

DISQUIET EVALUATION

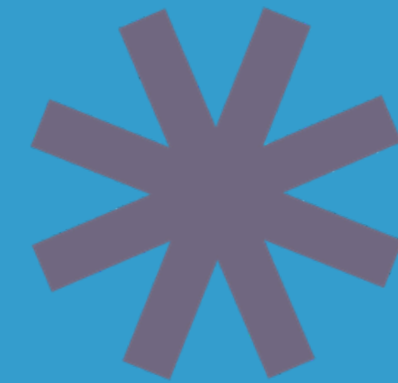
**YOUTH
MUSIC**



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



PROJECT AIMS



DisQuiet was designed to engage Young People (YP) traditionally excluded from creative activities via:

- **Entry-level music workshops**
 - **Intermediate-level school Audio Camps over school holidays**
 - **Advanced-level open band practice**
 - **And regular open-mic/ showcase events**
 - **Providing YP in Swale & Medway opportunities to enjoy entry-routes & pursue progression routes into music-making**
 - **Boosting wellbeing**
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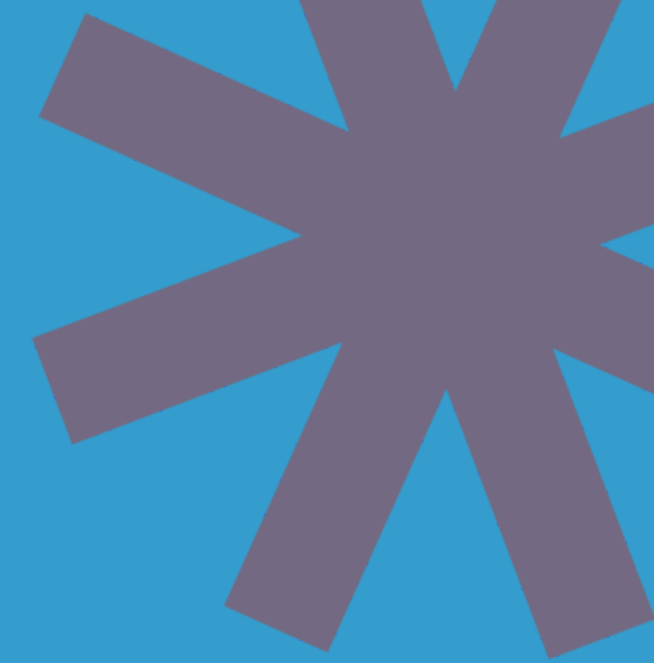
KEY OUTPUTS

- **Increase young people's musical creativity and confidence**
- **Improve young people's wellbeing**
- **Propensity to crossover to other programmes/retention**
- **Increase skills and knowledge**



BARRIERS FACED BY YP IN MEDWAY AND SWALE

- **Economic deprivation**
- **English as an additional language**
- **Excluded from school**
- **LGBTQ+**
- **Mental ill health**
- **Not in Education**
- **Employment or Training (NEET)**
- **Rurally isolated**
- **Special Educational Needs**
- **Traveller/Romany**



PROGRAM COMPONENTS // KEY DELIVERABLES

1. Weekly Music Making & Support

- **Foundation Sessions:** Weekly after-school sessions for YP with low/no access to music, building core skills
- **Expert Team:** Staffed by a Lead Facilitator, Peer-Mentor (under 25), and Youth Worker for pastoral support
- **Quality & Voice:** Includes reflection/consultation to ensure programming is informed by youth voice and choice.
- **Staff Up-Skilling:** Budget allocated for training (e.g., Youth Mental Health First Aid, Coaching Skills)

2. Open-Access & Progression

- **Rehearsal Space:** Weekly open-access time for YP already engaged in music to progress their skills
- **Youth-Led:** Sessions are predominantly youth-led, maximising agency and flexibility
- **Networking:** Staff facilitate relationship brokering (e.g. matching musicians) and signposting
- **Partnership:** Identified potential rehearsal space access via the Medway CEP/local authority

3. Performance & Industry Skills

- **Showcase:** Termly Open Mic/showcase in each location to build confidence and celebrate development
- **Off-Stage Roles:** YP can engage in roles like technical production, PR, or documentation if they prefer not to perform
- **Career Pathways:** Introduction to production and event management roles
- **Venue Outreach:** Identified local performance opportunities (libraries, festivals)



4. Intensive Skill Camps

- **Audio-Camps:** 3 x 4-day School Holiday Camps per year in each location (12 total/24 months)
- **Intermediate Level:** Pitched to allow signposting to appropriate follow-up activities (entry or advanced)
- **Curriculum:** Focus on areas like Production, Broadcasting, Songwriting, and Careers
- **Collaboration:** Delivered in partnership with local creative organisations
- **Accreditation:** Participants can be assessed for the Bronze Arts Award

YOUTH LED



We embedded a continuous process of youth voice extensively into the programme with:

- **Regular group discussions/ consultation sessions**
- **Evaluation which captured young people's comments**
- **Opportunity for reflection and co-design, ensuring the programme evolved to meet young people's needs, expectations, and ambitions**
- **Larger delivery teams (2 lead facilitators, plus a youth worker) which provided more opportunities for adults to provide creative and pastoral support to attendees**
- **Regular, weekly delivery informed creative planning for school holiday audio camps, as well as ongoing terms & performance opportunities.**





STATS

TOTAL ENGAGED NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE = 195

PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDING 3 SESSIONS OR MORE = 42%

TOTAL NUMBER OF WEEKLY SESSIONS = 149

TOTAL NUMBER OF AUDIO CAMPS = 14

TOTAL NUMBER OF AUDIO CAMP DAYS = 32

NUMBER OF PERFORMANCE DAYS & REHEARSALS = 9



KEY LEARNINGS



1. Operational Resilience & Infrastructure

- **The Lock-Down Factor:** Securing permanent, reliable venues is critical. Relying on community spaces led to cancellations that disrupted consistency for young people.
- **Resource Access as a Bridge:** Providing instruments is an essential equity tool; many participants have the talent but lack the economic means to own equipment.

2. Youth-Led Delivery & Flexibility

- **Removing Barriers to Play:** We learned that documentation-heavy outcomes (like Arts Awards) can stifle creativity. Prioritising "doing" over "documenting" led to higher engagement.
- **Active Listening in Real-Time:** Splitting groups based on specific interests (e.g Originals vs. Covers) showed participants that their voices directly shape the project structure.
- **The Lifecycle of Participation:** High-school age participation is naturally cyclical. We now view dipping out for exams as a successful transition rather than a loss of engagement.

3. Strategic Recruitment & Safeguarding

- **Peer-to-Peer Communication:** Initial recruitment struggled because marketing was aimed at parents. Effective outreach must be youth-to-youth in tone and platform.
- **Embedded Pastoral Care:** Including a dedicated Youth Worker alongside Music Facilitators is non-negotiable for managing complex pastoral and neurodivergent needs safely.
- **Digital-First Security:** Moving from paper to secure digital systems (Google Forms/Cloud) significantly improved data security and staff responsiveness.

4. Impact & Progression

- **The Scaffold Effect:** The project serves as a vital bridge to higher education. Consistent support empowers participants to transition from local hobbyists to professional music students and performers.
- **Professional Exposure:** Partnering with industry professionals (e.g, THENIX) provides world-class experiences that demystify creative careers for local youth.

PROJECT IMPACT

“It’s just a chance to play with other people. You don’t sort of get the opportunity that often. Like I do music GCSE but that’s more sort of talking about Mozart. This is the opportunity to play music that you like, instead of music someone’s telling you to listen to”



“I like to connect with other people that I’ve never known before, and I’ve made new friends, and it’s just such a great experience”



“When I play at home I get told to turn it down!”

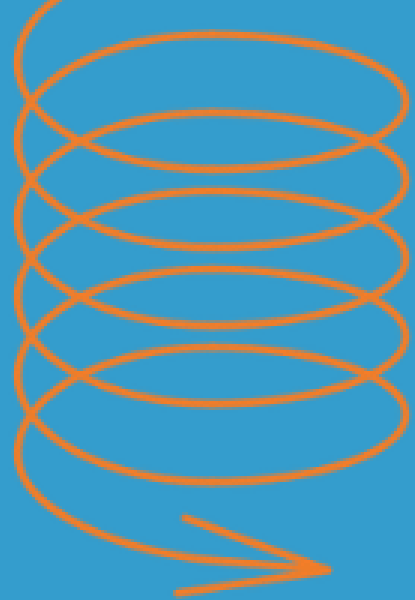


WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST BENEFIT OF COMING ALONG TO DISQUIET?

"I've definitely grown more confident"

"I just like expressing myself through music. Thursday is one of my favourite days of the week. I just come here and have a great time. I really look forward to it"





HAVE YOU LEARNED ANY NEW SKILLS BY COMING ALONG?

“improvising...it’s more hands on and everyone has a say in it”

“It’s helped get my confidence up in performing. I never used to be able to perform in front of people, even my mum, and now I can perform in front of anyone I want.”

“I performed at SWEEPS, and GENfest, that was fun. I don’t think I’d have had the confidence to do it live before. It’s the people that have given me confidence, and just actually understanding what’s going on and how it all works when you’re in a band”

“I feel like I’ve improved my bass skills quite a lot. I’ve been helped a lot with that”

HAS THE GROUP INSPIRED YOU TO DO ANYTHING SPECIFIC?

“Yeah I’ve bought a few new instruments.... a bass guitar or a keyboard. And an acoustic and electric guitar, and I’m planning to buy a banjo. I’ve also been learning the DJ on the side. I wouldn’t have done all that without this group. This group has inspired me quite a lot actually”

“I write music now and I didn’t do that before”

“Since coming to Disquiet I wanted to do more active stuff on my bass. So I thought about doing grading, and then go on to do other music events as well. My teacher said I’m already working at grade three standard, so he’s going to put me in for a four or five which I don’t think would have happened if I hadn’t been in this group”



DO YOU THINK YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO BE MORE CREATIVE WITH YOUR MUSIC BY COMING TO DISQUIET?

“I’ve noticed lately that I’m able to just like come up with my own writing. I make stuff up on the piano and I come to Disquiet and I’m like, look I’ve come up with this at home! If I hadn’t had joined this club, I would never have been able to do that”

“I wrote my first set of lyrics here, which was last week, which was very exciting, because I’ve never done that before”

“Yeah definitely, we wrote a song a few months ago, and just being involved in that – creating music with other people is a different experience from creating music yourself”

“I definitely think that being surrounded by other people with creative ideas makes you lean into the creativity. I think you become more creative together, because the positive energy interacts and bounces off each other”



FACILITATORS / LEAD ARTIST COMMENTS

“The young people have spoke about how proud they are to have created their own track and own music video.”

“It’s been a real pleasure working on this project; contributing to something that has enabled such meaningful progress for the participants has been incredibly rewarding.”

“The programme has been a pleasure and the commitment and passion from some of the members has been great to see. It’s also hard to believe some of them have been coming for the duration of the project- It has been a lot of fun!”

“seeing the boost in confidence in the young people after the chatham carnival performance is brilliant”



YOUTH WORKER COMMENTS

“What’s great about DisQuiet is now they’ve sort of developed...they all have their own instrument that they play. But what happens at the break time is that they all swap round, and everybody has a go of everything, yeah, and they feel confident to fail in front of each other.”

“It’s just like a youth club would be, but with a purpose, and the fact that they feel like they’ve achieved so much together as a team has brought them more together, and they feel like they belong.”

“Just to experience, over time, the difference that it made in those young people, both in practical skills, but personally, was a massive highlight for me.”

“All of the young people who attended came on their own and were experiencing a degree of isolation in friendships, And they were all very different from each other, different schools, different ages. And the thing they had in common was they wanted to play music, and then to see them be accepted into this group and belong...being an individual person- this is what the group’s been about. - it was individuals coming together who were looking for somewhere they could belong.”





IN CONVERSATION WITH MAEVE

Overcoming Barriers (2018–2020)

- **Early Challenges:** A neurodivergent young person from a low-income background facing significant barriers to formal music education.
- **The Disquiet Catalyst:** Transitioned from an unstructured club to the Disquiet programme, providing the "scaffolding" needed to focus their talent.
- **Building Foundations:** Developed the discipline and confidence to perform publicly and view music as a professional career path.


Educational Success & Professional Growth

- **Higher Education:** Inspired by the programme to move to Brighton and study Music Performance and Production at WaterBear College.
- **Industry Integration:** Focused on socialising and networking to build an extensive professional contact list while studying.
- **Graduation:** Successfully graduated in October 2025, a milestone Maeve credits to the early support of the project.

Current Impact & Future Ambition

- **Active Career:** Currently aged 22, gigging regularly with several bands and recording new original material.
- **Advocacy:** Passionate about the impact of youth-led provision and encouraging others to join similar programmes.
- **Full Circle:** Aiming to lead their own music community projects to pass on the discipline and passion to the next generation.



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“I’d say DisQuiet definitely affected my decision to go to music college quite significantly. Because without the ensemble practice, I wouldn’t be into music as much as I am”



PROJECT LEGACY

GILLINGHAM:

Medway Youth Service have now taken over the project with help from Kent Music

SITTINGBOURNE:

The facilitators and youth worker have applied to the Arts Council to continue the project





IDEAS TEST

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LOTTERY FUNDED

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