

Results Appendices

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The Results Appendices details the results from the different research methods used in this evaluation. Each section reports and analyses one of the four data collections methods: participatory systems mapping, surveys, a focus group and sixteen case studies. A final section describes how this data was analysed in both the writing of the summary report and the interactive layered map of evidence.

All the methodologies are detailed within the Methodology Appendices.

Appendix 1: Leavers Focus Group Results

The results of the Leavers Focus Group held in Big Noise Raploch & Fallin Big Noise in December 2024 are presented below.

1. Participant Background and Engagement Patterns:

All ten participants had been involved with Big Noise for many years, most since **P4 after-school**. Several described temporary drop-outs during exam periods or when competing interests (football, friends, academic pressure) took priority, but all eventually returned. Reasons for returning included:

- recognising the value of the programme
- missing their friends and the sense of belonging
- encouragement from Big Noise staff (“staff chapping on the door”)
- family encouragement

Participants described Big Noise as highly immersive and central to their routine, with many continuing these links by returning later just for a visit or as staff, cover musicians or volunteers.

2. Overall Experience of the Programme:

Participants consistently described Big Noise as a “**home from home**”, emphasising:

- structure and routine (“helped with routine... gave me structure in my day”)
- enjoyment of sessions
- the sense of comfort and familiarity
- long-term memories from performances, orchestras and international trips

Trips to **India, Italy and Venezuela** were repeatedly highlighted as major formative experiences, broadening cultural awareness and deepening their love of music.

3. Emotional and Wellbeing Impacts:

Strong themes emerged around **confidence, resilience and emotional support**:

- Many reported large increases in confidence (“Big Noise helped me become more confident”; “Confidence was the biggest factor”).
- Participants described feeling supported through personal challenges, including **grief, academic pressure and mental health difficulties**.
- Big Noise provided a sense of peace, escape, and stability (“down time from everything else”; “a safe place to learn and express yourself”).

- Several said Big Noise contributed to their sense of identity and self-belief, “Big Noise changed my life for the better.”

4. Social and Relational Impacts:

This was **one of the strongest themes** across the group:

- Big Noise friendships were described as “a second family,” “so close-knit,” and “friendships all over the world.”
- Young people mixed across **ages, schools and backgrounds**, forming inclusive social networks.
- Staff were viewed as family figures (“teachers were like family”; “teacher-student connection is key”).
- Participants described mutual support within the group, deeply shared histories and strong peer bonds.
- Families also became connected to the programme, with parents and extended family actively involved.

5. Practical Impacts and Benefits:

Participants described significant practical and developmental benefits from Big Noise:

- support with **university and music school applications**, auditions and career decisions
- exposure to high-level music experiences (RCS Juniors, RCS Seniors, NYOS, BBC SSO, Scottish Ballet, Scottish Opera)
- opportunities to travel and perform internationally
- support with instruments (e.g., loaned bass for university)
- development of self-discipline, organisation and planning (“more organised with time”)
- experience working in ASN schools, supporting future career goals (e.g., music therapy)

6. Long-Term Impacts:

Participants viewed Big Noise as having **lasting influence** on their lives:

- Many described Big Noise as directly shaping their career paths (“gave me a career path”; “I wouldn’t have gone to uni without Big Noise”).
- Nearly all participants continued to play at a **professional or high standard**.

- Several continued to work with or volunteer for Big Noise.
- Participants expressed pride and lifelong connection to the programme (“I still think about Big Noise... even at uni”).
- Big Noise fostered transferable life skills – confidence, leadership, communication, organisation and resilience.

7. Comparison with Other Services:

Participants consistently highlighted what made Big Noise distinct:

- strong relational ethos (“we don’t see teachers as teachers – more like friends”)
- deep emotional support over many years
- cultural and international opportunities not accessible elsewhere
- high-quality music instruction and access to elite pathways
- a uniquely welcoming and inclusive environment (“Big Noise is a family with open, welcoming arms for everyone”)

Nothing in their experience matched the intensity, consistency or relational strength of Big Noise.

8. Summary Reflections:

When asked to summarise Big Noise in one sentence, participants emphasised:

- life-changing impact (“it has given me a career path and a life”)
- personal growth and identity formation
- long-lasting relationships and community
- support through life challenges
- opportunities they would “never otherwise have had”

Their collective message to future participants: **“Trust the process.”**

Table1 summarises these findings by themes covered during the focus group.

Table 1: Overview of evidence from participants by themes discussed

Theme	What Participants told Us
Background & Engagement	Long-term involvement; temporary drop-outs with strong returns; staff and family support drawing them back.

Overall Experience	Described as “home from home,” enjoyable, structured, central to daily life; memorable trips.
Emotional Impact	Increased confidence; support through grief and stress; sense of belonging; emotional security.
Social & Relational Impact	Second family; cross-age friendships; deep connection with staff; development of supportive peer networks.
Practical Impact	Career pathways; elite music opportunities; instrument access; practical life skills; support with job and University / audition applications.
Long-Term Impact	Continued music study or careers; strong Big Noise identity; ongoing involvement; long-lasting skills.
Comparison with Services	Unique relational environment; unmatched opportunities; culturally rich experiences.
Closing Reflections	Big Noise seen as transformative; advice to others: “trust the process.”

The findings from the focus group were subsequently analysed against the four Participatory Systems Mapping themes, **emotional wellbeing, post-school pathways, social networks, and musical development**. The themes identified through the focus group aligned closely with those emerging from the mapping process, providing an additional layer of evidence to validate and triangulate the perceived impacts and outcomes reported by participants. **Table 2** summarises the focus group findings under each of the four mapping themes.

Table 2: Focus Group Findings Aligned to Participatory Mapping Themes

Theme	Summarised Participant Feedback
Emotional Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Noise described as a “<i>home from home</i>”, safe, calming and supportive. • Strong increases in confidence, self-esteem and sense of control. • Provided “down time”, escape from pressures, and stability during difficult periods (e.g., grief, stress, academic pressure). • Staff described as family-like, trusted adults who offered long-term emotional support. • Participants felt more organised, grounded and resilient as a result of involvement.

Post-School Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many progressed into music education or careers (e.g., Royal Conservatoire, BBC, RSNO, Scottish Ballet, music therapy aspirations). • Big Noise directly supported university and audition applications. • Participants gained transferable skills that helped with higher education and employment (discipline, organisation, leadership). • Opportunities to volunteer or work with Big Noise after leaving reinforced continuity and professional growth. • Several stated they “wouldn’t have gone to Uni” or chosen their career path without Big Noise.
Social Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants formed tight-knit, cross-age, cross-school friendship groups (“a second family”). • Long-lasting relationships built through rehearsals, orchestras and international trips. • Cultural trips (India, Italy & Venezuela) expanded horizons and strengthened peer bonds. • Peer networks provided support, belonging, shared memories and a strong sense of identity. • Families also created networks around the programme, strengthening community ties.
Musical Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants reported high musical skill levels, many performing professionally or at conservatoire level. • Big Noise opened access to elite opportunities: NYOS, NYCOS, BBC SSO, RCS Juniors/Seniors, European orchestras. • International performances and workshops were key milestones. • Participants continued playing after school, with several now teaching or working as musicians. • Big Noise was credited with establishing foundational discipline, performance confidence and musical ambition.

What we can take from the Leavers' Focus Group (With Limitations)

The Leavers' focus group provided rich, detailed insights into the long-term impacts of Big Noise on young people who had engaged deeply with the programme. Their reflections highlighted significant benefits across emotional wellbeing, musical development, social networks and post-school pathways, reinforcing many of the mechanisms identified through the Participatory Systems Mapping process.

Participants consistently described Big Noise as a stabilising and supportive presence in their lives and credited the programme with shaping their confidence, relationships, ambitions and career trajectories.

However, these findings should be interpreted with caution. The group represented a small sample of ten individuals, all of whom had long-term, immersive involvement in the after-school programme, and therefore do not reflect the experiences of many participants with lower levels of engagement or those who disengaged permanently. Participation was also dependent on availability on the agreed date, meaning the group mainly comprised young people who were on university or college holiday breaks, or those able to attend during work lunch hours. As a result, the findings provide valuable depth but cannot be generalised to the wider population of Big Noise participants.

Future evidence-gathering with former participants who engaged less intensively with the programme would be valuable in understanding how Big Noise affects children with lower take-up, as well as identifying barriers to participation. This would help strengthen programme design and inform improvements to delivery and reach.

Appendix 2: Survey Results

Various surveys were carried out throughout the evaluation period between late 2024 to October 2025. Views and experiences were gathered from a range of stakeholders across the Big Noise programme to build a triangulated picture of impact.

- **A peer-led research survey in Big Noise Torry**
- **A Teacher and Nursery Staff Survey across all sites**
- **Five Big Noise Staff and Volunteer Surveys across all sites**
- **A Little Noise Survey across 4 sites.**

Appendix 2a: Peer-led Research Survey Results

The results of the research led by two young researchers at Big Noise Torry in the Summer and October 2025 are detailed below.

Responses

A total of **43 young people** completed the survey:

- **25 primary-aged participants**
- **18 secondary-aged participants**

Results

Due to time constraints, the analysis was completed as part of the wider evaluation review. **Table 1** presents the breakdown of responses, and the accompanying graph (Exhibit 1) uses colour-coding to highlight how the results are distributed.

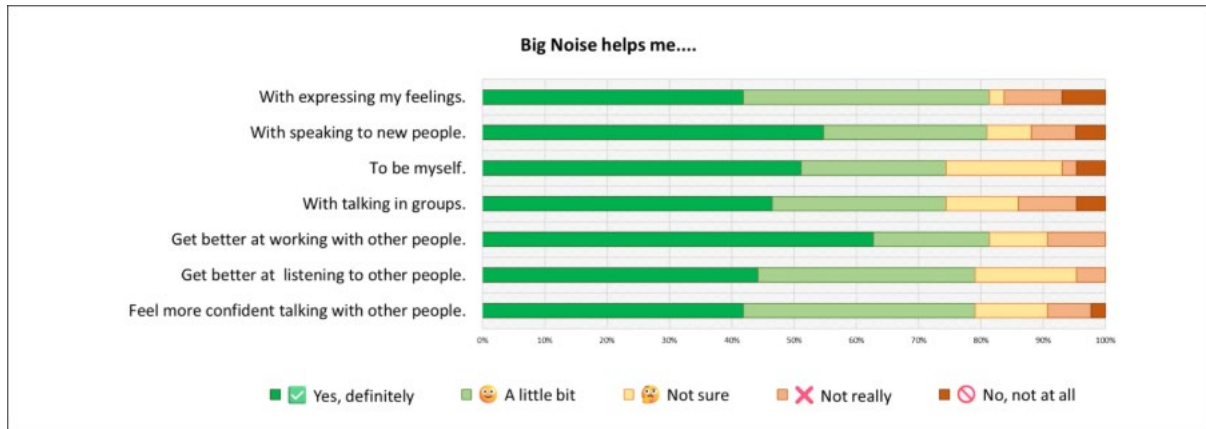
Table 1: Breakdown of Responses

Big Noise helps...	me feel more confident talking with other people	me get better at listening to other people	me get better at working with other people	me talk in groups	me to be myself	me speak to new people	me to express my feelings
Yes, definitely	18	19	27	20	22	23	18
A little bit	16	15	8	12	10	11	17
Not sure	5	7	4	5	8	3	1
Not really	3	2	4	4	1	3	4
No, not at all	1	0	0	2	2	2	3

Total	43	43	43	43	43	42*	43
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*One respondent did not answer this question

Exhibit 1: Colour coded breakdown of responses by statement



Analysis shows that all seven statements had strong and consistent support through positive agreements;

- The most strongly agreed outcome was for **Big Noise helping me to work with other people** and **Big Noise helping me to express my feelings**, both scoring 81% positive.
- The least rated was **Big Noise helps me talk in groups** and **Big Noise helps me to be myself**, both scoring 74%, but with still a clear majority.
- Broken down by age, **the youngest Year groups (P3-5) see the most consistent and significant results** across the seven statements.
- The **S1-2 Year group was the largest sample size** (15 responses) and less consistent with their responses, feeling unsure about the impacts around **talking in groups, speaking to new people** and **expressing their feelings**.

Further breakdowns of intensity of Agreement (Yes, definitely) responses helped to gauge the depth of the impact. Table 2 provides a summary of the strength of agreement.

Table 2: Intensity of Agreement by Statement

Outcome area	Yes definitely	% of total (n=43)	Total positive
Big Noise helps me get better at working with other people.	27	62.8%	81%

Big Noise has helped me speak to new people.	23	53.5%	79%
Big Noise helps me to be myself.	22	51.2%	74%
Being part of Big Noise has helped me talk in groups	20	46.5%	74%
Big Noise helps me get better at listening to other people.	19	44.2%	79%
Being part of Big Noise helps me feel more confident talking with other people.	18	41.9%	79%
Big Noise has helped me to express my feelings.	18	41.9%	81%

These results show that the strongest positive responses from Big Noise participants relate to three key areas:

- **Teamwork** – Participants reported the highest levels of agreement and the strongest “yes definitely” responses for *working well with other people*, highlighting this as a major strength of Big Noise.
- **Speaking to new people** – More than half of respondents felt Big Noise had *definitely* helped them talk to new people, an important skill for building friendships and managing transitions.
- **Emotional expression** – There was very high overall agreement that Big Noise helps young people *express their feelings*, although many selected “a little bit,” suggesting growing confidence that could be developed further.

Big Noise could strengthen its impact by further supporting young people to feel confident **talking in groups** and **being themselves**, as these areas scored slightly lower (74%) than the others.

Conclusion Summary and links to Wider Evaluation

The peer-led research gave an authentic picture of how young people themselves experience the impact of Big Noise. The survey results showed consistently high levels of agreement (74%–81%) across all seven statements relating to **confidence**, **communication**, **teamwork**, and **emotional expression**. These findings demonstrate that **Big Noise helps young people feel more confident, interact positively with others, and express their feelings more easily.**

Because the questions were designed by young participants, the results reflect the issues that matter most to them. This youth-designed approach strengthens the validity of the findings and highlights the real-life benefits young people associate with Big Noise.

The results also connect clearly to Big Noise's wider outcome themes:

Emotional Wellbeing

High agreement around *expressing feelings, being myself, and gaining confidence* shows that Big Noise creates emotionally safe spaces where young people feel supported, valued and able to express who they are. This directly strengthens emotional wellbeing.

Social Networks & Relationships

Strong results in *working with others, talking to new people, and developing group-talk confidence* demonstrate how Big Noise helps young people build friendships, trust and belonging. These social networks play a key role in improving confidence and reducing isolation.

Post-School Pathways

Improved communication, teamwork, independence and self-belief are all skills that support young people as they move through school and into future education, training or work. The peer-research results suggest Big Noise is helping participants develop transferable skills they will rely on throughout their future pathways.

Musical Skill Outcomes

Although the survey focused on personal and social development, confidence, communication and teamwork are all essential building blocks for musical learning. The findings indicate that Big Noise strengthens the foundational interpersonal and emotional skills that enable children and young people to progress musically within ensembles, lessons and orchestral settings.

Taken together, the peer-research results strengthen the wider evaluation by showing how young people themselves understand the value of Big Noise across emotional, social and musical domains, and how these benefits contribute to their future opportunities.

Limitations of the Findings

Some **caution** with the results is required due to several limiting factors ensuring a robust data.

- **Single-site pilot:** The research was carried out at only one Big Noise centre, so the results cannot be generalised to all sites without caution.
- **Small sample size:** With 43 responses, the dataset provides useful insight but cannot represent the full range of participant experiences – just that one moment in time captured.

- **Time constraints:** Limited time for design, testing and analysis meant that the researchers worked with a simple survey tool, restricting the depth and type of questions asked.
- **Self-report data:** Responses relied on young people's own perceptions, which can be affected by confidence, mood or familiarity with the survey environment.
- **Facilitation support:** Although youth-led, the project relied on staff support to organise sessions and encourage participation, which may have influenced levels of engagement or responses.

Acknowledgement of Chloe and Dede's Contribution

The peer-research element of this evaluation was made possible through the commitment, creativity and leadership of the young volunteers, Chloe and Dede, who designed and carried out the survey. Their enthusiasm, insight and willingness to take responsibility for shaping the research made this a successful and meaningful part of the overall evaluation. By leading the question design, engaging their peers, and gathering honest feedback, they ensured that young people's voices were represented clearly and confidently.

Their work not only strengthened the credibility and depth of the evaluation but also provided Big Noise with valuable learning about the power of youth-led approaches. The process has demonstrated how peer-research can create richer, more authentic evidence and has shown the potential for expanding this type of activity across other Big Noise sites in future.

The results gathered by the young volunteers have already proven extremely helpful for Big Noise staff, offering clear insights into how young people experience the programme and highlighting areas where practice can continue to grow. This contribution is deeply appreciated, and their leadership forms an important part of Big Noise's ongoing commitment to listening, learning and improving with children and young people at the centre.

Thank you Chloe & Dede!

Appendix 2b: Teacher & Nursery School Survey Results

The results from the Nursery and Teaching staff survey held in June & October 2025, across all partner schools and nurseries, are detailed below.

The sections presented in this chapter follow a sequential structure aligned with the roles of survey respondents and the scope of their involvement in the Big Noise programme.

Section 1 begins with high-level perspectives from Senior Leadership Team (SLT) respondents, outlining their views on the impact of the Big Noise in-school programme on their school or nursery as a whole and suggestions for improvement.

Section 2 then moves to the views of front-line teaching staff, reporting on the perceived impact of in-school delivery on their class, on individual pupils, and on their own teaching practice.

Section 3 summarises teachers' perceptions of the After-school programme and its influence on learners from their class who attend.

Section 4 invited open-ended feedback, where staff shared highlights from the Big Noise programme and suggested improvements. They were also invited to provide any additional comments, which they hadn't had an opportunity to express elsewhere in the survey.

Section 1: Senior Leadership Team Respondents

This section presents the findings from Senior Leadership Team (SLT) respondents regarding the perceived impact of the Big Noise programme on their school or nursery. A total of **17** SLT members participated, including Headteachers, Depute Heads, Principal Teachers, Heads of Faculty and Nursery Managers, representing nursery, primary and secondary settings, as set in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Senior Leadership Team Respondents by Setting

Setting	Number of Respondents
Nursery	3
Primary	7
Secondary	4
Unknown	3
Total	17

SLT respondents were asked to rate the overall impact of Big Noise across 12 thematic areas. The results show strong and consistent agreement that the programme makes a significant positive contribution in several key domains, particularly:

- Music provision and musical skills
- Curriculum support
- Positive learning environments
- Raising aspirations
- Community engagement

These areas received the highest proportion of **Significant Impact** ratings across settings.

Perceptions were more varied in relation to **attendance levels, broader academic skills, improved behaviour, relationships across the classroom and attainment** where responses were more evenly split between *Significant* and *Moderate* impact, and where small proportions reported *No Impact*. **Table 2** provides a detailed breakdown of responses across all thematic areas.

Table 2: Senior Leadership Perceptions of impact of Big Noise on School / Nursery
(17 responses)

Theme	Significant Impact	Moderate Impact	No Impact
Music Provision	82% (14)	12% (2)	6% (1)
Curriculum Support	82% (14)	12% (2)	6% (1)
Positive Learning Environment	82% (14)	12% (2)	6% (1)
Musical Skills (listening, performing, creating)	76% (13)	24% (4)	-
Raising Aspirations	76% (13)	24% (4)	-
Community Events	71% (12)	24% (4)	6% (1)
Enjoyment in Learning	59% (10)	41% (7)	-
Mental Health & Wellbeing	59% (10)	41% (7)	-
Raising Attainment	47% (8)	47% (8)	6% (1)

Improved Behaviour	41% (7)	47% (8)	12% (2)
Peer Relationships	41% (7)	59% (10)	-
Broader Academic Skills	35% (6)	59% (7)	6% (1)
School Attendance	24% (4)	59% (10)	18% (3)

Opportunities to enhance Impact of In-school Programme

Senior Leadership Team respondents identified several areas where the Big Noise programme could further strengthen its impact. Key suggestions included:

- **Enhanced early-years support:** Provide younger children with more individual time and strengthen links with classroom topics by working more closely with teachers.
- **Provide staff training:** Offer additional training for school and nursery staff to build confidence in using music throughout the day, beyond Big Noise-led sessions.
- **More performance opportunities:** Create more chances for pupils to perform and share their progress and offer opportunities to observe after-school club activities.
- **Continued specialist support:** Maintain targeted support for learners working towards exam-level requirements, particularly in settings without an instrumental service.
- **Family and community engagement:** Continue involvement in family and community events and explore ways to help families support music and rhyme at home, alongside opportunities for all ages to take part in community projects.

Additional Quotes

To complement the quantitative findings, respondents provided open-ended comments that highlight positive experiences of the Big Noise programme and areas where further support or development would be welcome. The quotes below illustrate common themes shared by Senior Leadership Team and teaching staff:

- **Building capacity and confidence in music delivery**
“Big Noise is such a big part of our nursery community... building our capacity as a team to deliver quality music learning opportunities out with Big Noise sessions would help to build on our good practice.”
— Victoria Road Nursery

- **Helping pupils recognise and extend their musical learning**
“We need the pupils attending Big Noise to realise that the skills they are learning can be shared in the classroom... it would also be good if any of them could attend school groups/orchestra after school.”
— Shawlands Academy
- **Providing valued access to music in ASN settings**
“Big Noise has been amazing... without Big Noise we would not have the opportunity to do music on this scale. The Makaton choir and individual lessons have been amazing. Staff and learners look forward to Big Noise each week.”
— St Modan’s High
- **Flexibility in delivery for younger pupils**
“I really appreciate how flexible Big Noise have been with their sessions, especially in P1.”
— Sighthill Nursery
- **Increasing opportunities for performance and personal achievement**
“I would like to see more opportunities for classes to perform what they have learned in Big Noise. This would provide more opportunities for personal achievement.”
— Greyhope School

Section 2: Front-line teacher responses on perceptions of impact of In-school programme

Front-line teaching staff were invited to share their perspectives on the impact of Big Noise’s in-school delivery, including its influence on their class overall and any changes they observed in their own teaching practice.

Teachers were also asked to comment on the impact of the Big Noise after-school programme on pupils from their class who attend - this excluded Nursery staff and those children in primary one and two, as the After-school is limited to P3 upwards.

Seventy-one per cent of teachers reported attending Big Noise in-school sessions alongside their class, and a further sixteen per cent had collaborated directly with Big Noise staff to support individual children. This high level of direct involvement means teachers are well-placed to comment on the programme’s impact and offer informed suggestions for improvement, providing strong validity to their feedback.

Most front-line teachers worked within **primary school settings**, with smaller numbers from nursery and secondary environments. Table 3 summarises the distribution of responses by setting. As respondents were able to select more than one setting, the total number of selections is higher than the number of individual respondents.

Table 3: Front-line teacher respondents by setting

Setting	Number of Respondents
Nursery	2
Primary	48
Secondary	4
Total	63

Teaching staff were invited to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements exploring the impact of Big Noise on their class. These statements covered a range of areas, including:

- Development of pupils’ musical skills
- Changes in confidence and engagement
- Effectiveness in meeting the needs of individual children
- Influence on peer relationships and staff interaction

Teachers gave very positive feedback about Big Noise’s in-school delivery. They agreed that it helps children develop **musical skills, build positive relationships, gain confidence, work well in teams, and express their own ideas through music**. Many also felt it supports **personal achievement, meta-skills, and meeting individual needs**. The only area with mixed views was **school attendance**, where opinions were more divided. **Table 4** provides a detailed breakdown of responses across all thematic areas.

Table 4: Front line teaching staff perceptions of impact of In-school Big Noise programme (51 responses)

Theme	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
Musical Skills of Pupils	100% (51)	-	-
Big Noise encourages positive relationships between adults and children	88% (45)	12% (6)	-
Opportunities for Pupils’ Personal Achievement	84% (43)	12% (6)	4% (2)
Musical skills of pupils (listening, performing, creating etc)	84% (43)	14% (7)	2% (1)
Class Confidence	82% (42)	18% (9)	-
I am satisfied with the learning and teaching in Big Noise sessions	82% (42)	18% (9)	-
Pupils Given Opportunity to Express own ideas, thoughts & feelings	78% (40)	16% (8)	6% (3)
Big Noise helps my class work as a team	78% (40)	22% (11)	-
My Class is Engaged During Big Noise	76% (39)	24% (12)	-
Big Noise supports the development of "meta-skills" (self-management, social intelligence, innovation etc)	75% (38)	18% (9)	8% (4)
Individual pupils have their needs met and are supported	63% (32)	29% (15)	8% (4)
Encouraged school attendance	39% (20)	45% (23)	16% (8)

Teaching staff perceptions of impact on their own teaching practice

Teachers were also asked to reflect on how Big Noise’s In-school delivery influenced their own teaching. **Most teachers felt that taking part in Big Noise sessions had a positive influence on their own teaching.** They said the programme helped pupils meet Curriculum for Excellence music benchmarks (86%), contributed to positive outcomes for individual children (78%), and improved their own practice through sharing knowledge (75%). Around two-thirds also said they picked up alternative teaching methods by joining sessions (69%).

However, fewer teachers felt the programme gave them time away from whole-class teaching (45%), likely because most attended sessions with their class. And just under half (49%) felt well-supported with information-sharing about pupils, suggesting there is room to strengthen communication between Big Noise staff and teaching teams. Table 5 provides a breakdown of the responses across all thematic areas.

Table 5: Teaching Staff views of Big Noise In-school programme impacts their own teaching practice (51 responses)

Theme	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree
Supporting pupils to meet Curriculum for Excellence Music benchmarks	86% (44)	10% (5)	4% (2)
Achieving positive outcomes for individuals	78% (40)	22% (11)	
Sharing knowledge	75% (38)	22% (11)	4% (2)
Encountering alternative teaching methods	69% (35)	27% (14)	4% (2)
Sharing information on pupils	49% (25)	45% (23)	6% (3)
Collaborating with Big Noise staff for projects and events	45% (23)	49% (25)	6% (3)
Allowing time out from whole-class delivery	45% (23)	41% (21)	14% (7)

Section 3: Front-line teacher responses on perceptions of impact of After-school programme

Section 3 summarises teachers' perceptions of the After-school programme and its influence on learners from their class who attend. Nursery and SLT staff were not asked these questions. All responses agreed or neither agreed nor disagreed, apart from a 5% disagreement on impacting school attendance.

Most teachers felt the Big Noise After-school programme had strong benefits for children, particularly in **developing musical skills**, providing a **safe and supportive space**, and **helping pupils meet Curriculum for Excellence music benchmarks**. Many also highlighted gains in **emotional wellbeing, social skills, confidence**, and **wider life and meta-skills**, as well as the value of **offering children respite from pressures at home**. Teachers also noted improvements in healthy behaviours such as emotional regulation and time management. The only area where views were mixed was school attendance, with just under half believing the programme helps improve it. **Table 6** provides a breakdown of the themed impacts.

Table 6: Teaching staff perceptions of impacts of After-school programme on their Learners attending (43 responses)

Theme	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree
Musical Development	88% (38)	12% (5)	-
Securing Emotional Wellbeing	79% (34)	21% (9)	-
Social Skills & Networks	79% (34)	21% (9)	-
Respite from external stresses	74% (32)	26% (11)	-
Healthy Behaviours	67% (29)	33% (14)	-
Life Skills e.g. confidence	74% (32)	26% (11)	-
Supporting families with Safe Space	88% (38)	12% (5)	-
Development of Meta-Skills	79% (34)	21% (9)	-
Support to meet Curriculum for Excellence Benchmarks	86% (37)	14% (6)	-
Encouraged School Attendance	48% (20)	48% (20)	5% (2)

Please note: After adjusting for SLT and Nursery Teachers, the number of responses for these questions is 43. Only 42 participants selected an answer for Social Skills & Networks and Encouraged School Attendance.

Section 4: Front-line teacher Highlights and Wishes (In-school or After-school)

Section 4 summarises the final section of the Teacher and Nursery staff survey. This section invited open-ended comments on the Big Noise in-school and after-school programmes. Teachers were asked to describe the moments they felt had the greatest impact (Highlights) and to flag any opportunities for further improvement (Wishes).

Responses were themed and shared with the relevant centres to support ongoing local programme review. **Table 7** summarises the highlights identified by teaching staff.

Table 7: *Themed Highlights of Teaching & Nursery Staff*

Theme	Celebratory Highlights from the Year
Musical Development & Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers celebrated pupils’ musical progress and enthusiasm when performing. • Children loved playing real instruments and taking part in music projects. • Strong teamwork and class cohesion were noted as major successes. • Staff highlighted how proud pupils were of their musical achievements.
Engagement & Learning Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils consistently looked forward to sessions and showed strong motivation. • Teachers observed increased confidence and creative learning across the year. • Growing participation—including from children who are usually less engaged—was seen as a key success. • Flexible, interest-led sessions were praised for supporting meaningful learning.
Relationships & Personalised Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm, supportive relationships between Big Noise staff and pupils were widely celebrated. • Personalised support, thoughtful transitions and tailored musical activities were highlighted as standout strengths. • Teachers praised staff for going “above and beyond” and acting as positive role models.
Community & Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers valued how Big Noise provided musical opportunities that many children would not otherwise experience. • A strong sense of belonging and pride was evident across pupils and families. • Community events and family engagement activities were seen as important, positive highlights of the year.

Themed Wishes:

Teachers responded very positively about the Big Noise programme, and their suggestions reflected a desire to build on what is already working well. Many asked for

even more time in sessions, additional opportunities for performances and community events, and extended provision, particularly within ASN schools, where Big Noise is highly valued and often the only music offer available. These requests for ‘more’ strongly underline the positive impact teachers see the programme having on children across their settings.

Alongside this praise, teachers also offered constructive suggestions for future improvement, highlighting the importance of consistent staffing, information-sharing, and close alignment with school teaching teams to help embed Big Noise learning across the school day. This feedback was provided to senior Big Noise staff for review.

Table 8 summarises the Wishes for the Year Ahead identified by teaching staff.

Table 8: Themed Highlights of Teaching Staff Wishes for the Year Ahead

Theme	Wishes for the Year Ahead
Increase instrument access & variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time, range, instrumental playing/exploration and practice opportunities
Increase collaboration with Class Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and link to planning, align with Curriculum for Excellence, link to class topics • Encourage Big Noise participants to engage more in school events / orchestra • Share information on activities and progress in Big Noise, opportunities for teachers to get involved more often
Curriculum & Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Support play-based learning • Adapt for non-club attendees at In-school • Increase inter-class & school sharing events • Increase diversity in singing languages • Continue holiday clubs • Increase frequency of sessions
Inclusivity & Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand reach in Secondary and Additional Support Needs (ASN) settings • Consider full range of sensory needs • Continue whole-class engaging activities

Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase parent-attended sessions and showcase events
Sustaining Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue engaging delivery to increase participation • Avoid repetition • Increase consistency in who teaches the class • Build on strengths

Additional Feedback or Comments

Finally, teaching staff were given the opportunity to provide further free text feedback or comments to Big Noise. The list below provides a summary of the feedback provided.

- Strong appreciation for Big Noise’s positive impact on children and the wider community.
- Staff praised for enthusiasm, patience and high-quality teaching.
- Requests for clearer terminology to support different learning needs.
- Desire for better co-ordination between Big Noise sessions and class teachers.
- Need for more flexible learning spaces to reduce disruption.
- Suggestions to vary content and include more musical history or progression.
- Children reported as excited and highly engaged, including in Baby Noise.
- Many expressions of thanks for Big Noise’s commitment to families and the community.
- Evidence that Big Noise supports positive post-school pathways and qualifications.
- Teachers find sessions enjoyable and engaging too.
- Request to make meta-skills more explicit within lessons.
- Big Noise seen as improving access to music for children who might otherwise miss out.
- Examples of songs and activities strengthening bonds at home.

Summary of Key Findings (with Limitations)

This research brings together views from Senior Leadership Team and front-line teaching and nursery staff to give a rounded picture of Big Noise’s impact on schools, classes and individual children. The findings are strongly positive, showing clear benefits in **musical development, confidence, engagement, wellbeing and social skills**. These insights align closely with wider evidence from across the evaluation, reinforcing the key messages of the current independent review. **Table 10** summarises the main impact themes and links them to the evidence sources used in the wider study.

Table 10: Summary of Impact themes Mapped to Evidence Sources

Impact Theme	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	Front-line Teachers (In-school)	Teachers (After-school)	Open-ended Staff Feedback
Musical Development	Rated consistently as having <i>significant impact</i> across Music Provision and Musical Skills (82–76% Significant Impact)	100% agreed pupils’ musical skills improved	88% agreed children’s musical development strengthened	Frequent praise for performances, real instruments, visible progress
Positive Pathways after Education	Strong ratings for Positive Learning Environment (82% Significant Impact)	High agreement on engagement, teamworking, confidence and enjoyment	Teachers reported children “look forward to sessions” and feel safe and motivated	Teachers highlighted excitement, anticipation and sustained momentum
Emotional Wellbeing	High ratings for Raising Aspirations, Enjoyment in Learning, Wellbeing	Strong agreement that Big Noise builds confidence and provides personal achievement opportunities	79% reported improved emotional wellbeing; 74% saw increased life skills	Teachers described children “growing in confidence” and feeling proud
Social Networks	Moderate impact reported on behaviour	88% agreed BIG NOISE improves adult–child relationships; 78% reported	79% saw improved social skills and peer networks	Highlighted warm relationships, positive role-modelling,

	and peer relationships	stronger teamwork		personalised support
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However, the findings should be interpreted with caution due to uneven representation, with most responses coming from nursery and primary staff and very few from secondary or ASN settings. This limits insight into the experiences of older learners and those with additional support needs, highlighting the need for further research with these groups

The feedback also highlights that **not all school staff have the same level of knowledge or exposure to the After-school programme**, with some respondents indicating limited awareness of specific elements of the programme delivery and the overall inconsistent communication and collaboration between teaching staff and Big Noise. These gaps highlight the importance of strengthening awareness and partnership working across schools and teaching staff to ensure all school teaching staff can understand the aims, activities and the full offer of the Big Noise programme.

Appendix 2c: Big Noise Staff “Just a Minute” Survey Results

The results from the Big Noise all staff survey series held across all Big Noise sites across May to September 2025 are detailed below.

The five surveys were conducted over three months (avoiding Shutdown in July).

Response Rates

Big Noise Staff Surveys	N of responses	Total N of staff & Volunteers	Response rate
Overview (May 2025)	89	238	37.4%
Relationships (May 2025)	64	238	26.9%
Effectiveness (June 2025)	62	238	26.1%
Impact (June 2025)	42	238	17.6%
Inclusion (August 2025)	45	238	18.9%

All Big Noise sites were represented across the survey set, including perspectives from the Central Team, frontline musicians, support workers, volunteers, and senior staff.

Survey responses were extracted from Excel worksheets, manually reviewed, and also analysed using the AI tool Co-pilot to identify and group themes and generate summary insights, with all AI-produced outputs checked for accuracy before inclusion; together, this combined analysis shows that staff feel Big Noise strongly meets children’s needs and reflects its communities, while noting that increased capacity, more individual support, and improved accessibility would further strengthen its impact, with these findings now being shared with the Leadership Team and Heads of Centre for consideration.

Overview of the programme Survey:

Big Noise staff overwhelmingly feel the programme meets children's needs and reflects their communities, while highlighting that more individual support, accessible spaces, and increased capacity would help deepen its impact.

1. ***“There is a good balance between holistic and musical outcomes.”***

Most respondents **agreed or strongly agreed**, showing confidence that the programme strikes an appropriate balance between musical learning and wider wellbeing. A small minority disagreed or were unsure, often due to feeling that some children need more personalised support or that musical expectations vary across staff

2. ***“My centre is tailored to the community it exists within.”***

Most respondents agreed, but fewer selected “strongly agree” than in earlier questions. Staff described the difficulty of fully tailoring the programme in communities with diverse and changing needs, or where physical spaces limit accessibility.

3. ***What more could Big Noise do to support participants?***

Suggestions commonly focused on:

- **More individual support** (1:1 lessons, nurture time, more support beyond music – particularly around transitions).
- **Better accessibility and inclusion** for neurodiverse young people and those with additional needs.
- **Improved facilities** such as quieter spaces, more accessible buildings, and better food options.
- **Stronger engagement with families** through home visits, family events, and more time for relationship-building.
- **More varied musical opportunities** (broader repertoire, more instruments).
- Overall, staff feel Big Noise already offers strong support but could enhance its impact with **more capacity, more tailored support, and more time.**

“I think all the musicians & support staff do an amazing job meeting the individual needs of their participants and adapting according. I think the only thing they could do more would be to have the capacity to expand to reach more children and young people.”

“Big Noise does a huge amount to support participants - to continue this work, encouraging staff teams to really go above and beyond with participants' families.”

“Provide volunteer mentors for those moving on from Big Noise eg into higher/further education to support them through the start of a new chapter in their lives which can be very daunting. Especially if moving away for the first time and you have little family/home support.”

Participant Relationships Survey:

These survey results provide a clear picture of how staff experience relationship-building across Big Noise centres. Overall, staff feel the programme strongly supports positive, trusting relationships with participants, while also highlighting common challenges such as limited time, busy environments, inconsistent attendance and communication barriers. Despite these pressures, staff describe a wide range of effective strategies, consistency, nurturing approaches, informal check-ins, individual plans and strong teamwork, all of which help create the safe, supportive connections that sit at the heart of Big Noise's impact.

1. Overall Support for Positive Relationships

Most staff felt the programme design **strongly supports positive relationships** between participants and staff. High scores were common (many rating 8–10/10), with staff highlighting caring interactions, shared music-making, and long-term consistency as key strengths.

2. Main Challenges Identified

Staff described several recurring challenges:

- **Limited time** with participants due to busy schedules, large groups, or restricted contact slots.
- **Behavioural difficulties** and dysregulation, especially in busy or noisy after-school spaces.
- **Irregular attendance**, making it harder to build trust.
- **Language barriers** and communication difficulties.
- **Staffing inconsistencies**, leading to changes in approach or missed information.
- **Volunteers' limited contact time**, making it harder to learn names and build relationships.

3. How Staff Overcome Challenges

Common strategies included:

- Building consistency through **routine, boundaries, praise**, and a fresh-start approach.

- Using **individual support plans**, restorative conversations, and informal check-ins during walking lines or snack time.
- Strengthening relationships through **community events**, concerts, trips, and shared activities.
- Increasing communication with families and teachers for a fuller understanding of children’s needs.
- Creating **quieter spaces**, offering breaks, and tailoring support for neurodivergent young people.

4. Additional Insights

- Many staff stressed that **trust builds slowly**, especially for children who have had difficult experiences with adults.
- Strong relationships were seen as the **foundation** of effective musical and social development.
- A consistent message across responses: **relationships grow through time, presence, and genuine care**, not just structured lesson content.

Making a Difference (Impact) Survey

Staff see Big Noise as making a **strong, meaningful difference** to young people, particularly through confidence-building, stability, and long-term relationships. Increasing impact would involve **more time, more personalised support, more community connection, and strengthened pathways for young people as they move into adulthood.**

1. *Where Staff See Big Noise Making a Difference*

- Most examples focused on **children and young people.**
- Staff most commonly described:
 - **Increased confidence** in participants.
 - **Meaningful emotional and practical support**, especially for vulnerable or care-experienced young people.
- Examples included helping young people access college, supporting ASN learners, and providing encouragement, stability and opportunities.

“In my musical approach I've been encouraging children to share their ideas and thoughts and I can see this affecting their confidence positively.”

“My support for a participant who with significant ASN encouraged them to explore their options for post-secondary education. The student told me I was their best friend, not because they lack friends, but because I encouraged them when others were sceptical. This shows the importance of our support work and how it is appreciated by students.”

“Helping a young participant obtain the funding he needed to attend the Junior Conservatoire.”

2. *How to Increase Impact for Existing Participants*

Staff suggested:

- **More one-to-one time** and personalised support.
- **Additional support for school-leavers**, including practical skills for transitions.
- **Expanding youth-voice work** and opportunities for young people to shape their own experience.
- **More social, non-musical trips** to strengthen relationships.
- Some staff emphasised keeping a strong focus on **high-quality musical delivery** as the core driver of impact.

“Continue to build on providing real world experiences including opportunities to express themselves, cope and gain confidence e.g. concerts, residencies etc”

“I think providing opportunities for the students to interact more with staff/support staff in addition to the music syllabus would allow us to build on established trust and use it to help students (especially older students) navigate challenges in their life and make good decisions”

3. How to Increase Impact in the Wider Community

Staff felt Big Noise already contributes strongly to communities, but suggested:

- **More community events** and wider public performances.
- **Greater partnership working** with local organisations.
- **Expanding adult music opportunities** and involving community members in delivery.
- **Improving physical accessibility** of buildings.

“Giving regular concerts or workshops in schools so that young people are always aware of what the programme offers.”

“By being out in the community more and more open evenings just for being a safe space / building relationships to start with and it will grow from there.”

“Potentially increasing the range of the area/schools that can access Big Noise? This is obviously restricted by budget and staffing.”

Effectiveness Survey:

Staff view the programme as **high-quality, responsive, and participant-centred**, with strong use of feedback. The main challenges relate to **space, time, staffing and facilities**, which limit the programme’s ability to fully meet demand and support every child as effectively as staff would like.

1. Adequacy of Resources

- Around **65% of staff** felt they have enough **space, time, funding, and skills** to deliver the programme well.
- About **20%** felt resources were **not** adequate, mainly among musicians.

2. What Resources Need to Increase

Staff consistently highlighted **two priority areas**:

Space:

- More suitable teaching rooms in schools
- Better storage for instruments
- Improved office space
- More accessible and suitable buildings (especially in Govanhill)

Time:

- More time with participants
- More time for individual lessons
- More time for senior staff to complete non-teaching duties
- These issues link closely to **funding**, as more time and space require more staffing and investment.

“Musicians have enough planning time on paper but in reality there is a lot more to their job and they never seem to have enough time.”

3. Use of Participant Feedback

- Staff strongly agreed that Big Noise **listens to participants** and adapts delivery in response.
- Over **80%** felt feedback is used well, making this a **clear strength** of the programme.

4. Aspects That May Not Enhance Impact

- Almost **half of staff** said there were no areas that failed to contribute to positive impact.
- The rest gave small, individual suggestions rather than consistent themes. Examples included:
 - Some children struggling in large groups
 - Staff changes affecting continuity
 - A desire for better alignment of staff skills with public-facing work

Inclusion Survey:

Staff see Big Noise as already highly inclusive and supportive, with strong relationships and good communication at its heart. However, the programme could reach and support even more families by improving **awareness, accessibility, cultural responsiveness, and flexibility**, particularly for families facing practical, linguistic, or additional-needs barriers.

1. Main Barriers to Signing Up

Staff identified several recurring barriers that prevent families from enrolling in Big Noise:

- **Practical barriers:** pick-up/transport difficulties, clashing clubs, timing issues, having multiple children to manage.
- **Awareness and understanding:** families not knowing about the programme, not understanding its benefits, or being unsure of what participation involves.
- **Language and literacy:** limited English, low literacy confidence, difficulty with forms (especially online).
- **Cultural and religious factors:** music not prioritised in some households; after-school religious classes; stigma around classical music.
- **Accessibility:** non-accessible buildings, limited support for children with additional support needs (ASN).
- **Life circumstances:** chaotic home lives, competing pressures, transient housing, families leaving the area.

2. Ideas to Reduce These Barriers

Respondents proposed practical actions, many of which are in place already:

- **Improve communication** – more flyers, open days, school-gate chats, translated materials, short videos explaining Big Noise.
- **Increase visibility** – public performances, presence at parents' evenings, stronger local marketing, signage improvements.
- **Strengthen relationships** – more contact with families, more opportunities to meet staff, ambassadors from older participants.
- **Boost accessibility** – quieter spaces, ASN-friendly approaches, improved buildings, exploring transport support.

- **Offer flexible options** – more instrument choices, alternative lesson times, small-group tasters.
- **Work more with partners** – schools, religious organisations, ASN schools, community groups.

3. What Could Help Retention

Staff highlighted three core areas that keep children engaged:

- **Fun and motivating sessions** – exciting repertoire, trips, concerts, celebrations.
- **Clear progress and purpose** – young people feeling they are improving and part of something meaningful.
- **Consistent relationships** – stable staff teams, regular communication with families, personalised support plans.

4. How Big Noise Could Be More Inclusive

Common themes included:

- **More accessible buildings** – lifts, improved layouts, better physical access.
- **Greater ASN support** – extra staffing, adapted instruments, nurture spaces, targeted training.
- **Cultural inclusion** – more diverse music, visibility of community languages, welcoming different cultural practices.
- **Safer, calmer environments** – quieter snack spaces, better behaviour management, sensory-friendly approaches.
- **Ongoing adaptation** – listening to young people, responding to individual needs, reducing overwhelm in group settings.

Summary of Impact themes Mapped to Evidence Sources

Emotional Wellbeing:

Staff messages repeatedly emphasised:

- the importance of safe, nurturing environments
- consistent, calm adults
- restorative conversations
- tailored support for children who are dysregulated or anxious
- the role of snack times, walking lines and informal check-ins for emotional containment

What this indicates for emotional wellbeing:

These comments show that emotional safety, trust, and responsive relationships are already well-embedded but also stretched by limited space, staffing, and time. Staff describe how wellbeing is supported day-to-day through consistency, praise, and gentle boundaries – demonstrating that Big Noise’s environment meaningfully contributes to children’s confidence, regulation, and sense of belonging.

The challenges (behaviour pressures, limited 1:1 time, busy sessions, communication gaps) highlight where additional support or resources could further strengthen emotional wellbeing outcomes.

Positive School Pathways:

Across surveys, staff highlighted:

- the barriers caused by poor attendance and how Big Noise works with schools to improve it
- the value of individual support plans
- the importance of transitions (especially P7–S1)
- young people struggling at school benefiting from stable relationships with musicians
- the need for more time with families to address practical and emotional factors influencing school engagement

What this indicates for school pathways:

Big Noise is acting as a stabilising influence for many young people who struggle with attendance, focus, or school engagement. Staff’s calls for improved communication

with schools, increased transition support and consistent behaviour approaches demonstrate that positive school pathways are tightly linked to Big Noise's ability to remain coordinated with education partners. The insights show that Big Noise supports school confidence and continuity – but better resourcing would extend these gains.

Social Networks:

Staff messages strongly emphasised:

- the role of ensembles, rehearsals, concerts and trips in building shared experiences
- the importance of “being a constant” in a young person’s life
- the value of community events in strengthening relationships
- challenges around busy or overwhelming group environments for neurodivergent children
- the impact of volunteers and support workers building trust over time

What this indicates for social networks:

Social connectedness is a key impact identified throughout Big Noise's programme. Staff repeatedly described how friendships form through group music-making and how safe, trusting relationships with adults create belonging. However, the findings also show that some children struggle in large groups, and staff changes due to turnover or competing pressures can reduce opportunities to build deeper connections. This highlights where better staffing ratios, quieter spaces, and more tailored grouping could support stronger peer and adult relationships.

Musical Development:

Respondents shared:

- strong belief in musical ambition and high-quality teaching
- concerns about limited time for individual lessons
- challenges in balancing musical excellence with inclusion (group learning progress versus individual support)
- opportunities for more varied repertoire and cultural diversity
- reflections that some children need extra support before they can fully participate in ensembles
- the need to nurture advanced young musicians and not lose them through boredom or lack of challenge

What this indicates for musical development:

Staff messages clearly show that the musical core is strong, but under pressure. Musical development is closely linked to:

- staffing
- time
- group size
- space
- consistency

Staff want to preserve high standards but recognise that some learners need differentiated approaches. This reinforces Big Noise’s dual outcome model: musical progress is strengthened when emotional wellbeing, relationships and inclusion are supported and weakened when resources cannot keep up with needs. This highlights the importance of the roles of Support Workers and Volunteers in supporting the participants within the orchestral setting.

Summary of Key Findings (with limitations)

The *Just a Minute* survey series provides a valuable snapshot of staff experiences across Big Noise at a particular moment in time. Across the surveys, staff consistently expressed strong commitment to participants and confidence in Big Noise’s core approach, while also identifying clear areas where improvements could be made. Response rates varied across the series, but each survey gathered meaningful contributions from staff working in different roles and centres, giving a useful spread of perspectives, though these remain individual opinions rather than representative of all staff.

Overall, staff identify relationships, nurture and high-quality music-making as key strengths of Big Noise. They also highlighted pressures around time, space, staffing capacity and consistency in communication and behaviour approaches, alongside ongoing challenges in fully including children with additional needs. Suggested improvements focus on increasing individual support, strengthening inclusion, improving facilities, deepening family engagement and developing more flexible pathways for young people who struggle in group settings.

It is important to note that the results reflect self-selected responses, which introduces possible bias toward staff who are more engaged, more reflective, or have stronger feelings, positive or negative, about aspects of the programme. The surveys also capture a snapshot rather than long-term trends, and some insights were shaped by local circumstances at individual centres. In addition, the predominance of qualitative

responses means findings rely on interpretation and may be influenced by how staff understood the questions.

Despite these limitations, the surveys offer clear, consistent signals about where improvements could strengthen practice across centres, particularly around inclusion, capacity, communication, and tailored support. When used in combination with other evidence, these findings can meaningfully inform planning, staff development, and organisational decision-making.

Appendix 2d: Little Noise Survey Results

Results of the Little Noise Surveys held across Raploch, Douglas, Wester Hailes and Govanhill throughout 2025 are detailed here.

Response

There were 27 responses in total from across the Big Noise sites; Raploch (6), Govanhill (7), Wester Hailes (7) and Douglas (6).

Analysis

Responses were collated in MS Excel and analysed thematically to identify patterns in participant experiences, perceived benefits, opportunities for improvement, and any concerns or barriers raised. These themes informed the evaluation findings and provided a grounded understanding of Little Noise's impact on families. The findings from each centre were reported back to local senior staff for review.

Results

Across Raploch, Govanhill, Wester Hailes, and Douglas, feedback about Little Noise is overwhelmingly positive. Parents, carers, and childminders consistently describe the sessions as welcoming, inclusive, and highly beneficial for both children and adults.

1. How families hear about Little Noise

Most participants found out through:

- Friends or word of mouth*
- Health Visitors or other support workers*
- Flyers, local Facebook groups, or seeing it online*

This indicates strong community visibility and informal networks driving attendance.

2. Benefits for children

Commonly reported benefits include:

- **Socialisation** and interaction with other children*
- **Exposure to music**, instruments, rhythm, and new songs*
- **Improved confidence** and communication*
- **Routine and structure***
- **Enjoyment and engagement** (many note children “love it”)*

“Good interactions with others. Soaks up a lot and repeats at home.”

“She really enjoys it! Also a fantastic way to learn the fundamentals of music, group participation and to spend time with other children.”

“Extremely isolated and life is very hard this is one of the best things for us.”

“[Child] is shy with other children, he loves singing and joining in with the instruments. He feels valued at the class because of the interactive songs and the relaxed atmosphere.”

“Singing, speech, interaction.”

3. Benefits for parents and carers

Adults consistently report:

- **Social connection** and meeting new people
- **Improved wellbeing and reduced isolation**
- **Learning songs and activities to use at home**
- **Enjoying time with their child in a relaxed, supportive environment**
- **Break from the house / structure in the day**

Several specifically highlight the sessions as “life-changing” or a vital support to mental health.

“Socialising with other mums, brings parents together from across the schools, community events are fun and inclusive, music is important - therapeutic particularly for son who has ASN. Community building – brings the people together.”

“Exposure to language, music, socialisation, routine, community”

“Parent gets time out of house and can relax and interact with her children in a stress-free environment. Clear benefits to parents' mental health – mood is boosted.”

“I have met so many friends through Little Noise and we meet with our children at other places. It's a lovely social space full of joy. I have learned new songs and tunes to sing at home with him.”

4. What people value most

Across all sites, participants praise:

- **Approachable, friendly staff**
- **Warm, inclusive atmosphere**

- **Free sessions and snacks**, which make attendance accessible
- **High-quality musical experiences**
- **Sense of community** and connection to other local families

Many comments commend individual staff.

5. Negatives or challenges

Very few negative comments were recorded. The few mentioned include:

- **Timing issues** (e.g., clashes with naps)
- **Occasional missed communication when sessions are cancelled**
- **Physical accessibility needs for post-partum parents**
- **Limited provision for children aged 3–7 (Govanhill)**

The overwhelming majority wrote “No” or “Nothing” under this question.

6. Suggested improvements

Recurring suggestions include:

- **More sessions / longer sessions**
- **More frequent communication via text/email if sessions are off**
- **Lyrics/word sheets and song lists** for parents
- **More musicians at some sessions**
- **Small extra instruments/toys** occasionally

Improvements suggested were minor and did not take away from overall satisfaction.

7. Additional comments

Participants widely emphasised:

- Deep appreciation for staff
- Feeling welcomed and supported
- Enjoyment of the environment, music, and community
- Desire for Little Noise to continue or expand

Several long, heartfelt comments show a strong emotional attachment to the programme.

Overall Conclusion

The survey responses show **exceptionally positive feedback** across all sites. Little Noise is described as:

- **Highly valued by families**
- **Supportive of both children’s development and parents’ wellbeing**
- **A key source of community connection**
- **Well-run, friendly, and musically enriching**

Suggested improvements are minor and relate mainly to **communication, increased capacity, and small practical additions**. There are **no significant negative themes**.

Summary of Results (with limitations)

Although the findings are strong and consistent, the evaluation has several limitations:

- **Site coverage:** Surveys were completed in Raploch, Govanhill, Wester Hailes and Douglas, but **Fallin does not currently host Little Noise**, and researchers were **unable to attend a Little Noise session in Torry**. This means the findings cannot fully represent all Big Noise communities.
- **Self-selecting sample:** Participants were those already attending and willing to take part, which may reflect more positive views.
- **Time-bound snapshot:** Feedback reflects experiences on specific days and may not capture longer-term changes or seasonal variations.
- **High satisfaction may obscure needs:**
Because comments were overwhelmingly positive, some potential areas for improvement may remain unvoiced.

Despite these limitations, the evidence strongly suggests that Little Noise offers **meaningful developmental, social and emotional benefits**. It supports children’s early musical learning, strengthens attachment and communication within families, and creates a warm, supportive community space that enhances wellbeing and encourages positive future engagement with music and school.

Analysis of Links to Wider Themes

Emotional Wellbeing:

Little Noise has a significant positive impact on parental and child emotional wellbeing. Parents repeatedly report feeling less isolated, more connected, and uplifted by the sessions. The class was described as the “best thing for us” or “a huge asset to the community,” highlighting how the supportive atmosphere and weekly routine boost

mood and reduce stress. Children benefit from a safe, nurturing environment where they can explore, express themselves, and grow in confidence.

Positive School Pathways:

For many families, Little Noise forms an early bridge into wider Big Noise programmes, offering children an introduction to structured musical learning, group participation, and routine. Several parents note improvements in communication, focus, and confidence, all important readiness skills for nursery and school. Long-term participants describe how older siblings have continued into Big Noise school-age programmes, reinforcing Little Noise as an early stepping-stone into sustained positive educational pathways.

Social Networks and Community Connection:

The programme strongly enhances social networks. Parents consistently mention making new friends, meeting other families, and feeling more connected to the local community. Many emphasise that the group is a rare space where they feel welcomed, supported, and included. For some parents, particularly those experiencing isolation, new to the area, or facing challenging circumstances, Little Noise provides a vital source of belonging and social contact.

Musical Development:

Children experience early, meaningful musical engagement through exposure to live instruments, singing, rhythm, movement, and collaborative play. Parents frequently mention that children “love the music,” “repeat songs at home,” and “learn new words and skills through music.” The consistency, quality, and enthusiasm of staff help embed musical learning in a fun and accessible way, supporting early communication, listening, and motor skills.

Appendix 3: Case Studies

Sixteen case studies were gathered across all sites in 2025. These stories are detailed below. Some of these case studies have had name changes and some have remained anonymous. All stories have been agreed by the contributors.

Summarised versions of these have been used in the interactive impact maps, alongside additional quotes that may not feature in these case studies.

1. Charlie, Torry
2. Ben, Raploch
3. Cara, (Volunteer) Raploch & Fallin
4. Chloe & Stuart, Govanhill
5. Craig, Douglas
6. Danielle, Raploch & Fallin.
7. Dede, Torry
8. Eliah & Nicola, Raploch & Fallin
9. Emily, (Volunteer) Raploch & Fallin
10. Anonymised Family, Raploch & Fallin
11. Harrison & Jill, Douglas
12. Harry, Wester Hailes
13. Jensen, Raploch & Fallin
14. Maya, Raploch & Fallin
15. Mohammed & Sophia, Govanhill
16. Paige, Raploch & Fallin

Case Study 1 – Charlie, Big Noise Torry

Charlie (16) has been a participant of Big Noise Torry for 9 years, starting to attend the afterschool club when she was around 7, picking the violin as her instrument. When she first started at Big Noise, she enjoyed getting to meet new people and doing something different, boosting her confidence significantly and she has been enjoying the afterschool club ever since.

Charlie thinks the best part of her experience with Big Noise is that she has noticed a significant improvement in musical skills over the years. Now she says there's "no chance" she's giving it up given she has spent so much time on it. As well as this Charlie began being homeschooled in S3 after a period of school bullying, yet she felt Big Noise provided a safe space for a 'normal social life' and an escape to enjoy music. Big Noise staff provided her with support and care during this time, boosting her confidence.

"I think I just needed it because I was so used to school and people maybe not liking me as much at school, and then I came here, and then I have friends and people like me. So, I think I was good just to be like, not everyone likes you. Like, I don't need to change for anyone else, [at Big Noise] everyone's just happy, no one's gonna bother you or anything pick on you, because you all like the same thing."

Charlie feels a sense of belonging with other Big Noise participants and families, especially after concerts and performances, sharing a joint musical interest, identity and friendship. A highlight for her was attending the Big Noise United Residential, which meant she could mix with other Big Noise participants from other cities, making loads of new friends and taking part in lots of fun activities. She feels that playing music in a group with others has improved both her listening and social skills.

Charlie feels she can lean on Big Noise staff if she has any problems;

"They get to know you. And then if you've got any problems, you can just go to them and they just, they care. They do care about everyone so much, I would say all of them definitely care about everyone. And want just the best for you... they just listen, yeah. They try and do their best for everyone."

She enjoys playing her violin and working on new things, even if it's hard, pushing herself and practicing when she needs to work effectively in her group. Working in a group has showed her that;

"You can't just judge other people off of things...everyone's just good at, better at different things... yeah, just be patient"

Charlie enjoys helping others and often helps her violin teacher with younger participants. She thinks she could maybe teach violin in the future and may apply for

the Big Noise internship next year to continue developing her teaching skills. For Charlie, music makes her feel “very calm”;

“I just enjoy it, and that's my main passion. I don't if I didn't do music, I don't know, yeah, actually, don't know what I would have done....yeah, I don't think I would have done music if Big Noise wasn't here, I would have thought, ‘Oh, it's too hard’. And like, yeah, ‘it's not for me, because none of my family does music’.”

Charlie feels Big Noise has helped foster a sense of community in Torry, sharing a sense of pride with her parents or her friends’ parents after concerts. If there was no Big Noise, Charlie said she’d be bored and she wouldn’t be able to speak to everyone as much and would feel left out. She is planning to go back to learning in person, potentially at college, something which Big Noise staff have supported her with through encouraging conversations.

Case Study 2 - Ben, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin

Ben was a participant in the very first cohort of Big Noise Raploch back when he was 6 years old, he is now 21 and is currently at college for sound production. He also works with various music and social charities, teaching kids' musical skills, from piano to DJing to music theory; *“music is the only universal thing everybody can understand”*.

Ben started out playing the Cello, then after a year out, he returned and took up the Tuba which he much preferred. Reminiscing on when he attended the Afterschool programme four days a week, Ben felt he had a home there - *“You feel like you live here.... I felt safe in every instance”*. When asked what his first impressions of Big Noise were, he highlighted the staff balancing the learning of music with the needs of each child;

“It was just a different way of teaching [...] and if you need to leave the class, go leave the class. If you want to go, if you don't really feel confident doing this stuff in front of other people, it was just, aye, probably just sense of family and connection I'd say. That's my first impression [of Big Noise] from being a wee Wean. [...] And I feel like I was taken care to the best of their ability, I felt safe in every instance. [...] We're all playing music. That's like the main thing. But behind the scenes, they are helping every aspect of your life. It's not just all music and playing all these amazing songs.”

Ben was in kinship and foster care from mid-primary school, and he attributes a sense of stability and support from attending Big Noise, especially from his main music teacher who he saw as a *“Father figure”* who provided consistent guidance and compassion. He felt a strong sense of pride and passion for Big Noise, something which he still holds on to. Ben saw Big Noise as an *“outlet”* from other areas of his life where he could channel and focus his energy into improving his Tuba playing. Ben believes Big Noise helped him reach his full potential and changed the trajectory of his life;

“I absolutely love that, kept me off the streets, being good and stuff like that...[Without Big Noise] Listen, I'm no being harsh, but I genuinely think I'd be in jail... Me and my cousins are just trying to break a mould in our family pattern I'd say, so I definitely say if I didn't have my outlet or my upbringing, I'd say I might be forced in the jail or even worse. [Now] I'm just, I'm just full of life, and I feel like I've had the hardships, I had all the support I had to put me through and have them problems or, and arise for them and beat them, I wouldn't be never near where I'm at.”

Although Ben has not continued playing music regularly, he attributes many of the skills he learned at Big Noise as helping him with his current employment where he is a trainee peer mentor for children who have experience of the Care system to support and guide them, *“Well it's pretty much what the staff did to me here pretty much I'm just using my own experiences and doing that”*.

Ben describes a sense of community, inclusivity, mutual respect and shared love of music at Big Noise, something which he still feels now;

“At the end of the day, everybody still loves each other. Like, there's always just a home. Like, you know when at school, you went ‘Aye am no sitting there, blah, blah’, I'm no bothered if wee Brian wants to come sit and have a chat. Why not, like? We're at Big Noise! There's a whole different community from school.”

“You know, you used to just getting talked to like a wee Wean, and you're actually getting talked to like a human being! Like a human being and your own person. You get each staff member tailoring to each child and actually helping them with their problems. They'll break down the barriers you have and turn it into positives and actually make sure you're okay, and you will aspire to do good things.”

“We are all in the same team, like we're all on the same boat. The best part about it, like is the big, big characters, you feel that you can rely on them and they're on your side. You can feel like you can beat the world with them... I think it was a lot of a lot of students here found that their teachers were their heroes.”

Through Big Noise, Ben was the first young Scottish person to attend the National Orchestra For All (NOFA) in England, this and regular performances with Big Noise grew his confidence and social skills even further. He believes this now helps him in his workplace;

“Generally, so simple, but confidence. So in my work, I take, like, I'll work as a peer mentor, so I help people, for me, specifically in foster care, okay, like my past, I just help people where like this, try and treat them with experiences what I didn't have, and just try and try and help them with that. And I feel like if I didn't have the confidence I've got, I feel like I wouldn't be able to help the people I'm helping, the kids I'm helping, who are vulnerable and like, have no idea what they're doing with their life situations are going through is abnormal. Nobody, like, no normal child here, like, went through like, half the stuff they're going through.”

Ben attributes respecting routine, developing a sense of personal resilience, pride and sense of achievement, as well as a sense of responsibility and perspective as some of the value's Big Noise developed;

“Aye like everybody, like everybody was here for each other, and like, if you didn't have one person here, then you would be slack in one part of the orchestra anyway, so the music wouldn't sound as good, or people, maybe people can't make up with the volumes. Maybe you could. So, I feel like if you weren't here, then the other, everybody else is losing. If That makes sense. So, if you are a missing piece, yeah, every individual is a missing piece in an orchestra, we can always make everything better and sound

better. So, every individual has got purpose here, no matter what you're playing or what you're doing”

“I feel like you need the parent first to be like, you can do this and actually believe in the kid. Then then it is up to the kid for a split amount of time, just a split amount of time, to give yourself a chance to get in the door and try it. And I swear the Big Noise team will have it from there. They will keep you engaged. They will keep you occupied. They will keep it fun. They keep it fresh, keep it new. And you will learn so much, even if it isn't playing an instrument.”

Case Study 3 – Cara (Volunteer), Big Noise Raploch & Fallin



Cara (60) is retired and volunteers at Big Noise Raploch 3 nights a week, having played music all her life and having heard of Big Noise for years she decided to get involved about 4 years ago after seeing they were looking for volunteers on their website;

“It felt very much like coming home — like walking into my happiest place from the very beginning. That was partly because I have always loved music, and partly because I love working with children.”

After experiencing a sudden family bereavement, Cara felt that Big Noise was her “Absolute saviour”, feeling welcomed, supported and valued, giving her a focus and sense of fulfilment which she feels positive and proud of;

“The volunteers genuinely feel that we are being useful, without any doubt. Often, teachers are managing challenging behaviour and simply need someone who can support a child who is struggling — perhaps by taking them aside for a moment or by providing an additional pair of eyes and ears. Sometimes, the issue is not even related to the music itself. The teachers make you acutely aware that you are making a real difference to their teaching. They are exceptional with their pupils — remarkably empathetic and deeply understanding of the children’s individual needs. You truly feel part of the team, and you feel that you are making a meaningful difference.”

Cara and the other volunteers work alongside Big Noise staff and musicians in constant communication to implement individual support for children who may need specialised techniques or breaks from the main programme. When asked if she has witnessed any impacts of the programme on the children, Cara stated;

“Children who once would not make eye contact, who did not want to participate or speak at all, are now members of the Symphony Orchestra - playing first oboe, first flute, or similar leading roles - and confidently holding their own. They now initiate conversations with me, telling me about what is happening in their lives. The confidence they have developed is extraordinary.”

Cara believes that this confidence is developed over time as children begin to learn that the programme belongs to them, was made for them and serves them, they gradually understand a sense of ownership in Big Noise, which the staff and volunteers encourage and welcome - *“It’s their centre, they obviously want to be here”*.

Additionally, staff at Big Noise have the time and space to listen to the young people, something which Cara feels may not be possible in a pressurised school environment.

Case Study 4 - Chloe and Stuart, Big Noise Govanhill

Chloe is 17 and has been attending Big Noise Govanhill since she was in P3, and after graduating from Secondary school she undertook a paid summer internship with Big Noise and recently has been employed as a Support Musician with the programme. Chloe is planning to study Fine Art at Dundee next year and plans to continue playing music with university groups and orchestras. Chloe and her friends at school have also made a band, where she quickly had to learn how to play the bass guitar, which she felt she was able to do given her existing, foundational and developing musical skills from Big Noise.

Chloe's dad Stuart also works as a Support Worker with the programme after volunteering there since it arrived in the Govanhill community. Their family values both what the programme brings to the community and what they provide for the children involved, both with a strong sense of pride working for the organisation

"it was my opportunity to give a little bit back for, you know, what they were doing for Chloe, That's always been my motivation, even now that I'm being paid to do it, it's giving back, you know, trying to help the children that I support, in the way that Chloe received"

Stuart's employment with Big Noise is the longest he has been at one job, as he *"always got bored and moved on"* but with Big Noise he doesn't think he'll ever leave and he enjoys coming to work every day, although he describes himself as being *"as musical as a brick"*;

"Every day is different... there's lots of children that we see on a daily basis with wide ranging needs in terms of support. Quite a lot of them don't need any support, really, other than sort of a little bit of moral support. Whereas then you've got other children with specific learning needs, you know. So, it makes it every day a challenge.... it's really, really fulfilling.... it provides great satisfaction seeing them take part and, you know, improving on a weekly basis."

Chloe loves playing the violin and has experienced many opportunities while at Big Noise, including playing with Nicola Benedetti, going on residential trips, playing with the RSNO [Royal Scottish National Orchestra], and meeting and playing for the King & Queen, things Stuart believes she wouldn't have been able to do without Big Noise. For Chloe, these opportunities, especially regular orchestra performances and band gigs, have become *"quite normal"*, something she is appreciative of and believes has really boosted her confidence, independence and pride. This growing confidence cumulated in her performing a solo at her school concert;

"which I wouldn't have done. If you asked me to do that, like a few years ago, I would not have done that.... it was a massive boost. Even though I was nervous. You know, still do"

it. You just do it nervous... it's just helped me be more confident in any of my abilities in general, and being able to try things like I usually wouldn't, and just see how it goes”

Growing up, Chloe was able to focus on developing her musical skills at Big Noise and socialising with other kids, a group of friends away from school and across the city, who had a shared interest in music, which helped with social anxiety and in moving from primary to secondary school.

“That was usually one of the only times we could see each other, like a couple times a week. So having that time to come together and do the thing we love, like play music together, it definitely helped, because it was a struggle being able to see people outside of school, especially later on, because exams and everything, so it gave us that time to come together, and I think that's probably one of the reasons I kept coming back, along with us enjoying music so much and everything, but just knowing that they were there and I could enjoy myself after maybe a bad day at school or something.”

Chloe felt a sense of safety and comfort at Big Noise, and staff have always been there to support her, especially when she took a break from the programme during a period of family illness.

“It was really it was, yeah, safe spaces. it was comforting to know that if there was something up, like if I had a bad day at school, there was always the support workers and the staff that I could talk to about that, and they would always be there....but like, it's good that I can give what I've received, and that I can support other people the way I was as well. Feels good.... it's very rewarding to see the kids getting somewhere. So, I think that's, yeah, the progress.”

By developing a tangible, audible skill through continued practice, one in which she could easily see and hear her own progress, Chloe describes gaining a strong sense of achievement, increased resilience, and a more positive outlook.

“I remember we had this really specific piece, and I could never play this one part. And then I kind of just woke up one day played it, and then I could, I was like, yeah, that's quite it's quite weird. But then every like, since then, everything just got easier. So that's when I was like, ‘Oh, this the skills going up a bit’.... It's made me realise that, you know, it's getting better, even if it doesn't seem like it is, but just a long process, but it's worth it, yeah, you get there eventually so.... I do love the practicing part of it and working towards something. And then when the performance comes, it's like, oh, you're performing to your friends and family and whoever else is there. And it feels very like an accomplishment, like I've done all that work and I'm showing people”

Chloe's ability to focus has greatly increased since joining Big Noise, she attributes this to having to concentrate for long periods of time on the music while being interested in

it and enjoying it. Chloe and her friend sometimes spend hours focused on composing or transposing their own music, finding it fun and engaging.

For Stuart, children at Big Noise are safe and can develop and learn their musical skills at their own pace in a fun environment;

“Something like Big Noise gives a great focus, I think, for children, you know. You know, gone are the days where it's safe to allow children you just go and play in the park and things like that. You know, they need something to do other than just wandering the streets and Big Noise gives that, and it also gives a lot of emotional support. Now, you know, nowadays, things are getting really complicated for children growing up, you know, the things like, you know, the internet access, sort of things that they're seeing on there most of it is not appropriate. So being able to come here where they can, they're still learning. They're still learning lots at their own pace. It's very much driven at the child's pace, but it's safe. You know? They can feel comfortable. They're getting some food after school. You know, I think it's just absolutely brilliant!”

Case Study 5 - Craig (Adult Participant), Big Noise Douglas

Craig was born in Dundee in 1969, moving into the Douglas community when he was around 18, he has overcome many hardships in his life;

“Went through poverty, went through. You can keep going hungry, days, hungry nights, you know, really pretty bad days, mental health got worse”

Although Craig still experiences episodes of depression and anxiety, he regularly attends counselling, however, it's attending the Big Noise Douglas community Traditional Group and Community Choir which he thinks helps him the most, playing new instruments for the first time, including the Boron and Whistle, with the Trad group Craig was initially nervous, but the staff and other members encouraged him;

“I said to them, but I don't want to play wrong notes. But they say who's going to be an aficionado and check? They're not going to sit there going he's played a wrong note.

“I think your mood changes with it. I think that's a big thing, because you come in here going ‘Oh God, she wants me to do this’ and I'm thinking ‘how Am I supposed to get through that?’. But then when you actually get maybe half through, you think, ‘Oh, God, I've got half through it’, you know, yeah. I'm bloody cheesy I know.”

Coming to Big Noise community groups for over two years now and performing in regular concerts, including a recent one at the Dundee's V&A Museum, Craig's confidence and motivation is growing. Having tangible & audible goals to practice towards allows Craig to feel a sense of accomplishment, self-belief and pride when performing with the rest of group, as well as when he overcomes challenging musical techniques or passages on his own - *“Aye but I'm able to do it, because I step up to the plate, as it's called”*. A particular highlight for Craig was the Big Noise Ceilidh which the Trad group performed in last January, especially the *“knock-out”* haggis.

“They've encouraged me and helped me. I think the first, when I started, at first I thought, ‘oh, this is going to be hell’. No, it was, no it was, it was pure hell. But I think I've got, got through those days, and I was able to say, right, when I got to the first concert, I thought, ‘right, yeah, that's fine, I've got to the first concert’ that was like a milestone, and each concert I get to, it's like a milestone. So, I think, oh, here I've done that, got to the next milestone.”

Craig enjoyed attending the community choir, feeling a sense of ownership, *“comradeship”* and belonging within the group;

“In a way, yes, it's part of me.... I said wait a minute, these bricks [of the community centre], one of these is mine. I've been, I've come here for 30 years. One of these bricks is mine. This place gets knocked down. I want that brick. That brick's got my name on it.”

Craig uses music as a form of escape and relief from struggles in his life;

I went from one rubbish job to another.... So, music, music's a getaway. It's a sense of, well, you know, it's a get away from the rest of it. I can leave my life outside and forget about it.

Craig thinks the way he sees life now has changed with Big Noise Douglas helping to reduce his feelings of anxiety and isolation, he is motivated to attend due to his strengthening relationships with the other people in the groups. He describes Big Noise as dragging him out of his comfort zone slightly, *"in a good way"*, expanding his social circle and support network. To Craig the Big Noise staff are *"fantastic"* and are flexible in how they teach and conduct the community groups, listening to and responding to the group's opinions and ideas, he feels he has a voice at Big Noise.

"I could come and talk to Big Noise anytime, yeah, I know that. I've done that before. they've always said that, they says, 'Well, look, come upstairs. Come upstairs and see us, don't be sitting out if there's something going on, come and see us', they're quite happy with that."

Craig's ambitions have grown and he hopes to volunteer or work with Big Noise in the future, teaching others how to play new instruments in a larger community orchestra and passing on what he's learnt in the programme.

Case Study 6 - Danielle, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin

Danielle started Big Noise Raploch in 2011 at the start of her P7 year, now she is 26 and still remembers the day she got her own instrument, a flute, as a “big game changer”,

“That's what sold Big Noise, because they just made it so fun. And it was like, just coming into a second wee family.... It just gave me something to focus on, kept me out of a lot of trouble...it's a gateway to get away from reality”

For Danielle, Big Noise was different than school in how they approached learning;

“Difference was this was fun learning, And I just learned you got to really push yourself to your limits, where you wouldn't have learnt from a text book, or you know you were learning from the teachers, your peers, and just a totally different - it's hard to describe it, because it wasn't like I was learning I was more like just going and hanging out with your second family, and it's hard going, But there was nothing ever you felt defeated on....whereas with school...”

Although Danielle had a tough time during Secondary school with her mental health and self-confidence, Big Noise supported her, providing a “switch-off point” alongside a feeling of self-achievement and pride as her musical skills grew. She also had the opportunity and space to socialise with a range of other children across year groups and schools. For Danielle, Big Noise was a safe space, an outlet to express emotions and a place to look forward to;

“I was with the brass and percussion and the woodwind, and you were just, that was, you - lost in your music. You didn't think about any of that outside, and always it gave me, and always thought every day at high school, if today's a bad, if today's a bad day. It's a bad day, but I know I'm gonna have a good evening, cause I'm going to Big Noise. Soon as I get on that coach to Big Noise. That's it. It's gone.”

Danielle took part in the Big Noise trip to Venezuela, she also performed at the opening of Big Noise Torry in Aberdeen and took part in the BBC Proms, only to name a few. But for Danielle, her relationship with the staff at Big Noise was a highlight of her time in the programme and something she still values and maintains now;

“The memories are definitely something that is probably the best gift out of it all, like and obviously the ability to play the flute.... and the staff as well, like I was just, whenever they see you, you don't ever feel unwelcomed, they remember everything, absolutely everything, like you just feel like you're their kids, you know”

“you could come with anything, any problems at home or problems at school they sat down and they listened to you....sit and talk about how I am and, you know, not talking about Big Noise or anything that, we're talking about you and how you're doing”

Danielle describes one member of staff as a “role model” and a “superhero” given how much they consistently supported everyone at Big Noise. That staff member still catches up with Danielle and her daughter when they come in for Little Noise, a group for babies and their carers;

“Well, I would never, ever have thought put my kid into music like, never, ever have thought of that, even for even for myself. So, I guess that’s a big thing from going to Big Noise... I like doing community stuff. So, it’s made me more a person to think about, more thoughtful of others you know what I mean, because I mean, because I feel like, well, I’ve been given so much, so it’s nice to give it, give it back. So that’s what you learn from Big Noise. So, I want [my daughter] to learn the same.”

Danielle developed a strong sense of resilience at Big Noise, and she remembers the amount of work and determination she put into it and the self-belief that followed;

“If I put half the determination in, as I did to my flute, I’ll get there. So that’s what I compare everything to. Even when I was giving birth, I was like, if I could get in a 12-hour flight to Venezuela, I’m sure I could do this.... I think the best thing it gave me was self, self-belief, you know, self-confidence, definitely. Because never in a million years when you first handed me that flute, I thought, ‘Oh my God, I’ll go away to Venezuela’ and stuff like that. Like, it gave me purpose, really.”

Danielle is extremely grateful for her time at Big Noise and believes it has impacted her life in many ways, shifting how she views the world;

“Definitely I’ve, I wouldn’t have been as far without Big Noise and skills and everything, it really does teach you to be a better person.... more caring, more understanding of others. Never judge a book by its cover. Because, like Jo used to say to me ‘I bet no one looks at you and thinks you can pull a Flute out your sleeve and play it’. No, and so you should never ever judge. Never, ever judge.”

When asked to describe what being a part of Big Noise meant to her, Danielle struggled to find the right words, apart from “magical”;

“Because everyone Hum’s and Ah’s over Big Noise, like so many questions and curiosity about it and what it actually does. But I always say you need to be part of it, to feel it, and what the true magic has been, I think it definitely was. There’s no words or sort of explanation you can do to sum it up as a whole, you can’t. It’s just a magical, magical experience. And so many selfless adults doing this for all these kids like it’s just amazing.”

Case Study 7 - Dede, Big Noise Torry

Dede is a 14-year-old participant at Big Noise Torry. Although they play violin and piano at Big Noise, they also play guitar in a band with school friends, and they are currently learning the flute. Before joining Big Noise at P3, they “didn’t really have a thing for music”, but now they find learning new instruments fun and interesting after learning core musical skills at Big Noise;

“It’s so easy. Like, if you figure out what the notes are and where they are, you know how to play songs..... I hate reading piano sheet music. I just, you know, let me play by ear.”

For Dede, playing music is a core part of their personality and self-identity;

“Yeah, it’s like, the only thing I want to do, like, like, so I’m grounded, right, I was being a bad little child, I’m grounded. I don’t have a phone, so I have nothing to do all day unless go on the TV... so all I have to do is just play my instruments. So, that’s all I do. Instruments.”

Dede also loves creating and composing music across genres, and recently they have composed a piece for Big Noise’s composition competition;

“I just kind of really like music, but I like all the sides of music. I love, I do music tech in school as well..... And it’s just like, I like all types of music, yeah... I love creating tunes and like, when it sounds really good, I’m proud.”

Dede believes that Big Noise provides access to the Torry community, and they enjoy having a community of musical people who share their love and language of music;

“I wish more people did Big Noise, because it’s just so, so good. Well, it’s all free. That’s the best part about it. It’s free, and you get to learn so much from it. It’s just like, why do more people not do it?”

After experiencing a family bereavement, Dede took some time away from Big Noise, during which their teacher continued to support them with in-school lessons, and they gradually increased their participation and rejoined the full programme. Having time away from Big Noise, Dede realised what they missed about playing music;

“It’s just sometimes, like, when I was off, I would just felt so weird, because, like, it just feels so good to play in an orchestra, and especially if you’ve been working on, like, a bit, and then you finally get it right, and you, like, finish a song or something, and it’s just the satisfaction, and you get that rush of dopamine you know, yeah, like, yes. Like, you’re so proud of everyone. I love it.”

Dede feels that the teachers at Big Noise are caring, encouraging and consistently reassuring when participants are learning new instruments and skills, building a trusting

relationship over their time in the programme. For Dede music is an outlet for emotions and as a form of escapism if they are stressed or overwhelmed;

“Music just basically controls my emotion. I can't lie, like, when I'm playing piano and I'm playing a song that I really know well, so I can close my eyes while playing, and it's just like, you get so lost in the music....[In the future] I really want to join an orchestra or a band or something still in the musical area. I would never quit playing my violin or piano, I can't go too long without playing an instrument, I'd just go insane.”

Dede also attributes strong listening and teamwork skills from working in their Big Noise orchestra, while attributing a sense of resilience, focus and confidence to their regular performances;

“So we got to play with RSNO [Royal Scottish National Orchestra] twice and when we were going on stage and stuff you just have to kind of snap yourself out of it, like okay you're going to be worried but then the moment I sit down I'm okay and I'm reading my music and I'm playing like it's just, I don't know, it's kind of like my subconscious, like I'm not really thinking about it I'm just doing it, I'm playing, I know the song already, its practically easy.”

Reflecting on their relationship with Big Noise, in particular with their main instrumental teacher, they said;

“I feel so at home now She just pulled me back up. I was going to quit Big Noise, I was going to quit music when [there was a family bereavement], and it's just like she was there, she let me take it at my own pace. Just all the support and everything, and it's so crazy how it's free. I feel like it's just so important to some people who really struggle with their life at home and stuff, and they come here and it's just like another family, I think it's really important for some people... I really appreciate it so much.”

Case Study 8 – Eliah & Nicola, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin



Eliah, aged 9, is in Primary 5 and he enjoys attending Big Noise Raploch two days a week and describes music as a fun hobby which makes him “feel really happy”. He is learning to play the violin and thinks he is “quite good at it”, describing it as “the hardest to learn”. Despite the fact he finds it difficult sometimes, he recognises it as something he wants to continue to try because of how much he likes it, even though he’s “not doing it to become a musician”.

Eliah thinks the staff at Big Noise are very ‘helpful and kind’, particularly when he attends his one-on-one sessions and lessons at Afterschool Club sessions, something he has done for nearly 3 years now. Despite being a bit nervous when joining Big Noise because it was something he had never done before, “it got a little better” and now he regularly plays the piano and violin at home. Eliah often plays from memory, learning music by ear, and has even composed his own musical composition alongside his teacher. Eliah recognises that his ADHD sometimes makes him “struggle a bit more”, making “it a little harder”, however the staff have always supported him:

“Sometimes, in Big Noise, cause the way, they’ll always help you in a way that no matter what you have or whatever happens, they’ll always know how to help you... there has been times where I’ve been like, frustrated, annoyed, not knowing how to do it and have helped me understand it, and I’ve played again.”

When talking about his favourite member of staff, Eliah mentions that she looks out for him;

“Somehow she does, she does everything and can still look out for everyone.”

Using fun and engaging techniques the Big Noise staff teach Eliah mechanisms to work with his ADHD, allowing him time and space away from bigger groups if he needs it.

Nicola, Eliah’s mum, describes the staff as going ‘above and beyond’ for every child at Big Noise, and she is grateful for the sense of community she has developed here.

Nicola is especially appreciative of the impact Big Noise has had on Eliah, as well as the opportunities it has provided, alongside not only “time”, “patience” and “safety”, she knows Eliah has a place to go to if he needs to talk to an adult outside of the family.

Describing the sense of trust she has with the Big Noise Raploch & Fallin staff, Nicola said;

“If there's someone that can talk to him or somebody that he can express himself to, I'm overjoyed with that. And I think just watching that, think watching him put his trust into them, definitely allowed me to have trust for them. And I think that's what kind of gave me a chance to be like they were just so kind and compassionate. It's genuine. It's not, you know, it's not fake. It's genuine care. It's genuine.”

Nicola finds the Big Noise staff easy to talk to, and she believes Eliah can confide in others at Big Noise allowing him to open up more and talk to other kids. Nicola also believes the staff are “very much there for not just the kids”, recalling times staff members have supported her, working together to support Eliah the best they know how to. Through facilitating conversations allowing for parents to feel involved in their child’s BN journey, Nicola feels parents feel supported.

Eliah thinks both the music and the feeling of being at Big Noise is soothing and therapeutic, in particular with other children in a group sharing environment;

“You understand that it's very nice and soothing to be around like other people, yeah, who can help you. And like, just listening just is just really nice to like, hear everyone playing and knowing that you can do the same.”

Eliah believes the support and encouragement from staff, not only to develop musical skills, but also to be the person you are and “be happy about it”, is one of the best parts of Big Noise;

“No matter what happens I will feel like I'm part of it...just from the way they make me feel happy. They make me feel just playing, yeah, just like, even if you don't get it perfectly right the first time, they'll always be like, you've done a good job for trying.”

Case Study 9 – Emily (Volunteer), Big Noise Raploch & Fallin



Emily is 23 and has volunteered at Big Noise Raploch for 3 years. She first heard about Big Noise when she was younger, after her mum watched the BBC documentary ‘The Big Trip’ following Big Noise’s trip to Venezuela. Emily grew up in the Highlands and although there wasn’t much music tuition, she was able to receive violin lessons, but she never had the opportunity to play in a larger group or orchestra. While studying Biology & Education at university, Emily took a break in her third year, where she found a “purpose” volunteering with Big Noise, reigniting a fire she had lost;

“It was the best thing that I ever did with my life ever, like I cannot, yeah, hands down. It completely changed my life....I don't think I was ever happy before I started Big Noise, I don't, I can't really describe what it is, but I can, hands down, say it's the thing that changed my life completely... I'm such a different person than I was before.... It makes me feel valued. It makes me feel part of a community.”

Not only has working with Big Noise provided countless opportunities for her to develop key skills working with children in education, but Emily has now been recently employed at one of the partner primary schools Big Noise works with. Comparing the environments of Big Noise and the current education system in schools, Emily highlights the positivity and “magic” which Big Noise possesses, something “formal” educative spaces lack given the immense pressures and workload placed on teachers.

“I was coming into a community where there's so much positivity, there's so much hope, and honestly, the most wonderful children and the most wonderful staff as well... They're so welcoming, like everyone, I feel like everyone is welcome at Big Noise. And you can go away from Big Noise and come back, and you'll always be welcomed with open arms. It does just feel like they want to be there for everyone as well. Yeah, and very inclusive, I always feel valued as well.”

Emily attributes a level of vocational training that she has experienced while volunteering at Big Noise which she finds more valuable and useful than some of her theoretical university lectures;

“Learning about what different barriers different children face, and things like that, that's been so eye opening. But also, the Big Noise training has been - there was one training session I went to that I used more in my school placement than I did in three years of Uni....it was more helpful. I still use it to this day.”

After Emily's mother passed away, volunteering at Big Noise gave her a sense of routine and purpose, alongside a network of support from staff and friends;

“I feel like Big Noise are my family now, which then helped with like when my Mum did die, Big Noise has been my family. Big Noise has been the one thing that's been constant for me throughout that five and a half years I've been at Uni.”

Emily dedicated her dissertation to Big Noise, as well as to all the children who participate in the programme, and when she graduated, she did so proudly wearing the Big Noise logo. Emily's dissertation acknowledgements concluded with the following:

“Thank you to every single community member, family member, staff member and volunteer at Big Noise centres across the country. Not only have you played a massive role in helping me with my data collection, but you've played a massive role in who I have become as a person over the last two and a half years, you have taught me so much, things that you cannot learn at a university, but are equally, if not more important. I've become a competent young woman, and I know now that what I want in life isn't a fancy degree or a fancy job. I just want to spread kindness and help people smile. And finally, to the children of Big Noise centres across the country, thank you for being you. Thank you for showing me the true value of kindness and helping me find my own smile. Keep showing the world how amazing you are. I will always be fighting in your corner. This one is for you. I'm so glad you're here.”

Case Study 10 - Anonymised Family, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin

This case study follows one parent and her two daughters, aged 13 and 16, who have been a part of Big Noise Raploch for over ten years now, and they all believe that it has provided a love of music and sense of support which has been, and continues to be, an integral component of their lives. The parent believes Big Noise has provided a high level of emotional support for herself and her daughters, when feeling isolated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Big Noise offered both daughters a safe, supportive space where music and wellbeing go hand in hand.

Older Daughter (16)

After attending a Little Noise session at Nursery and finding out that she “had really come out of herself” her parent was keen to keep her involved with Big Noise and music, now she is in high school and enjoying playing the double bass with Big Noise. Not only does she really enjoy playing music, but her parent also believes it has really “shaped her as a whole”, encouraging her hopes of pursuing a music career in the future.

She regularly plays her musical instruments at home as a form of ‘regulation’, and her parent is unsure where they would be without music as an outlet, “That is her expression to the world, music is how she communicates what she’s feeling”. She describes feeling “calm” when she is playing music, and that she sees Big Noise as a reassuring environment that feels different from school, it is somewhere she can relax, be herself and build confidence without pressure. She has been consistently supported by her main music tutor who has worked with her for many years and assists her with her future aspirations with Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) and music exams at school. For her parent, without Big Noise her daughter would not be able to, or wouldn’t be aware of, the opportunities to pursue a musical career;

“The difference for her hasn’t just been confidence in playing her music, but confidence in herself. She’s a very different person now, because music is something she really loves, she has been willing to push herself outside her comfort zone.”

For the parent, Big Noise has also been a crucial source of reassurance and support for the whole family

“School can only do so much, but Big Noise has been somewhere we could be open about the challenges she is facing. The teachers and staff know her, they understand, and they make sure we know that they are there. It was never just about attending, it has always been about the best way they can support my daughter.”

Younger Daughter (13)

The younger daughter has never known life without Big Noise. It has been a regular part of her week for as long as she can remember, and she describes it as somewhere she feels completely at ease. During a particularly difficult period, her involvement with the programme changed, but she continued to feel supported by staff and was able to stay connected to music in a way that felt right for her. Over time, she gradually returned to fuller participation, doing so on her own terms.

“It feels like being back home. When I wasn’t coming for a while it just felt really strange It felt empty... like something was missing.”

For her, Big Noise is a “safe space” and somewhere she can ‘leave any stress at the door’ and by the time she leaves “it’s not really there”;

“We also have that kind of dynamic of achieving something at the end of it, we've had a bad day. We can always have a better one at the end of it.”

She thinks her confidence has grown at Big Noise given regular performances, and her outlook on challenges has evolved alongside this to embrace nerves and increase her own self-belief and resilience. She feels her discipline and work ethic have grown given encouragement, patience and routine to practice, as well as putting in hard work to overcome musical challenges;

“It is really different compared to school, because people just sometimes give up on school. I guess at the end of the day, if you don't play, you're just gonna get worse, you just need to keep it there.... just doing it even when you don't want to....

because at the end of the day you're going to fail at some point. Well, a lot of points, but you fail a lot, I will say that, at the end of the day, when you fail a lot, you win more. If you fail on a piece, you'll probably get it the next day. It could click any day. So, if you say, ‘I'm going to give up on it because it's not working’. It's probably, you could have missed the day it was going to click... [Big Noise] just kind of teaches you that, like you need to put in dedication or work to get something....

I think the one thing we've been taught if like we don't like a piece of music, or we don't like doing certain things like a piece of music, we've been taught that sometimes you have to do things you don't want to do.... but you always end up getting good music at some point. So, it always works out, the faster you do things you don't want to do, the more you're going to get out of what you really want to do.”

Music feels more intuitive to her than many other subjects, and she experiences a strong sense of achievement when performing with others, attending residencies, or mastering new skills on her violin. She highlights that music has a unique ability to measure audible progress;

“If you know something's wrong, you can always tell with music, because every note has been put in prestigiously, everything's been made to a certain standard in it. So, you

can always tell what's meant to be there and what isn't, so it's really easy to also just pinpoint when you've done something wrong, but once you know you've done it wrong, you can go back, play it right.... you can hear that it's wrong, and then you can hear the progress through it after it.”

One of the most meaningful aspects of Big Noise for her has been the friendships she has formed. Through joint activities and residencies, she has connected with young people from different areas and age groups, her parent believes that “this helps her be a part of something bigger”. She also feels that this sense of community and the orchestral musical model fosters and develops her communicative skills;

“It's definitely the communication aspect of it, because it's not just that you have to communicate with other people in the orchestra. You can't just do your own thing, because it has to sound, basically all just one instrument, basically, yeah, violins have to sound like one. Everybody just has to sound like one. “

Working in this group orchestra model with supportive Big Noise staff, she feels her independence and agency has grown as well as a positive view of teamwork.

“It's okay to have somebody else there.....it's okay to have other people helping you through it as well....It's also taught us to ask questions, not just to sit there and not ask questions, but yeah, kind of have a bit more of a voice in your life”

Additionally, she highlights that it reinforces the idea that you can maintain individual subjectivity & uniqueness while fostering a cohesive group voice, and in sharing these experiences and a joint interest in music, she feels it has given her “more of an open mind” and that it is “easier to understand” her peers;

“I would just say that there's no really wrong or right way to play the music. Everybody plays it their own way....everybody has a different story. I don't think you could go to one person, and another person would have the exact same story. Everybody's different, but they're always tied together because of music, it's such a weird dynamic, in school, not everybody's going to be like that, and music, a lot of people are almost like same stories, but different stories. it's kind of hard to like place.”

Like her sister, when she plays music, she feels “quiet” and calm, in particular when “everything clicks in a piece”, she doesn't feel nervous when performing on stage;

“I also feel like if you have the ability, not many people do, but if you have the ability to tell a story through the instrument, it is a completely different story, But there's a warmth and a spark to certain people when they play. But you can feel it when somebody loves to play, just the thing that they're made to do.”

Parent Perspective

The parent reflects on growing up in the community and not having access to the same opportunities her daughters now enjoy. She describes Big Noise as having a profound impact on their lives and feels it has helped shaped who they are becoming;

“The opportunities for playing music just weren’t there when I was growing up. Not to be dramatic but it has been life changing for them. It’s definitely shaped their lives.”

Motivated by this experience, she recently began working in the Fundraising team at Big Noise, after having always wanted to work with them and having a passion for charity work;

“I had always really wanted to work for Big Noise, I really wanted to be a part of it for the job satisfaction it would bring, especially because it’s in my own community. I grew up here, I’ve seen the difference it makes. I think when you grow up in a community like Raploch, you do become passionate about the kids having the same opportunities, you can see what they’ve been missing out on.”

She understands that Big Noise is more than just a programme for children to develop their musical skills, but another place for them to feel safe, supported and loved;

“I think if I was to sum it up, I’d say the music has obviously become really important to my daughters, and that’s what they’re following is the music. But for us as parents, the music was always secondary. What was more important to us was that they had a safe space to go to with their peers....that there are other adults.... Not just for my kids, but for other kids, that they’ve got a point of contact with other adults.... a safe space that if someone needs an adult to speak to that there’s one there.”

Case Study 11 - Harrison & Jill, Big Noise Douglas

Harrison is 10 years old and “loves coming to Big Noise nights”, and according to his mum, Jill, he was immediately drawn to playing the cello after creating a cardboard one in his first Big Noise Douglas session at school when he was 6.

Harrison is on the waiting list for an ADHD and Autism diagnosis, and his mum and the staff at Big Noise have developed an individual programme to best suit his needs while attending Big Noise. Being able to focus on the music has been an outlet for Harrison at Big Noise, with the engaging teaching methods at Big Noise meaning he can experience a different type of learning environment than school, something which Jill believes is “less of a struggle” for him. Responding to the needs of some of the children in the programme, including Harrison, the Big Noise team created a smaller, more relaxed group which allows children who may be easily overwhelmed by larger groups, or who may require additional support, to still experience the benefits of group music playing in a comfortable environment.

Jill proudly remembers the day Harrison came home exclaiming “I can read the notes now!” even without the use of the specialised coloured overlays which Big Noise provide to assist participants with ADHD and other learning challenges. Harrison is now beginning to join in with the larger orchestra as his confidence is growing and with the Big Noise staff’s flexible approach Harrison can take time away if he needs it and he is supported in doing so. Jill highlights the teamwork of the staff team and their consistent openness and willingness to involve her and Harrison in their conversations;

“With Harrison, it's like, it's if I've got an issue we talk. There's been, especially since he moved [schools] there's been lots of different times where, like that, ‘Oh, he was struggling with [the larger group]. Let's have this conversation. And we actually started the [smaller group] for Harrison and a small group of other kids’, and like that one on one, I've had [staff] come and speak to me going, ‘Oh, lets, he's doing this, this is what's happening. Like, how can we figure and change this?’”

Jill believes that whether it's taking regular breaks or walks away from the group, the staff at Big Noise tailor their approach to the individual child and that this is felt by many of the parents;

“They're all great with them. And definitely it is a one on one with the kids. And it's not, I don't just see it with Harrison. I am friends with a couple of other mums that have kids at Big Noise, and it's the same with them, that they feel in the same boat as I do, is that if they've got a concern for their child or their child's not enjoying it, that it's not, they definitely don't look at the whole every orchestra as a whole, it's definitely well, if you're struggling, we'll see what your struggles are first and integrate that into the session....it's definitely not a one size fits all.”

For Harrison, regulating his emotions can be hard, but Jill believes Big Noise gives him an outlet away from technology or his phone. Jill believes that Harrison's social skills and confidence have come on massively since attending Big Noise, especially after moving schools, helping maintain structure, routine and a social circle for him. But most importantly, Jill believes Harrison is "happier" after Big Noise, more energised and stimulated;

"He only does Big Noise after school two nights a week, but the difference in a Monday and a Tuesday are so different. When he comes out of school on a Tuesday, at normal time he's done, he's fed up, he just wants to go home and relax where he's when he comes out of Big Noise, he's happy....just buzzing with energy...and on a Monday and Wednesday, he's actually able to tell me what he did at school, whereas the rest of the week he just can't."

Jill thinks one of the biggest things Harrison gets out of Big Noise is a "sense of belonging", knowing that it is "for him and only for him". He is excited to share what he learnt on the cello that day, urging his dad to video it, Harrison is proud of his personal achievements and enjoys sharing this with his family - "the smile is just one that'll melt your heart".

Case Study 12 – Harry, Big Noise Wester Hailes



Harry is in primary school at Wester Hailes and is now in his 3rd year of Big Noise playing the violin. As his confidence grows, Harry has friends at Big Noise across all the schools they work with in Edinburgh, which has widened his social network, something his mum hopes will help him as he transitions into Secondary school.

Harry's mum also thinks attending Big Noise's afterschool club 3 times a week helps Harry reduce the amount of time he spends on technology and instead he can develop his music skills and socialise with his friends having fun;

“For me it's something different after school, instead of coming home and going on an iPad until teatime. And it's not just about playing music — they do lots of games and activities. It's a mix of things, not just the instruments.”

Harry has performed many times with Big Noise, further boosting his confidence, something his mum is very proud of;

“Seeing them know exactly which strings to play without being told is just amazing. And then, when you watch them at the Christmas concert, it's just lovely to see them able to play a tune.”

Harry's mum feels supported by Big Noise staff, who she considers trusting, approachable, friendly and encouraging with continuous open dialogue between them. She also is hopeful that through developing his musical skills including rhythm skills, routine development and a sense of achievement. Harry's mum also believes that both the resilience and enjoyment Harry experiences within Big Noise has fostered a greater desire to participate in other community events such as weekly park runs.

“I just think it's brilliant. I think it's a really, really valuable skill. It gives the children something — maybe a snack or a treat — that helps them feel involved and loved for a couple of hours. I just think it's really important that they get this at school, and it's great. I think it's something that should be everywhere, to be honest. I know that's impossible, but I do think every area should have something like it.”

Case Study 13 - Jensen, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin



Jensen is 14 and has been attending Big Noise Fallin since he was in Primary 6 after he saw a poster for the programme and became interested in learning an instrument. Jensen was born with hearing loss and is also dyslexic, however he finds reading music easy - for him it “clicks” and it is “his language”. Big Noise has supported Jensen by providing overlays for his music, earplugs when he was younger, and consistent support as he grows within the programme.

“So, they just put me in same band for everyone else, not separating me, so I don't feel like a side, like pushed away, just keep, kept me with everyone. And they check in every now and then. When I was younger, they always checked on me, but now they know, ‘He's okay, we'll check on him once or three times in a whole session’, help me out if they can see that I'm struggling, but come help. Play the same part as me. Kind of just help me out... I feel like they're caring about every single person and understanding their needs.”

Jensen feels like he belongs at Big Noise;

“And you're all the same, and you've been included right, right from the beginning, so that you're just big part of Big Noise. You're a big part of that.”

Jensen's musical development and consistent performance opportunities through Big Noise have helped him grow his resilience, confidence and independence;

“It just makes you feel happy, like I'm able to understand that some things are going to be hard, object - obstacles coming my way, but I can face them. I can beat them.”

Jensen also believes Big Noise encouraged him to talk to more people and he has made lots of friends through the programme, from different schools and cities, he describes it as a safe place where no one discriminates against him due to his disability. His highlights are the many trips he gets to go on, especially going on the residential and

playing alongside the RSNO, developing meaningful connections with the musicians there as well as his musical skills, he recently felt like he'd "just met an older version" of himself. For Jensen, a career in music has become an achievable and possible option for his future. Jensen's mum believes that Big Noise's presence in the village is giving young people more opportunities to get involved in activities beyond the 'traditional football' offer, and that the stigma around playing music is fading as participation grows and perspectives shift.

If Jensen ever feels sad, he will think of a performance which went well, and he feels proud of himself. Jensen's mum feels he is safe when he is at Big Noise and also describes him as acting more independent and looking "taller" when at Big Noise which Jensen attributes to the routine and security of Big Noise.

"I feel more like I can express myself and show people who I really am... [outside of Big Noise] I hide away from folk that don't like me. Just kind of avoid people. But then now, coming to Big Noise, I've learned that I don't need to hide. I can just speak to them."

Case Study 14 - Maya, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin



Maya, aged 12, is from Fallin and has been a Big Noise Fallin participant for 3 1/2 years, starting in Primary 4 playing the Tenor Horn and then moving on to the French Horn after her Big Noise teachers introduced her to the instrument in High School. Maya attends the After School Club every Wednesday and Thursday in Fallin, and on Tuesday she takes the Big Noise bus to Stirling and attends Big Noise Raploch alongside other Fallin participants.

After sustaining an injury to her knee stopping her from continuing her love of football, Big Noise staff helped Maya feel more confident and encouraged her to 'push on' while helping her around and moving her music lessons to the ground floor. She describes the staff as 'accommodating', having made her 'feel better'. Unable to play football, Maya's passion now lies with music,

"I Love it. Like, I never got really into, like, classical music with instruments and that, until I joined Big Noise, until that happened with my knee, and then it's opened up a whole new gate... Like, so I never knew what jazz was. I never knew what I never knew. Any type of music, I just thought music was music. Didn't care very much. And then when I got into music, we learned about Jazz, we learned about Hip Hop, we learned about Rock and all that. It swang me the other way. And now I know every single type of music I can keep the beat to any music I want to, like see if I'm bored, but I'm listening to music, I can just easily tap the beat with my hand or my foot, yeah, and that's me concentrated for like hours."

Maya describes Big Noise as “really fun” and enjoys mixing with other kids she wouldn’t normally get to meet in Stirling. Maya believes that Big Noise staff helped her with social anxiety, which emerged because of school bullying and now she ‘hardly has it anymore’. Maya thinks Big Noise staff are ‘lovely’, ‘helpful’, and ‘real understanding’, and are always there for her if she has a bad day to talk with her and help her with it. She also uses music as an escape;

“So, when I play, it tunes out all the bad thoughts for me, and when I started, it helped a lot. And now I hardly think about my anxiety when I play music, because it just tunes it out for me.”

Maya can read music easily, despite her dyslexia, and she feels empowered through her musical skills;

“It feels empowering, Like I can do something what mostly other people can't do. I can play an instrument, but other people can't. And it feels like if I can do that, I can do more stuff.”

Big Noise has arranged and facilitated Maya to play with the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland twice. Having travelled to Aberdeen to play, she is looking forward to playing with the Big Noise United Orchestra next year. Maya believes playing in Big Noise has opened up lots of different gates for music careers and she can see herself being a musician when she’s older – as well as opening her own restaurant.

Maya thinks her concentration has improved since starting at Big Noise, that she ‘can think more deeply about stuff’ as her musical & listening skills as well as her ability to understand people have improved.

Maya enjoys practicing at home, as playing her instrument provides a release of energy and allows her to express her emotions

“If I’m ever, like, really bored, I can just get my instrument out and start playing. Like sometimes at school, I get really frustrated. I keep it in then when playing music, I just like, let it go out really loud...it just takes everything just away for me.....but without music, I’ll probably be just lying in my room and that doing nothing. and just like sinking into myself probably, but this keeps me up, my energy’s up, and it just helps me a whole lot.”

Case Study 15 – Mohammed & Sophia, Big Noise Govanhill



Mohammed first got involved with Big Noise in their summer club when he was in P4. He described his first impression as “amazing”, and he is still attending as he finishes up High school. Mohammed’s mum Sophia felt that attending the summer clubs helped relieve the energy and boredom Mohammed and his brothers felt when off from school, while keeping them entertained and developing new skills in the process.

Sophia describes Mohammed as having a “strong base at Big Noise”, and given Big Noise’s development of core musical skills, as well as learning the Euphonium, he is finding Nat 5 Music “easy”. In particular, he highlights that his coordination, listening and rhythm skills have flourished at Big Noise;

“I have to do, like, loads of different things at once.... I know which fingers go where I'm just so used to it, and then, like, I remember earlier in Big Noise they told me about how peripheral vision works, and so I use that to, like, watch the conductor as they move the baton, so I stay in time. So even its basic skills like that, they taught me how to do.”

Mohammed believes these skills also help him at school, when concentrating on multiple important things at once. He enjoys playing music in a group of friends at Big Noise, stating it can help relieve stress and provide a sense of joy and satisfaction after working on a difficult part of the music.

Mohammed has played with players from the RSNO [Royal Scottish National Orchestra] and RSC [Royall Conservatoire of Scotland] which not only ‘inspired’ him given how

much effort he could see they put into their work, but also increased his confidence, self-belief and public speaking skills. For Mohammed, Big Noise has helped him improve his social skills, sharing a joint interest and language in music with his friends, developing their 'bond' while playing music together;

"Before Big Noise....I was a very shy person....and, you know, ever since I came to Big Noise, I'm making new friends. It just made, it was just natural that any new person I talked to we were friends, yeah, you know, any, anyone in school, you know, started making more friends.... Big Noise just has that sort of environment where, like, you know you're safe, you know you can, like, make friends without, like, you know..."

One of Mohammed's young brothers also enjoys coming to Big Noise, in particular making new friends and learning the violin;

"When I first joined Big Noise, I was actually kind of nervous, but when I when I saw the other people and some, learning the instrument I wanted to play and I was, like, very happy. I made different friends from different schools.... It's like, I never want to leave."

It's not just her sons who recognises the effect Big Noise has had on their social life, but Sophia and the whole family have developed meaningful relationships with other Big Noise families, regularly meeting for dinner or celebrating birthdays together. When asked how she feels about her sons having the opportunities they have with Big Noise, Sophia said;

"I feel blessed. Honestly, if you ask me.... Life with the cost of living. - everything is so expensive. See, if I look at all the things he has done in his life, if it was me, there was no Big Noise....those residential, they are, they are, like, funded. We don't have to worry about the money.... But if it was me, I couldn't have afforded it honestly, I couldn't, so he's going to miss out all those experiences if we don't have Big Noise".

Both Sophia and Mohammed describe the Big Noise staff as supportive, in particular in developing individualised support for Mohammed's younger brothers, one who has been diagnosed as Autistic and the other waiting for an assessment. They both feel that they could go to any of the staff as a space to talk if they needed to. For Mohammed, he sees the Big Noise staff as friends, having developed connections over years. Sophia previously worked as a support worker at Big Noise, and describes the positive environment and willingness to listen to individuals as huge benefits for all the children;

"But here it was, like, 'High five. How was your day?' That was so friendly. And I think after a hectic day school, when kids come over here, this is what they're looking for.... They need to calm down. And everybody is not privileged to have a calm, welcoming home as well.... but when they come over here, they see Big Noise staff like friends, they just wipe everything out.... there was no classroom atmosphere of it's like, like, 'No, you have to sit straight, put your feet down'. No, everybody was chill, fun, doing stuff, talking,

chit chatting, jokes and enjoying music, that is quite very different from the school atmosphere. That's what I love."

Case Study 16 - Paige, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin



12-year-old Paige is from Raploch, and she first got involved with Big Noise Raploch in primary 5 after watching staff playing in their winter concert. The next day she went back and told them she would like to play the French Horn as it looked interesting and fun. Paige soon became the first person in her cohort to play the French Horn, and although the initial stares made her feel nervous and weird, she describes the moment she first played with the orchestra; “Oh, wow, this is the instrument for me, and I'm going to love it ...my stress just went all away”. Now Paige plays in Big Noise’s highest level Symphonic Band 4 days a week, and she enjoys growing her creative skills, composing her own music with her friends in the Young Leader’s group.

“Because I had gotten so, I had gotten into a real love of music, right from when I joined it, and it was just a passion of mine, and I just wanted to keep doing it”

For Paige having her own instrument is a big deal and opened the door for increasing responsibility and independence;

“I feel quite good about my instrument.... now that I've got it, I feel quite responsible. Because before, I felt like I wasn't properly responsible for anything, but now I feel like I'm responsible for loads of things.”

Paige describes the Big Noise environment as “calm”, and although sometimes it can get a “hectic” it’s only because “everyone’s excited”, and it can act as an outlet, a place to come and relax, after a potentially stressful day at school;

“Even though there's loads of noise, that Big Noise, it does sometimes help you feel much more calm... [One day after school] I felt quite frustrated. Then when I started playing that just went away, it went away.”

But the best part of Big Noise for Paige is “how kind everyone is”, especially the staff. When Paige first moved into her school, Big Noise supported her, providing a safe space and comforting conversations while she experienced bullying at school. Paige believes Big Noise helped reduce her anxiety and increased her confidence during this time.

“The staff look after the children like their own children. They are so kind and lovely.... they treat you like you're basically, like, you're the last thing on earth...and like, they treat you like, so nice and like, special and everything. They make you special in some sort of way.”

When asked if it's she think's having a trusting relationship with Big Noise staff is important, Paige articulated;

“I think that's very important. Because sometimes you might want to talk to people that aren't your family, because your family might sometimes get very worried about you. So, it's just like, it's very important to speak to someone that you trust is that's not your family as well.”

Paige feels proud of herself after managing to overcome a difficult or particularly challenging piece of music, something which frustrates her but that she manages to work on “step by step” each day. This sense of achievement, alongside the fun and joy she experiences playing with her friends in a group orchestra makes Paige feel happy and boosts her confidence further;

“I became more confident when I was able to play quite high notes on my French horn, because it's harder to play high notes on a French horn than it is on a Flute... Because French horn, you have to tighten your lips up so much, they get really red and sore. But when I managed to achieve that, I got really confident in myself ...[my confidence] will follow me all down, like, different routes, whatever path I want to take up, it will follow me.”

Appendix 4a: What did we do with all this information?

This section outlines how the evidence base featured in the Methodology was analysed and incorporated into the summary report and the interactive layered systems map.

Grouping and Theming Impacts

Across all Big Noise sites, the analysis showed consistently positive impacts across different elements of the programme, even though each location delivers it slightly differently. The words people used most often, and the first impacts they mentioned, helped indicate not only the strength of these impacts but also what participants themselves saw as most important. These impacts formed the basis of where these impacts could be grouped together.

Across all the evidence sources, the analysis showed consistently positive impacts across the programme, despite some differences in delivery across the Big Noise centres.

The outcomes could be grouped in many ways, but researchers identified four main themes that were most strongly supported by the evidence and incorporated the full range of impacts described.

1. How people feel (Emotional wellbeing)

This theme covers the emotional effects of taking part. People described feeling happier, more relaxed, more confident, and less isolated. Many said they felt valued, seen and cared for, which helped them feel stronger and more able to cope with challenges in their lives.

2. How people learn skills that support them at school (Positive school pathways)

This theme relates to learning and readiness for education. Participants described gaining skills like listening, joining in, following routines, and feeling comfortable in new settings such as nurseries, schools, orchestras, clubs, college or work environments. Participants also talked of feeling familiar with Big Noise, so made it easier to trust and engage with other learning over time.

3. How people make friends and feel part of a community (Social networks)

This theme focuses on connection and belonging. Participants spoke about making friends, feeling part of a friendly, welcoming community, and enjoying spending time with others. They described spaces where people support and encourage each other, where children play together, and adults feel less alone. This helped reduce loneliness and build a strong network of relationships and shared identity.

4. How people learn and grow through music (Musical development)

This theme captures how music itself supports development. Children and adults spoke about exploring instruments, taking part in music-making, trying new things, and seeing themselves improve through practice. They developed confidence, creativity, and resilience, whether through performing, managing nerves, or feeling pride in their progress. Music helped many people feel calm, energised, and motivated, building positive habits and opening doors to new opportunities.

Once the themes were agreed, the researcher carried out a further review of all research findings to ensure that the evidence aligned with, and was accurately reflected within, the four overarching themes. These four themes have taken a central focus of this report, providing structure and a simplified logic to an otherwise complex mish mash of individual impacts.

How this Evidence supports the Systems Mapping approach

The Systems Mapping approach incorporates the evidence from the individual impacts, that have been thematically organised, to show not only what outcomes occur, but how they are generated through the programme's design and delivery.

By mapping these impacts, from emotional wellbeing to social networks, musical development, and positive school pathways, we begin to see the mechanisms through which change unfolds for participants.

This thematic evidence then feeds directly into the systems mapping process. Each impact identified in the data becomes a "node" within the systems map, and the relationships between them are drawn from the detailed qualitative accounts provided by participants and other stakeholders. The result is a visual model that demonstrates how different elements of a participant's experience are interconnected rather than isolated.

For example, a parent describing increased confidence after attending Little Noise sessions contributes to multiple elements of the map:

- the social uplift created by the group environment,
- improved emotional wellbeing,
- strengthened social networks, and
- enhanced family engagement in musical activity.

In the systems map, this single piece of evidence helps to illustrate the chain of effects, showing how supportive group design leads to social confidence, which in turn contributes to broader wellbeing and can open pathways to further engagement with the Big Noise programme.

By presenting evidence in this interconnected form, the systems map:

- makes pathways of change clearer and easier to understand,

- shows how impacts reinforce one another,
- highlights interdependencies between emotional, social, educational and musical benefits, and
- provides a holistic picture of each individual's experience across different layers of the programme.

Ultimately, the systems map helps convert a large and varied evidence base into a coherent, visual explanation of how Big Noise creates change, showing that impacts do not operate in isolation, but emerge through a network of mutually reinforcing experiences shaped by the programme's design.

Appendix 4b: Participatory Systems Mapping

Map Nodes

Evidence was compiled for every one of the 62 nodes contained in the final map and is outlined below.

Improved employment outcomes

Good employment outcomes are those that align with people's skills and interests, helping them build a more secure and fulfilling future. Good employment outcomes are especially valuable for those facing barriers linked to inequality and deprivation.

I was a participant since primary three, I think, and then graduated in April this year, and school this year. And then I did my summer internship here, and then applied for a job [at Big Noise] and eventually got it!

Former Participant & current Staff, Big Noise Govanhill, Case Study, 2025

Big Noise has been the one thing that's been constant for me throughout that five and a half years I've been at Uni, and then it got me a job. I work in one of the Primary schools. I wanted to take a year out before going back to Uni, but I thought, I need a job. And I really don't think I would have got that job if it wasn't for me being at Big Noise.

Volunteer, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case Study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Longevity & Commitment

Opportunities for further impact: Systematic tracking of participant pathways beyond education would allow this to be evidenced in the future.

Positive pathways beyond school

Positive pathways beyond school include college, training, work, university and volunteering.

Big Noise has provided me with the unique opportunity of participating with music sessions in Castlevue Primary school. This is a school for young people with ASN and disabilities. I aspire to be a music therapist, so this is incredibly valuable to me.

Big Noise Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Leavers Focus Group, 2024

In a survey of Senior Leadership from local schools (2025), **100%** of respondents agreed that Big Noise encourages enjoyment in learning across their school or nursery settings, and **59%** reported this impact as significant.

Delivery Principles: Inclusivity & Accessibility

Opportunities for further impact: Significant planning is required to directly support young people leaving the Big Noise programme to positive post-school destinations. Providing formal employment at Big Noise requires extensive and appropriate support around training and recruitment.

Communication with families

Families receive information about their child's progress and support needs and are engaged through performance opportunities and community celebration events. This encourages further informal sharing of information.

I feel like, compared to school, [Big Noise] can have that conversation with you, and you are involved, and they want to involve you. And, yeah, you know, I've got Big Noise's [phone] number, and they can call me whenever, and it's even just a case of if he's feeling down, or if there's anything maybe going on, you know, anything in our personal life, they're always there to support to see what you know they can do.

Parent, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case Study, 2025

In the Teaching and Nursery Staff Survey (2025) when asked about their wishes for next year, front-line Teachers and Nursery staff were keen for Big Noise to provide further opportunities for families to be involved through events that showcase pupil learning and musical growth.

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships

Opportunities for further impact: It is a challenge to get the balance right between direct delivery and family engagement. Some Big Noise staff cited the need for more time to engage further with families.

Holiday Clubs

Big Noise offer school holiday clubs for after-school participants that are free and open to all. They involve playing music, sports, trips and concerts, and food is provided.

They're actually quite fun, because sometimes you play different pieces, depending on when you go. So, October club, you play Halloween. Summer club, you play quite happy, upbeat music. And sometimes you'd do problem solving skills and teamwork skills and everything. I think it wouldn't be the same without the summer camp. It would not feel the same.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case Study, 2025

Holiday clubs offer up to **four days per week** during the October and Spring holidays and up to **five weeks** of the summer holidays - an average of **24 hours of activities**

every week. Almost **500 children** attended the Holiday Club across the six Big Noise sites in summer 2025.

Delivery Principles: Intensity & Immersion

Opportunities for further impact: Some participants sign up to Holiday Club but do not attend. Big Noise staff carry out targeted recruitment and sustained communication with priority families to support engagement.

Trusting relationships with staff

Trust is built through long-term, caring relationships, which provide consistent support.

Sometimes you might want to talk to people that aren't your family, because your family might sometimes get very worried about you. So, it's just like, it's very important to speak to someone that you trust, that's not your family as well.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case Study, 2025

We don't see the teachers as teachers. We look at them as friends, always able to talk to them whether it's appropriate or not.

Big Noise Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Leavers Focus Group, 2024

In the Teaching and Nursery Staff Survey (2025), **88%** of respondents agreed that the in-school Big Noise programme **encouraged positive relationships** between the adults and children.

In the Big Noise Staff and Volunteer Survey (2025), respondents rated how well the programme supports **positive relationships between staff and participants**, with one third selecting 10/10 and an **overall average score of 8.5**.

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Longevity & Commitment

Opportunities for further impact: Some Big Noise staff feel that increasing contact time, clearer approaches to supporting challenging behaviour, and more opportunities for one-to-one interaction, would support even stronger relationships with participants.

Music as a career option

Music as a career pathway might include working as a musician, a music teacher or in a role that requires musical skills, such as a sound technician or music therapist.

There's not a lot of people that say 'I would like to be a world-famous violinist when I grow up', because they don't know that world. And this is something we've been

thinking about for a while as parents, because he's not academic, but he is clever. So, it's like, where does he go after school? And it wasn't actually until last week, I was at the concert, and I thought, yeah, that's a career path. That's an actual career path.

Parent, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case Study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Excellence, Aspiration & Inspiration; Quality Relationships

Opportunities for further impact: Future systematic tracking of Big Noise participant's employment destinations will provide information on this.

Ability to focus

This is the ability to concentrate on a task, particularly one that is challenging, frustrating or lacks interest. Focus is required for increasingly longer periods of time as a child or young person gets older.

If I'm finding it hard to focus in school, I think back at 'Oh, look at how long I've been doing Big Noise for and look at how good I am because I have put in this amount of focus', so if I put in this amount of focus into school, then I can be just as good as Big Noise in school, so it's something to give you that motivation.

Participant, Big Noise Torry, Participatory Mapping Workshop, 2025

Delivery Principles: Collective & Co-operative Learning

Opportunities for further impact: Big Noise often runs in busy and bustling spaces. Staff ease this by creating calmer breakout spaces, but staff surveys show that limited space in some centres can cause challenges in creating relaxed environments.

Work experience opportunities at Big Noise

Big Noise offers a range of paid and volunteering roles, which provide young people and adults with opportunities to gain work experience.

It was just meant to be a thing for a year, but now it's like a joke that you just can't get rid of me because I should have been long gone. I was enjoying it so much. Again, I was getting out of my own wee bubble of flat, flat and uni. I was getting out of that, and I was coming into a community where there's so much positivity, there's so much hope, and honestly, the most wonderful children and the most wonderful staff as well.

Volunteer, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

In 2026, Big Noise supported:

- **42 volunteering roles** across their six sites - 44% are under the age of 25.

- **29 paid roles** to participants within Big Noise, to allow them to develop skills and work experience in a range of areas – three of these are Modern Apprenticeships.

Delivery Principles: Collective & Co-operative Learning

Opportunities for further impact: Volunteers play a valuable role in Big Noise by offering practical support and positive relationships to participants. However, there has been little research into the benefits the programme may have for volunteers themselves. Exploring the impact of Big Noise on its volunteers could be a useful focus for future study.

Developing musical skills

Big Noise teaches a wide range of musical skills including; playing (multiple) instruments, singing, keeping rhythm, reading music, transposition, improvisation, composition, playing in an ensemble, performance, stage presence and learning about different musical genres.

I remember we had this really specific piece, and I could never play this one part. And then I kind of just woke up one day played it, and then I could, I was like, yeah, that's quite it's quite weird. But then every like, since then, everything just got easier. So that's when I was like, Oh, this the skills going up a bit. I don't know how, they're probably just playing it over and over. It's made me realise that, you know, it's getting better, yeah, even if it doesn't seem like it is but just a long process, but it's worth it.

Former Participant & Current Staff, Big Noise Govanhill, Case study, 2025

In a survey of Senior Leadership from local schools, **82%** of respondents believed the programme has a **significant impact on their school's music provision.**

In a survey of Teaching and Nursery Staff (2025), **100%** of respondents agreed that the Big Noise programme **positively impacts on the musical skills** development of their pupils.

Delivery Principles: Intensity & Immersion; Quality Relationships; Collective & Co-operative Learning

All are welcome

An environment that is welcoming and supportive, regardless of background, ability, or circumstance, so that all people can participate fully and with dignity.

Like I was just, whenever they see you, you don't ever feel unwelcomed. They remember everything, absolutely everything, like you just feel like you're their kids, you know, I

mean it's just amazing, honestly.

Former Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

Each week in 2025-2026, Big Noise delivered:

- **In-school** and nursery programmes to **3,050 children**.
- **After-school** programmes to **945 children and young people** (31% of primary and 10% of secondary children eligible for the programme).
- An additional **115 children** receive **1:1 or 1:2 tuition** to build confidence and maintain connection until they can rejoin the full programme.

Big Noise provides additional **tailored support to 339 participants**, through the Priority Family Pathway. This approach supports children experiencing a wide range of vulnerabilities.

Delivery Principles: Inclusivity & Accessibility

Opportunities for further impact: Big Noise are currently working to improve accessibility and inclusion further across all of their sites. In particular, they are working on reaching more priority families flagged by Secondary schools who are not yet engaged in the after-school programme. Staff capacity is the main limiting factor.

Longterm commitment to delivery

Once a Big Noise centre is established, the programme is committed to the community for decades to come.

The list below shows when each Big Noise site was established. Big Noise is committed to supporting participants throughout their school years and beyond.

- Raploch: 2008
- Govanhill: 2013
- Torry: 2015
- Douglas: 2017
- Fallin: 2021
- Wester Hailes: 2022

Sistema Scotland's funding model is based on building long-term partnerships with private and public sector funders (currently £2.2m) to ensure the sustainability of the programmes. However, Big Noise still rely on public sector investment from the Scottish Government to maintain and support growth across each centre and leverage private funding.

Delivery Principles: Longevity & Commitment; Intensity & Immersion; Quality Relationships

Immersive programme engagement

Big Noise offers lifelong engagement, from Little Noise, through the school years and into adulthood via community orchestras. Programmes run year-round across schools, after-school clubs, and holiday sessions.

Every day at school, you would go straight from primary school, Monday to Thursday [...], when you're little you're there for a little bit shorter time periods. But when you get older, you were there all the time. You feel like you lived here, to be honest. You come straight after school, then once you finish, you'd rather go practice at your pal's house, or, I don't know, just go home and live your daily days. But you're here Monday to Thursday, definitely.

Former Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

The different delivery models offer varying levels of immersion:

- In-school sessions (P1–P3): Pupils receive **two 45-minute sessions** each week, providing a lighter, more introductory level of engagement.
- After-school sessions (P3–S6): Pupils can take part in **four 2-hour sessions** each week, offering a much more intensive and immersive experience.

In 2025-26, **68% of participants attended all** the sessions they were eligible for.

Delivery Principles: Longevity & Commitment; Intensity & Immersion; Quality Relationships

Opportunities for further impact: Many young people attend two or three out of four nights a week. Some participants drop out temporarily, often during exam season, or when other interests like football or spending time with friends feel more appealing. Big Noise now offers extra support and flexibility during these moments and keeps in touch so young people can return when they're ready.

Confidence

Confidence describes a sense of self-belief, emotional security, and personal agency.

Big Noise helped me with my confidence and made a lot of good friends [...]. I wasn't able to perform in front of people and really self-conscious about my playing. I couldn't play by myself in front of people and was always quiet. Have gradually gotten better being at Big Noise.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Leavers Focus Group, 2024

In a survey of Teaching and Nursery Staff (2025):

- **82%** of respondents agreed Big Noise in-school delivery **boosts pupil confidence**
- **84%** agreed it gave pupils meaningful opportunities for **personal achievement**
- **78%** agreed the after-school programme strengthens key life-skills such as **confidence**, communication, leadership and resilience.

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Collective & Co-operative Learning

Empowerment

Empowerment is the freedom and power to control your own life and what happens to you.

I got into [playing music] really well. I read music quite easily. My dyslexia got bad, but I can still read the music. [...] It feels empowering. Like I can do something what mostly other people can't do. I can play an instrument, but other people can't. And it feels like if I can do that, I can do more stuff.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

In 2025, 43 young people at Big Noise Torry completed a survey designed by participants themselves:

- **74%** agreed that Big Noise helps me to **be myself**
- **81%** agreed that Big Noise has helped me **express my feelings**

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships

Improved engagement with education

Engagement with education involves active involvement, participation, motivation, and investment in the learning process. It underpins attendance at school and the achievement of learning outcomes.

[Big Noise] helped me quite a lot, because I said I was going into high school, and they asked if you ever need any help, just come to us, especially with your homework, and, like, music homework and everything. And then also, I've just had my music test, right? And Big Noise help. They didn't help me with that, but because I came here, I managed to get 100%. I felt quite proud of myself, and I felt like I achieved something. Yeah, because I thought I was gonna get quite a low score, but then I realised maybe I might

get a high score because of Big Noise.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study 2025

In a survey of Teaching and Nursery Staff (2025):

- **86%** agreed Big Noise delivery aligned well with the curriculum and **helped with schoolwork**
- **39%** agreed it encouraged school **attendance**.

In a survey of Senior Leadership from local schools (2025):

- **59%** of felt Big Noise delivery had a moderate effect on school **attendance**
- **24%** believed the impact was significant.

Delivery Principles: Excellence, Aspiration & Inspiration

Time management & Organisation

Time management skills include planning, estimating the time required to complete tasks and prioritising effectively.

I work seven days, even if I'm not working, my schedule is seven days a week. There's always a day I'm doing something. If it's not college, it's work, studying or personal stuff I need to do. Time management is a really big thing. That's where it branched from: counting bars, being here for non-negotiable meetings, the mutual respect of needing to be here on time. That helped me later in high school with my attendance. I got threatened to not go to prom or graduate because my attendance was slipping. Here was what helped that, I'd say.

Former Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

In a survey of Teaching and Nursery Staff (2025):

- **75%** agreed that Big Noise's in-school sessions help build pupils' meta-skills, such as self-discipline, **organisation** and time management skills.
- **79%** respondents agreed the Big Noise after-school programme positively impacted pupils' healthy behaviours including improved **discipline and time management**.

Delivery Principles: Longevity & Commitment; Intensity & Immersion

Opportunities for further impact: The proportion of school teachers who neither agreed nor disagreed about the programme's impacts suggests that greater awareness of what the Big Noise programme offers to schools and partner organisations may be beneficial.

Performance Opportunities

Big Noise performance opportunities include informal demonstrations to families, participating in school and community events, and taking the stage at larger events alongside professional musicians.

I don't really get stage fright, but when I was first starting, and I was in a concert I was like 'Oh, I don't know what I'm doing!'. And I think it applies to more than just that, like at school if there's an opportunity where we have to make a presentation and present it to the school or your class it's kind of similar because it's the same feelings, you have to be on a stage and you're in front of people, in essence it's putting on a performance, it helps with that stage fright and that nervousness and that giddiness.

Participant, Big Noise Torry, Participatory Mapping Workshop, 2025

In Big Noise Govanhill, there were **29 musical performances** and events held in 2024-25, involving more than 600 participants and over 1000 audience members.

Big Noise **Torry** recorded **32 performance events** held in 2025-26, involving more than 760 participants and 1,300 audience members.

Delivery Principles: Excellence, Aspiration & Inspiration

Opportunities for further impact: Information gathering on performances is in development to ensure consistent recording of numbers of participants and audiences involved across Big Noise sites. Teaching & Nursery staff identified opportunities for Big Noise to become more involved in wider school events and performances, expressing a desire for the programme to build stronger links and collaborate more closely with whole-school activities.

Commitment & self-discipline

Self-discipline is the ability to control and regulate actions, while commitment is a dedication to a goal, idea, or cause. Together, they enable focused effort and persistent action toward goals.

I work step by step each day. And so even at my house, I sometimes just practice my humming. [...]. The only time I don't take my instrument at home is during different holidays. I take it home over the weekend and everything. It's definitely helped me at Big Noise because now I'm able to play more notes, understand the rhythms, and able to

play the music.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

In a survey of Teaching and Nursery Staff (2025):

- **75%** agreed that Big Noise's in-school sessions help build pupils' meta-skills, such as **self-discipline**, organisation and time management skills.
- **79%** respondents agreed the Big Noise after-school programme positively impacted pupils' healthy behaviours including improved **discipline and time management**.

Delivery Principles: Longevity & Commitment

Opportunities for further impact: The proportion of school teachers who neither agreed nor disagreed about the programme's impacts suggests that greater awareness of what the Big Noise programme offers to schools and partner organisations may be beneficial.

Listening & communication skills

Listening & communication skills are the ability to effectively exchange information and ideas. This includes listening and effectively sharing thoughts, feelings and experiences.

I work with a child who joined the school mid-way through the year. They did not speak any English and were therefore quite isolated within the classroom. A few months later, the classroom teacher shared with me that she was really pleased to see them joining in with the singing and other musical activities during Big Noise sessions and that she felt the sessions were helping this child develop their language skills and helping them feel a valued part of the class.

Big Noise Staff Survey, 2025 evaluation

In primary five I wasn't that really good at concentrating. My math was going down, my English was going down, and my dyslexia wasn't helping, but then when I started doing Big Noise, it helped a lot. And my concentration went higher and higher and higher and higher. And now every single report my parents get is always good, because my concentration as well. I can know what I'm doing different straight away. I used to be terrible at listening and that, and now I'm brilliant at it.

Participant, Raploch & Fallin Big Noise, Case study, 2025

In 2025, 43 Big Noise Torry participants completed a peer-designed survey - **79% agreed** that Big Noise helps them:

- feel more **confident talking with other people**
- get better at **listening to other people**
- helped them **speak to new people.**

Delivery Principles: Collective & Co-operative Learning

Improved academic performance

Academic performance describes a person's success in meeting their learning goals. This includes their development of key skills, as well as topic knowledge.

I think [my musical skills are] very much improved. I went through a phase of not understanding music theory in general, I remember learning stuff about rhythm, and I was just like - I don't understand that at all. But again, with that, we split into little groups and eventually worked through that. ...But now it's kind of gotten to the point where, more recently, I've been able to explain it to other people. That has made me feel better because something I didn't understand and had to get explained to me, I'm doing that for other people.

Former Participant & current Staff, Big Noise Govanhill, Case study, 2025

Big Noise is an amazing project and has benefitted so many young people. This has helped young people achieve better outcomes as they have had the chance to succeed in music and gain qualifications. Big Noise also support young people beyond school and help give them a positive destination.

Teacher, Teaching & Nursery Staff Survey, 2025

In a school Senior Leadership Team survey (2025):

- 59% described the impact of Big Noise on participants' **broader academic skills** as moderate, while 35% described it as significant.
- 47% described the impact of Big Noise on **attainment** as moderate, while 47% described it as significant.

Delivery Principles: Intensity & Immersion

Opportunities for further impact: It is difficult to analyse Big Noise's impact on academic attainment in a statistically reliable way. Big Noise sites that currently have participants old enough to sit exams are spread across many different schools. Because of this, the dataset is not big enough to run a meaningful statistical comparison or produce robust conclusions.

Youth Voice

Big Noise involve children, families, and communities in shaping how Big Noise is planned, run, and improved. Formal Youth Voice sessions run monthly across four sites where older participants engage in structured activities such as consultations, research and decision-making processes, including having an active role in recruitment of staff.

[Big Noise] do sometimes do surveys and stuff where you can ask, like, is there anything you'd like to change. They have actually asked about food, do you want anything different? I've asked about that. And then in our orchestra group, sometimes it'll just be like, what songs do you want to do? There's a list you can mark what ones. Yeah, so they do listen to you. They'll try and change things as much as they can if it's acceptable.

Participant, Big Noise Torry, Case study 2025

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships

Opportunities for further impact: The evaluation highlights a recognised challenge in enabling young people's voices to be heard while ensuring their participation is used appropriately and remains focused on the programme's core activities.

Team around the child & family support

The team around a child consists of trusted adults, like family members, teachers, and Big Noise staff. They work collaboratively to nurture the child's wellbeing, development, and confidence.

School can only do so much, but Big Noise has been somewhere we could be open about the challenges she is facing. The teachers and staff know her, they understand, and they make sure we know that they are there. It was never just about attending; it has always been about the best way they can support my daughter.

Parent, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

The relationships we have with young people are built over a long period of time, based on a knowledge of their best days and their not so good days. Based on trust with families, care of how they are as people and then how they are progressing and noticing who they are. The relationships are two way and very much a partnership with a musical purpose. Schools are key in this, parents and care givers are key and these things working together with the young person at the centre are what makes the difference, I think.

Big Noise Staff Survey, 2025 evaluation

Big Noise are also very much there for not just the kids, but the parents as well... I feel like there's times I've been able to confide in Big Noise and we've been able to work

together... to support him as best as they can, individually as well.

Parent, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Innovation & Flexibility

Opportunities for further impact: Partnerships across organisations, including schools and social work departments, provide a strong foundation, with opportunities to further strengthen communication and information sharing. A review of partnership working could support the development of closer, more effective and collaborative relationships.

Big Noise is a safe space

Safe spaces are those where people feel protected from discrimination, judgment or harm, whether that's emotional or physical. They are spaces in which people can express themselves, share experiences, and participate without fear or exclusion.

I think if I was to sum it up, I'd say the music has obviously become really important to my daughters, and that's what they're following is the music. But for us as parents, the music was always secondary. What was more important to us was that they had a safe space to go to with their peers, that there are other adults. Not just for my kids, but for other kids, that they've got a point of contact with other adults, a safe space that if someone needs an adult to speak to that there's one there.

Parent, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

It was comforting to know that if there was something up, like if I had a bad day at school, there was always the support workers and the staff that I could talk to about that, and they would always be there.

Former Participant & current Staff, Big Noise Govanhill, Case study, 2025

In the Teacher & Nursery Staff Survey (2025):

- **88%** of respondents agreed that Big Noise provides a safe and supportive space, particularly for pupils who may struggle in other settings.

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Inclusivity & Accessibility

Opportunities for further impact: Some children feel overwhelmed in the busy Big Noise environment; while centres provide calm spaces and support, the inclusion review found that additional and better-designed spaces would be beneficial in some locations.

Music qualifications

In Scotland, music qualifications take two forms. The first are Grades, awarded by ABRSM, which test ability on specific instruments. The second are part of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence and cover a range of aspects of music composition and performance. These can often be studied at school, alongside a young person's other subjects.

Big Noise helped with the performance part [of my music exams]. It gives you a subject that you can excel in [...] the fact that you have that, from early exposure to it, it helps you to get a better grade.

Participant, Big Noise Torry, Participatory Mapping workshop, 2025

Going through school with [music] exams was easier because past practice from Big Noise, [a high] standard was already set.

Participant, Leavers Focus Group, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, 2024

In the Teacher & Nursery Staff Survey (2025)

- **100%** of respondents agreed that the Big Noise in-school programme positively impacted on the **musical skills** of pupils
- **94%** felt that it helped to raise **attainment**, 47% significantly
- **86%** felt the programme helped pupils meet Curriculum for Excellence music benchmarks
- **82%** felt that the programme provided them with **curriculum support**

Delivery Principles: Longevity & Commitment; Intensity & Immersion; Excellence, Aspiration & Inspiration

Opportunities for further impact: There is potential for this data to be shared by partner organisations.

Signposting to other organisations

Signposting involves pointing someone to information, advice or support from another organisation. This can be simply directing someone to a website, referring them to another organisation or personally introducing them to someone who can help.

I think if I was to go to them with a concern, even if it wasn't about [my child], they would help and try and talk me through what it is if they can help and like also, there's things that they can't help with. If there's something that they can help signpost me to, they

would.

Parent, Big Noise Douglas, Case study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships

Respect

Respect involves having due regard for the feelings, wishes or rights of others.

Everybody just felt it, when you walked in a room, everybody was set to high standards. You know, instead of getting talked to like a wee wean, you're actually getting talked to like a human being, like a human being and your own person.

Former Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

Everyone's good at different things. So you can't, you can't just be like, just because they're taking ages for one thing, like, I don't know how to explain it, but you can't just judge other people off of things. Everyone's just good at different things.

Participant, Big Noise Torry, Case study, 2025

In the Teacher & Nursery Staff Survey (2025)

- **88%** of front-line teachers agreed that the in-school programme encourages **positive adult-child relationships**
- **78%** agreed that Big Noise helps classes **work as a team**.

Delivery Principles: Inclusivity & Accessibility; Quality Relationships

Exposure to different cultures

Engaging with and learning about diverse traditions, languages, beliefs, and ways of life.

I have friendships all over the world!

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin Leavers Focus Group, 2024

Big Noise regularly work with local and national partners to provide a broad range of experiences and insights into different cultures and ideas. One example of this is the collaboration between the National Galleries of Scotland and young people at Big Noise Torry, when they explored themes around racism, inequalities and the environment. Working alongside an artist through a series of workshops, the young people an artwork

titled 'Temples of Care' was created.



The collaborative piece offers lots of little details created to represent ourselves as individuals, and as a community here at Big Noise. We each made artworks which were sewn into the work, to represent the 'threading together' of our different voices, experiences and perspectives. We chose words we thought of, and feelings we felt when looking at the portrait. Our artist-educator Ursula also drew inspiration from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child when designing the work.

Co-created by young people from Big Noise Torry and artist-educator Ursula Kam-Ling Cheng.

Made during 'Temples of Care', a National Galleries of Scotland outreach project, 2025.

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Inclusivity & Accessibility

Friendships around music

These are the friendships that are formed with others through listening to, learning about and playing music, based on common interest and knowledge on the subject of music.

Big Noise gives you a deep connection with people. There is always someone there that you know when you go somewhere, so you don't worry so much about going to new places. And it gives you multiple connections with people, so they are from Torry but also in Big Noise.

Big Noise Participant, Torry Mapping Workshop, 2025

You just kinda get to know the person that you are sitting next to. I never knew the person that I sat next to at the beginning of the year, but now we are like best pals.
Big Noise Participant, Govanhill Mapping Workshop, 2025

In 2025, 43 Big Noise Torry participants completed a peer-designed survey - **79%** agreed that:

- being part of Big Noise helps them feel more confident **talking with other people**
- Big Noise has helped them **speak to new people**.

Delivery Principles: Collective & Co-operative Learning; Quality Relationships

Reduced Loneliness

Loneliness is the feeling of being socially disconnected or alone. Reducing loneliness requires an increase in the number or quality of social relationships, like friendships.

Well, they've encouraged me and helped me. I think the first, when I started, at first I thought, Oh, this is going to be hell. No, it was. But I think I've got through those days, and I was able to say, right, when I got to the first concert, I thought, right, yeah, that's fine. Maybe, as I said, taken me in and driven me out my shell, maybe just slightly more. I've maybe been in there too long. Now I've got an interest and a purpose to come in here.

Member of the Adult Community Group, Big Noise Douglas, Case study, 2025

In 2025, 43 Big Noise Torry participants completed a peer-designed survey - **79%** agreed that being part of Big Noise:

- helps them feel more confident **talking with other people**
- helped them **speak to new people**.

Delivery Principles: Collective & Co-operative Learning; Quality Relationships

Community-based groups for adults

Big Noise host a range of freely accessible community groups for adults. These include group choirs, ukelele playing, traditional music bands and adult orchestras. Many of the groups provide community concerts and support local events and celebrations.

As at Feb 2026, 160 participants are signed up to the range of adult community groups operating across the Big Noise centres. These offer free, regular social space with a musical focus. They provide opportunities to develop musical skills, access to instruments, agreeing musical choices, hosting performances (ceilidhs, Burns Suppers, Summer and celebration concerts), and playing in public community events.

Delivery Principles: Collective & Co-operative Learning; Quality Relationships

Opportunities for further impact: This evaluation did not carry out extensive research into the value and impact of the community groups. Further work in this area would be required to capture the full range of impacts for participants attending.

Feeling loved & valued

Feeling appreciated and cared for by others, despite any faults a person might have.

The staff look after the children like their own children. They are so kind and lovely. They treat you like you're basically the last thing on earth. They treat you like, so nice and special and everything. They make you special in some sort of way.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

I would say just from them speaking to you and things, they get to know you. And then if you've got any problems, you can just go to them and they just, they care. They do care about everyone so much, I would say all of them definitely care about everyone and want just the best for you.

Participant, Big Noise Torry, Case study, 2025

In the Teacher & Nursery Staff Survey (2025), **88%** of front-line teachers agreed that the in-school Big Noise programme encourages **positive adult-child relationships**.

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Longevity & Commitment

Pride

A feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction that comes from achieving something.

A lot of people would always tell you about your achievements and stuff too. And everybody was always so proud to show it and showcase like, what everybody has done, not just me individually.

Participant, Big Noise Govanhill, Case study, 2025

You get this [music] handed to you and you go, 'how am I supposed to play all that?'

you know? But I am able to do it, because I step up to the plate, as it's called. [...]

Researcher: And so how does that make you feel?

I suppose it is a sense of pride in some sense. The way that I see life now, well to think years ago I was at school, I never thought I'd get this far.

Member of the Adult Community Group, Big Noise Douglas, Case study, 2025

In the Teacher & Nursery Staff Survey (2025), **84%** of respondents agreed that the programme provided opportunity for pupils' **personal achievement**.

Delivery Principles: Collective & Co-operative Learning; Quality Relationships; Excellence, Aspiration & Inspiration

Musical opportunities beyond Big Noise

Musical opportunities include the chance to watch performances, meet professional musicians, or join choirs, orchestras or bands.

I got multiple opportunities to go and play in multiple music organisations, e.g. Youth orchestras, National Youth Choir of Scotland, National Youth Orchestras of Scotland, National Orchestra for All, Young Sounds. Fantastic trips abroad with Big Noise, such as India and Italy. Played with big orchestras such as BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and the BBC Royal Symphony Orchestra.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Leavers Focus Group, 2024

As at April 2026, there were **120 Big Noise participant memberships** across **15 other musical organisations**, which are being facilitated through the Big Noise. This opens up wider opportunities across musical experiences, trips, social networks and learning techniques.

Many former participants moved on to programmes such as the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, NYOS / NYCOS, BBC SSO and European ensembles. Some now work in music, childcare, community arts or at Big Noise itself.

Delivery Principles: Intensity & Immersion; Quality Relationships, Excellence, Aspiration & Inspiration

Trips, travel & residentials

Big Noise offer fully funded experiences to cultural events, spaces and places within and beyond their local community. Annual Residential trips are offered to older participants and culminate in a public concert. Other trips may involve playing with other musicians and orchestras and can include overseas travel.

In the residential there's hundreds of activities to do. We're allowed to go out and just run about, play tag, do whatever. And then we had certain groups, group A, group B, group A would go there tag. Group B would go Easter egg hunt or something. And then we'd swap that around. And it was just they do things that just fun for everyone to do.
Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study 2025

We were put in a room with just people we didn't know and I think that was fun, because you we all had to speak, and I think that was good. I was just speaking to everyone. I would say that trip gave me a boost of confidence, as in just speaking to new people.

Participant, Big Noise Torry, Case study 2025

In 2025-26, Big Noise facilitated approximately **55 trips and concerts** out with their local Big Noise centres.

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Collective & Co-operative learning

Sense of belonging

Belonging is the subjective feeling of acceptance, connection, and being a valued part of a group, environment, or place.

I think the sense of belonging that he has for Big Noise is for him and for only for him, and when it comes to family life, yeah, he's special. That's him. That's his thing, yeah. And when he comes home, when he does bring his cello home, he absolutely loves sitting and going I want to play this.

Parent, Big Noise Douglas, Case study, 2025

We have cases of kids with very poor (or none at all) school attendance, but that are very involved in our After School Club and have pretty good attendance and commitment, which is amazing to see that it is a place they feel they belong and where they want to be in a self-motivated way!

Big Noise Staff Survey, 2025 evaluation

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Longevity & Commitment

Playing in a group

Group playing includes orchestra practice and performance, as well as section ensembles and bands.

If you didn't have one person here, then you would be slack in one part of the orchestra anyway, so the music wouldn't sound as good. So, if you weren't here, then everybody else is losing, if that makes sense. So, if you are a missing piece, yeah, every individual is a missing piece in an orchestra. Every individual has got purpose here.

Former Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

You can't just do your own thing, because it has to sound... basically all just one instrument.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Collective and Co-operative Learning

Opportunities for further impact: Some young people talked of how playing in large groups could be stressful. Small group playing is preferable for some. This option is available across the centres when space and staff capacity allow.

Longterm friendships

Enduring relationships built on shared history, mutual understanding, and consistent support, which may span years or even decades.

You just kinda get to know the person that you are sitting next to. I never knew the person that I sat next to at the beginning of the year, but now we are like best pals.

Participant, Big Noise Govanhill, Participatory Mapping Workshop, 2025

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Collective & Co-operative Learning; Longevity & Commitment

Teamwork & tolerance

Teamwork is a collaborative effort by a group working together to achieve a shared goal. It requires tolerance, which is the practice of accepting and respecting differences in others.

I used to help my teacher. After my lessons, I would help teach some of the younger ones. And then during the holiday clubs, I would also come help, which I think was good for getting used to younger [participants], patience is a big one. I like just helping other people, and I think violin I can help maybe show other people what to do. So I was like, Oh, that'd be good to give. They just kind of say to everyone, if you want to come and help them, whatever, it's fine. So any anyone could do it, like if you're older.

Participant, Big Noise Torry, Case study, 2025

I wouldn't have been as far without Big Noise and skills and everything, it really does teach you to be a better person, more time, more caring, more understanding of others. Never judge a book by its cover.

Former Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

In 2025, 43 Big Noise Torry participants completed a peer-designed survey – **81%** agreed that Big Noise helped them get better at **working with other people**.

In the Teacher & Nursery Staff Survey (2025), **78%** of respondents agreed that Big Noise helps classes to **work as a team**.

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships, Collective & Co-operative Learning

Social skills

Social skills are those abilities that enable effective communication with others. They encompass verbal and non-verbal interactions.

Big Noise helped a bunch. They do loads of team exercises and it really helped my confidence speaking to people.

Former Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

In 2025, 43 Big Noise Torry participants completed a peer-designed survey – **79%** agreed that Big Noise helps them:

- Feel more confident **talking** with other people
- Get better at **listening** to other people
- Speak to **new people**

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Collective & Co-operative Learning

Empathy & Kindness

Empathy is the ability to understand, feel, and share the emotions and experiences of another person from their perspective. Kindness is the outward action that can stem from empathy, and can involve showing generosity and consideration for others.

I like doing community stuff. So, it's made me more a person to think about, more thoughtful of others you know what I mean, because I mean, because I feel like, well, I've been given so much, so it's nice to give it, give it back. So that's what you learn from

Big Noise. So, I want [my daughter] to learn the same.

Former Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Collective & Co-operative Learning

Sharings

Participants' family and friends have an open invitation to attend Big Noise teaching and playing activities, to share in the achievements of the participants.

I think having that thing where they know they're working towards something kind of gives them more, well at least with me, it gave me more reason to get better. Obviously, you want to be the best you can when you're performing, and I think that got them there, being able to show their family.

Former Participant & current Staff, Big Noise Govanhill, Case study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Excellence, Aspiration & Inspiration; Quality Relationships

Community engagement

Big Noise organises and participates in events within the local community, including hosting public concerts, playing at local celebrations, fun days ceilidhs or festivals, and visiting residential care homes.

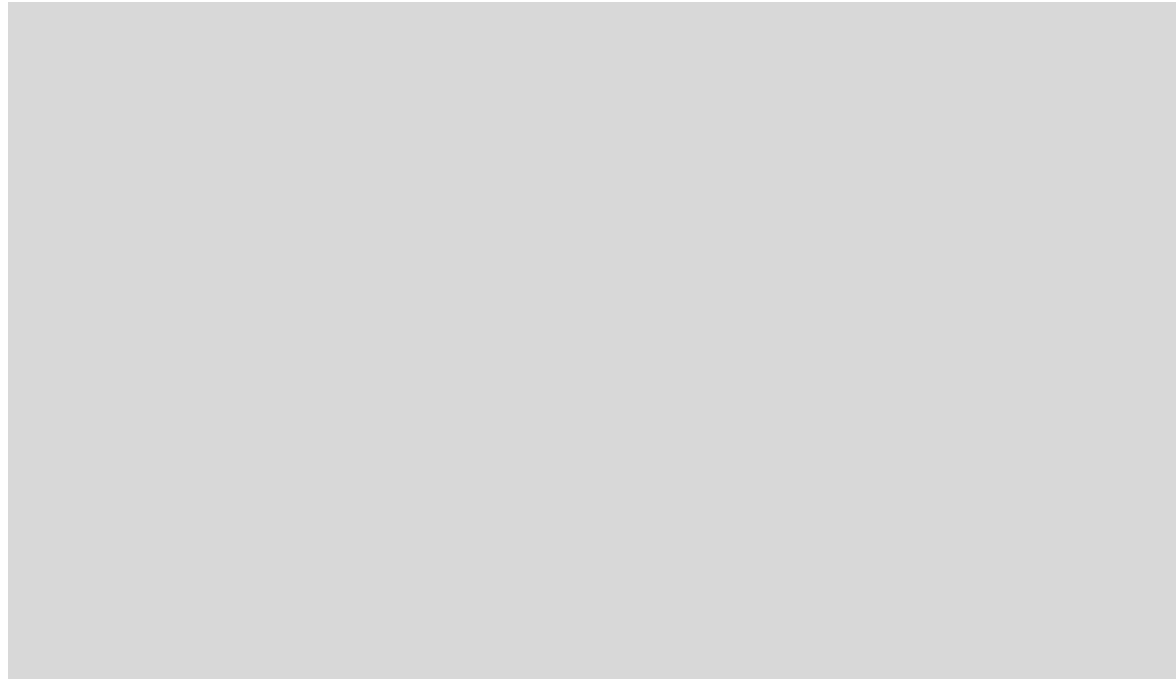
When we do concerts, there's a lot of people, like the ones we do at the country hall that was full last time with the bottom, and then the top floor as well. There is a lot of people. I would say it's pretty equal, people who have kids here and then people that just enjoy the community.

Participant, Big Noise Torry, Case study, 2025

In a school Senior Leadership Team survey (2025), **71%** of respondents stated that Big Noise had a significant impact on **community events and engagement**.

There are also additional community engagement projects which Big Noise get involved in. A key example of this would be the Dundee traditional songs which introduced the children to local traditional songs, which can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXPH1HKI8QQ>



Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Collective & Co-operative Learning

Fun & Enjoyment

Happiness driven by lively, playful, or entertaining activities.

I really enjoy [playing the violin]. I think I just really like it because I get to work on new things. I think that's quite fun even if it's hard.

Participant, Big Noise Torry, Case study, 2025

You know, sometimes when there's that one piece of music where it's like, you know, I can't play this. It makes you feel stressful. Like with a bit of practice, with a bit of one-to-one tutoring, and you know, just playing in the band together, you know, you get to laugh with your friends, like oh you messed up. You know, it's still fun, and then you just ease off.

Participant, Big Noise Govanhill, Case study, 2025



Participant, Big Noise Torry Holiday Club, 2025 evaluation

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Collective & Co-operative Learning

Diverse teaching approaches

A blend of approaches in relation to pedagogy and methodology that focus on sensory, exploratory and playful learning.

So when I first joined, when with wind band, they did loads of like clapping rhythms to get you used to like what like notes you will hear, so you have like a TA, TE, TI. And so they got you used to the rhythms you might hear, like, loads of different music. And then they also got you to hum different notes to get you used to like, Buzz different notes, to get you used to how you how to play your instrument.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

[Big Noise] don't have, like, a certain curriculum to follow. They sort of just, you know, go where everyone says. But from school, you know, you have to follow certain curriculum at a certain time. Big Noise, it can either be fast or slow, depending on how fast everyone else is learning.

Participant, Big Noise Govanhill, Case study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Excellence, Aspiration and Inspiration; Collective & Co-operative Learning

Curiosity & courage to explore

Curiosity is the desire to learn and explore, which can require courage: the strength to do so despite fear or difficulty.

Big Noise has been a safe place to learn and express yourself.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Leavers Focus Group, 2024

It's opened up a whole new gate... I never knew what jazz was. I never knew hip hop or rock... now I know every single type of music.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Innovation & Flexibility

Opportunities for creative expression

The process of conveying personal thoughts, feelings, and ideas using musical elements like melody, rhythm, and harmony, through activities such as playing an instrument, composing, singing, or improvising.

That is her expression to the world – music is how she communicates what she's feeling.

Parent, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

In the Teacher & Nursery Staff Survey (2025), **78%** of respondents agreed that pupils are given opportunities to **express their own ideas, thoughts and feelings** during Big Noise sessions.

Delivery Principles: Excellence, Aspiration and Inspiration; Quality Relationships

Emotional outlet & break from stress

An emotional outlet is a healthy and constructive activity or behaviour that allows someone to express, process, and release pent-up feelings.

I hardly think about my anxiety when I play music, because it because, like, it just tunes it out for me. It's like an escape route for your mind.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

I saw Big Noise as “down time” from everything else on the outside world. I liked Big Noise nearly every time I went.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Leavers Focus Group, 2024

In 2025, 43 Big Noise Torry participants completed a peer-designed survey, **81%** of respondents agreed that Big Noise helps them to **express their feelings**.

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Inclusivity & Accessibility; Collective & Co-operative Learning

Patience

The ability to manage emotions to stay calm and composed and avoiding frustration or anxiety when things take longer than expected, don't go as planned, or feel frustrating.

I used to help my teacher. After my lessons, I would help teach some of the younger ones. And then during the holiday clubs, I would also come help, which I think was good for getting used to younger [children], patience is a big one.

Participant, Big Noise Torry, Case study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Collective & Co-operative Learning

Managing emotions

Recognising, regulating, and expressing feelings constructively.

I'd come into the room to play my tuba, and it would get me away from my home life and my struggles. I'd be thinking about the stuff that had happened and everything physical that was going on at home. But coming here and thinking about music, trying to dedicate myself and be better – I'd just play and get myself out of that rhythm, and try to find my own one.

Former Participant, Big Noise Raploch and Fallin, Case study, 2025

In 2025, 43 Big Noise Torry participants completed a peer-designed survey, **81%** of respondents agreed that Big Noise helps them to **express their feelings**.

In the Teacher & Nursery Staff Survey (2025):

- **78%** of respondents agreed that pupils are given opportunities to **express their own ideas, thoughts and feelings** during Big Noise sessions.
- **75%** agreed that the programme supported the development of meta skills, including self awareness and **emotional management**.

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Inclusivity & Accessibility; Collective & Co-operative Learning

Play

Engagement in an activity for enjoyment and recreation, rather than a serious or practical purpose.

Everybody is chill, fun, doing stuff, talking, chit chatting, jokes and enjoying music.

Participant, Big Noise Govanhill, Case study, 2025

[Big Noise is] fun learning. It wasn't like I was learning, I was more like just going and hanging out with your second family.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Inclusivity & Accessibility

Decreasing anxiety

Anxiety describes feelings of unease or fear, that can range from mild to severe. Anxiety can decrease either in the amount of time spent feeling anxious or the severity of the anxiety.

I have had really bad social anxiety when I was little. I used to just get bullied a lot, they just brought me right down. I started at Big Noise, and it helped me a lot. They encouraged me to do more stuff and it's helped me with my anxiety. I hardly have it anymore. It's when I play, it tunes out all the bad thoughts for me, and when I started, it helped a lot. And now I hardly think about my anxiety when I play music, it just tunes it out for me. It's like an escape route for your mind.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Inclusivity & Accessibility

Self-acceptance

The ability to fully embrace who you are, including strengths, flaws, quirks, and everything in between, without judgment.

I came here, and then I have friends and people like me. I don't need to change for anyone else.

Participant, Big Noise Torry, Case study, 2025

In 2025, 43 Big Noise Torry participants completed a peer-designed survey - **74%** of respondents agreed that Big Noise helps them to **be themselves**.

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Inclusivity & Accessibility; Collective & Co-operative Learning

Resilience

The ability to adapt and recover when faced with stress, adversity, or change, by navigating it in ways that preserve wellbeing and allow for growth.

It is really different compared to school, because people just sometimes give up on school. I guess at the end of the day, if you don't play, you're just gonna get worse, you just need to keep it there, just doing it even when you don't want to, because at the end of the day you're going to fail at some point. Well, a lot of points, but you fail a lot, I will say that, at the end of the day, when you fail a lot, you win more. If you fail on a piece, you'll probably get it the next day. It could click any day. So, if you say, 'I'm going to give up on it because it's not working'. It's probably, you could have missed the day it was going to click.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

I'm just, I'm just full of life. And I feel like I've had the hardships, I had all the support I had to get me through and have them problems and I rise from them. I wouldn't be near where I'm at.

Former Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Collective & Co-operative Learning; Quality Relationships

Mental health

Mental health encompasses our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing, influencing how we think, feel, and act, and how we cope with life's stresses. It's not just the absence of mental illness.

I have previously struggled with mental health, pressure and expectations, but Big Noise was always willing to help even if I hadn't been in a while.

Participant, Leavers Focus Group, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, 2024

In a school Senior Leadership Team survey (2025), **100%** of respondents felt that Big Noise had a positive impact on pupils' **mental health and wellbeing**, with 59% noting a significant impact.

In the Teacher & Nursery Staff Survey (2025), **74%** of respondents saw benefits in pupil's **emotional wellbeing** such as increased happiness, sense of purpose, and positive relationships through attending the after-school programme.

Delivery Principles: Longevity & Commitment; Quality Relationships; Intensity & Immersion

Opportunities for further impact: Big Noise staff described a number of arrangements that are in place to support diverse needs and vulnerable individuals. There was

however, concern from some that they did not have the skills available to work with serious mental health issues and that further training and external support would be required.

Practice

To repeat an activity so that it becomes a skill developed through trying, failing and trying again.

I remember we had this really specific piece, and I could never play this one part. And then I kind of just woke up one day played it, and then I could. But since then, everything just got easier. So that's when I was like, Oh, this the skills going up a bit. I don't know how, probably just playing it over and over. It's made me realise that, you know, it's getting better, yeah, even if it doesn't seem like it is but just a long process, but it's worth it, yeah, get there eventually so.

Participant, Big Noise Govanhill, Case study, 2025

I practice at home as well. I've got my own wee book for my lessons. My teacher ticks and I practice them at home. And I figured out what they're meant for, and then when I get them done, we do them in our lessons every Thursday. And then when I get, like, bang on correctly he crosses them, and we go onto a different other page. It's a fun thing to do.”

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Intensity & Immersion; Collective & Co-operative Learning

Early years foundation

Early Years Foundation is the stage of learning and care for children from birth to age five. Big Noise hold free social, weekly or twice-weekly baby and toddler community groups for parents or carers to attend with their young children, “Little Noise”. They also provide in-school nursery sessions to local nursery schools up to two-times each week.

I find your classes so good both for children and their families. So inclusive and friendly and I love that my son gets opportunities to be exposed to musical instruments, new songs and people. I really think his communications skills and love of music have been influenced by Baby Noise. Also, the fact that it is free and snacks provided makes it accessible.

Parent, Big Noise Raploch, Little Noise survey, 2025

As at September 2025:

- **510 nursery school children** were receiving up to two weekly Big Noise sessions within their settings across the six Big Noise sites.
- **145 parents or carers** had signed up to attend the Baby / toddler social groups held weekly within their communities.

Delivery Principles: Quality Relationships; Collective & Co-operative Learning

Sense of responsibility

A sense of responsibility involves recognising duties and accepting accountability for actions and outcomes. At Big Noise this includes taking responsibility for your learning and your instrument.

Now that I've got [my instrument], I feel quite responsible. I feel like I'm responsible for loads of things

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

Delivery Principles: Collective & Co-operative Learning; Quality Relationships

Routine

The Big Noise after-school and in-school programmes follow a structured timetable that remains consistent throughout the week.

Big Noise has helped me become more confident, helped with having a routine, was a safe place, helped build strong healthy relationships.

Former Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Leavers focus group, 2024

Delivery Principles: Longevity & Commitment; Quality Relationships

Ambition & Aspiration

Ambition is an intense, often external drive for personal advancement, requiring determination and hard work. Aspiration is a deeper, internal desire to achieve something higher, focusing on personal growth, meaning, or becoming a better version of oneself.

I think because when I was little, I was like, Oh, this is fun. And then when I got older, it's like, oh, I actually really like this and helping other people. I would like to do something into child's care, definitely. So like, even if it's like, I do a music job or I keep music as a hobby, yeah, but I can still take my instrument in and, like, teach it to them.

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case study, 2025

Hanging around with [musicians], I feel like it inspires you to just if you keep, if you stick with it, then that's what you can be like and things. And then in the summer holidays and things, they do internships and things where they take people like from here, and then they give them, like, work experiences.

Participant, Big Noise Torry, Case study, 2025

In a school Senior Leadership Team survey (2025), **100%** of respondents felt that Big Noise raised **aspirations** across their school or nursery, with 76% noting a significant impact.

Delivery Principles: Excellence, Aspiration & Inspiration

[Links to other musical organisations](#)

Many music organisations collaborate with Big Noise to deliver and expand their programme (e.g. RSNO, BBC SSO, Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet, NYOS, RCS). Barriers such as poverty, additional support needs, disadvantage, or stigma are identified by Big Noise staff and actively addressed.

It's really good getting the opportunity, but it's happened a lot. It's become quite normal, I was talking to my friends, before the thing with the Parliament meeting, and I was like, oh, yeah, this weekend I'm away in Edinburgh, you know, playing for them. And my friend was like, Oh, you're gonna play for the King and Queen? And we're like, yeah. And they were just, everyone was really surprised. And I was like, oh, yeah, that isn't normal. People wouldn't get that opportunity if they just go to school. It's definitely made me appreciate it a lot more, yeah, than obviously, just being something to do and it's all like leading to something, you know?

Former Participant & current Staff, Big Noise Govanhill, Case study, 2025

The amount of opportunities that [my child] had through After- School club. She got to play alongside Nicola Benedetti, the RSNO and other things. The residential trip met the King and Queen of England, Great Britain, just phenomenal things that you wouldn't normally get. Children going to school wouldn't get these opportunities if it wasn't for Big Noise.

Former Participant & Current Staff, Big Noise Govanhill, Case study, 2025

As of April 2026, there are a total of **120 Big Noise participant memberships** ranging across **15 partner organisations**, including, the Royal Conservatoire, European Youth Orchestra and the National Youth Choir of Scotland.

Delivery Principles: Excellence, Aspiration & Inspiration

Free food

Free food is provided to all participants of after-school and holiday programmes. Locally sourced, healthy snacks and meals, including sandwiches and fruit and vegetables are provided. Warm drinks and hot food are also served at community events. Much of the food is over supplied to enable families and community members take food home in containers to heat up later on.

The food is yummy! I love the cucumbers but I don't like the oranges because they are messy!

Participant, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, captured during observations, 2025 evaluation

In 2025-26 free food was provided every day to all **945 participants** of after-school.

Throughout the summer camps, participants were also given almost **5,000 hot meals** and healthy snacks, all of which are free of charge.

Delivery Principles: Inclusivity & Accessibility; Quality Relationships

Staff training & investment in wellbeing and personal growth

The ongoing support provided to help staff build skills, expand knowledge, and develop professionally. It includes opportunities for learning, reflection, and career development.

Staff are very well supported with training provided and a budget for focusing on person-specific training, which is very much welcomed and appreciated by staff. There is, however, always a tension for time, as we strive to continue the day-to-day delivery of our programme.

Big Noise Staff Survey, 2025 evaluation

Learning about what different barriers different children face, and things like that, that's been so eye opening. But also, the Big Noise training has been - there was one training session I went to that I used more in my school placement than I did in three years of Uni....it was more helpful. I still use it to this day.

Volunteer, Big Noise Raploch & Fallin, Case Study, 2025

In the 2025 Big Noise staff survey, **65%** of respondents agreed that resources (including skills and training) were adequate.

Since 2020, Big Noise has grown from 128 (80 FTE) to 196 staff (119 FTE) in 2026. This is a 53% increase across the five cities and six programmes and includes a central

support team.

In 2026, staff **turnover was consistently below national and sector averages**, indicating strong retention, organisational stability and effective wellbeing support despite the demanding nature of the work.

Delivery Principles: Excellence, Aspiration & Inspiration

Opportunities for further impact: Although planning time is allocated, musicians often face significant pressure as the reality of the role can extend far beyond this, which can be stressful.

Case studies

Post School Pathways: Ben (Big Noise Raploch & Fallin), 21

Case study story

Ben was part of the first cohort of Big Noise Raploch at age 6. Now 21, he studies sound production at college and works with music and social charities, teaching children skills from piano to DJing and music theory; “music is the only universal thing everybody can understand”.

He began on the cello before switching to the tuba, which he preferred. Reflecting on attending the afterschool programme four days a week, Ben described it as a place of belonging: “You feel like you live here.... I felt safe in every instance”. His early impressions highlighted a supportive, flexible environment:

“It was just a different way of teaching [...] and if you need to leave the class, go leave the class. If you want to go, if you don't really feel confident doing this stuff in front of other people, it was just, aye, probably just sense of family and connection I'd say. That's my first impression [of Big Noise] from being a wee Wean. [...] We're all playing music. That's like the main thing. But behind the scenes, they are helping every aspect of your life. It's not just all music...”

Having been in kinship and foster care from mid-primary school, Ben credits Big Noise with providing stability. He describes his music teacher as a “Father figure” and viewed the programme as an “outlet” to focus his energy. He believes it changed his life’s trajectory:

“I absolutely love that, kept me off the streets... [Without Big Noise] ...I genuinely think I'd be in jail... I definitely say if I didn't have my outlet... I'd say I might be forced in the jail or even worse. [Now] I'm just... full of life...”

Though he no longer plays regularly, the skills he gained inform his current role as a trainee peer mentor for young people with care experience: “Well it’s pretty much what the staff did to me here... I'm just using my own experiences”.

Ben emphasises the sense of community at Big Noise:

“At the end of the day, everybody still loves each other... There's a whole different community from school.”

“You’re actually getting talked to like a human being... each staff member tailoring to each child... they'll break down the barriers you have...”

“We are all in the same team... you feel that you can rely on them... I think... a lot of students here found that their teachers were their heroes.”

Through Big Noise, he became the first young Scottish person to attend the National Orchestra For All in England, boosting his confidence. He links this directly to his work supporting vulnerable young people:

“Generally... confidence... I feel like if I didn't have the confidence I've got... I wouldn't be able to help... the kids I'm helping...”

He also highlights lessons in responsibility, resilience, and collective purpose:

“...if you didn't have one person here... the music wouldn't sound as good... every individual is a missing piece in an orchestra... every individual has got purpose here...”

Reflecting on access, he stresses the importance of encouragement and the programme's impact:

“I feel like you need the parent first to be like, you can do this... And I swear the Big Noise team will have it from there. They will keep you engaged... And you will learn so much, even if it isn't playing an instrument.”

To explore Ben's story further, follow the coloured arrows around the map.

All are welcome -> Safe Space

It was just a different way of teaching [...] and if you need to leave the class, go leave the class. If you want to go, if you don't really feel confident doing this stuff in front of other people, it was just, aye, probably just sense of family and connection I'd say. That's my first impression [of Big Noise] from being a wee wean. [...] And I feel like I was taken care to the best of their ability, I felt safe in every instance. [...] We're all playing music. That's like the main thing. But behind the scenes, they are helping every aspect of your life. It's not just all music and playing all these amazing songs.

Safe space -> Trusting relationships with staff

I was [in] Primary 5 or Primary 6 [age 9-10], I think. I came to my lesson with [Musician]. I told him what had happened and stuff like that. And like, you can see, I'm ready to greet like everything, like the full shebang, obviously, just a wee boy. And he just looked me in the eyes and just said [...], “This is not your first time going into foster care. You'll be fine. You'll be absolutely grand. I know you can. You're so strong”. I kind of had, at the time, to bottle stuff up. But [Musician] was the one person I could just release some my stuff through, like, one to one.

Trusting relationships with staff -> Team around child & family support

Just like any, any problem I'd ever faced, they would help me or support me. If I was to say to them, “oh stuff is so bad at home”, and I'm telling them about the stuff, like the personal stuff that's happening. And [Musician] would be the first one to take me out of class. Or, like, well, it's usually one on one, you tell them, but he'd be the first one to

guide me on what to do, give me advice and show me what I can do and who I can be. I feel like there was no other avenue except for [Big Noise], really. I feel like if this wasn't here, then I'll be in a whole different trajectory.

Team around the child & family support -> Positive pathway beyond school

It just gave me such a good perspective on other people's lives, and I feel like I can help so many other people, and be vulnerable, and talk about my past. I do it all the time in my work now [as a Peer Mentor for Care Experienced Children & Adults], like my foster care, what happened, my parents and stuff like that. I talk it about all the time. I feel like some people can't and for me to be that advocate, to talk about, like, I've been through some bad stuff when I was little, and I feel like, I can be a prime example for people like that. It's so bad to say, but I'm in the minority there, like people in my position, who go through that, they don't come out how I came out. They come out on drugs and in the jail or even worse.

Positive Pathways beyond school -> Improved employment outcomes

I teach literacy skills for people who can't read and write properly. I do music theory for people who want to learn that avenue, that's once a week workshop, but it's a workshop I do, like Job Club. I do cooking skills, tenancy agreements, management and budgeting. I just want to help as many kids as I can. [...] It's rewarding, it is so rewarding. [...Big Noise has] given me a lot of values there, I feel like it's also helped me in a lot of ways. It's hard to even tell you, to be honest.

Post School Pathways: Chloe (Big Noise Govanhill), 17

Case study Story

Chloe is 17 and has attended Big Noise Govanhill since P3. After graduating secondary school, she completed a paid summer internship and is now a Support Musician. She plans to study Fine Art at Dundee and continue playing music with university groups. At school, she formed a band and quickly learned bass guitar, supported by her musical foundation from Big Noise.

Her dad Stuart also works as a Support Worker after volunteering when the programme began. Both value its impact and feel pride in contributing:

“it was my opportunity to give a little bit back for, you know, what they were doing for Chloe, That's always been my motivation, even now that I'm being paid to do it, it's

giving back, you know, trying to help the children that I support, in the way that Chloe received”

Stuart says this is the longest he has stayed in one job, describing it as fulfilling despite claiming he is “as musical as a brick”:

“Every day is different... there's lots of children that we see on a daily basis with wide ranging needs in terms of support... it makes it every day a challenge.... it's really, really fulfilling.... it provides great satisfaction seeing them take part and... improving on a weekly basis.”

Chloe loves playing violin and has had opportunities including performing with Nicola Benedetti, the RSNO, and for the King & Queen. These experiences have become “quite normal” and built her confidence, independence, and pride. This culminated in performing a solo at a school concert:

“which I wouldn't have done... a few years ago... it was a massive boost... You just do it nervous... it's just helped me be more confident... and being able to try things like I usually wouldn't”

Big Noise also supported friendships and social confidence, giving her regular time to connect with peers:

“That was usually one of the only times we could see each other... having that time to come together... it definitely helped... I could enjoy myself after maybe a bad day at school”

She describes Big Noise as a safe, supportive environment, especially during family illness:

“It was really... safe spaces... there was always the support workers... that I could talk to... it's good that I can give what I've received... it's very rewarding to see the kids getting somewhere.”

Through music, Chloe developed resilience and a sense of achievement:

“I remember we had this really specific piece... I could never play... And then... I could... ‘Oh, this the skills going up a bit’... it's a long process, but it's worth it... it feels very like an accomplishment”

Her focus has also improved, spending hours composing or transposing music. Stuart highlights the programme's role in providing safety and structure:

“Something like Big Noise gives a great focus... they need something to do... Big Noise gives that... it also gives a lot of emotional support... it's safe... they're still learning... at their own pace... I think it's just absolutely brilliant!”

To explore Chloe's story further, follow the coloured arrows around the map.

Ability to Focus->Developing Musical Skills

I've been able to keep focus on stuff a lot longer than I used to be able to. Like, I would get a sheet of music and think, "oh, I'm bored already", but now I'm given something, I'm like, "oh, yeah, that's quite interesting, I'll have look at it." Yeah, I can go for quite a long time if I just have that something, it's definitely become a lot easier to focus on something in general, but especially having music, either playing it or on in the background, helps.

Developing musical skills -> Performance Opportunities

I do really, I love the practicing part. I do complain about it, but I do love the practicing part of it and working towards something. And then when the performance comes, it's like, oh, you're performing to your friends and family and whoever else is there. And it feels very like an accomplishment, like I've done all that work and I'm showing people. Especially the residencies we did, because a lot of those were music we just learned, like just there. So it was quite a lot of work in quite a long few days but then the performance in like Caird Hall in Dundee, that's a good place to play. We were just performing as a big orchestra, and it felt like, yes, very good.

Performance Opportunities -> Confidence

I think that confidence that came about from performances and concerts, through Big Noise, then had the knock-on effect of giving her the confidence to pick up a new instrument and learn it in a very short time, to perform it in stage. You know, you perform some good gigs in good places, in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, recorded two EPs on Spotify. Done that all in, what, two years? Massive. [Parent]

Confidence ->Ambition & Aspiration

I looked into like Dundee [University], and they have an orchestra there. So I figured, well, you know, I could go and do art now, and then I have my orchestra there, anyway, so music on the side. And then the other programme I was looking at was Audio Engineering, and we went to the Open Day for that, but everyone else there was a lot older than me, I was the youngest one by a long shot. So I was like, 'oh, I could do my four years at Dundee, and then I'll be the same age as everyone else, then I can get the best of both worlds [and do the audio engineering programme]. So I think that's probably what's gonna happen.

Ambition & Aspiration -> Positive Pathways beyond School

So there was a post that came out for a support musician [at Big Noise], and I figured, oh, may as well just go for it, because what am I gonna lose otherwise? And then it was an audition and interview. So I did that, and I kind of didn't have high hopes, because I saw a bunch of people that were doing it, and it was like grown adults with so much more experience. I was like, oh, whatever happens, happens. And I originally didn't get it, yeah. But then the boss phoned and was like, they were really impressed with both of the internship [I did previously] and then the interview and auditions, so they wanted to create another post for me to come back.

Musical Skills: DeDe (Big Noise Torry), 14

Case study story

Dede is a 14-year-old participant at Big Noise Torry, developing skills across violin, piano, guitar, and flute. Having joined in P3 without a strong initial interest, they now demonstrate adaptable, transferable musicianship grounded in core skills learned at Big Noise:

“It's so easy. Like, if you figure out what the notes are and where they are, you know how to play songs..... I hate reading piano sheet music. I just, you know, let me play by ear.”

Music-making is central to Dede's daily practice and discipline, with a strong focus on instrumental engagement:

“Yeah, it's like, the only thing I want to do... I'm grounded... I don't have a phone... so all I have to do is just play my instruments. So, that's all I do. Instruments.”

They actively develop creative and technical skills through composing and music technology, working across genres and refining their ability to create original material:

“I just kind of really like music..I love creating tunes and like, when it sounds really good, I'm proud.”

Dede values access to structured musical learning and ensemble experience, recognising the opportunity to build skills within a supportive community who all share a love and language of music:

“I wish more people did Big Noise... it's all free... you get to learn so much from it... why do more people not do it?”

After experiencing a close family bereavement, Dede took some time away from Big Noise, during which their teacher continued to support them with in-school lessons, and they gradually increased their participation and rejoined the full programme. After a period away, Dede realised what they missed about playing music; noting the

importance of consistent practice and ensemble playing in maintaining and progressing skills to get that sense of achievement:

“It's just sometimes... it just feels so good to play in an orchestra... when you finally get it right... it's just the satisfaction... you get that rush of dopamine... you're so proud of everyone.”

They highlight how teaching supports technical development and confidence when learning new instruments, while also using music as a means of focus and immersion:

“Music just basically controls my emotion... you get so lost in the music....[In the future] I really want to join an orchestra or a band... I would never quit... I'd just go insane.”

Through orchestral performance, Dede has developed strong ensemble awareness, listening skills, and performance confidence:

“So we got to play with RSNO... you just have to kind of snap yourself out of it... the moment I sit down I'm okay... it's kind of like my subconscious... I'm just doing it... I know the song already, its practically easy.”

Dede feels that the teachers at Big Noise are caring, encouraging and consistently reassuring when participants are learning new instruments and skills, building a trusting relationship over their time in the programme. Reflecting on their relationship with Big Noise, in particular with their main instrumental teacher, they said;

“I feel so at home now She just pulled me back up... I was going to quit... she let me take it at my own pace... it's just like another family.... *I feel like it's just so important to some people who really struggle with their life at home and stuff, and they come here and it's just like another family, I think it's really important for some people... I really appreciate it so much.*”

To explore Dede's story further, follow the coloured arrows around the map.

All are welcome -> immersive programme engagement

I was going to quit Big Noise, I was going to quit music when [my dad] passed, and it's just like [musician] was there, she let me take it at my own pace. Just all the support and everything and it's so crazy how it's free [of charge]. I feel like it's just so important to some people who really struggle with their life at home and stuff and they come here and it's just like another family.

Immersive programme engagement -> Practice

When we're practicing a piano piece or something, we're learning it, we go bit by bit, hand by hand. And then when I'm always like, 'oh, can you play the next part?', so I could hear how it sounds when she plays it, it's just like, I want to be able to play it like that. And it's just hearing it, and I want to, I want my hand to be doing that, you know?

Practice -> Developing musical skills

I love when I sit at a piano and I've just listened to like a piece or a Waltz or something and I just try to figure out the notes, it's so relaxing as well. And it's just, it's you want to keep listening, just repeating a part, just to figure it out.

Developing musical skills -> music as a career pathway

I don't think I'd do further education, personally school is just not for me. I really want to join an orchestra or a band or something still in the musical area. I would never quit playing my violin or piano, I can't go too long without playing an instrument, I'd just go insane.

Musical Skills: Maya (Big Noise Raploch & Fallin), 12

Case study story

Maya, aged 12, is from Fallin and has been a Big Noise Fallin participant for 3 1/2 years, starting in Primary 4 on Tenor Horn before moving to French Horn in High School. She attends the After School Club twice weekly and travels to Big Noise Raploch once a week.

After a knee injury ended her involvement in football, staff supported her confidence, encouraging her to 'push on' and adapting lessons to make them accessible. She now describes music as her main passion:

"I Love it... I never got really into... classical music... until I joined Big Noise... and then it's opened up a whole new gate... we learned about Jazz... Hip Hop... Rock... And now I know every single type of music... I can keep the beat to any music... I can just easily tap the beat... and that's me concentrated for like hours."

Maya describes Big Noise as "really fun" and values meeting other young people across Stirling. She feels staff supported her social anxiety, which developed due to bullying, and that she now 'hardly has it anymore'. She describes staff as 'lovely', 'helpful', and 'real understanding', and highlights music as an emotional outlet:

“So, when I play, it tunes out all the bad thoughts for me... now I hardly think about my anxiety when I play music, because it just tunes it out for me.”

Despite having dyslexia, Maya can read music confidently and feels empowered by her abilities:

“It feels empowering... Like I can do something what mostly other people can't do... if I can do that, I can do more stuff.”

Through Big Noise, Maya performed twice with the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland and travelled to Aberdeen, and she looks forward to playing with the Big Noise United Orchestra. She believes these experiences have opened pathways into music and can see herself becoming a musician, alongside ambitions to open a restaurant.

Maya feels her concentration and listening skills have improved, allowing her to “think more deeply about stuff” and better understand others. She enjoys practicing at home, using music to release energy and express emotion:

“If I'm ever... really bored, I can just get my instrument out and start playing... sometimes at school, I get really frustrated... then when playing music, I just... let it go out really loud... it just takes everything just away for me.....but without music, I'll probably be just lying in my room... and just like sinking into myself probably, but this keeps me up... and it just helps me a whole lot.”

To explore Maya's story further, follow the coloured arrows around the map.

Practice -> Ability to focus

In Primary 5 [age 9] I wasn't that good at concentrating. My math was going down, my English was going down, and my dyslexia wasn't helping. But then when I started doing Big Noise, it helped a lot. And my concentration went higher and higher and higher and higher.

Ability to focus -> developing musical skills

You've got to concentrate. What bar you're on, you have to concentrate, how many bars, you have to count, and you have to concentrate on what the teacher's been saying to you. And at Primary 5, I wasn't good. [Now] I'm great at listening and getting, like, understanding them easily, because of Big Noise. [...] As I'm getting older, getting more responsible and that, so you listen more, but also bigger knowledge, because you have to listen to a teacher and, like, listen to key moments and all that, to see where your part fits in and all that.

Developing musical skills -> confidence

It feels like empowering, like I can do something that mostly other people can't do. I can play an instrument, but other people can't. And it feels like if I can do that, I can do more stuff.

Confidence -> positive sense of identity

I feel special because I was only person who stuck around in Secondary 1 [age 11], who got to play tenor horn because people changed to cornets and left, or people just left because they didn't feel like doing it anymore, and I went to French horn. I'm the only person in Big Noise that's done French horn, from all the little kids and the higher kids. And from Big Noise Fallin I'm only one that's done it right, and that felt empowering. I can read music. What other people mostly can't, I can do sharps really quickly, so it'll go one from E to F and F to E, high E's and low F's, and all that I can do really quickly.

Emotional Wellbeing: Danielle (Raploch), 21

Case study story

Danielle started Big Noise Raploch in 2011 at the beginning of P7. Now 26, she still remembers receiving her flute as a “big game changer”;

“That's what sold Big Noise, because they just made it so fun. And it was like, just coming into a second wee family.... It just gave me something to focus on, kept me out of a lot of trouble...it's a gateway to get away from reality”

For Danielle, Big Noise offered a distinct approach to learning:

“Difference was this was fun learning... And I just learned you got to really push yourself to your limits... you were learning from the teachers, your peers... it wasn't like I was learning I was more like just going and hanging out with your second family... there was nothing ever you felt defeated on....whereas with school...”

During a difficult time in Secondary school with her mental health and confidence, Big Noise provided a “switch-off point”, alongside a sense of achievement and pride as her musical skills developed. It also gave her space to socialise across schools and age groups. She describes it as a safe, supportive outlet:

“I was with the brass and percussion and the woodwind... you - lost in your music... if today's a bad day... I know I'm gonna have a good evening... Soon as I get on that coach to Big Noise. That's it. It's gone.”

Danielle took part in the Venezuela trip, performed at the opening of Big Noise Torry and at the BBC Proms. However, she values her relationship with staff most:

“The memories are definitely... the best gift out of it all... and the staff as well... you just feel like you're their kids”

“you could come with anything... they sat down and they listened to you... we're talking about you and how you're doing”

She describes one staff member as a “role model” and “superhero”, and the relationship continues as Danielle now attends Little Noise with her daughter:

“Well, I would never, ever have thought put my kid into music... So, I guess that’s a big thing from going to Big Noise... I like doing community stuff... I feel like... I've been given so much... so it's nice to give it... back... I want [my daughter] to learn the same.”

Danielle developed resilience, determination, and self-belief through her musical journey:

“If I put half the determination in, as I did to my flute, I'll get there... even when I was giving birth... I think the best thing it gave me was self... self-belief... never in a million years... I thought... I'll go away to Venezuela... it gave me purpose”

She credits Big Noise with shaping her outlook and values:

“Definitely I've... wouldn't have been as far without Big Noise... it really does teach you to be a better person... more caring, more understanding... Never judge a book by its cover... ‘I bet no one looks at you and thinks you can pull a Flute out your sleeve and play it’... you should never ever judge.”

When describing Big Noise, Danielle struggles to find words beyond “magical”:

“you need to be part of it, to feel it... there's no words... you can't... It's just a magical, magical experience... so many selfless adults doing this... it's just amazing.”

To explore Danielle’s story further, follow the coloured arrows around the map.

All are welcome -> Feeling loved and Valued (add arrow)

You don't ever feel unwelcomed. They remember everything, absolutely everything. You just feel like you're their kids, you know. I mean, it's just amazing, honestly.

Feeling loved and Valued ->Trusting Relationships with Staff

[Musician] is so strong and such an amazing person, like I take so, so much from her because she's a role model to me, I've always, always said that. So even when I was at Big Noise, I was like, [...] she's a superhero!

Trusting Relationships with Staff -> Fun & Enjoyment

Difference [between school and Big Noise] was, this was fun learning. And I just learned, you got to really push yourself to your limits, where you wouldn't have learnt from a textbook, or you were learning from the teachers, your peers. [It's] just a totally different... it's hard to describe it. Because it wasn't like a learning, I was more like just going and hanging out with your second family. And it's hard going but there was nothing ever you felt defeated on.

Fun & Enjoyment -> Confidence

When I left school, I went to the safari park to work. And then I was like, I want to do nails, want to be a nail tech. And I thought, you know something, if I put half the determination in I did to my flute, I'll get there. So that's what I compare everything to. Even when I was giving birth to [my child], I was like, if I could get on a 12 hour flight to Venezuela, I'm sure I could do this [because] I was terrified, absolutely terrified, to be literally across the full other side of the world.

Confidence -> Resilience

It gave me self-achievement, confidence as well. That's something I've really struggled with during high school and stuff. I had really, really bad mental health, had hard time in school, you know. [...] So I think the best thing it gave me was self-belief, you know, self-confidence, definitely. Because never in a million years, when you first handed me that flute, I thought I'll go away to Venezuela and stuff like that. It gave me purpose, really, yeah, definitely.

Emotional Wellbeing: Harrison, (10) & Mum, Jill (Big Noise Douglas)

Case study story

Harrison is 10 years old and “loves coming to Big Noise nights”. His mum, Jill, recalls he was immediately drawn to the cello after making a cardboard one during his first Big Noise Douglas session at school when he was 6.

Harrison is on the waiting list for an ADHD and Autism diagnosis, and his mum and Big Noise staff have developed an individual programme to suit his needs. Focusing on music provides an outlet, and the engaging teaching methods offer a different learning environment than school, which Jill believes is “less of a struggle” for him. In response to children needing additional support, including Harrison, Big Noise introduced a smaller, more relaxed group, allowing participation in group music-making in a comfortable setting.

Jill remembers when Harrison proudly said “I can read the notes now!” even without the specialised coloured overlays used to support learning. As his confidence grows, he is beginning to join the larger orchestra, with flexibility to step away when needed. Jill highlights the staff’s teamwork and communication:

“With Harrison, it's like, it's if I've got an issue we talk. There's been... lots of different times where... ‘Oh, he was struggling with [the larger group]. Let's have this conversation. And we actually started the [smaller group] for Harrison...’ and... ‘how can we figure and change this?’”

She feels staff consistently tailor their approach to each child:

“They're all great with them... it is a one on one with the kids... if they've got a concern... it's definitely... if you're struggling, we'll see what your struggles are first... it's definitely not a one size fits all.”

For Harrison, regulating emotions can be difficult, but Jill says Big Noise provides an important outlet away from technology. She has seen significant improvements in his social skills, confidence, and ability to maintain routine, particularly after moving schools. Most importantly, she feels he is “happier”, more energised and engaged:

“He only does Big Noise after school two nights a week, but the difference... is so different... when he comes out of Big Noise, he's happy...just buzzing with energy...and... he's actually able to tell me what he did at school, whereas the rest of the week he just can't.”

Jill believes one of the most important outcomes is Harrison’s “sense of belonging”, feeling that Big Noise is “for him, and only for him”. He is proud of his progress on the cello and enjoys sharing what he has learned with his family, often asking his dad to record him - “the smile is just one that’ll melt your heart”.

To explore Harrison’s story further, follow the coloured arrows around the map.

All are welcome -> Big Noise is a safe space

I am friends with a couple of other mums that have kids at Big Noise, and it's the same with them, that they feel in the same boat as I do, is that if they've got a concern for their child or their child's not enjoying it, [...] if you're struggling, they'll see what your struggles are first, and integrate that into the session. Like Harrison gets to have five-minute brain breaks if he's really struggling with his time playing and someone takes him away, let's him wander the hall and come back again. [Parent]

Big Noise is a safe space -> Emotional outlet and break from stress

Once he gets to Big Noise, he's always happy to be there like that. He does have a struggle. The days that he does have his struggles, he's still happy that he went, even though he's having to get picked up early, he's still happy that he went and he was still happy to go and try. No, he doesn't seem to have very many challenges in getting to Big Noise anymore. [Parent]

Emotional outlet and break from stress -> Managing emotions

That's the big thing for Harrison, is that emotions are hard for him. But I think Big Noise gives him an outlet that's not just his phone, his technology. He's happier, definitely, when he comes out Big Noise like that. He only does Big Noise afterschool two nights a week, but the difference in a Monday and a Tuesday are so different. When he comes out of school on a Tuesday, at normal time he's done, he's fed up, he just wants to go home and relax, where he's when he comes out big noise, he's happy. [Parent]

Social Networks: Jensen, 14 & Mum, Andrena (Big Noise Raploch & Fallin),

Case study story

Jensen has been attending Big Noise Fallin since he was in Primary 6 after he saw a poster for the programme and became interested in learning an instrument. Jensen was born with hearing loss and is also dyslexic, however he finds reading music easy - for him it “clicks” and it is “his language”. Big Noise has supported Jensen by providing overlays for his music, earplugs when he was younger, and consistent support as he grows within the programme.

“So, they just put me in same band for everyone else, not separating me, so I don't feel like a side, like pushed away, just keep, kept me with everyone. And they check in every now and then. When I was younger, they always checked on me, but now they know, ‘He's okay, we'll check on him once or three times in a whole session’, help me out if they can see that I'm struggling, but come help. Play the same part as me. Kind of just help me out... I feel like they're caring about every single person and understanding their needs.”

Jensen feels like he belongs at Big Noise;

“And you're all the same, and you've been included right, right from the beginning, so that you're just big part of Big Noise. You're a big part of that.”

Jensen's musical development and consistent performance opportunities through Big Noise have helped him grow his resilience, confidence and independence;

"It just makes you feel happy, like I'm able to understand that some things are going to be hard, object - obstacles coming my way, but I can face them. I can beat them."

Jensen also believes Big Noise encouraged him to talk to more people and he has made lots of friends through the programme, from different schools and cities, he describes it as a safe place where no one discriminates against him due to his disability. His highlights are the many trips he gets to go on, especially going on the residential and playing alongside the RSNO, developing meaningful connections with the musicians there as well as his musical skills, he recently felt like he'd "just met an older version" of himself. For Jensen, a career in music has become an achievable and possible option for his future. Jensen's mum believes that Big Noise's presence in the village is giving young people more opportunities to get involved in activities beyond the 'traditional football' offer, and that the stigma around playing music is fading as participation grows and perspectives shift.

If Jensen ever feels sad, he will think of a performance which went well, and he feels proud of himself. Jensen's mum feels he is safe when he is at Big Noise and also describes him as acting more independent and looking "taller" when at Big Noise which Jensen attributes to the routine and security of Big Noise.

"I feel more like I can express myself and show people who I really am... [outside of Big Noise] I hide away from folk that don't like me. Just kind of avoid people. But then now, coming to Big Noise, I've learned that I don't need to hide. I can just speak to them."

To explore Jensen's story further, follow the coloured arrows around the map.

All are welcome -> feeling loved and valued

Yeah, I feel more like I can express myself and show people who I really am. [I used to] hide away from folk that don't like me. Just kind of avoid people. But then now, coming to Big Noise, I've learned that I don't need to hide. I can just speak to them." (Jensen)

"He's very much, he's just described his school day there, you know, he hides away, and he's very much always on his own. So it's great that he's got this outside of school. [Parent]

Feeling loved and valued -> Confidence

It kind of helped me with my, obviously my confidence, and it helped me talk to people, other people and everything. I can talk to people I know, it just kind of boosts my range of people I can talk to. I've also made quite a lot of friends from Big Noise.

He struggles to make friends, you know, he's quite happy in his own company. But that wee boy I seen last week [at the Big Noise concert], that's a different wee boy, yeah, a different person. Absolutely, definitely, when I seen it, I hung about afterwards, you know, as he was getting stuff from the locker just making sure he was okay, and he looked taller. It was just, he looked tall and like he was so confident. [Parent]

Confidence -> Social skills

I think [I've struggled with making friends at school] mostly because of my disability, okay, but then when I started Big Noise, more and more folk came and talked to me. More started being friends and everything. If you need to talk to someone, they'll be there to listen to you.

Social Networks: Mohammed, 15 & Mum, Sophia (Big Noise Govanhill)

Case study story

Mohammed first got involved with Big Noise through a summer club in P4, describing his first impression as “amazing”. He is still attending as he finishes High School. His mum, Sophia, felt the summer clubs helped channel energy and reduce boredom while keeping her children engaged and developing new skills.

Sophia says Mohammed has a “strong base at Big Noise”, and with his core musical development and Euphonium playing, he finds Nat 5 Music “easy”. He highlights growth in coordination, listening, and rhythm:

“I have to do, like, loads of different things at once.... I know which fingers go where I'm just so used to it... and... I use... peripheral vision... to watch the conductor... so I stay in time... even its basic skills like that, they taught me how to do.”

He feels these skills also support his concentration at school. Playing music with friends helps relieve stress and gives a sense of enjoyment and accomplishment.

Mohammed has performed with musicians from the RSNO and RSC, which he says inspired him and built confidence, self-belief, and public speaking skills. He also credits Big Noise with improving his social skills and friendships:

“Before Big Noise....I was a very shy person... ever since I came... I'm making new

friends... it was just natural... Big Noise just has that sort of environment where... you know you're safe... you can... make friends...”

His younger brother also attends and enjoys learning violin and making friends:

“When I first joined Big Noise, I was actually kind of nervous... I made different friends from different schools.... It's like, I never want to leave.”

Big Noise has also strengthened relationships beyond the programme. Sophia and her family have built connections with other families, socialising and celebrating together. Reflecting on the opportunities available, Sophia said:

“I feel blessed... Life with the cost of living... everything is so expensive... if it was me... I couldn't have afforded it... so he's going to miss out all those experiences if we don't have Big Noise”.

Both Sophia and Mohammed describe the staff as supportive, particularly in adapting to the needs of Mohammed’s younger brothers, one diagnosed Autistic and another awaiting assessment. They feel comfortable approaching staff for support, and Mohammed sees them as friends developed over time.

Sophia, who previously worked as a support worker at Big Noise, values its positive and welcoming environment:

“But here it was, like, ‘High five. How was your day?’... after a hectic day school... this is what they're looking for... they need to calm down... when they come over here... they see Big Noise staff like friends... this helps them feel relaxed... there was no strict atmosphere... just fun, chatting, and enjoying music... very different from school... that's what I love.”

To explore Mohammed’s story further, follow the coloured arrows around the map.

Immersive programme engagement - > Sense of belonging

So in the past, we were bored in the summer holidays, there's not much activities. Obviously, it cost us money, so most of the time we were home, and I had two other boys, so taking all three of them together, and [their] dad was working full time, so for me, our safe place was inside the home. But when Mohammed started, there was a wee entertainment [club], so we walked to Forsyth House in the morning to drop him around half nine-ish, and then we came back at one. And sometimes I used to come early to take the other two to the park and at the end of summer school sessions. And they used to go to parties, they were usually with Big Noise people, so I can spend time with the other two. And so that, that's how I came out of the house. [Parent]

Sense of belonging -> Friendships around music

Big Noise just has that sort of environment where you know you're safe, you know you can make friends without, you know... Even when you're just sitting in the band, you know, if you've got someone sitting next to you playing, like, I don't know same section instrument, or even the same instrument, because when I went to RSO, I met a guy who also played euphonium, which I thought was strange, because I felt like I was the only euphonium there!

Friendships around music -> Reduced loneliness

Before Big Noise, my mum would know, I was a very shy person. And ever since I came to Big Noise, I'm making new friends. It just made, it was just natural that any new person I talked to, we were friends, yeah, you know, anyone in school, [I] started making more friends.

Attribution:

The headings in this document relate to the nodes and case study boxes on the Big Noise impact map, produced by Dr Lisa Garnham at the University of Strathclyde. The data in this document was compiled by Aileen Campbell, Big Noise Evaluation Lead.