

## Do, Review, Improve...

### A quality framework for music education

By The National Foundation for Youth Music



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#### What is the quality framework and who is it for?

The framework comprises the 23 criteria that Youth Music considers desirable for a high quality music-making session. It is designed to be an active document which music leaders, project managers and other observers can use to pass constructive comment on any particular session within a project. The framework is intended to help identify training needs or particular areas for development within an individual music leader's practice.

As well as a tool for peer observation, the framework can be used for self-reflection by individual music leaders, allowing them to cross-reference their practice against broader principles and to identify areas in which they may wish to develop.

It is not intended that music leaders will be scored or ranked, or for a comparison to be made with others (as echoed in criterion 5 of the framework).

This framework can be used by any organisation involved in the delivery of music-making sessions with young people. Organisations in receipt of Youth Music funding can use the framework to support Youth Music's Generic Outcome 1: *to improve the quality and standards of music delivery for children and young people.*

#### Using the framework

While the framework refers to a 'young musician' in the singular, in a group setting the music leader will be expected to relate the criteria to each individual and the group, and where appropriate adapt the criteria to address the aims of group music-making.

The framework is intended for session observation: to monitor the face-to-face interaction between the young musician and the music leader. Having said this, sessions do not usually take place in isolation, and some criteria may only become evident over a number of sessions; in these instances a wider and on-going conversation with the music leader may be appropriate (e.g. 'broadening musical horizons by introducing new and other musics' may not be possible or appropriate in each and every session, but the music leader may have a clear plan for how it will be delivered over the whole project). Please note that wider processes and policies (such as safeguarding, insurance and child protection) are not covered.

#### Terms

**Music leader** – the person leading the activities: the practitioner, usually an adult, the teacher/facilitator.

**Young musician** – this term was chosen over 'young person', 'child' or 'participant' to empower the young person. It makes the relationship between practitioner and participant more equal, and demonstrates that this framework applies when the young person is actively participating in making music.

**Progression** – this refers to the broadest interpretation of the social, personal and musical development of the young musician.

## Background

The development of the quality framework was led by Amy Wilson of the National Foundation for Youth Music. Youth Music would like to thank all the organisations and individuals who contributed to the development of the quality framework.

Youth Music uses an outcomes approach across its funding programme. The outcomes approach provides a method for projects to plan effective evaluation activities and measure the impact of their provision. This framework builds on and supports the outcomes approach by measuring the quality of provision.

Youth Music began developing the quality framework in January 2013, drawing on the findings of *Communities of Music Education* (Saunders & Welch, 2012). The conditions that Saunders & Welch identified in the non-formal projects they observed were cross-referenced with findings from Youth Music's Impact Report 2011/12. Drawing on the organisation's own knowledge - both of Youth Music funded projects and previous independent experience - the criteria were further refined.

During the development of the framework, Youth Music staff kept the proposed criteria in mind while on project visits, feeding their thoughts and observations into each subsequent development session.

Two other examples of quality frameworks were closely analysed (one from the education sector and one from the arts), and the presentation, form and language of these informed the development of the Youth Music quality framework.

*Raising the standard of work by, with and for children and young people* (2012) was a report by the National Foundation for Educational Research, commissioned by Arts Council England. This research examined 31 quality frameworks from a number of settings around the world and drew together the common themes into seven core principles. The framework was then cross-referenced with these principles to ensure that (where appropriate) they were addressed in the Youth Music quality framework.

Finally, academics, project managers and music leaders were consulted on the draft framework. This led to refinement of the terminology and a consensus that practical examples for each of the criteria would make the framework more accessible and user-friendly.

The quality framework builds on the Music Education Code of Practice, which was developed by Youth Music and Sound Sense in 2011. It is recommended that you read the Code of Practice in conjunction with this framework to access further resources and recommendations about other aspects of music leading not covered here, such as preparation and health and safety. You can find this on the Youth Music Network ([www.youthmusic.org.uk/network](http://www.youthmusic.org.uk/network)).

## Young people -centred

*These criteria focus on allowing space for the young musician to be respected and supported according to their individual needs.*

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 \*
2. Young musicians experience equality of engagement: no participant is discriminated against \*
3. The young musician's performance and technique are monitored, and achievements are celebrated and valued
4. Feedback on young musician's practice is given, with next steps for improvement made clear (though not necessarily through spoken instruction). Where possible the pathway for improvement is identified by the young musician and their peers
5. Achievement and excellence are measured in terms of personal progress and a comparison to others is only made where appropriate
6. The music leader and/or project staff identify any needs for additional pastoral or other support, and seek to provide or signpost to this as appropriate

## Session content

*These criteria examine how the content of musical activities is planned ahead of the session, and how these activities are delivered.*

7. Activities are engaging and inspiring and allow young people to achieve their full potential
8. The musical process (and what is expected of the young musician) is clearly explained and demystified
9. The young musician's views are integral to the session
10. Young musicians are supported to progress their musical skills, and other skills through music
11. Sessions have an atmosphere of collective learning; music leader and young musician support each other to develop and excel
12. The intent for the session is clear and reinforced , although not necessarily through formal spoken instruction
13. Young musicians are supported to broaden their musical horizons through listening to and understanding other musics, as well as making their own \*
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 \*

## Environment

*These criteria explore to the tangible aspects of the session: physical space, materials and levels of staffing.*

15. The ratio of young musicians to music leaders (and other project staff where required) is appropriate \*
16. Consideration has been given to the physical space, with available resources being best used to make it comfortable and appropriate for the target group \*
17. There are appropriate and sufficient materials and equipment to support the activities
18. The duration of contact time and depth of engagement are sufficient and appropriate

## Music leader practice

*These criteria emphasise the need for music leaders to engage in ongoing training, professional development and reflective practice.*

19. The music leader has demonstrable appropriate musical competence, and is both an able teacher/facilitator and an inspirational role model \*
20. The music leader has an appropriate understanding of the young musician's starting point. Activities are designed and delivered in a manner appropriate to the musical and other needs of the young musician
21. The music leader reflects on their practice: activities are reviewed and adapted over the course of the session according to how the young musicians respond, and the music leader takes time after the session for self-evaluation (with other project staff where possible)
22. The music leader has up-to-date knowledge of progression routes appropriate to the young musician
23. Project staff - beyond the music leaders - show commitment to the activities, and music leaders and other project staff communicate during the session