Examples to support selected criteria

Do, Review, Improve...
A quality framework for music education

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

"Across Devon we have a number of area roots bands and youth choirs, as well as two county level groups (one instrumental and one vocal) for older teenagers. When we work with these regular groups of young people, the musical and creative relationship that develops between the music leaders and the young people is based on each of them bringing a part of themselves. When writing new tunes or songs the group works collectively, drawing on the young people's ideas, and influences from other parts of their musical lives.

Even when in a one off session, the tune or song is usually chosen by the music leader, but we take the young people's ideas when putting together the arrangement. And more explicitly when we use the junk rig, we usually start with a bass line from a pop song and then improvise around that on the higher pitched instruments (and we are usually able to find some traditional rhythms to go underneath!).

Having said all this, we also consider it important that the existing musical identity of the music leader is respected: as a professional musician they have a role to play in being one of the musical influences that the young people are exposed to."

Project manager, Wren Music

2. Young musicians experience equality of engagement: no participant is discriminated against

"All good music workshops value inclusion and fairness alongside creativity, self-expression, collaboration and meaningful experiences of development. There are many factors that can directly (or indirectly) influence whether a young musician would agree with the statement 'I had the same opportunities as everyone else'.

The primary responsibility for anti-discriminatory practice rests with the music leader which is shared with project managers and group/setting representatives. Anti-discriminatory practice, in this context, is probably not the same thing as knowing what the law says (although that is clearly important). Anti-discriminatory practice is the physical expression of a core value that goes something like "I believe we are equal irrespective of who you are, where you are from, what you believe, why you are here, what you already know, like or can do". This is the best starting point to ensure that young musicians experience equality of engagement.

The music leader's ability to differentiate and adapt activities according to individual needs, abilities and interests is essential for anti-discriminatory practice. Simply planning to teach 3 guitar chords to a group that includes a fluent improviser, a saxophonist and a DJ isn't likely to

work! The leader needs to multi-task such that all participants are engaged in a group activity through making individual contributions that are unique, enjoyable and challenging for them.

The music leader needs to be monitoring their practice throughout the workshop. Have I included that quiet participant sitting at the back? Have I favoured the ideas of one participant above others? Who hasn't had the chance to use the iPads yet? Is there a young musician in this room who is dominating others? When did I last check out that everyone is ok? The self-monitoring process can help the music leader to be more aware of their own practice and decision making, and re-engage participants who have 'got lost' for one reason or another."

Project Manager, soundLINCS

13. Young musicians are supported to progress their musical skills, and other skills through music

"At our organisation we would expect this to be evidenced by practitioner's pre-session planning and meetings, discussing tailored routes for each young person, awareness of musical progression in and out of qualifications, young people using scales which track the difference made to their musical skills and wider outcomes (social, functional skills)."

Project manager, AudioActive

14. 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

Through taking part in a quality project, young people should develop an understanding that there is a wealth of careers related to music: performer, sound engineer, composer, broadcaster, music journalist, technician, film scorer, instrument maker, manager/agent, producer... the list goes on. And it may well be the case that a career in or with music is not the intention for every young person. How many of us garner enjoyment from music while not considering ourselves musicians, perhaps from being informed listeners and audiences? How many of us define as 'musical adults' because we sing in a choir on Wednesday nights, or like to strum the guitar on holiday?

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

"There isn't a neat formula that can be applied to all the variables involved in a music workshop to calculate the perfect ratio. It is useful to consider significant variables.

- *How large is the group and how old are they?*

- *What is the setting/location and where is it? (for example:- school, youth centre, Pupil Referral Unit, festival site)*

- *What else is known about the setting/location? (for example:- access, accessibility, power, musical resources, sole use or shared)*

- *What spaces are available for the workshop? (Upstairs/ground floor, Is it going to be suitable? Are enough separate spaces available?)*

- *Is the setting providing staff to support the workshop?*

- *What is known about the group? (for example:- Looked After Children, children with physical disabilities, informal youth group)*

- *What else is known about the group? (for example:- they are enthusiastic musicians, they have never met each other, they can be boisterous)*

- *What is known about the workshop? (for example:- single taster session, regular weekend session, holiday project, 12-week school project, links to a festival, culminates in a performance)*

- *What else is known about the workshop? (for example:- Rock School, Gospel Choir, singing & songwriting, Samba drumming, music production)*

Managers and music leaders should be aware of any statutory requirement for ratios relevant for the group they are working with (such as within Early Years or with childminders). Ideally the music leader will not be included within this ratio, as the relevant settings have a responsibility to provide appropriate staffing levels at all times. Managers and Music leaders should always try to find out if any formal or informal ratio guidelines exist for the setting that is hosting the workshop.

Two examples of projects help to illustrate how variables inform decisions about ratio:

Download is a 12-week Music Technology project working with whole classes for 1 hour sessions in Primary Schools. It makes use of any and all Technology resources that are available in the school. A named teacher is committed to attend and support every session. Additional training sessions are available to the teacher to improve their Music Technology confidence, skills and knowledge. The project was led in each school by a single music leader and supported by the named teacher. Class sizes were typical for a primary school, ranging from 22 to 28.

soundBOOST is a project working with Looked After Children. One strand worked with a small group of between 6-8 Care Leavers for two-hour sessions, weekly, over 24 weeks. The sessions focussed on singing, rapping, songwriting, music technology, recording, and playing instruments. The group were supported by a Leaving Care worker. Participants, particularly in the early stages, needed short focused activities to retain engagement. The project contracted two music leaders.

It can be seen from these two examples that the ratio of music leaders and project staff to young musicians varies considerably. For Download the ratio is around 1:14. For soundBOOST it is around 1:3. However, having considered all the influencing variables, we are confident these are the most appropriate ratios."

Project Manager, soundLINCS

16. Consideration has been given to the physical space, with steps taken to make it comfortable and appropriate for the target group.

"Working across a variety of community venues means that we are often working in less than ideal spaces. Given there are some things we have no control over, we have to ask ourselves, have we done all we can to make the space as good as it can be with existing resources?

We find ourselves arriving an hour early to turn the ancient heaters on, sweeping the room before we start because play-group finished late, breaking down the formal layout of a class

room, instructing participants to make sure they wrap up warm for the December performance in the unheated town chapel (where we begin with a vigorous physical warm up!), and on one occasion — after thanking the farmer for the extra layer of straw in the sheep shed — choosing to work outside in the sunshine.

While doing all of this we have to consider – do these factors detract too much from the benefits of us running the session? And usually the answer is no. As long as the young people can see that the leaders are doing what they can, sometimes overcoming a little hardship as a group can be good fun."

Project manager, Wren Music

17. There are appropriate and sufficient materials and equipment to support the activities

It is important that the equipment available is appropriate to the size of group and the planned activities. For example, if young people are working individually on creating electronic music, there should be enough work stations, software licences and sets of headphones for each of them to have sufficient creative time within the session. Attention to simple detail can change the feeling of the session; if there are not enough copies of the lyrics and young musicians are not able to make their own personal notes on the arrangement, will they remember it as well? Will they develop their own ways to notate scansion and dynamic? Will they feel the same sense of ownership and achievement when it goes well?

In this context, 'materials' also refers to the session content and the planned activities, and it is important that this has been well prepared by the music leader. In a session observation, in order to see whether this is the case, it may be necessary to talk with the music leader about how and what they had prepared in advance.

19. The music leader has demonstrable musical competence, and is both an able teacher/ facilitator and an inspirational role model

"Obviously a practitioner needs to have adequate expertise to be able to resapond to any musical or technical requirements. This will partly come down to their planning and preparation but is equally relevant to how well they can respond to demands or questions as they arise. I think credibility as a musician/artist is hugely influential especially when working with 'hard to reach' young people who can find it hard to quickly build a trustful or respectful relationship with adults. This can be a tricky balance as a music leader between letting a young person see that you have got expertise but at the same time, not showing off to a point that a young person feels intimidated or belittled by their skill/expertise. It's not always about what they do in a workshop either. One of the things I have noticed is that young people often go home and Google an artist/music leader, find out what work they have done or released or what other people say about them. So, music leaders need to be mindful that their publicly accessible profile (often through social media etc.) is also a key factor in their responsibility as an inspirational role model."

Project manager, AudioActive