

Collecting information

Musical inclusion guidance

Collecting information from young people - how do you avoid being invasive?

How can you balance respect for people's privacy with collecting information about the 'challenging circumstances' participants face?

This document has been developed from a series of online conversations including those on the Youth Music Network, and a facilitated discussion at a national gathering of organisations funded by Youth Music's Musical Inclusion programme.

In this document:

1. What sort of information are we required to collect?
2. What risks and ethical concerns do we need to be aware of?
3. What do we mean by 'challenging circumstances'?
4. Making it work: tips from the Musical Inclusion community
5. Guidance from other sectors

1. What sort of information do we collect and for what purpose?

As organisations delivering work that requires outcomes for particular people, we may need to collect information about who these people are, and why they might benefit from our work. This may be for our own monitoring purposes, as a requirement of funding, or for use in our own advocacy communications,

Youth Music asks grantholders to collect detailed information on about the challenging circumstances that participants face (as do other funders).

This may include a number of challenges not just their primary challenge (eg that they are looked-after children, or have SEND)¹.

¹ Youth Music uses the principles of (among others) the Lankelly Chase Foundation – Literature Review of Severe and Multiple Deprivation Studies, and Theory of Change publications. See link below for further reading:

http://www.lankellychase.org.uk/resources/publications/254_severe_and_multiple_disadvantage_literature_review

2. What risks and ethical concerns do we need to be aware of?

Ethics and intrusiveness

Why do we need to know, and what is fair and ethical for us to know, given our point of intervention? As professionals we have a responsibility to collect only the data we need, guard it carefully and not keep it unnecessarily. We may undermine the Musical Inclusion principles of acceptance and inclusivity by seeking the information, and young people may find us intrusive and voyeuristic.

Risks attached to labelling

We face dilemmas each time we try to describe a young person. The labels that professionals use may be upsetting to a young person; but a young person's own self-labelling and self-description may not be appropriate either.

Misinterpretation of challenge

We should be careful of our own assumptions and prejudices in

categorising those we consider challenged. Family stability, resourcefulness, care and a strong community can remove many barriers.

Who has a right to share it

Who the information is collected from (the participant, their carer, a professional) may change the analysis, and fellow professionals may not be in a position to share information.

Challenges of open access projects

Often there is no compulsion for participants to reveal information. How can we be sure that we have reached the target participants without using data collection as entrance criteria? Open access projects may have the advantage of a good social mix, but this which leaves them open to the criticism that it is not those in need who are benefiting.

It's also difficult and sometimes impossible to collect data from some settings, eg: Adolescent Mental Health (medical codes of practice may come into play) or Secure Residential Units (specific data may not be shared for reasons of justice and safeguarding). Then there is the problem of what to do with 'inadvertent' data sharing, for example when an individual reveals information as part of the creative or workshop process.

3. What do we mean by 'challenging circumstances'?

Musically inclusive practice aims to ensure that all children and young people who want to can make music. Challenging circumstances could potentially act as barriers to music-making.

These can be grouped as following:

- **Economic** – children and young people whose family income restricts or prevents their participation in music-making,

because it is unaffordable or inaccessible.

- **Life condition** – children and young people with a condition which makes their participation in music-making more expensive or complex, such as a disability or sensory impairment.

- **Life circumstance** – children and young people who are living in situations which makes their participation in music-making more expensive or complex, such as looked-after children, young carers or those living in rural isolation.

- **Behavioural** – children and young people whose behaviour means they need additional support or specialist services in order to be able to participate in music-making, such as young offenders or young people at risk of exclusion.

Definitions developed by Sound Connections' Challenging Circumstances Network, a project supported by Youth Music.

4. Making it work: tips from the Musical Inclusion community

Collecting information on a project

- Give a list of names of the young people who are involved in a particular project to the staff who work with them, and ask them to come back with a **summary of the issues** those young people face without attaching the data to individual names.
- **Don't ask clients to tell their story or identify themselves as X or Y** - one of the strengths of the work is that we can present as non-threatening 'musicians' rather than mental health workers or social workers.
- **Use clear and concise statement** to explain what you're collecting, why, and what happens to the information. Make sure also that you're aware of Data Protection guidance (see section 5).
- **Use data from referral agencies / partners where possible** - ideally there should be a 'data sharing protocol', an agreement that states why and how the information is being shared, and what it may and may not be used for.

- Use data which **indicates a challenge without the need for further enquiry** – for example, Free School Meals entitlement is an indicator of a low income household.

- Use voluntary, anonymised **online surveys** with young people: frame questions carefully to avoid people feeling they're being unhelpfully labelled through the process.

Sharing (anonymised) information eg for advocacy or evaluation

- **Avoid labelling** - never describe anyone in a way which, were they to hear it, they would find upsetting, or ask them questions which might lead them to think they're being labelled.
- Ask senior staff to give **general summaries of the impact** without naming individuals.
- Find ways of using the data we do collect to accurately reflect the whole, to avoid a large number of 'not known' answers in stats reporting.

5. Guidance from other organisations

Charity Comms

Show and tell: a best practice guide for portraying beneficiaries and users

<http://www.charitycomms.org.uk/articles/show-and-tell-our-first-best-practice-guide--2>

HM Government

Sharing guidance for practitioners and managers

eg (p11) 'Seven golden rules for sharing'; a flow diagram; and a list of resources (p29 onwards).

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277834/information_sharing_guidance_for_practitioners_and_managers.pdf

National Children's Bureau

Guidance on involving children and young people in research

http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/434791/guidelines_for_research_with_cyp.pdf

See pages 27-29, 43

Institute for Youth Work

Ethics Statement

<http://www.iyw.org.uk/terms-and-conditions>

See in particular points 3, 4, 5, 7, 8:

3. Our relationship with young people **remains within professional boundaries** at all times, to protect the young person and the purpose of the work.

4. We work in a **fair and inclusive way**, promoting justice and equality of opportunity, challenging any discriminatory or oppressive behaviour or practice.

5. We seek to enhance young people's personal and social development by:

- Enabling them to make **informed decisions** and pursue their choices;
- Supporting their **participation** and active involvement in society;
- Helping them to become **independent** and move on when the time is right.

7. When we receive or collect **personal information** about young people, we make them aware of with whom and for what purpose that information will be shared. We do not disclose confidential information unless this is necessary to prevent harm or is legally required.

8. In our engagement with young people, and resulting relationship, we strive to be **honest and non-judgemental.**

Example of regional guidance

North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board Procedures – information sharing, confidentiality and consent. Includes advice about data protection

<http://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/section-3-procedures.html>

About the Musical Inclusion programme

Musical Inclusion was a programme funded by Youth Music, running from April 2012 to March 2015.

Youth Music invested in 26 Musical Inclusion projects, tasked with ensuring that all children and young people in their local areas were able

to access music-making opportunities, by working in and through the (new at that point) Music Education Hubs.

Sound Sense led the Musical Inclusion Evaluation and Networking team.

Projects carried out music education work with children in challenging circumstances; workforce development to ensure the quality of the provision; and strategic working to ensure and the quality of the provision; and strategic working to ensure integration of musically inclusive practice in hubs across England. You can find out more at <http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/musicalinclusion>.

Edited from contributions of practitioners working on Musical Inclusion projects supported by Youth Music. Particular thanks to Gail Dudson of Yorkshire Youth and Music, who contributed much of the content and helped in the writing and editing, and to Pete Moser, of More Music, who started the conversation online.

National Foundation for Youth Music

Youth Music is a national charity supporting life-changing music-making. Every year, it provides children and young people with the opportunity to make music, helping them to overcome the challenges they face in their lives. The projects it funds support young people to develop their creative and social skills, make positive contributions to their community and improve their wellbeing. Its ongoing research and growing online community for music education professionals helps develop high quality practice and drive fresh thinking in music education. Youth Music is supported by Arts Council England, People's Postcode Lottery and charitable donations.

youthmusic.org.uk
network.youthmusic.org.uk



Sound Sense

Sound Sense is the professional association promoting community music and supporting community musicians. Community musicians are specialists in breaking down barriers to participation in music. They work with participants of all ages and abilities to support their active and creative participation in music and respond to their needs and interests. Many of them are specialists in working with young people in challenging circumstances.

www.soundsense.org





Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**