

# Fairbeats!



## Introduction to Fairbeats

Fairbeats is a music and creative charity working with children, young people and families who have experienced forced displacement, are navigating the UK asylum system, and building their lives in the UK. We work with community centres across south London and the families we work with come from all over the world. We bring people together for music-making and other artistic activities in a way that is creative, relaxed, dynamic and fun.

Fairbeats was founded by Catherine Carter and Jennifer Raven in 2009-2010 and became a registered charity in 2014.

The core and longest-standing part of our work involves delivering regular music sessions for children age 3-11 in partnership with four community centres:

- The Rainbow Club Saturday school at Action for Refugees in Lewisham
- The Love To Learn homework club at the Katherine Low Settlement in Wandsworth
- Refugee Action Kingston
- Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers

More recently we have developed Future Leaders, which includes a youth-led creative music-making programme for young people ages 11-16 and a Young Music Leader Trainee role.

You can find out more about our work, meet the team and hear music Fairbeats children have created on our website: [www.fairbeats.co.uk](http://www.fairbeats.co.uk)

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“

Music can express loads of things  
It can be as liberating as swimming  
as entertaining as a theme park,  
It can be an escape from pain,  
like a daydream ”

*Nicole, Fairbeats young leader*

## Fairbeats' Mission

Our **mission** is to provide relief and respite to refugee and asylum seeking children, young people and their families through music. We do this by making **music** with children and their families from diverse backgrounds and different walks of life. In doing so, we aim to be an anchor in a chaotic and challenging world. We offer space and time outside the challenges of everyday existence – a safe and nurturing place for children and young people to feel seen, heard and valued; build friendships; express themselves and regulate their emotions; learn skills to help them navigate challenges; and uphold their right to creative and artistic experiences.

## Fairbeats' Vision

Our **vision** is for a society where all children and families experiencing forced migration and displacement have the opportunity to participate in musical activity, and in doing so experience the transformative benefits of music and creativity.

Ultimately we believe our work contributes to a more welcoming, caring and compassionate society.

We acknowledge that we are one part of a much larger mission to promote equality, fairness and freedom for all human beings, especially those who have left their countries of birth and who become refugees, asylum seekers and newly arrived migrants.

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## Fairbeats' aspirations for the next 5-10 years

- To be widely **known by children and young people** who have experienced displacement, and have recently arrived in South London, as a **safe, caring, joyful and inspiring place**.
- To have **young people, and people with lived experience of displacement, involved at every level** of Fairbeats, from programmes to governance - for our future to be powered by their vision, hopes and needs.
- To be **well-respected nationally as a leading organisation working ethically and creatively** with children and young people who have experienced displacement and forced migration - to influence change through sharing practice and creating a platform for Fairbeats children and young people to share their music and other creative outputs publicly.
- To actively **decolonise our practice** and continually work on our commitment to **tackling oppression and injustice** in all its forms.
- For all Fairbeats children and young people to have access to 1) **regular/consistent music provision**, 2) **opportunities to progress** should they wish to (e.g. to individual instrumental tuition or creating their own music), and 3) **one-off inspiring events and projects** in partnership with other creative and cultural organisations.
- For our practice and programmes to be underpinned by **research, evaluation and frameworks** that enable us to deliver our values and principles meaningfully.

## Fairbeats beliefs

- We believe that **participation in arts and culture is a basic human right**, as enshrined in Article 27 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Our participants have often had their most fundamental rights violated in their country of birth. Arriving in the United Kingdom, they face multiple challenges: language barriers, complex processes, inadequate living conditions and profound uncertainty. They find themselves in a new culture, with different legal, health and education systems, as well as new customs, practices and expectations – this can be confusing and overwhelming. By making music together, we provide respite from these challenges and opportunities to forge new relationships that support families to build lives in the UK

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- We believe that **children and families are best placed to voice their needs and expectations**. We recognise that refugees, asylum seekers and newly arrived migrants are not an easily defined “community”. For this reason, we work in close consultation with our partner centres, our children and their families to better understand their needs, wishes and desires.
- We believe that making **music together is the best way that we can achieve our mission and vision**. Making music allows children to connect with one another and express themselves. As artists, musicians and engaged citizens ourselves, we believe that we have a responsibility to support the most vulnerable members of our society whether they have lived here for generations or only just arrived. We believe **all forms of music are valuable**, and strive to embrace music styles from across the world. We focus on creating new music together, drawing on the knowledge, experience and expertise of every person in the room. As a learning organisation, we are constantly evaluating our practice and collecting evidence on the role of music in making such changes.

“ Music helps you to hope for the future.  
To aspire to a world where there is  
more fairness...  
Where people are not racist, and  
everyone accepts uniqueness,  
and people respect each other's  
religion and accept difference ”

*Fiona, Fairbeats young leader*

## Fairbeats values

Our **values** are: Creativity, Choice, Trust, Consistency, Equity

## Fairbeats programme

Fairbeats creates safe, caring, joyful and inspiring spaces for children and their families to make music together.

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Our key **aims and objectives** are to:

1. Deliver fun, dynamic music-making sessions for refugee and asylum seeking children and their families, in a safe and supportive environment.
2. Train and develop practitioners to work in community settings with refugee and asylum seeking children and their families.
3. Produce thoughtful, awareness-raising research about music-making in these settings, and share this with the music sector.
4. Support children's progression to other musical and cultural activities that further their development.
5. Run an ethically principled and sustainable organisation which can successfully achieve these aims.

The Fairbeats model and creative approach involves three strands of work:

1. **Regular activities and workshops based at community centres** - providing children and young people with consistent access to music-making:
  - Instrumental sessions (predominantly on ukulele and fife/flute)
  - Creative sessions (songwriting, improvisation, bands, music tech)
  - One-off workshops with partner organisations such as Aurora Orchestra
2. **Progression routes** - supporting children and young people to access musical progression routes such as 1:1 lessons, music classes at clubs at other local centres/organisations, and seeing live music at London venues. Partner organisations include Midi Music, Multi Story Orchestra, Kinetika Bloco, and World Heart Beat Music Academy.
3. **Special celebration projects**, for example in 2022 we launched [They're Playing My Song](#), a new collection of music, podcasts and films created by Fairbeats young people and parents. Fairbeats children chose inspirational artists they were excited to work with. You can hear 'Rise Up' which was created by children at Love To Learn and facilitated by rapper, singer, songwriter and producer Awate Suleiman [here](#).

Our programme is delivered by a team of freelance artists who facilitate music sessions with support from trainees and volunteers. Our Young Music Leader Trainee programme provides people with the opportunity to develop their skills and confidence alongside more experienced music leaders.

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A core principle of our work is youth voice and choice, so we regularly consult with Fairbeats children and families, and artists embed voice and choice within all sessions.

“

We connected over our love of music. I performed by myself at school. Fairbeats makes people feel comfortable and makes a good change for them.’

”

*Ji Yin, Fairbeats participant*

## Fairbeats ethos

We promote equity, fairness and freedom for all people. Our work is focused especially on those who have left their countries of birth and who experience displacement or migration for reasons that mean they can't return, and those who seek asylum.

We actively oppose oppression and bullying in all its forms, including racism, anti-Muslim hatred, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, ableism, sexism and any other form of discrimination whether based on race, religion, language, age, nationality, race, gender, sex, colour, sexual orientation, disability, neurodiversity, conscience, belief, culture or birth.

So that our opposition of oppression and bullying is truly active, we:

- Foster a culture of reflectiveness and openness with the hope that anyone feels able to share experiences in the knowledge that they will be heard and action will be taken
- Work to acknowledge our own position, power and privilege as individuals
- Continuously learn and reflect as individuals and collectively
- Seek to take an intersectional approach to understanding, supporting and connecting with anyone we work with

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## Safeguarding

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is critical to Fairbeats, especially because many of the people we work with have experienced trauma and are living in vulnerable circumstances. Our safeguarding practice is underpinned by regularly reviewed policies, procedures, recruitment practices and team training. We take a broad and holistic approach to safeguarding, for example we are currently developing our skills and practice in grounding techniques which help support children and young people's emotional wellbeing. The Fairbeats team have enhanced DBS certificates and safeguarding training.

## Language

We treat anyone we work with, with respect, using language that promotes self-worth and value. We refer to people using individual names (checking how people like to be referred to), or collectively using terms like children, musicians, families or parents. We never refer to people directly as refugees or asylum seekers or use any other term that may isolate them, or make them feel othered, de-humanised or unequal. We seek to ensure that anyone we work with knows they are valued and respected.

We use an asset-based model of communication rather than a deficit-based model (i.e. we celebrate and work with people's strengths, rather than focussing on challenges or weaknesses). We never make assumptions about circumstances, we avoid the use of labels and we avoid asking about people's backgrounds or previous experiences unless they choose to bring them up.

## Culture

We aim to create a culture of openness, trust, freedom and creativity. By creating safe spaces for families to be creative and learn, we aim to be an anchor in a chaotic and challenging world. We work alongside children, young people and families collaboratively – and we emphasise 'working with' rather than 'giving or doing to'. Our vision of a more caring and compassionate world motivates everything we do and every aspect of our work and organisation.