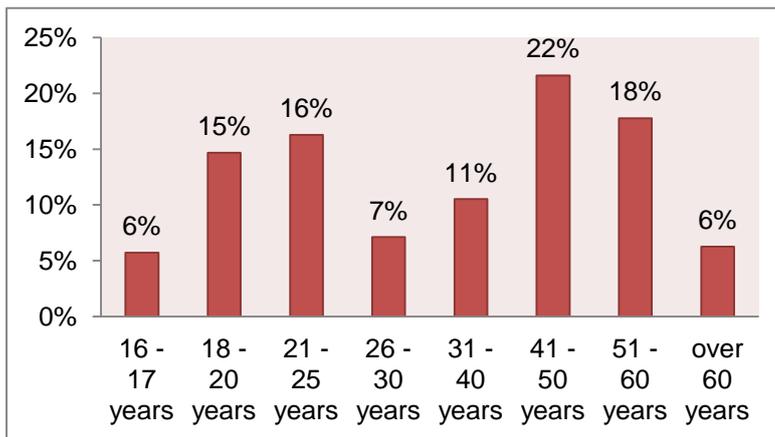
Online survey

- 3.4 We developed, piloted and managed an online survey which was open for seven weeks during June and July 2018. It was promoted and publicised by Fischy Music - by direct mailing to client schools, churches, and other organisation, and through targeted social media.
- 3.5 The survey collected both quantitative data (through closed questions) and qualitative data (through 'free text' responses). See Appendix for the key questions contained in the survey.

Respondent profile

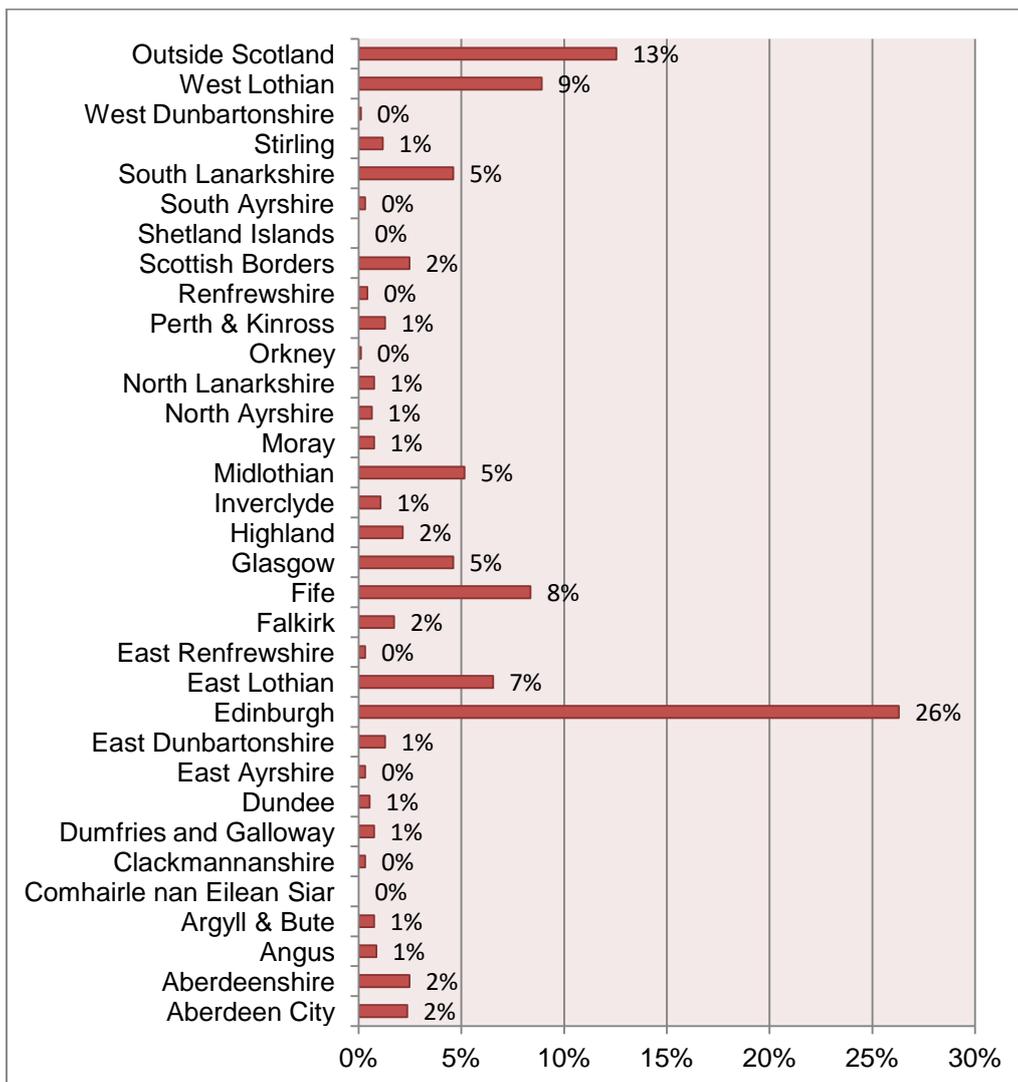
- 3.6 There were 945 responses in all, of which 79.5% were from females, 19.5% from males, and 1% identifying as neither. The chart below shows the age profiles.

Chart 1: Age profile of all survey respondents



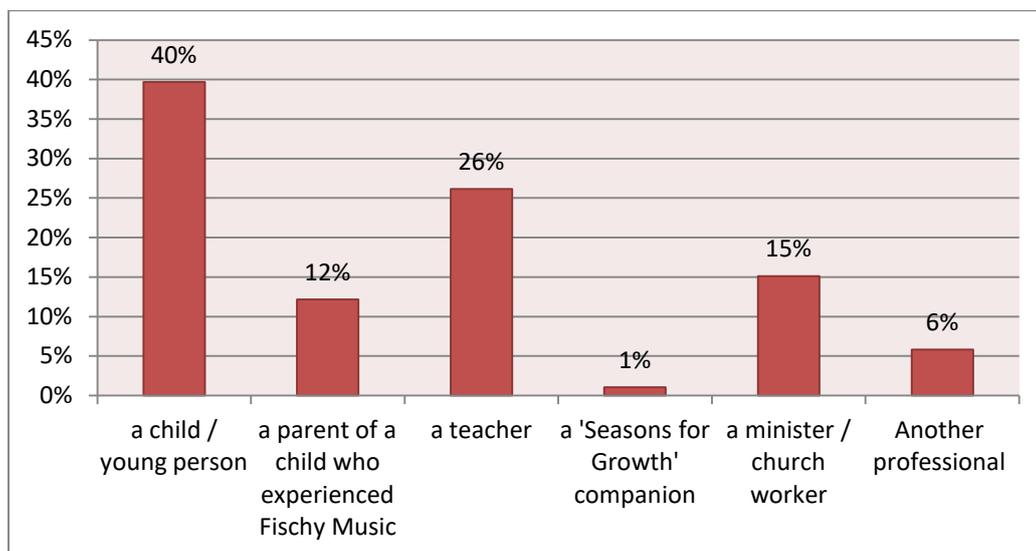
3.7 Responses were received from across Scotland, with only two out of 32 local authorities not being 'represented'. 13% of responses came from outside of Scotland, of which the majority were from England (88%). The chart below shows where respondents were when they experienced Fischy Music.

Chart 2: Geographical profile of all survey respondents



3.8 The roles in which respondents experienced Fischy Music are shown in the chart below.

Chart 3: Role profile of all survey respondents



Interviews

3.9 In order to 'get under the skin' of the survey data and to identify concrete instances of positive impact, we held interviews (the majority of which were by telephone) with the following people:

- 5 teachers (from Edinburgh, Fife, West Lothian, Aberdeenshire), including a head teacher, a DHT, a classroom teacher, and a music specialist. These were suggested by Fischy Music
- 3 teachers from England (Derbyshire, West Yorkshire, and Lancashire). These were selected from the survey respondents.
- 4 young adults who experienced Fischy Music at primary school age
- 3 professionals who had experienced Fischy Music and used their resources
- 2 parents of children who had experienced Fischy Music while at primary school age

Analysis

3.10 We adopted a 'framework analysis' approach to the analysis of the survey data. This approach is often described as being composed of the following 5 stages¹: familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, coding of the data set, grouping sub-themes into themes, mapping and interpretation.

3.11 In our analysis, we have attempted to separately identify respondents perceptions of the Fischy Music experience as it happened at the time, from the impacts which may have persisted and endured through time.

¹ <https://blogs.cmdn.dundee.ac.uk/meded-research/tag/framework-analysis/>

Issues and limitations

Nature of survey sample

- 3.12 In order to reach the widest audience, we relied on Fischy Music to publicise the survey - both through direct mailing and the use of targeted social media. Potential respondents were encouraged to provide critical as well as positive comment. The 945 individuals who responded to the survey covered all but two local authority areas, embraced an age range of 16 to 60+, included both male and female (although see 'limitations' below), and reflected the key actors - young people, parents, and professionals. This contributed to a purposive, rather than a formally representative, sample.

Gender issues

- 3.13 Among those who had been young people when they experienced Fischy Music, there was a strong weighting towards female respondents (three quarters of the sample). While this might have raised questions about the validity of the responses had the overall sample size been smaller, the number of young people responding (375) and the resultant number of males (92) give confidence in the quality of the data.

Terminology

- 3.14 In the interests of brevity, survey respondents and interviewees who had been young people when they experienced Fischy Music but were now young adults (mainly 16 - 30 years) are generally referred to as 'young people' in the report.

Nature of the Fischy Music 'experience'

- 3.15 Young people (and adults) have 'experienced' Fischy Music in a number of ways, and it is worth being clear what these may be.
- 3.16 At what might be described as the 'first tier' experience, young people take part in an event, workshop, project or programme which is led by Fischy Music staff themselves. This might be for half a day or for an extended period of up to a term. At the 'second tier', a variety of other adults (teachers, church workers, Seasons for Growth staff, and others) use Fischy Music resources (CDs, online materials, music books etc) in their own programmes and work, while retaining the recognisable Fischy Music 'hallmark'. The 'third tier' is where young people make use of Fischy Music resources on their own (eg listening to CDs at home) without the need for an adult to intervene. This research includes evidence from each of the three tiers.

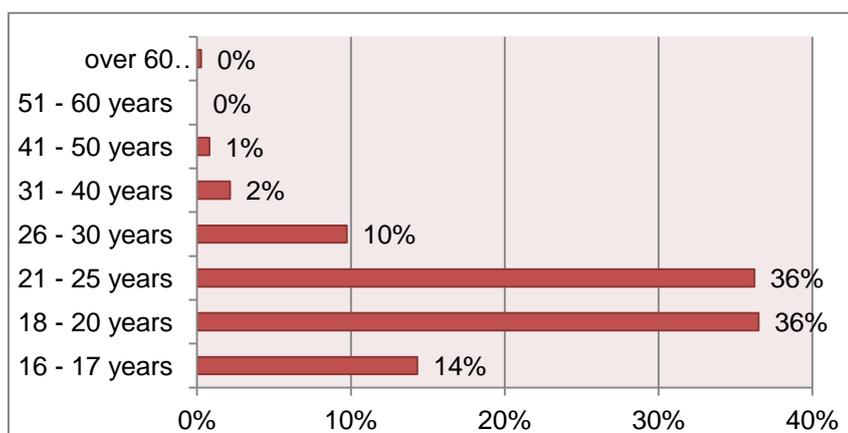
4 Findings: young people

- 4.1 In this chapter we present the key findings from the research with young people. Through the online survey and the qualitative interviews we aimed to identify and understand both the nature of children's experience of Fischy Music at the time of the original intervention, and the extent to which it may have had a longer term impact.

Respondent profile

- 4.2 The majority of respondents (96%) were now aged 16 - 30 years. 92 were male, 271 were female, and 9 did not identify as either.

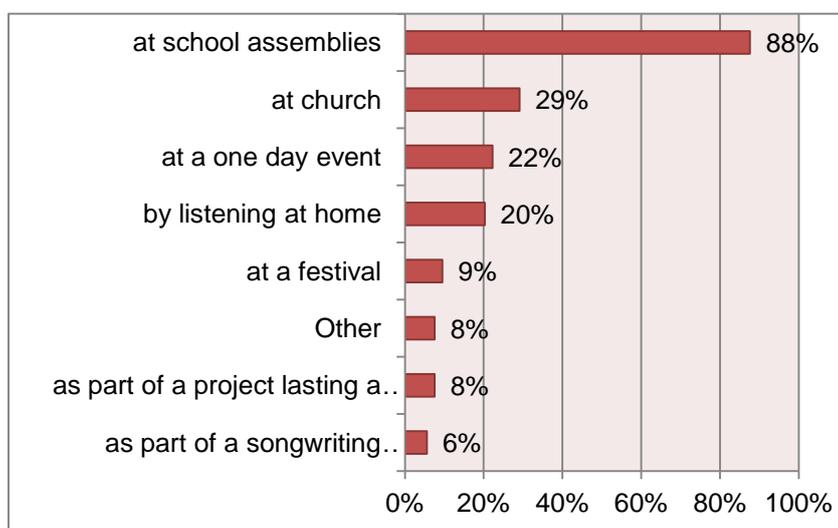
Chart 4: Age profile of young people



Experience of Fischy Music

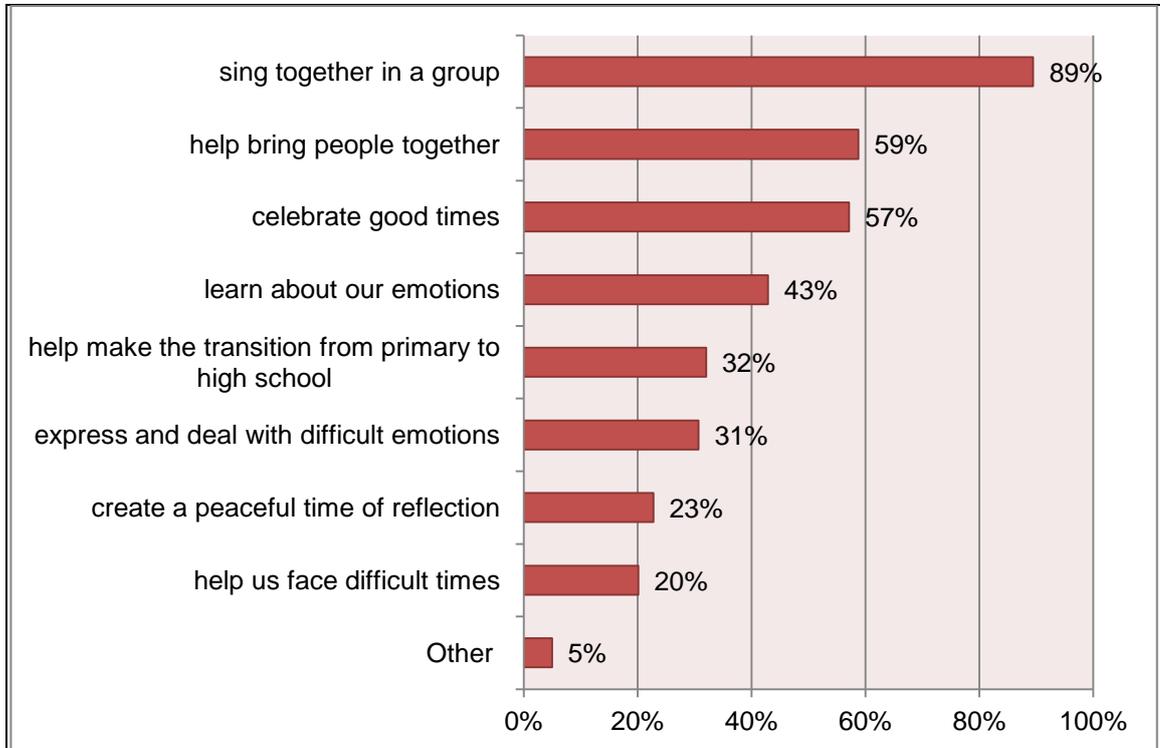
- 4.3 Respondents were asked to identify all the settings in which they had experienced Fischy Music. The most frequently cited was the school assembly (88%), with just under a third (29%) citing church. A fifth referred to listening at home, and a smaller number had taken part in a longer term project.

Chart 5: Setting in which young people experienced Fischy Music



4.4 Respondents were also asked to say how they understood the purpose of the Fischy Music intervention. While the largest response reflected a positive, 'corporate', and celebratory motivation, significant numbers saw Fischy Music as an approach to addressing challenges (dealing with emotions, transitions).

Chart 6: Young people's perception of the purpose of Fischy Music intervention



Impact at the time

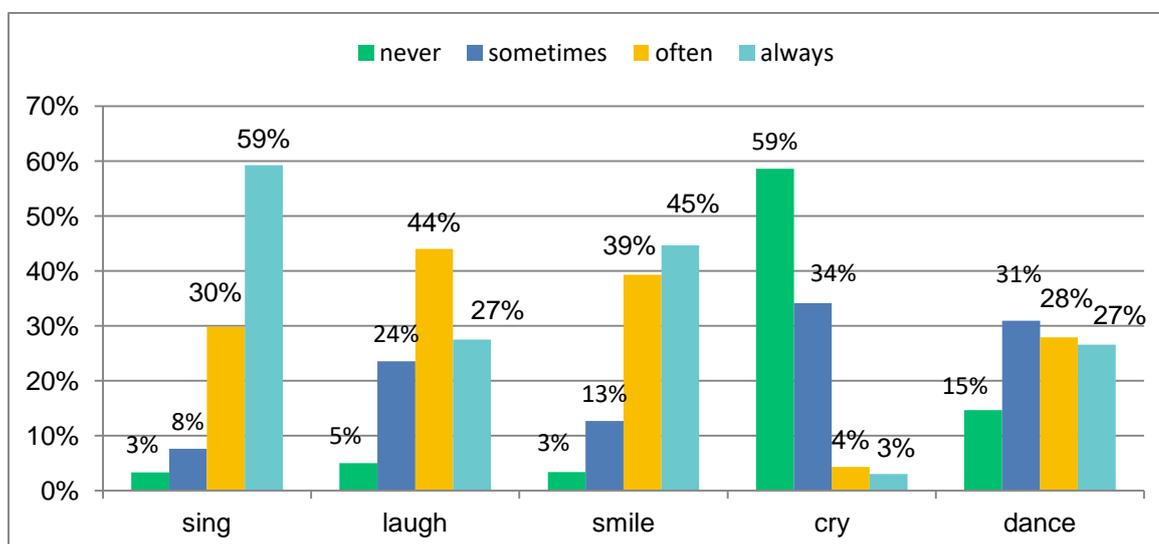
4.5 We asked respondents three general questions about the impact of Fischy Music at the time - in relation to feeling safe, belonging, and having fun. The scoring indicated that they experienced all of these, with the fun element standing out as the most prominent (85% 'a fair amount' or 'a lot').

Table 1: Impact of Fischy Music on young people

| | Not at all % | A bit % | A fair amount % | A lot % |
|--|--------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| Fischy Music helped me feel safe | 15 | 30 | 38 | 16 |
| Fischy Music helped me feel I belonged | 9 | 26 | 39 | 27 |
| Fischy Music helped me to have fun | 5 | 10 | 28 | 57 |

- 4.6 We also probed the extent to which Fischy Music had caused them to sing, laugh, smile, cry or dance. Unsurprisingly, singing proved the most frequent response (89% 'often' or 'always'), while 7% admitted to crying 'often' or 'always'.

Chart 7: Young people's response to Fischy Music



- 4.7 The qualitative data gathered from both the online survey and the interviews with young adults furnished important insights (and some qualifications) about the nature of the Fischy Music experience at the time.

Fun and inclusion

- 4.8 51% of respondents described the main effect of Fischy Music on them as enabling them to have fun together with other children and to feel included. Reinforcing this, 60% said that this was the way that Fischy Music impacted on their friends and classmates. Singing the songs lay at the heart of this, with the quality of the songs being a vital element.

"It created an atmosphere of unity where everyone belonged, Nobody is a No-One for example."

"The songs were always catchy and although I've always loved music and singing, I remember noticing that even those who didn't normally, would always engage with the Fischy Music songs and actions."

"Everyone felt like they belonged when listening to Fischy Music!"

- 4.9 Some went further and quoted the impact on their class.

"Fischy Music was the glue in our class's 6 years at primary school"

"I felt a sense of belonging when singing and listening to the song, which soothed and relaxed me. I felt a stronger bond with my class and school though singing with them."

- 4.10 The ability to engender a sense of inclusion was mentioned by some.

"It helped me to feel included in school, It helped me feel like I belonged somewhere and it was fun to sing along with my friends."

"The sign language made us aware of the need to include kids with disabilities, and that we are all the same."

"It reinforced the importance of being kind to others. Especially those who may be left out."

Expressing and understanding emotions

- 4.11 A significant number (19%) of respondents spoke about the way in which Fischy Music had helped them explore and express their emotions.

I remember really enjoying the songs, Fischy Music is one of my best memories of primary school. I also feel the young 'me' really took the messages of some of the songs to heart, about being proud of one's individuality and understanding and expressing your emotions, both good and bad."

"It was a good compromise from my dislike and incomprehension of church and Catholic school, and love of singing and dancing and festivals. It taught me more lessons on the lyrics about emotions and how to deal with them and how to see other people and look at life than school ever did."

- 4.12 Several people quoted either specific songs or challenges they faced.

"At times this music got me through some challenging times."

"'You can hold' on specifically helped with some anger issues I experienced as a child. Especially the fact that it emphasised that it wouldn't be an easy thing to do."

"As someone who was bullied, some of the songs really made me feel heard, in that my hurt was real, particularly the song with the line "silly words hurt more". This was so important."

Confidence

- 4.13 12% of respondent described a process whereby Fischy Music helped to support young people's self esteem and confidence.

"It would always make me feel better about myself. As a child I was often bullied and my friend was often very critical of me. I would often come home very upset and in tears. I would then always listen to 'you are a star' and it would always make me feel better."

"The songs gave me the confidence to be me."

Happiness

- 4.14 Strikingly, a number of respondents (11%) described how Fischy Music made them feel happy. For some this was a consequence of singing in assemblies. For others it reflected the impact of more intense work at a class level.

"I remember always wanting to hear Fischy Music in assemblies, it makes you happy!"

"It always made me happy."

"It made me happy to see all different ages joining in and singing along together at school assemblies,"

"It was in P7 that I first heard any of the songs. It made me happy being part of the group project for the performance at the Brunton Theatre. We played the songs a couple of times in assembly which always made me happy and brought back memories of the workshops and performance."

"It made us happy as a class and brought us together."

"Despite going to different primary schools, the other day myself and my boyfriend (both 19) were reminiscing about how happy the songs made us."

Faith and values

- 4.15 Some children (7%) encountered Fischy Music in both the school and the church context. In the latter, it seemed to provide a degree of relevance and 'credibility' that might otherwise have been absent.

"It made me feel like church could be cool and excited that there was a different type of singing other than traditional hymns."

"Fischy didn't come along till right at the end of primary school for me, but it was around a lot of the church events when I was a teenager. It brought me a lot of joy. And was a way to connect with new friends and express delight in being together with other Christians in a way that wasn't either too serious (hymns) or using language I wasn't comfortable with (praise songs). At Youth Assembly or SU camp or Children's Assembly these were the songs we could almost all love and not worry about being so worthy and putting our hands in the air!"

"The songs provided me with comfort when I was bullied for being a Christian."

Gender issues

- 4.16 The overall number of male responses was considerably lower than the female responses, as we have seen. However, there were very few differences between the quantitative data from males and females. The exception was in response to the question 'Has Fischy Music ever made you...sing, laugh, smile, cry, dance?'. In this

instance, males appeared somewhat less enthusiastic about their response to certain questions!

- 4.17 In general terms, the similarity of response between males and females was striking.

Table 2: Impact of Fischy Music on young people (by gender)

| | Males | Females |
|--|-------|---------|
| 'Has Fischy Music ever made you sing? | 45% | 64% |
| 'Has Fischy Music ever made you smile? | 35% | 48% |
| 'Has Fischy Music ever made you dance? | 14% | 31% |

Negative responses

- 4.18 While the overwhelming majority of comments were positive, 5% of respondents were critical. For some, this was probably a matter of taste. For others, there was a principled objection.

"We only ever sang 1 song and i got really board of it."

"To be honest, I was too old for it so I didn't enjoy it."

"It made me question the church and religion, and affirmed my atheistic views. As a kid I found it very strange that this church-y group were allowed time and space in the school environment, when no other religious groups every got the chance."

Lasting impact

- 4.19 We invited respondents to state and give examples of any ways in which Fischy Music had created an enduring impact on them or their peers, shaping the type of people they had become. While this was difficult to quantify, some clear themes emerged.

Expressing and understanding emotions

- 4.20 For some (19%), the ability to understand and express their emotions and to develop a more mature sense of emotional intelligence was key to how Fischy Music had affected them. For some this was evidenced in a broader 'world view'. For others, quite specific examples were cited.

"I remember thinking about feelings, really thinking about them and being aware of my emotions and attempting to understand them. I firmly believe that this increased my Emotional Intelligence in understanding emotions and their impact, and has increased my compassion and empathy for what others are going through."

"Bag of worries' still reminds me to talk about worries rather than bottling them up."

"Helped my friend through their parents' divorce in primary."

Teaching and guiding others

- 4.21 For a significant subset of respondents (18%), Fischy Music had clearly helped to shape and inform future paths into adulthood. Sometimes this was seen as 'good things' being passed down to the next generation.

"I honestly think it's beautiful that they've still got something going now, that was there when we were younger. I love stuff like that. Stuff that I've known, now my son knows. I think that's brilliant."

"It's helped me to pass on my experiences and knowledge to children now."

- 4.22 Several people also commented on how Fischy Music had impacted on future career choices, and had informed their practice in very direct ways.

"I remember being super excited for assembly day to be allowed to stand up with friends/classmates., and sing these catchy positive songs. The music inspired me to then study music when I got older."

"I had quite a hard time with various things growing up but the songs and the messages we learned from them stuck with me through all that. Kids I work with now are encouraged to "build up not tear down" and that's a lesson I try to apply to my relationships with everyone I meet in life."

"Learn how to work with children - being silly, engaging, bright and colourful. Fischy has amazing techniques with younger people that I take on into my work as someone who works with children."

"As a student teacher I have already used the likes of 'You are a Star' and 'These are our emotions' with my placement classes, as a fantastic Health and Wellbeing resource. The kids absolutely loved singing these songs and I was able to relive my own childhood during this time- couldn't help but to smile!"

Confidence

- 4.23 Developing people's confidence was seen as a longer term impact by 15% of respondents.

"Just be yourself. That was one of the main things they taught. Be your own person. Every one of the songs taught you that. Be happy, be who you want to be - and that's one thing that did stick."

"During my years at university I have had several knock backs and struggles. But through it I have always looked to song 'stronger' which has kept me going."

"Gain confidence singing and leading worship."

Supporting others

- 4.24 The development of altruism and care for others was seen as something that resulted from Fischy Music by 15% of the respondents.

"Encourage children to accept and care for other children."

"Sympathise with others and view others in a fairer way."

"These songs have helped people to feel like they belong and can help individuals to feel good about the part they have to play in the world. You can't help but sing along and play some air guitar!"

Singing and music

- 4.25 The 'core' dimension to Fischy Music - singing together - was felt to be a longer term impact by 10% of respondents.

"Develop my sense of rhythm and confidence through singing."

"It allowed me to sing in school which was always something I was shy about and didn't have many opportunities to do. Also, singing 'As We Go Now' at the leavers assembly in primary 7 was quite possibly one of the most emotional moments of my life!"

"They do stick with you, they're really good songs for learning, like. They make you happy for one when you're singing them."

Faith

- 4.26 5% of the young people responding identified the development of their Christian faith as a long term impact of Fischy Music.

"Grow up to become a Christian."

"Grow in my relationship with God and my Christian family. Lead children in worship now as an adult, and encourage them to explore their emotions too."

5 Findings: teachers

5.1 In this chapter we describe the findings from teachers. This draws on the views of those completing the online survey and the one-to-one interviews conducted with teachers. Specific roles of respondents have not been identified, but contributions have been received from classroom teachers, depute headteachers, headteachers, music specialists, and others.

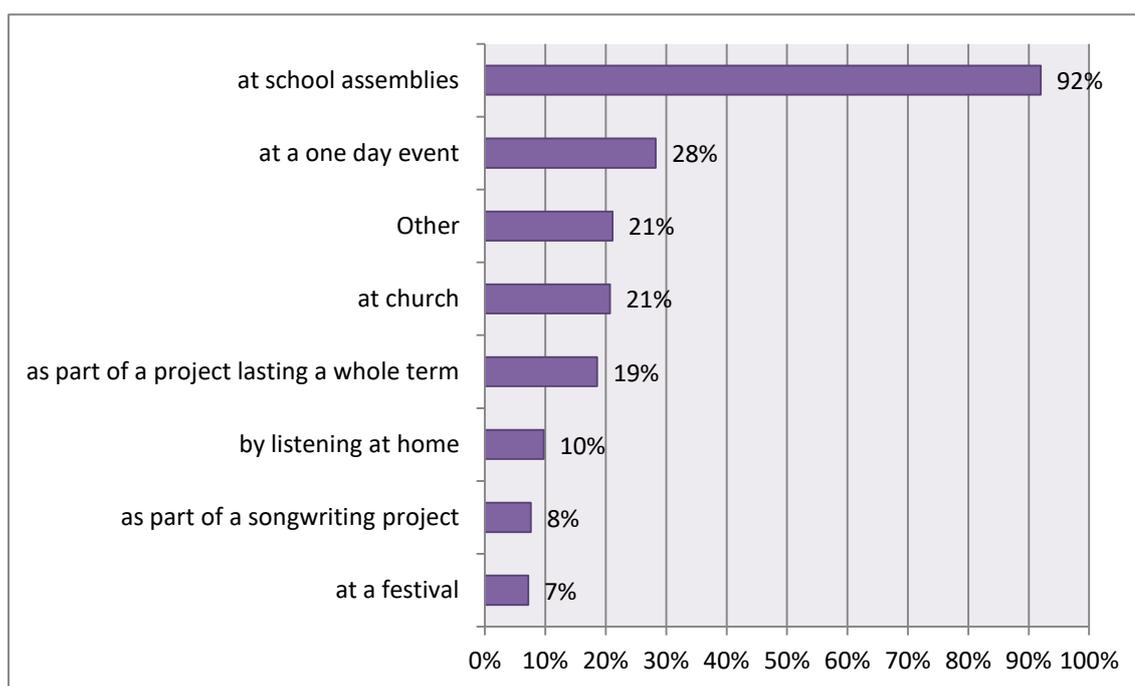
Respondent profile

5.2 247 teachers responded to the online survey, of whom 92% were female and 8% male (reflecting national trends in Scotland). 79% were between the ages of 30 and 60. They were spread across 21 of the 32 local authorities, while being weighted towards Edinburgh and surrounding authorities (42%).

Experience of Fischy Music

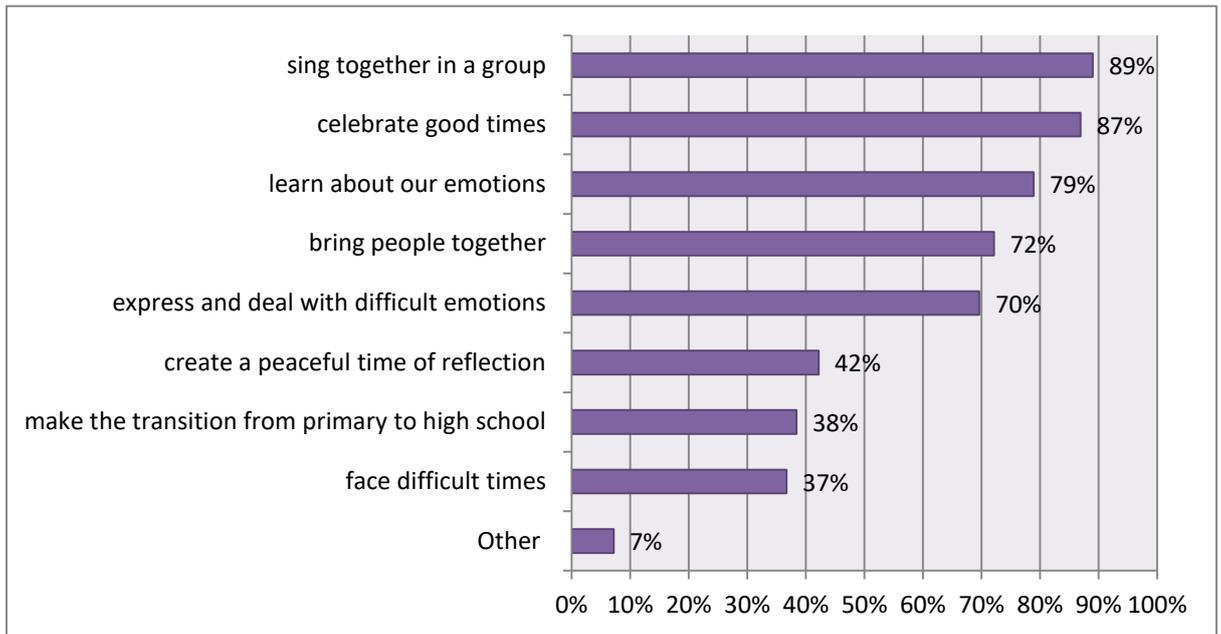
5.3 Teachers experience of Fischy Music was mainly through the use of the resources at assemblies (92%). 19% had been involved in term-long projects, and 8% as part of a song writing project.

Chart 8: Setting in which teachers experienced Fischy Music



5.4 The perceived reasons for using Fischy Music related generally to the creation of a positive 'corporate' environment (72% to 89%), followed by helping children express and deal with their emotions.

Chart 9: Teachers' perception of the purpose of Fischy Music intervention



5.5 We asked teachers about the impact of Fischy Music on the children at the time of the intervention, and on the children and on themselves over the longer term

Impact at the time

5.6 Teachers felt overwhelmingly that Fischy Music helped the children have fun (99%) and feel they belonged (96%). They also believed that the children generally felt safe (82%).

Table 3: Impact of Fischy Music on young people (teachers' view)

| | Not at all % | A bit % | A fair amount % | A lot % |
|---|--------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| Fischy Music helped children feel safe | 0 | 18 | 49 | 33 |
| Fischy Music helped children feel they belonged | 0 | 4 | 37 | 59 |
| Fischy Music helped children to have fun | 0 | 1 | 13 | 86 |

Singing together

5.7 Half of the teachers responding to the survey (50%) emphasised the value and enjoyment of children singing together.

"Feel good factor of the songs make the children feel positive."

- 5.8 This was a communal activity - often one of the few times when the whole school came together.

"It's become a bit of a banner for the school. Whenever we come together to do Fischy Music, everyone's very excited. It's one aspect of music that the whole school does together from nursery to P7."

"The children are immediately physically involved in the songs, while at the same time involved in singing. So simultaneously their confidence in singing increases, but so does their ability to relate to whatever the subject of the song is."

- 5.9 As well as the whole school level, teachers reported this being true at class level too.

"When they worked together as a team their voice was heard and everyone in the class contributed to the finished song. In the end of session assembly all the children had fun and it was a great way to get the message across."

Expressing and understanding emotions

- 5.10 Almost a quarter (22%) of teachers identified how effective Fischy Music was in assisting and supporting children to explore and express their emotions in constructive ways.

"Helped them to express their emotions. I taught a child who cried after hearing a particular Fischy song which helped him to open up and explain why he was feeling sad and angry."

- 5.11 It provided a special kind of support - allowing them to find a relevant 'emotional vocabulary'.

"It gives pupils a way to engage and join in ... to express their emotions in a 'scaffolded' way through joining in with the songs and singing together. The songs do a good job of naming emotions - our children at [area] don't necessarily have that emotional vocabulary when they first come in to school. Maybe some of them know 'happy', 'sad', and 'angry', but they don't necessarily know any other emotions or shades of emotion. Likewise some of our older learners with additional needs may not know beyond two or three simple emotions. The Fischy songs back up what we got through the 'Emotions Talk' programme, through Seasons for Growth, and through various other well-being and emotional literacy programmes. They're reinforcing the learning and learning new vocabulary for different emotions and feelings through the music and the lyrics."

- 5.12 The ability of the Fischy Music team to 'tune in' to the mood of a class was cited as an important pre-requisite to working at this deeper level.

"Fischy can come in and take the class exactly where they're at, and work with them in such a way that it pulls the team working dynamic of the class together. It pulls the creative out of the children in a very very different way. Some children who would say 'I can't write a song' just get on board. I think

that with hardly an exception, we have everybody engaged in this process. and we don't take that for granted because that's a big big thing."

- 5.13 Several concrete examples painted vivid pictures of how children had been helped.

"Last year the idea was to look at transition, and the different emotions involved in moving on. We had a particular year group last year who have gone through ... we have lost a child to meningitis, and we also have a child who has lost his sight due to a devastating brain condition. so the emotions in that year group were already really intense. So Fischy allowed them another experience of discussing what transition looks like and what moving on feels like, and what some of the different emotions when you're changing from one thing to another. So the children were able to explore some of that through discussion, allowing them to process some of these emotions in quite a safe space."

"One that I can remember was a little boy whose dad was with the armed forces and away. It was a song about saying goodbye but remembering that they come back. That song was telling them everything they were feeling but couldn't put into words. They'd been keeping that all inside but somehow the song gave them the freedom to say 'that's exactly what I'm feeling' It kind of gives them permission to feel what they're feeling."

Reinforcing ethos and values

- 5.14 About a fifth (21%) emphasised the 'fit' between Fischy Music and their school's ethos and values

"We've found it fits really well into our ethos. For the school and the school community it's just a perfect fit."

"It has reinforced the school values in a powerful way. The children learn and remember best through music and in particular through community singing."

Belonging

- 5.15 Fischy Music's role in building up the school community was seen as important by 19% of respondents. Sometimes this was intentional. On other occasions, the communal spirit was forged inadvertently in the face of adversity.

"I was on supply for about 6 months in 2012 and I was going into different schools and I was put in situations where I had some very challenging children. In one school I had a year 6 class, and I walked into class on this first day and asked this one child to do something. He told me to F off! I used Fischy Music with this class..... The next day I went to collect them from the playground. They were lining up and some of the children were actually singing the songs, and they had big smiles on their faces."

Confidence

- 5.16 A special kind of confidence could be created as a result of the Fischy Music intervention.

"Our children were really involved in writing songs that were their songs, so the ownership of their songs was really high. The lyrics come from them, the music comes from them. The Fischy team somehow wave their magic wand and what comes back is really high quality, and the children have a real sense of pride in what they've done.... Last year they didn't just perform it in front of their own class in their own school, they went and performed it in front of the new S1 year group. So one of their final things and one of their introduction things to their new high school was coming together and performing their song. We had everything from country and western to rap!"

Lasting impact on children

- 5.17 Several teachers in the interviews spoke of the challenge of finding evidence of long term impact. For some, this was due to child protection and safeguarding policies which precluded follow-up contact with pupils once they had left primary school. For others, it was simply that they tended not to have the time or opportunity.

Understanding and managing emotions

- 5.18 Despite the above constraints, about a quarter (27%) of teacher respondents to the survey felt that Fischy Music had helped their pupils learn some key lessons about emotions.

"Accept that difficult emotions are felt by everyone We can cope with such emotions in positive ways that don't impact on negatively on others."

"Deal with life's ups and downs through music."

Join in, sing, and have fun

- 5.19 Fischy Music as a way of helping children to participate in learning and have fun was quoted by 22% of respondents. Anecdotal examples provided some indication that children's experiences while in primary school remained with them in a positive way.

"They maybe come along when they're S5 or S6 and I'm a contact in the school because I taught them. They'll come along and maybe shadow me or sit in the class, and they're really touched that we're doing songs that we were doing when they were at the school. 'I can't believe you're still doing 'You're a star'. That was one of my favourites' "

Self belief

- 5.20 14% of teachers clearly felt that Fischy Music helped to embed some of the important messages from school.

"They still sing the songs as they grow older, and can take some of the messages in, about inclusion, emotions etc, without realising it."

"Find ways to identify and express feelings. For example one older class I taught with some highly creative and independent thinkers were delighted to discover songs that affirmed their right to be themselves and that valued their particular strengths."

- 5.21 One head teacher had had extended contact with a young man over a period of several years - from primary school to late teenage years. For him, Fischy Music had been instrumental in maintaining his self belief.

"I think the memorable catchy words and tunes were remembered when away from school at home and in hard times. I know this from one boy who ended up in secure accommodation throughout his secondary education, who later said to me, "When I was in secure, I used to sing they Fischy songs when I was locked in my room. They made me happy."

Belonging

- 5.22 There were comments from 11% of respondents about how Fischy Music contributed to children's behaviour, and in turn their sense of belonging to the school community.

"They're a lot kinder... more respectful to each other. When we first started, the changes were so immediate. Our Deputy Director pushes Fischy Music hard because she obviously sees that impact."

"Many of the songs help the children feel part of a community and that they belong as well as having fun together."

Support and care for others

- 5.23 Cases of individual kindness on behalf of pupils towards their peers were also provided.

"It was a year six girl who was upset one dinnertime - she was quite hormonal, got very greasy skin with spots breaking out. And the other girl used the lyrics from the song ('Perfectly OK') to re-assure her that that was OK and that was normal, and just part of growing up and becoming who you are. it's totally normal because it says it in this song."

Lasting impact on teachers

- 5.24 While teachers were slightly reluctant to identify long term impact on children they had taught (as outlined above), they clearly felt that Fischy Music had been a significant engine for their own learning and practice.

Using music in school

- 5.25 Almost a quarter (23%) said that Fischy Music had supported them to develop their skills both in leading effective assemblies and in their classroom teaching practice.

"Put a good interesting assembly together."

"Provide engaging and interesting lessons for pupils. Developed own confidence in using music across the curriculum."

5.26 For one head teacher, Fischy Music had exerted a significant impact on her practice.

"Fischy Music has been an integral part of my journey as a school leader. It has enabled me to develop the emotional, spiritual and social wellbeing of the whole school community and has always been a vehicle for promoting wholeness, growth, peace and love."

Discussing difficult topics with children and teach about emotions

5.27 A fifth (20%) of respondents had found that Fischy Music had provided a number of ways to discuss challenging topics (including health and well-being) with their pupils.

"Discuss emotional and mental well being with the children by providing a gateway to difficult discussions through the lyrics of the songs.!"

"You've sung the song and it's put into words something that the children couldn't put into words themselves. It's given them the words, given them the emotional literacy. Following on from that you can have a circle time and issues can come up."

Having fun

5.28 Enjoyment and fun remained key ingredients for many teachers, and Fischy Music provided a means to achieve this in the learning context. This teacher described the benefits for both herself and her class.

"In the final year of my teaching I was in a totally Muslim school in the middle of Bradford. Quite a deprived area I would say. The children were great. The children were very often not the problem, it was mainly the management. However there were some challenging children and some children from quite deprived homes, who really just needed a bit of joy in their lives. I would say that Fischy Music definitely provided that. And it's not just the children who benefited. I as a teacher benefited as it made my job so much easier. I know it may a bit trite to say it, but I just used to feel a lot more joyful when I was in the classroom using that resource."

Confidence in using music with children

5.29 Providing a resource and an approach for teachers who would not naturally be especially confident in using music with children was highlighted.

"Super resources for primary teachers who lack confidence in ability to deliver music in the curriculum. Also ticks the health and well-being box too."

6 Findings: church workers

6.1 In this chapter we describe the findings from a range of professionals involved in the work of churches. These include ordained priests and ministers as well as lay people in roles such as youth worker and children's worker.

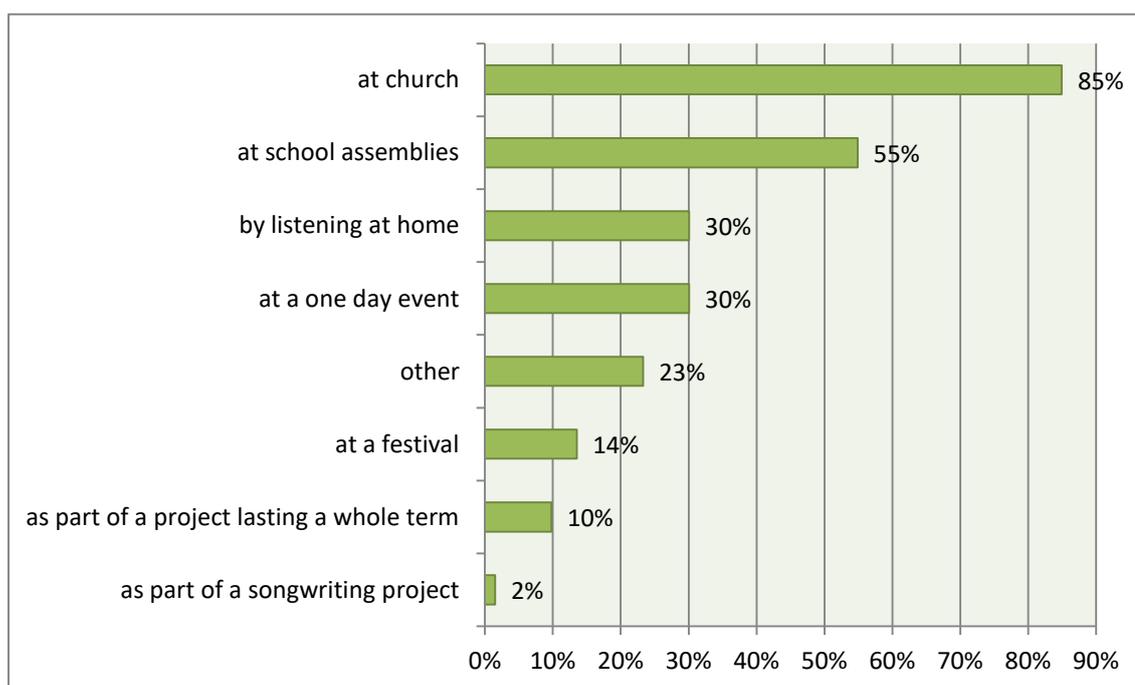
Respondent profile

6.2 There were 143 respondents in this grouping, of whom 67% were female, 32% were male, and 1% did not identify as either. They were located in 22 out of the 32 Scottish local authorities, and a quarter of them were from outside Scotland. Two thirds of respondents were aged between 40 and 60 years old.

Experience of Fischy Music

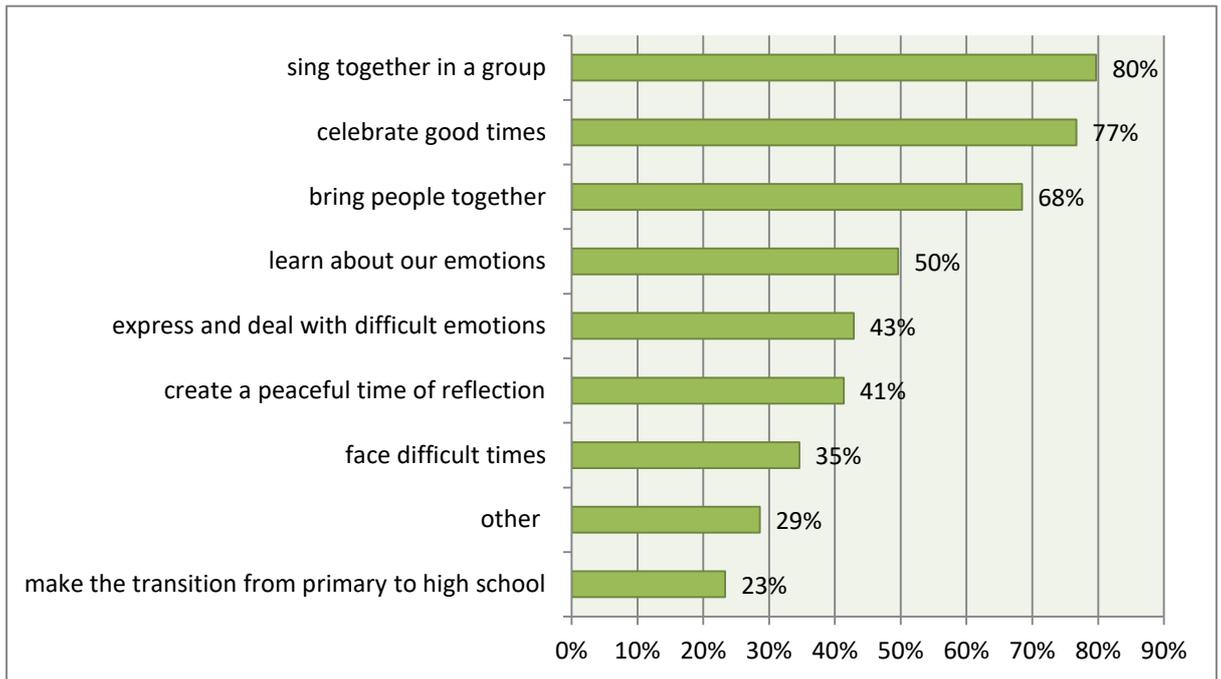
6.3 As might be expected, the most frequent setting in which they had experienced Fischy Music was the church (85%), with more than half (55%) also working in the school context.

Chart 10: Setting in which church workers experienced Fischy Music



6.4 The most common reasons for using Fischy Music in these contexts tended to be a desire to bring people together in a positive way.

Chart 11: Church Workers' perception of the purpose of Fischy Music intervention



6.5 We asked church workers about the impact of Fischy Music on the children at the time of the intervention, and about the longer term impact on the children and on themselves.

Impact at the time

6.6 Respondents felt universally that Fischy Music had helped children to feel they belonged and to have fun. Most (85%) also believed that children had felt safe as a result of their involvement.

Table 4: Impact of Fischy Music on young people (church workers' view)

| | Not at all % | A bit % | A fair amount % | A lot % |
|---|-----------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
| Fischy Music helped children feel safe | 2 | 13 | 46 | 39 |
| Fischy Music helped children feel they belonged | 0 | 3 | 24 | 73 |
| Fischy Music helped children to have fun | 0 | 1 | 11 | 88 |

Fun singing together

- 6.7 38% of church workers mentioned the value of singing together and the enjoyment it brings. This took place in a variety of settings, including schools, at church, and holiday clubs.

"They love the songs, are keen to sing them with the actions."

"Makes them so HAPPY"

"Great enjoyment. They love singing the songs. I use Fischy Music songs most weeks in the assemblies I take in church and community schools. They are always well received. Sometimes when I meet the children outside of school they sing me the songs. Music Maker was a particular favourite for that a few years ago."

"We ran holiday clubs through church and in my previous experience kids didn't like to sing, especially the boys! When we introduced Fischy everybody wanted to sing they ask for their favourite Fischy Music now. What a transformation!"

Feeling included in a community

- 6.8 Becoming part of a community was seen as important by over a fifth of respondents (21%). This included both the school community and the wider local community.

"Created community on every level. Children who struggle with behaviour issues can noticeably calm down with the use of songs. I know of teachers who use them to create the atmosphere they need in the classroom."

"It created a huge amount of community and fun in West Pilton. I remember the community concert and the place was packed. It was amazing."

- 6.9 For some, this meant an early introduction to inclusion.

"They learn to work together, learn a little sign language without even 'realising' it, learn ways to deal with feelings positively, are valued for who they are."

- 6.10 A particular 'brand' of community was generated by the creation of their own music

"Fischy music songs are sung every week at Assemblies. The 2 schools where I was chaplain both used the streaming subscription. In one you came and helped them write their own school songs which gave them a real ownership of it."

Confidence

- 6.11 A similar level of importance (21%) was given to the development of confidence. This applied to children across the ability range.

"Engaged them in music, built confidence and self-esteem, gave them a laugh."

"It gave the children confidence to be different individuals."

"Encouraged shy kids to find their voice. Allowed expressive kids a vehicle to express themselves fully."

Expressing and managing emotions

- 6.12 Expressing and managing emotions was important for a fifth (20%) of respondents, with the emphasis on getting to grips with both their own and others' feelings.

"It helped them to understand their own and other people's feelings. It taught them that kind words can go a long way and that they can make a difference to other people."

"Open and honest speaking/singing about real situations and real emotions was a very new experience. Helps to give an emotional language and bring often little discussed topics to the fore."

"Gave them self confidence, good values and fun and provided a way to talk about emotions. Developed their faith and the way they think about the world."

Engaging with tough issues

- 6.13 For some, Fischy Music had helped them to explore more difficult issues with children.

"Invaluable in helping children deal with grief, loneliness, bullying, sadness, self esteem."

- 6.14 This included addressing contemporary political issues.

"'You can make a difference' used at the end of a pupil-led whole school Easter Assembly, where we explored both Jesus' procession on Palm Sunday and the contemporary situ of Indian people marching for land rights... standing up for justice non-violently... the song was the perfect ending and the pupils loved it - so powerful."

Lasting impact on children

- 6.15 Church workers were often in the 'privileged' position of having regular contact with children and young people over an extended period of time, often for a significant number of years. This provided many opportunities to observe and comment on how children had grown and developed over time, and in some instances, what the impact of Fischy Music had been.

Joining in

- 6.16 Almost a third of respondents (30%) emphasised the simple but crucial value of participation and having fun. Having accessible music and lyrics were key to this.

"Discover the power of song words that say it in language that is natural and authentic. Kids at school were still spontaneously singing "you can make a difference" the whole summer term after that Easter Assembly."

6.17 One respondent described the longevity of the process.

"Just Imagine' was the only thing that our childminder and we could get my older child to calm down to as a baby. 17 years on, it is still a special CD."

Expressing emotions

6.18 For 20%, Fischy Music helped to provide the tools to express emotions - often in ways that formal education had not.

"Taught them songs they still remembered in their 20s - gave them words for different feelings/experiences/emotions: "You are a star" "Build up one another" Fischy songs reached those parts of children's hearts and memories that other parts of Primary education don't necessarily reach!"

6.19 This embraced a wide range of emotions.

"Cry and laugh and rejoice and question."

Faith

6.20 The development and nurturing of faith over time was seen by a fifth (20%) as important.

"In church, the words of songs have been formative in spiritual development and understanding of theology."

"One of my nephews sang Fischy all the way home from Iona to Liverpool. It reinforced his sense of belonging to the church and this year, aged 20, he is attending the Youth Assembly."

Feeling valued and confident

6.21 11% mentioned the development of confidence over years, and how this underpinned the ways in which people connect with each other.

"Have confidence in themselves and to know how much they are loved."

"Connect with each other. Having used it in Church services it has connected the young and the old alike. The congregation love to get up and do the actions."

Talking about difficult issues

6.22 Fischy Music was seen by some as a creative method of addressing 'tough issues'.

"It helped them articulate tough questions about faith - especially how they felt about grief."

"At secondary school, young people remember the Fischy songs I taught them in primary ... I've seen children moved to tears by 'As We Go Now'. Also, severely disabled children who are very difficult to engage, I have smiles and hand waving at Fischy songs eg 'I'm the only I'."

"Sing about difficult subjects such as bullying"

Lasting impact on church workers

- 6.23 As with teachers, many church workers had found that their involvement with Fischy Music had also had a personal impact on them.

Engaging with children

- 6.24 Almost a quarter (23%) felt they were now better equipped to understand and engage with children and young people, developing an authentic way of working - without losing the fun.

"Engage with children and be real about emotions."

"Connect with young people. There is a great sense of fun connected to Fischy it has blown away the staid reputation of singing Christian music - our kids have taken it back to school with them."

"Tune in to the problems the kids have and to help them think about them."

Bringing people together

- 6.25 16% commented on the capacity of Fischy Music to bring people together and create a sense of community. This respondent's question about a Fischy song at a wedding was 'answered' by the next respondent!

"The newer songs are being used in our local primaries and in worship. The familiarity and fun brings people together. How long will it be before the request comes to play one of your songs at a wedding?"

"I must say that Fischy music has not only had a positive effect on children but on adults as well. During the summer months, we sing 'As We Go Now' at the end of every worship service. People love it and find it very meaningful. I have even had couples request it for the end of their wedding ceremony!"

Expressing feelings

- 6.26 Underpinning much of Fischy Music's work is the ability to express feelings and emotions. 16% of respondents spoke about this, and this one described how a Fischy Music song had been helped him.

"Feel okay with myself and my very vague, often heretical version of faith. The songs counteract some of the stuff we hear so often about averting God's wrath and needing to repent because we are miserable sinners. Because the songs are so easily memorable, I carry lines in my head that help when I am struggling. 'Bring it all to me' is the one that particularly comes to mind."

Talking about important issues with children

- 6.27 Fischy Music was an approach to dealing with the 'real' issues - and several respondents mentioned their use in 'messy church'.

"I found it very good to use, and it was helpful to have the resources. The words address the issues and are culturally acceptable. We use it in 'messy church'. There's a different culture from regular church - it's less 'churchy' and non-threatening. In the poorest of our three churches, there's an earthiness about the way people live here."

Sharing faith and leading worship

- 6.28 Respondents spoke about how Fischy Music had helped them communicate their faith with young people.

"Share my faith and the love of God with young people."

"Communicate God's love in a non-threatening way."

- 6.29 In turn, some had used what they had absorbed from Fischy Music to lead worship in new and creative ways.

"Gave me confidence to teach children songs and actions."

"Develop different keyboard playing styles for accompanying choir and for worship with whole congregation. This was challenging at first but playing with our worship group, using the early books and listening to your own versions of your songs I've become more confident experimenting with different voices and rhythms to create fun stuff."

"Lead singing assemblies and enable primary school teachers to teach children to sing in a way that they don't have to learn anything - it works for their busy lives. I am more confident in leading singing because of the professionalism of the resource."

7 Findings: parents

7.1 In this chapter we describe the findings from parents..

Respondent profile

7.2 115 parents responded to the survey, of whom 83% were female and 17% male. They came from 14 different Scottish local authorities, and a fifth were from outside Scotland. 80% were between 41 and 60 years old.

Experience of Fischy Music

7.3 Parents described a wide variety of situations in which they experienced Fischy Music with their children. These included car journeys, relaxing at home, putting children to bed, being at church, and going to school.

Impact at the time

Fun and joining in

7.4 The majority of parents (70%) highlighted the value of being able to sing in a communal context - at church, at school, and informally.

"Helped them enjoy singing and meant they enjoyed church services more as the music was relevant. Helped them settle in to church and make friends by being part of Fischy music."

"My daughter loved the music so much we went out and sourced a CD. That was 15 years ago. I now work in the school and see all the children dancing and signing to the music. They love it."

"Singing with friends, singing with confidence, singing with joy."

"I remember accompanying my daughter's class as a parent helper on a school outing. As they walked down the road, one of the children struck up with 'Build Up', and the others joined in. I have never seen a whole class burst into spontaneous song before!"

7.5 An important dimension to the singing experience, mentioned by many parents, was the actions

"They love getting to do actions with the songs."

Self worth

7.6 19% of parents stressed the importance of reinforcing the self worth of children - both in everyday situations as well as in more challenging times .

"We sang You are a star with both children which I believe helped their self-esteem and they could come back to it when feeling low about themselves."

"Helped my child's friend who's parents were getting divorced. Helped talk about worries. Helped affirm identity and worth."

"One little girl - it helped her self esteem. She was dyslexic and didn't have any confidence. But she was able to stand up and sing in the classroom. She got a round of applause!"

Expressing and understanding emotions

- 7.7 18% of respondents spoke about the challenge (and value) of being able to discuss emotional issues.

We used to have your music CDs in the car and we found that it was music we could all enjoy as I couldn't stand a lot of the cheesy pre-fives music that was around. I have three boys and I also want them to grow up to be emotionally literate particularly as there is a history of mental ill health in our family. When we discovered one of our children was autistic this became even more important."

"Engaged them in singing with actions; enabled them to explore different emotions."

Dealing with difficult times

- 7.8 Going beyond talking about emotions, 12% said that Fischy Music had actively helped their children deal with challenging situations.

"Fischy songs helped my daughter a lot when we went through some really hard times as a family (her brother had cancer). We listened to songs about difficult times and sad emotions and being strong and they really helped."

"Fischy songs have become part of our family repertoire - the children would often sing a relevant song when struggling with something. The youngest listened to Fischy CD while going to sleep every night for several years."

- 7.9 One parent had noticed that sometimes there was a reciprocal dimension, with children who had been supported, going on in turn to support others.

"One thing I've noticed is that they are particularly adept at understanding the problems other children may have. I don't know how much you can attribute that to Fischy Music, but to some extent, children who have been through the thought process of how difficult it is to adapt to whatever circumstances they found themselves in, then become quite good 'peers' for other children who are having similar problems."

Making faith relevant

- 7.10 For 10% of parents, Fischy Music had helped to make faith relevant for their children.

"We listened to CDs in the car a lot. Great for musical development and fun. Also spiritual development."

"It was linked to church so gave them a joyful and contemporary way of thinking about real issues in a faith context."

"They learnt about a God who allowed us to own our emotions."

"We picked our son up after the first Church of Scotland Children's Assembly, not really knowing what he'd been at, and we ran into a wall of Fischy Music excitement, closely followed by a six hour drive with a newly acquired Fischy CD on constant repeat in the car. The whole experience made [child] realise that he was part of something special and much bigger than what he saw in his local church, a long way from Scotland."

Lasting impact

- 7.11 Parents did not always draw a clear distinction between the impact of Fischy Music when their children were of primary school age, and the enduring impact that it may have brought about as their children grew up. In reality, most reported on impacts that grew and developed with time, witnessed from the unique vantage point of being a parent.

Confidence and self belief

- 7.12 For 29% of respondents, confidence was the central dimension.

"Fischy Music gave them the confidence to join in and the confidence to sing."

"Even before primary school, I feel knowing Fischy songs helped my daughter's confidence. She was maybe 4, we were at a new playground with a tall slide and I heard her singing softly to herself "we all need encouragement" as she climbed the ladder. A few years later, one night before school, she was worried about how she might deal the next day with someone who was giving her a hard time. We went through the words together of "nobody is a no one" and she was then able to go to sleep."

"My daughter loved the songs. Now I have foster kids who can really relate to some of the songs and it really gives them confidence to know they are not alone."

"Feel more confident in difficult situations e.g. when needing to set boundaries, when struggling with self-esteem, when feeling down."

Reflecting on how they treat others

- 7.13 Almost a quarter (23%) felt that Fischy Music had allowed their children to think about their relationships with others and how they treated them.

"Remind themselves to be considerate of others."

"Help them to consider positive responses to difficult situations/scenarios, e.g. bullying, feeling left out/not good enough; encouraged them to know that God cares for them and knows them."

"Think about others and how their actions and words can hurt others."

- 7.14 Several mentioned the way that Fischy Music enabled children to go 'below the surface' and address some more challenging facets of contemporary life.

"Most children's songs are happy, fun type of songs. Fischy Music addresses the deeper things children are concerned about. The songs are very important in helping children come to terms with the world they live in."

Expressing emotions

- 7.15 Almost a quarter (23%) also laid considerable stress on the value of children being able to express their emotions.

"Express emotions they have otherwise kept to themselves."

"Think about emotions. Singing can help to release emotion. My daughter sometimes put on the CD when angry. It brings us together as a family too."

Faith and church

- 7.16 17% said that supporting children to find a place in their faith community was important, and that Fischy Music had helped with this.

"Worship at church. Worship at school. Grow in their understanding of relationships with others, and faith."

Enjoying singing

- 7.17 Enjoying singing was again important, and mentioned by 17%. One young woman was now producing her own songs.

"Sing. Reflect. Learn about kindness. Learn about the Christian faith. Learn some sign language and the importance of inclusion."

"Fischy has also contributed to the confidence with which one of my children now writes, records and performs her own songs."

Dealing with tough times

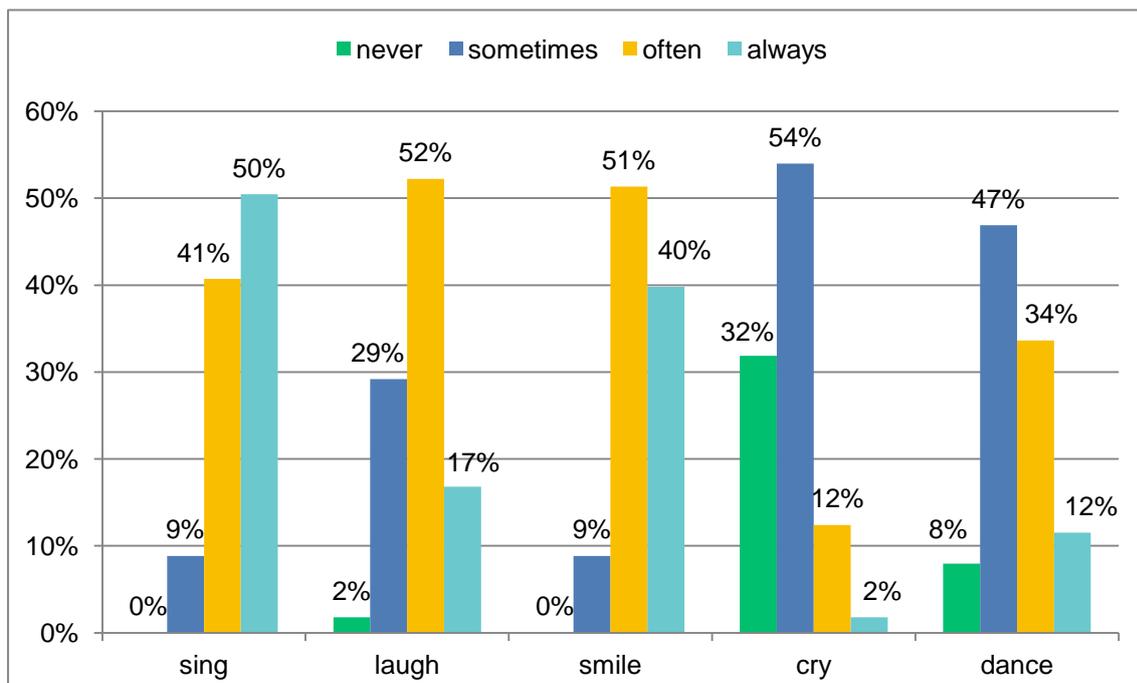
- 7.18 One respondent summed up the multi-faceted way in which Fischy Music can impact on children's lives

"Fischy manage to address life's difficulties and emotional highs and lows with a deft touch, allowing young people to be in touch with and express their emotions in a healthy way. I once had a very deep conversation with a somewhat troubled, and troublesome, young lady at the side of a packed Fischy concert. Tears were shed that needed to be shed, and then we both went back into the crowd and did an extremely silly dance together."

Impact on parents

7.19 We asked parents about the extent to which Fischy Music had ever made them sing, laugh, cry, smile or dance. The chart below describes their answers. The responses are very similar to the young people's responses (see p XX) with one major exception. While made 38% of young respondents cry 'sometimes' or 'often', for parents the equivalent figure was 66%!

Chart 12: Parents' response to Fischy Music



8 Discussion

- 8.1 In this chapter we explore the main issues that emerge from the findings, discussing where there are tensions and challenges as well as where the evidence points clearly in one direction. These issues fall into two categories: thematic issues which concern the substantive content of the research; methodological issues relating to the research process.

Thematic issues

Fun and inclusion as the bedrock to learning

- 8.2 Some of the strongest findings in the research described how much young people enjoyed their experience of Fischy Music. Whether as an alternative to 'staid' and 'boring' assemblies or as part of a creative song writing project, the 'fun factor' remained a constant. This was backed up by the comments from parents, teachers, and other adults.
- 8.3 A notable feature of many of the comments from young people was how often they used phrases such as 'It made me happy'. This sense of well-being seemed to be generated by a combination of the song content (interesting, relevant, poignant, and amusing lyrics), the musical style (modern, professional, and non-patronising), and the effect of taking part publicly in a variety of unusual actions (disinhibition, collective movement, and laughter).
- 8.4 In turn, this 'democratising' quality of the music helped to ensure that everyone felt included. Young people in particular commented on how it helped create a sense of unity and helped people to feel they belonged - to both the class and to the wider school community. They used phrases such as Fischy Music being the 'glue that held the class together'. For some, it highlighted the need to include those with additional needs or those who would simply have been left out of group activity. Teachers and other professionals tended to back this up, recounting instances of how Fischy Music had reinforced the school's values and ethos - in particular where it related to inclusion.
- 8.5 There is little doubt that the experience of singing Fischy Music songs was generally enjoyable for participants (both young people and adults). The widespread use of phrases such as 'It made me happy' tell their own story. Furthermore, the sense of well-being engendered by the musical experience seemed to create a 'bedrock' for learning that went well beyond merely the musical.

The power of communal singing and actions

- 8.6 Enjoying communal singing in a group lies at the heart of the Fischy Music way of working. This is rooted in a belief that singing can, and should, be open to everyone. Young people, teachers, (and church workers who had worked in the school context) waxed lyrical about the transformative effect of Fischy Music on school assemblies. To be able to instil value in this setting was seen as especially important, as assemblies were, for many schools, the only thing that the whole school did together on a regular basis. Several teachers spoke about how it helped to reinforce the ethos and values of the school. It was seen as being able to create a sense of unity and to help young people feel part of a community at both school and class levels.

- 8.7 Most Fischy Music songs have an accompanying set of actions (based on British Sign Language) that participants are encouraged to join in with. Despite a certain youthful Scottish reluctance to participate in activities that could be seen as embarrassing, many of the young people went out of their way to admit to taking part - and enjoying it. One dimension, commented on by teachers, was the influence it had on making the young people more respectful of each other.
- 8.8 There is a relatively large quantity of research² describing the value of communal singing. Fischy Music - whether led by staff from the organisation or by teachers or others - would appear to corroborate this.

Confidence and self-worth in children and adults

- 8.9 Doing something new and different, and being acclaimed for doing so, can be a way of building up your confidence. There was a strong thread of comments from young people, parents and professionals about Fischy Music's achievements in this area.
- 8.10 Young people who had never sung or performed in public before; teachers who would otherwise 'run a mile' from planning and leading an assembly; church workers who felt ill equipped to work with children. All these quoted examples of how the particular quality of Fischy Music songs had boosted their confidence and empowered them to venture out into new territory. This was both an individual and collective confidence. Several young respondents recounted episodes where they had used Fischy Music to achieve a fresh perspective on a situation where they lacked confidence. In a similar way, sometimes this was a group confidence, as for example when a group of P7 children sang in public at the high school where they were about to embark on their secondary education.

Understanding and expressing emotions

- 8.11 Since the early 90's, Fischy Music has intentionally utilised singing and music to help children explore, express, understand and manage their emotions. This has been against a backdrop of a growing emphasis on emotional literacy in schools (including programmes such as the 'Growing Confidence' project run by City of Edinburgh Council, and this work has been developed in tandem with local authorities and third sector organisations such as Seasons for Growth and Place2Be.
- 8.12 43% of young people responding to the survey recognised that Fischy Music had helped them learn about emotions. The organisation would appear to have pioneered an approach to this kind of work that is enjoyable and engaging for the majority of pupils, yet, honest, sensitive, and capable of being used to address complex emotional situations as well. It is a particular hallmark of Fischy Music that it can bring a high degree of authenticity to both 'everyday' emotional problems (such as negotiating the web of peer relationships) and to more challenging situations (such as loss and grief).
- 8.13 One respondent spoke of Fischy Music as a type of 'scaffolding' that is erected on a temporary basis to provide support, learning, and strength. Once its work has been achieved, it is removed and used elsewhere. There would be widespread recognition among young people, teachers, church people and others that Fischy Music offers a creative 'toolkit' that enables young people to get to grips with their emotions.

² See for example <http://rsos.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/2/10/150221> and <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2008/aug/26/healthandwellbeing.fitness>

Resilience in difficult times

- 8.14 Going beyond simply understanding your emotions to being able to build emotional resilience is an important step for children to take. The positive messages about self worth, the value of the individual, and the need to acknowledge difference, which are embedded in Fischy Music songs, support this process. The research findings - especially from young people - were rich with examples of where difficult or challenging situations had been faced with the help of an insight and a memorable tune from a Fischy Music song.
- 8.15 The role and function of 'happiness' is worth mentioning here. A striking number of young people commented how Fischy Music made them happy. Most often this was the result of an enjoyable collective experience - at school, in church, or at a festival. Alternatively, the happiness may have been the result of listening to a Fischy Music song in the privacy of the home (20% of respondents said they listened to Fischy Music songs at home).
- 8.16 Fischy Music songs have been extensively developed to support existing programmes run by organisations such as Place2Be and by loss and grief programmes such as Seasons for Growth, who provide a high degree of long term emotional support for children and young people who have experienced a variety of trauma or disruption in their lives.
- 8.17 A particular area that Fischy Music had contributed to is the transition from P7 to S1 (primary to secondary school). A large number of respondents mentioned a particular song ('As we go now') that had in effect become the soundtrack to their move up to a new school. While this transition is not necessarily traumatic, it requires a measure of emotional maturity in order that the transition is a 'good' one.

Nurturing a mature faith in children and adults

- 8.18 Fischy Music has navigated a sometimes difficult path between its work with churches and church groups and its more 'mainstream' work in schools. As an organisation it has worked hard to remain true to its original roots in the church, while operating with integrity and authenticity in the more 'secular' environment. Of course, in reality these are not two irreconcilable opposites. Many of the schools in which the organisation has worked (especially in England) are church schools. Churches also frequently play an active role in the worship and teaching of their own local establishment.
- 8.19 Fischy Music was a breath of fresh air for many young people and their teachers, injecting a blast of energy, active participation, and off-the-wall imagination into school assemblies. Indeed this was the setting most commonly cited by young people (88%) as the context in which they had experienced Fischy Music.
- 8.20 Several young people spoke about how Fischy Music had helped to nurture their Christian faith, not least by providing credible role models who came across as authentic and down to earth.
- 8.21 From the church perspective, Fischy Music provided a new way of 'doing business', and was welcomed. Many church workers who responded to the survey spoke of how Fischy Music had transformed the way they worked with children and young people, helping them create welcoming and inclusive church communities. These communities have a very particular experience of young people, often nurturing them

from babyhood to adulthood, and are often intimately involved in supporting the growth of faith in their young members. They are well placed to comment on the impact of Fischy Music in this setting. Involvement in church is a (largely) voluntary choice, as compared to school, where the same luxury does not apply! This affords the adults a unique opportunity to comment on the growth and development of its young people.

- 8.22 10% of parents felt that Fischy Music had made faith a relevant issue for their children, while 23% said that Fischy Music had effected the way their children related to others, and helped them to be more caring.

Shaping relationships and careers

- 8.23 An unexpected finding in the research was the extent to which young people acknowledged the influence of Fischy Music on how they relate to other young people, and in the career choices they have made.
- 8.24 18% said that Fischy Music had played an important role in shaping their relationships with others, and how they get on with them. This extended into the realm of volunteer work.
- 8.25 Several young people had entered professions (teaching, childcare, children's nursing) where Fischy Music had been both an incentive to enter in the first place (often because of the inadvertent role modelling function of Fischy Music staff), and a source of wisdom and practical techniques which could be used in their practice.
- 8.26 It was not only the young people who acknowledged the impact of Fischy Music on their lives and careers. A large proportion of the teachers and church workers who responded had clearly benefited from Fischy Music in their day to day work with children. New approaches and ideas had been generated, and a fertile landscape opened up for them in terms of the scope for using music as an educational and pedagogic tool.

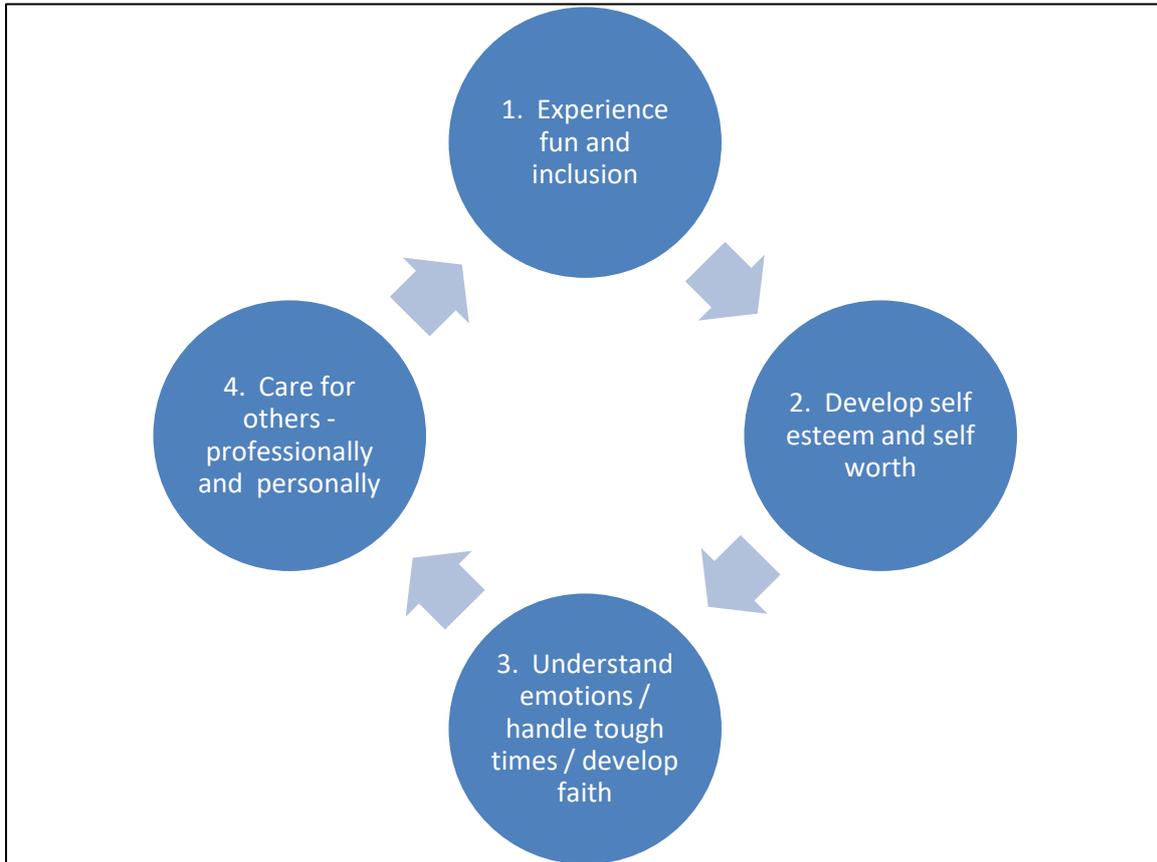
The Fischy Music cycle

- 8.27 Fischy Music has evolved a relatively sophisticated way of working with children and adults. Its apparent simplicity belies a more refined understanding of effective practice, built on many hard won lessons over several years.
- 8.28 The diagram (with apologies to Kolb³) below describes a possible learning cycle that could capture the trajectory of a young person encountering Fischy Music and growing through the various stages and opportunities that the organisation affords. It will not be everyone's experience, and some may not recognise it. It does however attempt to characterise the main elements of the Fischy Music approach.
- **Experience fun and inclusion:** through enjoyable and authentic musical activities.
 - **Develop self esteem and self worth:** through taking active control of the creative process.

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolb%27s_experiential_learning

- **Understand emotions / handle tough times / develop faith:** through a process of reflection, drawing on the activities participated in.
- **Care for others - professionally and personally:** through the practical application of the lessons learnt and the experiences gained. This in turn can lead to others benefiting from fun and inclusion, and so the cycle continues.

Chart 13: The Fischy Music cycle



Methodological issues

Lack of negativity

8.29 There is a striking absence of substantive negative commentary in the findings. About 5% of the responses by young people to the question about the impact of Fischy Music on them when they were young, contained negative comments such as

"Made me feel the odd one out because I didn't experience the messages in the songs."

"To be honest, I was too old for it so I didn't enjoy it."

"We only ever sang one song and I got really bored of it."

8.30 For the most part, these negative comments were lighthearted or facetious.

- 8.31 This lack of criticism is probably due in part to the nature of the sample. Young people who did not enjoy the Fischy Music experience would be less likely to complete a survey than those for whom the experience had been beneficial.

Gender issues

- 8.32 In the overall cohort of young people, the predominance of responses from young women was noticeable, with the ratio of women to men being 75% to 25%. In the 18 to 20 years age group, the percentage of young men rose to almost a third (31%). This may be due to the likelihood that this younger age group was more likely to have taken part in longer term projects (as opposed to 'one-off' events) - a more recent trend in the organisation's work output.

- 8.33 It was noticeable that several young men were prepared to be quite candid about their emotional response to Fischy Music.

"Singing 'As We Go Now' at the leavers assembly in primary 7 was quite possibly one of the most emotional moments of my life!"

"Songs like "you are a star" helped me feel comfortable being myself which was not always easy."

"Reinforced importance of being kind to others, especially those who may be left out."

"Fischy Music gave me hope and taught me not to bottle up my emotions."

- 8.34 It will be worth attempting to collect evaluation data over the coming years from young men in order to further determine the extent to which Fischy Music's impact varies across the gender divide.

Triangulation and the convergence of views

- 8.35 The value of gathering evidence from a range of stakeholders is the scope it affords to triangulate views and to determine where the real strength of opinion lies. There was a significant convergence of views across the comments from all respondent groups (young people, professionals, and parents). The majority of this chapter is devoted to analysing these.

9 Conclusions

- 9.1 The study aimed to examine the long term impact of Fischy Music over a period of up to 20 years on those who had experienced its work. We were especially interested in the views of young adults who had been at primary school when they had experienced Fischy Music. Having heard the views of almost 400 'young people' as well as significant numbers of adults involved in the care, nurture, and education of children and young people, we appreciate the complexity and challenge of this ambition.
- 9.2 There is strong evidence that Fischy Music is able to impact positively on children and young people in the target age group (mainly primary school age) with regard to confidence, emotional maturity, inclusion, authenticity, and faith development. While the extent and depth of this naturally varies, there is powerful evidence that this occurs while children are young, and remains with a significant number of them into adulthood. For many, this is articulated as 'happiness'.
- 9.3 Most young people were able to describe an intervention, recalled from childhood, which they experienced in a group context but which clearly also had a personal impact. Most had fond memories of Fischy Music and some described it with phrases such as the 'soundtrack to my childhood'. There was compelling evidence from both young people and adults that the Fischy Music input in schools and other settings was not only remembered, but valued.
- 9.4 Finding detailed evidence of how this impact may have had a lasting or enduring effect on participants was more challenging! For many young people, it simply constituted a happy episode (sometimes mitigating the effects of less positive events) in their bank of childhood memories. However, as we reflected on young people's comments and insights, illuminated by those of a range of adult 'witnesses', a picture began to emerge of what this slightly elusive longer term impact may be.
- 9.5 Fischy Music demonstrates an ability to foster an authentic response in children to the joys and challenges of growing up. At an individual level, it can enhance confidence and emotional maturity. At a group level, it is able to help create a sense of 'corporate' and inclusive group identity - effective with both large and small groups.
- 9.6 There are five main ways in which this is evidenced:
- **Confidence:** by participating in enjoyable musical activities, children are valued and encouraged. This fosters their confidence and self worth, and validates their individuality. The importance of enabling them to be happy should never be underestimated.
 - **Emotional maturity:** being open to exploring the full palette of emotions experienced by children as they grow up means that nothing is ruled out. Even difficult emotions are 'fair game' as long as they are addressed honestly and with integrity. Emotional intelligence then informs how people relate to and care for each other.
 - **Inclusion:** ensuring that everyone is able to participate is axiomatic for Fischy Music. This approach to inclusion impacts on children's musical abilities as much as their wider learning. It also means that the Fischy Music approach works well with vulnerable individuals and groups.

- **Authenticity:** modelling approaches that are honest, realistic, and rooted in the 'lived experience' of what it means to be a child, is central to Fischy Music's work. This entails acknowledging challenges and problems while offering fun, hope, and meaning. It applies to both the method and content of the pedagogic process.
- **Faith:** for some children, Fischy Music clearly supports the development and nurturing of a religious faith. Even for those (probably the majority) for whom this is peripheral to their lives, there is a recognition that this is a legitimate function. The creative interplay between faith and secularism remains an enduring enigma.

Appendix

Online survey questions

ALL RESPONDENTS

Q1 How old are you?

Q2 Are you

Female / Male / Don't identify as either

Q3 Which Scottish local authority did you live in when you took part in Fischy Music? (please choose one) If you lived outside Scotland, please say where.

Q4 When you experienced Fischy Music, were you... (please choose one)

a child / young person

a teacher

a parent of a child who experienced Fischy Music

a 'Seasons for Growth' Companion

a minister / church worker

another professional

YOUNG PEOPLE

Q5 In which year (to the best of your knowledge) did you first come across Fischy Music? (please choose one)

Q6 We took part in Fischy Music (please choose as many as apply)

at school assemblies

as part of a project lasting a whole term

as part of a songwriting project

at a festival

at a one day event

by listening at home

at church

Other (please specify)

Q7 We used Fischy Music to (please choose as many as apply)

celebrate good times

help make the transition from primary to high school

sing together in a group

express and deal with difficult emotions

create a peaceful time of reflection

help us face difficult times

learn about our emotions

help bring people together

Other (please specify)

Q8 Fischy Music helped me to feel safe

not at all / a bit / a fair amount / a lot

Q9 Fischy Music helped me to feel I belonged

not at all / a bit / a fair amount / a lot

Q10 Fischy Music helped me to have fun

not at all / a bit / a fair amount / a lot

Q11 Has Fischy Music ever made you....

Sing / laugh / smile / cry / dance

Q12 How did Fischy Music affect you when you were young? Can you give any examples.

Q13 How did Fischy Music affect your friends and classmates. Can you give any examples.

Q14 Fischy Music has helped me to..... (Can you give any examples.)

Q15 Fischy Music has helped people that I know to..... (Can you give any examples.)

Q16 Which Fischy Music song has had the most impact on you, and why?

Q17 The best thing about Fischy Music is....

Q18 The one thing I would change about Fischy Music is ...

Q19 What birthday greeting would you like to send to Fischy Music on their 20th birthday?

PROFESSIONALS

Q20 In which year (to the best of your memory), did you first experience Fischy Music?
(please choose one)

Q21 We used Fischy Music (please choose as many as apply)

at school assemblies

as part of a project lasting a whole term

as part of a songwriting project

at a festival

at a one day event

by listening at home

at church

Other (please specify)

Q22 We used Fischy Music to help children to (please choose as many as apply)

celebrate good times

help make the transition from primary to high school

sing together in a group

express and deal with difficult emotions

create a peaceful time of reflection

help us face difficult times

learn about our emotions

help bring people together

Other (please specify)

Q23 Fischy Music helped children to feel safe

not at all / a bit / a fair amount / a lot

Q24 Fischy Music helped children to feel they belonged

not at all / a bit / a fair amount / a lot

Q25 Fischy Music helped children to have fun

not at all / a bit / a fair amount / a lot

Q26 How did Fischy Music affect children when they were young? Please give examples.

Q27 Fischy Music has helped me to..... (please give examples)

Q28 Fischy Music has helped people that I know to..... (please give examples)

Q29 I have used Fischy Music resources

Never / sometimes / fairly often / regularly

Q30 I found them to be

Unusable / difficult to use / pretty straightforward to use / ideally suited to our needs

Q31 Overall, their resources are

Poor / not bad / pretty good / excellent

Q32 Which Fischy Music song has had the most impact on you, and why?

Q33 The best thing about Fischy Music is....

Q34 The one thing I would change about Fischy Music is

Q35 What birthday greeting would you like to send to Fischy Music on their 20th birthday?

PARENTS

Q36 In which year (to the best of your knowledge) did you first come across Fischy Music?
(please choose one)

Q37 Has Fischy Music ever made you....

sing / laugh / smile / cry / dance

Q38 How did Fischy Music affect your children when they were young? Can you give any examples.

Q39 Fischy Music has helped my child / children to..... (Can you give any examples.)

Q40 Fischy Music has helped other children that I know to..... (Can you give any examples.)

Q41 Which Fischy Music song has had the most impact on you, and why?

Q42 The best thing about Fischy Music is....

Q43 The one thing I would change about Fischy Music is ...

Q44 What birthday greeting would you like to send to Fischy Music on their 20th birthday?

ALL RESPONDENTS

Q45 Your contact details