

Good practice guide to running a music facility in *myplace* centres

Purpose

This guide will help you in running and managing your *myplace* music space. Young people's music-making takes many forms, from rock to samba and hip hop to classical. How you manage the music space is key to catering for these different interests and making sure that young people get the maximum benefits from getting involved in music. This guide focuses on the activities, training, staffing and management issues around music. You should read this guide with the guide to planning and developing music in *myplace* centres.

The evidence base

Teenagers and music is an instinctive match. Many young people look to music lyrics as a source of reassurance and inspiration, and joining a band is a classic teen pastime. Youth Music in its 2006 Omnibus survey found nearly a third of 7-19 year olds are making music outside school provision, many without supervision. A recent report found 43% of young people who want to engage in music didn't because of the lack of facilities or huge costs. The lack of affordable, well-equipped rehearsal studios means many young musicians have nowhere to practice and poor access to professional equipment.

The Make Space Campaign run by 4Children found half of 11-18 year olds complaining of a lack of facilities said an informal space for arts and creative work would be most important. And two thirds of this group is interested in music-making.

Personal and social benefits

Participatory opportunities give young people a safe place to learn, without the pressure of exams and marking. They provide young learners the chance to experience achievement, perhaps for the first time in their lives. It needs individuals to collaborate, listen to and hear each other, develop individual responsibility and professional attitudes. The Music Education Council has found participation in music can develop creativity, confidence and spiritual strength and can play a key role in health improvement, community safety and educational achievement.

Transferable skills

Making music has many transferable skills. By working with others in groups young people learn flexibility, teamwork, problem solving, innovation and risk taking. It can also elicit:

- a sense of pride and self-esteem;
- increase a young person's opportunities to gain enjoyment from music;
- commitment;
- reliability;
- responsibility;
- punctuality; and
- self-discipline.

Such outcomes are especially helpful for young people who cannot progress at more academic school subjects or disaffected young people.

The Creative & Cultural Skills Council bridges the gap between industry, training and the government. It has found a culture of unpaid work experience dominates the creative and cultural industries. For employers, someone with relevant on-the-job experience is more valuable than an untested graduate. Gaining experience in a well run music space will prepare a young person for work in the creative and cultural industries.

Accreditation and progression

Instrumental grade exams are now available for popular music. Popular music instrumental tuition takes various forms from individual lessons to large groups of around fifteen learners. There

are various music accrediting bodies including:

- Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
- Trinity Guildhall
- London College of Music & Media
- Rockscool
- National Open College Network
- Edexcel
- Music Medal

The Arts Award now assesses how a young person applies them self to their arts, rather than to the specific skills. It includes four areas - taking part in an arts project, going to arts events, arts heroes and heroines and an arts apprenticeship. For those who don't wish to take the accreditation route, taking part is enough in itself. There are other qualitative ways in which you can evaluate outputs and outcomes for your work such as:

- performances
- recordings
- young people who have progressed through your project
- who you have signposted or referred to similar activities
- people who have entered education, training or employment
- the number of new partnerships you have formed

Musicians don't just need to practice their music but also to manage creative entrepreneurship such as organising their group, performances, recording sessions, and rehearsals. The "movers and shakers" are vital in promoting new talent, circulating ideas and trends, putting people in touch with one another, setting up gigs and providing access to the wider market. They are often former musicians who have moved on, for example a singer turned manager.

Good practice programme

A good practice programme will last up to 10 weeks. The early sessions should include an introduction to the people

involved, the equipment, a description of the activity, and expected outcomes and outputs. Structured and progressive activity with critical learning outcomes will enable participants to move on to the next level. Groups of between 5-10 participants works best for DJ, recording and music technology to ensure participants' get to use the equipment and receive attention from the music leader. The group size for band rehearsals, where there is less need for direct instruction, can be much larger.

You should allow participants to join any level suitable to their skills. The high value placed on friendship, shared taste, tolerance and the ability to listen to each others' ideas are necessary because they should arrive at music-making through choice. The ideal of cooperation during rehearsals can bring a deep commitment to the group. Your music leaders should have experience working with young people at these levels. Many music leaders will be specialists in instrumental playing, singing, music production and technology or DJ'ing.

StreetVibes Youth in South London offers daytime vocational courses as well as after-school and school holiday music programmes to enable effective use of its space all year. Its centre houses three music learning spaces with recording booths, a live music room with PA and bass and electric guitars, keyboards and a drum kit on a moving platform that they can roll out easily into a bigger room to allow larger sessions.

Levels of engagement

There are several levels at which you can engage young people at. These are outlined below and in Figure 1. We intend the descriptions of the following levels as a guide only. Young musicians may move between levels depending on their needs.

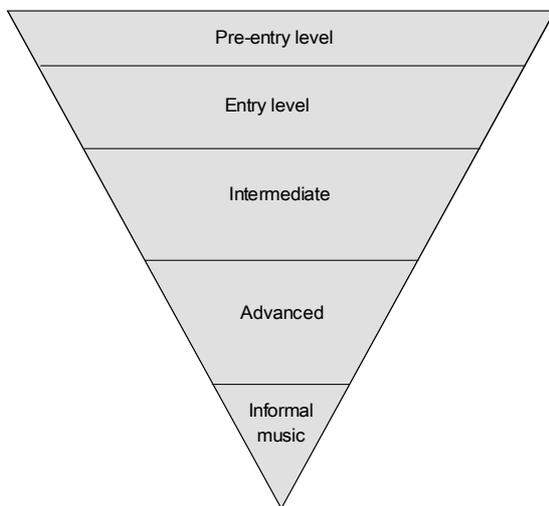
Pre-entry level

Being in a band, being a DJ, vocalist or creating your own tracks on a computer is a great motivator for young people. The first barrier to engaging in these activities is the confidence to start. Peer example is the best way of overcoming this barrier. When young people see someone they know, close to their age, creating music they can often gain greater conviction than from an

expert. Most guitar-based bands form so early that players often have little or no control over their instruments and limited knowledge of chord progressions, licks or songs. It is by no means unheard-of for bands to form before members have an instrument.

Pre-entry level work should include one-off outreach, detached and taster sessions to recruit young people on to your fuller programme. There is an opportunity for partner organisations to showcase their work in these open sessions in a market place style event, with performances from young people who have been through the programme.

Figure 1 Levels of engagement



Entry-level

You could arrange several taster sessions in different musical styles as a means of finding out what might appeal to young people. This could be part of an activities week or linked to a local arts festival. You could also run a first access club designed specifically for previously disengaged young people. Many entry level music projects involve music technology, DJing/ MCing and lyric writing. Music technology is especially good at providing reasonably good results in a short time. You could also consider running entry-level and taster sessions in African drumming, a singing group, guitar club or a drum clinic.

To enjoy their time in your music space it is important for participants to see the social experience as being of equal importance to the activity. Friendship and sharing musical

tastes are highly significant to young popular musicians and affect their learning practices in many ways. They often start off playing instruments they like because they had heard them being played in ways they found inspiring, or the music inspiring. This is especially the case for younger musicians just starting out where the move from listener-fan-mode into musician-fan-mode is likely to shift backwards and forwards before they identify themselves as a musician.

Interaction with friends, siblings and other peers can arise in casual encounters or organised sessions. It can also occur separately from music-making or during rehearsals and jam sessions. You may wish to enable participants to choose instruments freely and set them up themselves at this level. Even though this can take some time at the beginning while participants get to know one another and how to set up their 'band', it enables them to learn about taking responsibility for their instruments. It can help to bring about an environment of trust and respect. It is reasonable to expect members of embryonic groups won't know any tunes. You should therefore adjust your expectations accordingly.

Intermediate level

Once young musicians have gained the rudimentary skills in using their instruments or equipment, they begin creating music by spontaneously basing their ideas on what they have learnt through listening and copying other music. Participants may initially take on this task on their own with little guidance. However, you may wish to consider building in guidance to help them to understand how to put music together, for example verse and chorus sequences.

Developing creative music has its roots not just in good teaching and practice, but also in the confidence to experiment that a private music space can give you. Therefore there is a balance to strike between the support you offer those using your spaces and the time students are allowed to develop on their own - Gawain Hewitt, CM

Forming small groups where members support one another is a good way for them

to collaborate to create their own pieces. This may take the form of a songwriting club introducing chords, riffs, loops, scales, lyric writing, melody, group skills and performance. It could also include a music technology club using turntables and music technology. This may give the opportunity to use older participants as peer-mentors or trainees who begin to learn how to lead sessions and you can trust to use the space and equipment.

Most popular music is sung and the lyrics often form an important part. Songwriting can be an excellent way of enabling young people to express themselves about topics important to them in familiar musical styles. Recording and reviewing work is a critical part of the creative process and a good way of tracking progress. This level may result in musicians leading their own sessions with informal performances. You may wish to consider teaming up different groups, for example your guitar club musicians with your singing group.

Advanced level

You should aim to provide various activities designed by and for already engaged participants to help them take their music making to a new level. It is likely you will work with a smaller number of participants at this level. Some will achieve trainee status where they will be involved in:

- progressing on to formal music training courses
- organising showcase gigs and Battle of the bands competitions
- uploading their work to social networking sites
- working on their own
- studio recording sessions

Informal music level

After these successive levels you can trust young people to work independently and lead small groups of peers. This activity can be self-sustaining. With support from youth workers and specialists this could lead to further projects such as:

- small business incubation with the aim to work in the creative and cultural

industries, for example forming a record label or an events management company

- a heritage project linked to the local music scene
- Further or Higher Education creative diploma courses
- seeking grants to develop new areas of work

Equipment and instruments

Selecting equipment and instruments depends on your chosen activities.

A selection of guitars (acoustic and electric), bass guitars, and associated leads and amplifiers often feature heavily in popular music. Electric guitars hold particular appeal because of their association with rock and popular music, however acoustic guitars can be equally popular. It is unrealistic to expect to have enough guitars for every participant but having several guitars available can improve motivation.

Keyboards are universal and useful as a drum machine or rhythm section. They can also allow users to choose different timbres to reproduce sounds, and for melodic and harmonic parts. If young people are using keyboards with instruments such as drum kits and electric guitars, they will need an amplifier.

I would emphasise the importance of solid and reliable equipment. It is easier to get spares and maintain well-established branded instruments and equipment. Don't compromise on robustness. It is nearly always best to opt for simple equipment rather than complex items – Mark Bick, Forest of Dean Music Makers

Most music spaces will have at least one drum kit. Electronic drum kits have proved popular, as have electronic drum pads – and these options are easier to store, have a volume control and are easy to record. Bands often use untuned percussion, especially if drum kits are not available. Bear in mind young people into rock and punk music may prefer to use an acoustic drum kit. Electronic drums cost more and do not have as long a life span as acoustic drums.

You will need CD and MP3 players. Most activity will involve listening; therefore

audio playback equipment is essential in most sessions. You can also get MP3 recorders which are an excellent alternative to using computers for recording and are more easily portable. The Internet is useful for sourcing tracks to guide song writing, downloading lyrics, chords and music notation. Using mobile phones too can be useful to record audio to help participants remember how to play specific parts.

It is useful to have a stock of good quality microphones for participants using their voices to sing, rap and MC. Young people can also use these to record acoustic and amplified instruments.

For those interested in urban music they will be more interested in creating beats and backing tracks using computer-based sequencers. The simpler programmes are usually the best unless participants already have a background in music software. Current budget favourites are M-Audio Session and Cakewalk Music Creator 4 (for Windows PC users) and Garageband (only for Apple Mac users). Many youth settings already use Steinberg's Cubase and Logic available for either Windows PC or Apple Mac. Those interested in DJing and MCing will need pairs of record decks and associated mixer and microphone.

If you are using music technology, Assistive Music Technology such as Soundbeam, MIDI Creator for performance and switches, joysticks and trackball hardware will enable access by disabled musicians.

Consultation with young people

You need to involve young people centrally, above and beyond the active music-making. You should welcome young people as co-workers with a real voice in decision-making. You should weave consultation with young people into the fabric of all your music work. This should involve making young people aware of the opportunities available regionally, including mentoring, advice and guidance on the most suitable musical pathway irrespective of location. Providing regularly a full range of taster workshops, led by various specialist music leaders, is a good

way to show all the music-making options enabling young people to make informed choices. Youth workers can provide leadership and set standards by their management of the spaces.

Staff and training

Depending on the scale of your project, you may employ a music facility manager or incorporate this role in the job description of the overall centre manager. You should employ freelance music leaders to deliver activity. The centre manager should manage your pool of freelance music leaders. You should follow rates of pay recommended by the Musicians Union and adopt a continuing professional development plan for contracted staff using guidance from Musicleader.net. Specialist contracted music leaders should offer training to youth workers.

Staffing is much more expensive than equipment in the long run. Young people want space to make music without adult interference. Think through how you can efficiently provide staff to check people in and out, and provide background support without incurring huge costs or having staff sitting around doing nothing. The use of "gatekeeper staff" used by leisure centres is a good example – Mark Bick, Forest of Dean Music Makers

If you can, organise technician support in your music space, especially if you plan to have a music technology suite. It can improve equipment maintenance and saves you valuable time. The technician will help you to stay on top of maintenance and problem solving. Some investment in support from technician staff and/or from a trusted young person can support the smooth running of your work.

If you choose to run a recording studio you should consider employing a sound engineer experienced in working with young people. You will mainly employ the studio engineer to manage all aspects of the recording studio. Their role here is to help produce recordings with young people who want to be in control of every aspect of the production. This person could also be available to supervise the use of other

spaces and provide artistic and technical advice. She or he may offer support to bands and individuals if they ask for it. This person should also be responsible for a music technology suite with support from freelance technical support.

Support for those using the spaces also includes an effective maintenance system. Any public facility will get heavy use, and instruments and equipment can quickly deteriorate when not looked after. Project design that allows different types of music work to meet one another can help to foster new relationships and collaborations as well as a wider sense of music community - Gawain Hewitt, CM

Many youth music projects employ a trainee, often a peer leader. She or he should plan and lead activities, mentored by a more senior music leader. Activities could include:

- Workshops
- Informal presentations
- Seminars or self-help surgeries
- Project planning
- Rehearsals
- Performances

Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Consider the types of activity you want happening in your music space
- Consider designing activity that targets particular groups and communities
- Have a good system to manage bookings
- Encourage an open-door policy with other music providers and partners
- Advertise and promote the work of other providers
- Seek professional advice and best quality music leaders to deliver your instruction
- Involve and consult young people in all parts of the project
- Set up ongoing links with your freelance and specialist workers
- Act entrepreneurially or work with those, including young people, who do
- Strike a balance between adult support and time for young people to rehearse

- Consider suitable accreditation bodies for your young people
- Offer trainee peer positions to young people with advanced leadership skills
- Budget for CPD, training and inductions
- Consider hiring your equipment and service out
- Factor in how young people use new technologies to share their work
- Allow young people to tell you of developments in technology and music
- Consider buying laptops for outreach and flexible working
- Use a full-cost recovery approach to your fund-raising and project budgeting
- Think about how you can support musicians to buy their first instrument
- Budget to update your computers and software regularly
- Manage microphone and equipment booking
- Have earplugs available for rock bands
- Train participants to use the PA

DON'T

- Underestimate the growing number of young people wanting to use your space
- Judge artistic quality but encourage commitment to the activity
- Have too many participants in any one group or session
- Rule out hiring out your space to other users
- Lend instruments and equipment out to young people to take home
- Assume young people will like all types of activity including performing
- Rule out working with existing recording studios
- Scrimp on equipment repair
- Underestimate timetabling to allow enough time for setting up and packing away

Links to other material and sources of support

In developing your programme and running your facility you might wish to contact some of these organisations for further support and advice.

Local contacts

- Arts venues
- Third sector music organisations
- Music shops and retailers
- Local media (radio, TV)
- Local Authority Head of Children's Services
- Specialist performing arts and music secondary schools and colleges
- Higher & Further education institutions
- Local commercial recording and rehearsal studios
- Commercial and community training facilities

Regional contacts

- Youth Music Action Zone
- Youth Music's Regional Executive Officer
- Arts Council England regional office

Further Information

UK Music

www.ukmusic.org

Audio Support

www.audiosupport.co.uk

Association of Professional Recording Studios

www.aprs.co.uk

Music Industries Association

www.mia.org.uk

Music Education Council

www.mec.org.uk

Sound Sense

www.soundsense.org

Contact

This guide was written by Trevor Mason of Youth Music.

For further information or support on using music contact your regional lead advisor, e-mail us at: myplacesupportteam@hallaitken.co.uk. Or call the support team helpline on 0161 212 1100.