

# Music therapy

Music is a wonderful way to have fun and enjoy time doing something creative. Every week we provide two days of music therapy at Evelina London Children's Hospital.

Children receiving treatment for heart conditions are often very afraid – of being in a strange place with unfamiliar people and of the painful procedures they sometimes have to undergo. That fear is shared by their parents, who can also feel a sense of helplessness for their children.

Music therapy is an amazing way to help both children and parents deal with these fears, allowing them to express their feelings without having to put them into words and doing so in a way that's fun for everyone.

A typical music therapy session might include known songs, musical games, and improvised music-making. Children and parents don't need any musical skill to benefit from music therapy. Our music therapist follow the child's lead as much as possible, giving them a sense of creativity and engagement in a place where so much is out of their control.

ECHO's fully qualified music therapist visits patients in the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) and Savannah Ward (the specialist cardiac ward for babies, children and teenagers). The majority of referrals are for the under fives who often haven't developed the skills to articulate their feelings yet and so benefit hugely from this kind of psychological support.

*My daughter was so afraid of being in hospital and the painful tests but then Cathy arrived, she looked forward to her weekly session so much and got out of bed each time for her, even after surgery... although this therapy may not fix bones or mend a heart it did help to rebuild by daughter's spirit.*

**MOTHER OF TODDLER ON SAVANNAH WARD**

*I never realised I hadn't sung to my baby, Cathy taught me how to ignore the PICU noise and the people and just spend time singing to my baby.*

**MOTHER OF NEW-BORN BABY IN PICU**

## Meet Cathy, our Music Therapist



Cathy is a fully qualified music therapist who's been working with children at Evelina London for several years. Cathy has twenty musical instruments at her disposal and loves to sing and entertain young patients and their families.

*When I'm asked about my job, I often say how lucky I am and that I probably have one of the best jobs at Evelina London! Spending time in hospital or living with a long term health condition can be difficult for children and families in so many ways, so it's a real privilege to be in a role which is focused on helping children and families not just to cope but to live positively in the face of these challenges.*