

<b><i>Due to be Submitted to OT</i></b>	<b><i>Proposed Publication date</i></b>	<b><i>Organisation</i></b>
<i>19/09/2019</i>	<i>26/09/19</i>	<i>Soundabout</i>

Soundabout is a local charity that uses music as a bridge to engage with those that are less able to communicate.

There are over 350,000 people in the UK with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Soundabout is passionate about engaging with them through projects that unlock the potential of people with complex needs, helping them with communication and interaction, as well as being fun and fulfilling. They also aim to empower parents, carers and teachers, giving them the confidence to use music as a way of connecting.

Sam, a member of Soundabout's Inclusive Choir, has Down's syndrome and hearing loss. Singing has helped him overcome his stutter and has given him a voice. He feels more confident, more alive and more in control of his life when he is singing.

For Daniel, another participant, who was born with multiple disabilities, music has become a huge joy in his life. "He switches on the moment he enters the Soundabout session room and he's completely engaged for the entire session. The joy lasts with him for the rest of the day" says his dad Steve.

Daniel's parents now use Soundabout's techniques to get Daniel to come out of his shell and express himself at home. Similarly, Jessica and her mother use music as a way to strengthen their deep love and affection for each other.

Soundabout was launched in 1995 in Oxford, since then, it has grown into a national charity that is pioneering the use of music, sound and rhythm to give children and adults with disabilities a voice and a way to express themselves. They rely heavily on the generosity of volunteers and fundraisers to allow them to expand and reach more people.

You can get involved as a fundraiser or volunteer in many ways. Whether it's through Soundabout's fundraising events, going along to their Inclusive Choir and setting up or signing people in, making teas or giving time to help with office-based work. Volunteering and donating any amount, however small or large, is vital to their work.

Working with them is rewarding and fulfilling and as a volunteer you have the opportunity to socialise and meet new people and develop new skills.

There are a variety of volunteering roles at Soundabout for people with differing skill sets and experience. Sophie, one of their volunteers says it has been "an amazing opportunity for me to learn new skills and develop my CV. I also love volunteering at the wonderful Inclusive Choir."

"Volunteering at Soundabout has enabled me to learn new skills while maintaining existing ones. It has also provided a post-retirement sense of purpose" says Sandy, who is another volunteer.

Soundabout is launching a new music making session in Littlemore on Tuesdays, they are looking for an exceptional volunteer to regularly support the new project. If you think you can make a difference to the lives of people with disability and their families, please contact the team.

To find out more about these and lots of other volunteering opportunities in Oxfordshire visit [oxonvolunteers.org](http://oxonvolunteers.org), you can also visit [soundabout.org.uk/volunteering](http://soundabout.org.uk/volunteering)

This article was developed in partnership with the Volunteer Centre at OCVA. If you would like a feature about your **community group, charity or social enterprise** in the Voluntary Voice section of the Oxford Times please email: [vol@ocva.org.uk](mailto:vol@ocva.org.uk)