

Sharing your practice

Musical inclusion guidance

Documenting and sharing your musical inclusion practice

Face-to-face practice-sharing comes naturally to most music leaders, and often it's their preferred way of teaching, learning and sharing. Writing down or documenting your practice can often become a 'nice to have', 'end of the to-do list' kind of thing.

Yet we all know it's important. And there are many ways to do it, some of which are really quick and easy but can make a big difference. Something as simple as sharing a template that you use, or a 'different way of doing something' that's proved helpful to you, can really help someone else out.

If you're having difficulties working out how to actually get it down on paper, here are some ideas.

What could you document and share?

- Resources for others to use – templates, diagrams, timelines, forms, standard letters
- Practice write-ups/outlines
- Case studies (individuals/project), participant stories
- Interviews with practitioners, participants, commissioners
- Personal reflections, reflective diaries
- Training write-ups, Q&A sessions
- Outline of a problem and a solution
- Research
- Manuals created for practitioners in your area

20 questions to help you

Setting the scene

- what's it all about and who's involved?

- 1. Who** – are the participants, music leaders, partners, funders/ commissioners?
- 2. What** – is it and what's the purpose? What difference is it going to make?
- 3. Where** – does it take place?
- 4. When** – does it happen? How often, over what time period?
- 5. How** – does it happen? What's the process?
- 6. Why** – was the work needed/ why is it happening? Was there a problem that this work is solving? Why is it important?

Describing the practice

- how would you describe your practice, objectively?

- 7.** What does it look like, what are you actually doing ?
- 8.** Can you outline the key skills/ approaches that inform your practice?

- 9.** Is any of this unique in any way? Why?

- 10.** Is there any other background the reader needs to know about what you did and the way you did it?

Reflection

- why have you done it like that; what will you build on, what would make it better

- 11.** Why do you work in this particular way / with these particular groups?
- 12.** What works well / doesn't work well, and why?
- 13.** How do you know, how are you judging that?
- 14.** What would/will make it better?

The difference it makes

- what outcomes did you achieve, what didn't you achieve?

- 15.** What does it achieve, what difference does it make?
- 16.** What evidence do you have of this?

17. What outcomes were you expecting that didn't happen?

18. How could those be achieved in future projects?

Summing up

19. What was the upshot, what happened as a result of the work?

20. What's happening now or next?

Some of these questions are taken from a blog by Ben Sandbrook, part of a resource pack about Sharing Practice.

<http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/resources/blogs/ben-sandbrook/questions-practice-sharers-whats-important-sharing-effective-practice>

Tips to make your document easier to read

Your 'document' may be a printed item, a blog on your website or the Youth Music Network, or a PDF/download. Here are some tips to help with whichever format you choose.

Title

Use a descriptive title that's more than just the name of the project. Perhaps the outcomes you've achieved, what readers will learn about or who the participants were or the setting you worked in.

Examples: Working with young people in PRUs; Attachment theory at work with looked-after children; Transforming anti-social behaviour.

Summary/sub-title

It's helpful but not essential to have a sub-title or a boxout near the start to describe in brief what the document is all about. That way someone can instantly tell if it's likely to be of interest to them.

Introduction/first paragraph

This needs to gain the reader's interest and attention, and give a hint of why they should be interested.

It could include the 'who what why where when how' (see background, previous page); pose a question; start in an interesting place in the story; or with an anecdote.

Photographs

Essential to bring the words to life. It goes without saying that you'll need people's permissions, but if this is tricky, you could take photos where only the music leader's face is visible: participants could be facing her/him, or heads-down.

You could also use photos of other young people who you **do** have permission to feature, but use a caption stating that 'the young people pictured are not necessarily young people from this particular project.'

Layout

Using the following tools/tricks will make your case study look more appealing, and easier to read:

- pull-quotes (see orange text below - pull out and repeat a quote from text that follows, to give a flavour of the content and help people scan)

“use bullet-pointed lists but don’t go overboard”

- headings and sub-headings (to help people scan/navigate the copy – particularly important for web copy)
- bullet-pointed lists (but don’t go overboard)
- boxes that separate out specific chunks of information (see the purple box on the previous page)
- hyperlinks/references where people can find further information

Tips for easy-to-read web copy

1. Write how you speak - it’ll make your writing easier to read and more appealing.

2. Title and first paragraphs are critical – make sure these get the message across quickly.

3. Put essential information first, and only then follow with further detail.

4. Keep copy simple and concise.

5. Create ‘scannable’ copy - use headings, bulleted lists, pull-quotes; highlight key words or phrases (bolds, hyperlinks).

6. Make sure headings are meaningful – so that readers can understand what they’re describing.

7. Use contextual hyperlinks (the hyperlink describes where you’re going instead of giving a long URL – ie instead of: “Visit the Musical Inclusion group: <http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/groups/musical-inclusion>”, write: “Visit the Musical Inclusion group” and hyperlink this text to <http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/groups/musical-inclusion>).

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>.

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**