

# Inclusion: the business case for music services and music hubs

Inclusion isn't just a Social Justice issue for music services, says Michael Davidson, Head of Rock, Family and Community Music at Hertfordshire Music Service. It can also be a smart business move. In Hertfordshire, it's helped the service to secure new income through commissions, partnerships and funding; transformed their relationship with schools; and made them a more effective and creative, relevant and resilient service. Here are six reasons why.

## **1. Inclusion offers a broader range of possible outcomes for instrumental music teaching**

As music services, we've traditionally prioritised instrumental technique and music exam grades above all else, and benchmarked our teaching and learning accordingly. But many tutors, particularly new ones, feel that personal and social outcomes are a key part of their work. Some may be particularly skilled and motivated to develop their abilities in these areas.

Pupils, schools and parents think this is important too. So if we value these sorts of outcomes, capture evidence of them and their impact (eg through self-assessment, tutor CPD and stories), and make them visible, teachers, parents and young people will begin to value music for the range of benefits it can bring. This in turn can broaden and increase uptake for lessons.

## **2. Inclusion can improve quality of teaching**

Employing non-conservatoire trained tutors is sometimes seen as 'hollowing out quality' (in fact, this was a comment from the audience at a workforce development panel at Music Mark 2018). Yet for us, broadening the workforce by bringing in community musicians has improved quality in several areas.

Firstly, community musicians' focus on critical reflection has helped us to broaden our service training sessions beyond technique and repertoire. We've had useful conversations about differentiation, which can not only improve the teaching of technique, but also be vital in preparing tutors to engage and retain a wider range of pupils. This can apply across the board, to teachers of all sorts of instruments.

Secondly, community musicians' focus on holistic outcomes, and on being led by the student's needs and interests (negotiating participant roles and learning aims), can add value to instrumental teachers who may tend towards a 'telling mode' teaching technique. Applying this more coaching-based approach can help develop more independent learning in all students, at a time when many tutors report that this is increasingly restricted by 'teaching to the test' in schools.

Some tutors we've trained on inclusion projects have commented that learning how to teach vulnerable pupils has helped them learn how to manage their engagement and behaviour in larger groups, a key issue for First Access tutors, as well as an indicator of teaching quality for Ofsted.

## **3. Inclusion improves our value to schools**

This has relevance to the take up and sustainability of First Access (FA), otherwise known as Whole Class Ensemble Tuition (WCET). With mounting pressures on PPA time, schools are more likely to buy in FA from tutors who can manage classes without support from teaching assistants (Tas) or classroom colleagues.

With mounting pressure on finances, we know that some academy chains are beginning to employ tutors directly (comment from MU officer, Anglia Ruskin University, 2017). Others are beginning to

buy in lessons from independent providers. Often the incentives are that they take care of billing themselves, and offer a wider range of instruments and progression routes.

However, we've also found that schools are really interested in music services whose tutors can deliver inclusion outcomes, and provide a hospitable place for vulnerable children in school. For instance, a project in Hertfordshire that developed instrumental tutors as music mentors for pupils at risk of exclusion is funded by the school at a cost of £10,000 each year. Essex Music Service, one of the founder partners in our [Music Net East musical inclusion programme](#) reported that one academy chain was about to buy in provision from private tutors, when they heard about our SENCO-led music mentoring model. So instead, they decided to fund free instrumental lessons for a whole year 7 cohort.

In Hertfordshire, our inclusion work has got us back into schools where there's been no recent instrumental teaching. We've been able to re-establish First Access teaching, and provide Primary Music consultancy in those schools.

#### **4. Improving service value to local authorities**

We know that local authorities are under considerable financial pressure, and are particularly interested in saving money by preventing pupil exclusions. It costs almost four times as much to educate pupils in alternative provision as it does within mainstream schools. This increases considerably if pupils are educated outside the county.

Our creative musical nurture groups, delivered by music service tutors in Stevenage primary schools, each cost approximately £1,000 annually. They've already proven highly effective at preventing the exclusion of vulnerable pupils. That's a pretty good investment for local authorities, and one that can be fairly easily rolled out or replicated in other areas.

We know that local authority targeted support teams are increasingly tasked with raising attainment and preventing exclusion of vulnerable young people. Building partnerships with these teams can help them use music to develop relationships with hard to reach young people and families, raising the profile of music with L.A.s, as well as within schools.

We know also that some music services lease buildings from local authorities which are increasingly required to charge a full market rent for these. However, we've also come across instances where some have been able to offer a 'peppercorn rent' in return for activities which support the authority's corporate plan. For example, this might be long-term targeted programmes of activities to support vulnerable pupils and families, or weekly activities in music centres that add value to the work of targeted support teams.

#### **5. Inclusion improves musical outcomes**

We know that some services still regard musical inclusion practice as being only concerned with personal and social outcomes, and as a result, producing little 'proper music'. Our experience is quite the opposite. Young people on our Songwriting project perform at a higher level when singing or playing their own songs. Many have written high-quality songs. As a result of seeing these outcomes, schools have commissioned workshops to support the performance and composition elements of GCSE music.

These improved musical outcomes are important not only to the young people and to us, but also to schools, in terms of music curriculum requirements; to Arts Council England, in terms of funding outcomes; as well as to potential employers in the creative industries who are currently poorly served by school curriculum music examinations. See Youth Music's 'Sound of the next generation' report for more on young people's lives and futures in music.

#### **6. Inclusion offers alternative progression routes to HE**

Many schools have stopped running A-Level music due to lack of uptake, since following wider curriculum changes in schools. Since 2014, there has been a 30% decline in music entries at A-level (see: <https://www.ism.org/news/a-level-results-day-continued-decline-in-music-uptake>) Many Level 3 qualifications do not prepare young people for the more diverse ways to study music at Higher Education. Several of our young songwriters have evidenced their creative work with Songwriter to support their applications to study music at University, and we're interested in how this may inform future formal accreditation.

So how could **you** take this forward in your service? Youth Music has produced an Equality Diversity and Inclusion tool which you'll find on their AMIE (Alliance for a Musically Inclusive England) [inclusion resource hub](#). This tool was created to help music services and hubs assess where they are now, identify areas of strength and improvement, and put together an action plan (something that Arts Council England requires of National Portfolio organisations). This is a helpful way to start, and you'll probably find there's a lot that you're already doing to promote inclusion. Inclusion is a journey not a destination – we hope you'll join us on the journey, and also share your own stories of how inclusion is building your business case. Get in touch with us via [Michael.Davidson@Hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.Davidson@Hertfordshire.gov.uk).