Parents of premature babies typically experience a stressful discrepancy between the parenting they envisaged and the manner in which they are able to care for their infant on the NNU. Additionally, multiple barriers exist on NNU’s that may impede initiation of sensitive parenting and the establishment of healthy early dyadic relationships that usually support secure infant attachment (Balbernie 2013). It is acknowledged that family-centred care reduces stress for parents leading to better outcomes for NNU babies; it may enhance attachment leading to improved long-term outcomes for both babies and families (DOH 2009).

The Bliss (Family Friendly Accreditation) initiative and FINE (family and infant neurodevelopmental education) training for nurses on our NNU in Cornwall ensure that staff practise in ways conducive to optimising infant development and attachment. The Music Therapy project, alongside this approach, delivers an intervention that encourages Mums to sing lullabies to babies accompanied vocally and instrumentally by an HCPC registered Music Therapist (also a practising Registered Midwife). The aim of the project is to provide an emotionally supportive intervention for families and mothers that fits with the ethos of the unit.

The intervention itself is offered twice a week. Each individual session lasts from 10 to 30 minutes. Carefully selected lullabies are suggested, usually consisting of two vocal lines, which may be simple phrases rather than words. Melodies usually do not exceed a range of 5 semi-tones and are easy to learn. In keeping with providing a neuro-protective environment for babies, volume is kept well below 70 dB, and the intervention is offered for babies of more than 32 weeks gestation. Simple harmonic accompaniment is provided on guitar.

This pilot project is funded by Cornwall Music Therapy Trust. Survey collection from both families and staff is currently underway and formal evaluation will be complete by February 2018.

(299 WORDS EXCLUDING HEADING).