

A quality framework for use in music-making sessions working with young people in SEN/D settings.

Do...

Review...

Improve...



National Foundation for  
Youth Music



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## What is the quality framework?

A quality framework is a tool to help you understand, measure and evaluate quality in your work. Youth Music's quality framework – *Do, Review, Improve* - gathers together all the criteria we believe demonstrate quality in a music-making session. It's based on evidence we've been gathering from the projects we've supported since we began in 1999.

We ask all organisations funded by Youth Music to use *Do, Review, Improve* to reflect on their practice. And we ask anyone applying to us for funding to show how they would build it into their project. However the quality framework can be used by anyone leading a music-making session for children and young people: it's not just for those holding Youth Music grants.

You can use *Do, Review, Improve* for planning, peer observation or self-reflection. It's not intended to be a test, and you don't need to score yourself or rank yourself against others. Instead, the quality framework is designed to help you think about your practice and the principles behind it, and to identify areas you may wish to develop.

## Why have we created a new version for projects delivered in SEN/D settings?

Youth Music's quality framework is flexible and can be used for any kind of music-making project. However, the criteria might look different in different kinds of settings. There are increasing numbers of young people with additional needs participating in music-making. Around a quarter of projects supported by Youth Music specialise in working with children and young people in special educational needs and/or disability settings.

Drake Music is one of Youth Music's strategic partners. They're experts in music delivery in SEN/D settings and in using technology to break down disabling barriers to music-making. They've taken the original quality framework (first published in 2013), and built upon it in the following ways:

- Adding extra information offering practical insights and suggestions for making music with young people with additional needs.
- Giving examples illustrating how these suggestions might work in practice.

## Quality Framework criteria

### Young people-centred

#### Y1) Music-making is placed within the wider context of the young musician's life, with recognition of the young musician's existing musical identity

**Drake Music:** Many disabled young people have less opportunity to make choices and be 'in charge' than their non-disabled peers. Access to music-making can increase these opportunities.

***Example:** A music leader initiates a 'call and response' music activity with a musician with learning disabilities. Each time, the music leader and support worker wait for the participant to begin playing before they respond. The young musician can enjoy the power of keeping the others waiting in silent suspense.*

#### Y2) Young musicians experience equality of engagement: no participant is discriminated against

**Drake Music:** We believe in the social model of disability in which people are disabled by society, not by their condition or impairment. Be aware of 'disabling barriers' to participation in music-making (for example buildings which are hard to access or instruments which are unsuitable), and ensure music leaders have access to Disability Equality Training.

***Example:** A music hub organises an open access music session on a Saturday for both disabled and non-disabled young musicians. On offer*

*is a range of both 'music tech' instruments (e.g. iPads and Skoog) as well as guitars, drums and keyboards. All young people are given the choice of which instrument they'd like to play with no assumptions made based on whether they face disabling barriers or not. The music leaders employ a range of approaches to try and ensure each musician can independently access the instrument of their choice.*

### **Y3) The young musician's engagement and technique as well as participation are monitored, and achievements are celebrated and valued**

**Drake Music:** Real (not token) participation in a group or one-to-one session is a valuable indicator of achievement for disabled young musicians. Performance and technique are skills to be aspired to, as much as by their non-disabled peers.

**Example:** *A music leader working with young musicians with complex needs uses the [Sounds of Intent framework](#), which breaks down all aspects of participation into very specific elements. This means that they are able to track development that might otherwise have been too subtle to notice, but that could turn out to be significant.*

**Drake Music:** Many people in education have low expectations of what pupils and students in SEN/D settings can achieve in formal music education. Expectations of what young musicians can achieve must be high.

**Example:** *A music leader arranges a planning meeting for a music project in a special school. She asks the class teacher questions about the musical interests of the participants and any previous musical*

*experiences they might have had. She highlights some key aims for the project e.g. 'participants should be empowered to initiate their own movements when learning to play music' and invites the teacher and support staff to sign up and support these aims.*

**Y4) Feedback on young musician's practice is given, with next steps for improvement made clear (though not necessarily through spoken instruction). Where possible the pathway for improvement is identified by the young musician and their peers**

**Y5) Achievement and excellence are measured in terms of personal progress and a comparison to others is only made where appropriate**

**Y6) The music leader and/or project staff identify any needs for additional pastoral or other support, and seek to provide or signpost to this as appropriate**

### **Session content**

**S1) Activities are accessible, engaging and inspiring and allow young people to achieve their full potential**

**S2) The musical process (and what is expected of the young musician) is clearly explained and demystified**

### **S3) The young musician's views are integral to the session**

**Drake Music:** Amplifying and promoting the voices of disabled young musicians is a crucial aspect of improving provision.

**Example:** *A music leader wants to ask a class of disabled young musicians some questions as part of her on-going evaluation of the sessions. One of the participants uses a Voice Output Communication Aid (VOCA). After asking for advice, the music leader emails the questions to support staff in advance. This gives them time to elicit the young musician's answers and programme them into his VOCA, enabling him to independently answer each question when asked.*

### **S4) Young musicians are supported to progress their musical skills, and other skills through music**

**S5) Sessions have an atmosphere of collective learning; music leader and young musician support each other to develop and excel**

**S6) The intent for the session is clear and reinforced, although not necessarily through formal spoken instruction**

**S7) Young musicians are supported to broaden their musical horizons through listening to and understanding other musics, as well as making their own**

**S8) The music leader recognises and nurtures the young musician's musical development, as well as their wider understanding of what it means to be a musician**

## **Environment**

**E1) The ratio of young musicians to music leaders (and other project staff where required) is appropriate**

**E2) Consideration has been given to the physical space, with available resources being best used to make it comfortable and appropriate for the target group**

**Drake Music:** Many spaces provided for music-making are less than ideal; but for many young disabled musicians, getting the environment right can limit distractions and make a crucial difference to them engaging with the experience.

**Example:** *A music leader is given the school hall to use for music-making sessions involving young musicians with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) The hall is large with boomy acoustics and features strip lighting which quietly hums. In addition, other classes use the hall as a cut-through to other rooms and kitchen staff prepare lunch in the adjoining room. Some of the young musicians become distracted by these unintended disruptions and after a few weeks of trying to make it work, the music leader requests a new space with natural light and/or standing lamps, improved sound-proofing, and in a quieter part of the school site.*

### **E3) There are appropriate and sufficient materials and equipment to support the activities**

**Drake Music:** Inclusive, properly equipped music sessions often look and sound different to 'normal' music rooms. iPads, BIGmack switches, open tuned guitars, Soundbeams and EyeGaze technology commonly perform together in the same space.

**Example:** *Two music leaders have been invited to set up a Saturday music group in a local concert hall with disabled and non-disabled young people. In the first few weeks the music leaders bring a wide variety of musical instruments and music tech, to try and ensure everyone can get involved. As they get to know the young people and their support staff better, they learn about how individuals access music in school or communicate more widely. Over time they integrate this equipment and these approaches into the sessions.*

**Drake Music:** Appropriate training and ongoing mentoring is vital to ensure the materials and equipment chosen for music making are utilised to full effect by music leaders. This is especially relevant for assistive music technology and young musicians with additional needs.

**Example:** *A Music Education Hub invests in twenty iPads to be used as part of their Arts Award delivery in local special schools. The iPads are popular but some of the music leaders struggle with the different apps and settings and this often slows progress down. The music leaders request a half-day iPad training event and the trainer agrees to provide paid email support for the team in the event they have any follow up questions.*

#### **E4) The duration of contact time and depth of engagement are sufficient and appropriate to achieve the intended outcomes**

**Drake Music:** Music sessions involving young musicians with additional needs commonly have an increased time allowance, both to ensure personal comfort and to enable individuals to work towards personal and musical outcomes in an unhurried atmosphere.

***Example:** A special school is running an accessible music course for its Key Stage 4 class. The majority of the young musicians have physical impairments and many of them use a VOCA to communicate. The music leader plans the weekly lessons around a 'whole morning' delivery time. This enables enough time for a 30 minute comfort break as well as sufficient time for the class to fully access the practical activities, carry out assessment tasks and express their opinions independently.*

#### **Music leader practice**

#### **M1) The music leader has demonstrable appropriate musical competence, and is both an able teacher/facilitator and an inspirational role model**

**Drake Music:** Music leaders who work regularly with young musicians with additional needs often have a wide portfolio of experiences and skills in music. There's no magic formula to becoming an effective practitioner but a flexible, child-centred approach is the best foundation.

**Example:** *A disabled musician has a song-writing residency in a special school. She has played and toured in bands all her life and currently sings and uses Thumbjam on her iPhone as an instrument. She has real life experiences as a working musician and facilitator and is an inspiring role model for the disabled young musicians she works with, several of whom would like to follow in her footsteps.*

**M2) The music leader has an appropriate understanding of the young musician's starting point. Activities are designed and delivered in a manner appropriate to the musical and other needs of the young musician**

**M3) The music leader reflects on their practice: activities are reviewed and adapted over the course of the session according to how the young musicians respond, and the music leader takes time after the session for self-evaluation**

**Drake Music:** Many music leaders who work in SEN/D settings can feel professionally isolated at times. Meeting up face-to-face or connecting online with other colleagues is a great way to share ideas, issues and experiences and be re-assured that 'I'm not the only one out there!'

**Example:** *A music charity hosts a weekly chat looking at key issues in the world of music education, running on Twitter. They decide to highlight effective practice for music in SEN/D settings and invite an experienced music leader to host it and to lead the conversations. Because it's online and lasts only an hour, many more music leaders*

can join in the conversation in real time or read a summary of the chat later on.

#### **M4) The music leader has up-to-date knowledge of progression routes appropriate to the young musician**

**Drake Music:** Providing appropriate progression routes for young disabled musicians requires a flexible, patient approach to teaching and learning and the confidence to make judgements around assessment.

**Example:** *A new Music Co-ordinator in a special school wants to offer an accredited music course for her KS4 class. She researches the options and chooses the best fit for the needs of both herself and the class and then attends some relevant training on assessment.*

#### **M5) Project staff - beyond the music leaders - show commitment to the activities, and music leaders and other project staff communicate before, during and/or after the session**

**Drake Music:** Communicating the intent of each session and project overall is also useful for support staff. The more they understand the methods, the greater their support and encouragement can be.

**Example:** *A music leader arranges a planning meeting with her special school at the beginning of the new academic year. She suggests a session immediately after school as this enables more support staff to attend. She also provides a short briefing document explaining the aims of the music sessions, to be shared with colleagues who couldn't attend the planning meeting.*

## Observation worksheet

This worksheet is designed for use in session observation. You might find it useful to make general notes during the session, then mark on the scale and make notes against each of the criteria when you've had chance to reflect on the session as a whole. A yellow mark shows that the criterion was fully met and a purple mark shows that it was not met at all.

**Date**

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**Venue**

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**Session title**

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**Music leader**

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**Notes on the session – what happened?**

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## Example

You can fill the information out for each criterion like this:



## Notes

*Demonstrated through your manner with the young musicians and the time you had taken to do some research before the session. This could have been improved by responding with x, y or z for this particular group of young people.*

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## Summary notes

### Further reading

Below are the experiences, evaluation and research Drake Music used to make additions to the quality framework.

#### Drake Music

- Westrup, J., Bott, D. 'Consultation into Disabling Barriers to Formal Music Education' (2012)
- Three commissioned consultations/ reports involving 14 Music Education Hubs and 22 special schools in total (February 2013 – July 2015) 'Breaking the Bubble'; 'Sound Hub Kent'; 'Music Connections East'.
- Westrup, J., Noble, D., 'Top 10 Needs Analysis for Music Education Hubs and SEN/D provision' (October 2015). Based on the evidence from the three commissioned consultations/ reports above.
- Evaluation reports from previous Drake Music projects including feedback from: Music Education Hubs; disabled children and young people, their teachers and support staff, and music leaders.
- Experience of using the Youth Music Quality Framework as part of Drake Music's 'Rhapsody in Ealing: A four year musical adventure', one of Youth Music's four-year 'Exchanging Notes' projects (2013 – 17)

#### Other publications

- Welch, G. F., Ockelford, A., PROMISE (Provision of Music in Special Education): A Report on a Research Project Funded by the Esmee Fairburn Trust with Support from RNIB Paperback – Aug 2001

- Welch, G.F., Ockelford, A., Carter, F-C., Zimmermann, S-A., & Himonides, E. (2009). 'Sounds of Intent': Mapping musical behaviour and development in children and young people with complex needs. *Psychology of Music*, 37(3), 348- 370.
- Welch, G.F., Ockelford, A., Zimmermann, S-A., Music education for pupils with severe or profound and multiple difficulties – current provision and future need. *British Journal of Special Education* Volume 29, No. 4 (December 2002)

***Cover photo by Kevin Leighton. From LSO On Track : Special Schools.***