

The Music Partnership Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

The Music Partnership's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy has been developed by practitioners from across the partnership's organisations, reflecting their individual policies, and supported by knowledge and best practice from across the music education sector. The Music Partnership is grateful for the resources and guidance provided by the 'Youth Music Network' and, more locally, the 'MAC Music Education Hub Strategy Group'.

TMP Inclusion Lead

TMP has recruited a practitioner to lead inclusion for the music partnership, providing input, guidance, and expertise to assist partners and their leaders with the implementation of this strategy. The inclusion lead is Mr Joe Butler who can be contacted via admin@shropshiremusicservice.org.uk

Definitions

Equality – is about ensuring that all individuals have an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents.

Diversity – is about the presence of difference that already exists, e.g., the characteristics that an individual or group has that may be diverse from others.

Inclusion – is about creating an environment where people feeling valued, welcomed, and able to participate.

A further consideration is 'equity'

Equity – is about recognising that some people or groups need additional support to participate - and providing the means for them to do so.

The Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 provides the legislative framework that informs our work to promote equality of opportunity and reduce barriers to engagement for protected groups. The Act introduced the Single Equality Duty for public bodies. It supports good decision making by ensuring that public bodies consider

how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are accessible to all and which meet different people's needs.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour, or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex (gender)
- sexual orientation

As well as the nine characteristics protected in law, it's also important to consider what other factors might create barriers to participation, such as poverty, caring responsibilities, or someone's wellbeing.

The Equality Duty

The Equality Duty requires that we have had due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimizing disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

What is the purpose of the strategy?

The strategy sets the foundations for partners to build an inclusive educational culture where all children and young people are valued and recognised for their unique qualities, ideas, voices, and perspectives.

The strategy is based on seeking positive answers to three key questions:

1. Do all children and young people receive a high-quality music education that is tailored to their needs, interests, and abilities?
2. Do partner organisations' values embrace inclusion and promote it?
3. How well can the delivery teams, individually and collectively, recognize and overcome barriers to learning?

What is musical inclusion?

An approach to music teaching and learning, as well as organisational development, that means all children and young people can take part in music-making and learning, whatever their background or circumstances. It's about creating access to music-making in the first place and providing the right support and opportunities so that young people can progress on their individual journey. And it's about music leaders having the right skills and resources to help each young person fulfil their potential. When we talk about 'Music-making' or 'Music-making opportunities' we mean all the ways that young people make and learn music, in and out of schools.

So, who's missing out then?

Many children and young people face barriers to accessing music-making. These can be obvious, but many are not. Barriers exist because of the way society is organised and resourced. It's our responsibility to remove barriers for young people, where we find them.

OK, so how do you make music teaching and learning more inclusive then?

An easy way to understand this is that inclusive music is music that is **HEARD**:

- **Holistic** - placing emphasis on personal, social, and musical outcomes
- **Equitable** – people facing the biggest barriers receive the most support
- **Authentic** - developed with and informed by the people we do it for
- **Representative** – the people we work with as participants and colleagues reflect our diverse society
- **Diverse** – all musical genres, styles, practices are valued equally

[What do I need to know about inclusion? HEARD Model | Youth Music Network](#)

Musical Inclusion and Children in Challenging Circumstance

A key goal of this musical inclusion strategy is to enable all children in challenging circumstances to avail of a useful, high quality and personally suitable music education. Children in challenging circumstances may be categorized in the following groups (*Mullen 2011*):

- **Life condition** - young people with a permanent condition such as a disability, impairment, or a condition such as Asperger's syndrome.
- **Environmental issues** - young people with a challenge related to where they live. This could be about such issues as rural isolation or living in areas of social and economic deprivation or issues around differing cultural heritage.
- **Life circumstances** - young people who bully or are being bullied, who live in state or foster care, refugees - to name but some.
- **Behavioural issues** - young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties who become excluded from mainstream school.

Characteristics of Inclusive Practice

Progress

- Help participants develop musically, personally, and socially.
- Offer every participant a music education that is designed to meet their needs, interests, and abilities.
- Value all styles and forms of making and learning music equally.
- Frequently involve nurturing creative expression and shared ownership with young people.
- Foster a relational way of working where young people's voices are heard, respected, and acted on while also acknowledging the teacher's expertise and overview in relation to areas such as progression and attainment.

Barriers

- Reduce barriers to participation, engagement and learning for all students
- Not only those with impairments or those who are categorised as having SEND.

Opportunities

- Work towards equality of educational opportunity for all students, including opportunities to perform and record.
- Be important and beneficial for all children and young people but particularly for children and young people at risk of low attainment, disengagement, or educational exclusion.
- Identify and respond to areas of need whether geographic or for particular groups.
- At times be transformational, particularly with some children in challenging circumstances, notably in terms of their sense of self, intrinsic motivation, sense of empowerment and the building of resilience.
- View the difference between students as resources to support learning, rather than problems to be overcome.

Workforce

- Value the input of SENCOs, TAs, class teachers in Primary, Secondary and Special Schools as well as music specialists, social workers, carers etc.
- Encourage both music leaders and, over time, participants to become reflective practitioners.

Organisations within The Music Partnership are committed to:

- inclusive practice being a key priority throughout the thinking, language, training, delivery, professional development, and reporting for all partners.
- creating a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities served understanding that all the differences in peoples' skills, education, experience, background, education, age, working style, religion or belief, sexual orientation, race, gender, and other individual characteristics drive greater effectiveness in decision-making through diversity of thought and approach to delivery.
- creating an inclusive and welcoming environment free of harassment and bullying, where everyone can achieve their potential and all employees feel, and are, valued and respected.
- emphasising the inclusive behaviours expected of all our people and those working on behalf of The Music Partnership.
- sharing the commitment to valuing diversity and promoting an inclusive offer that respects and observes the individual
- practitioners committing to 'Youth Voice' and 'Child-Centred Delivery' in planning, delivery, and assessment as part of a quality offer e.g., through the characteristics outlined in 'TMP Quality Framework' or 'Youth Music Quality Framework'
- building a positive rapport with pupils, using appropriate language which promotes equality and diversity, taking steps to meet the needs of individuals. Teachers challenge discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- removing disadvantage by offering bespoke solutions, tailored learning styles and flexibility, enabling targeted support that reaches those most in need. Working with partners and signposting support to enable access for all is key to this success (e.g. funding, bursaries, instrument loan, music groups).

Key Challenges

Challenge	Description
Funding	Substantial and continued funding needed to prioritise education for <u>all</u> Children and Young People – those in challenging circumstances, SEND, Gifted & Talented, underrepresented. Uncertain funding climate and lack of available resource to make change quickly, without compromising current provision.
Workforce	EDI awareness has built successfully across the partnership through training, CPD and line management. The next step is to widen and deepen CPD, ensuring regular and appropriate bespoke inclusion training is available for delivery practitioners. Lack of diversity in current workforce and limited ability to change this quickly – often provision is market led and recruitment channels are limited. Parts of the region not hugely diverse but the workforce does not yet represent the communities served.
Data	Complexity in collecting useful data when it involves multiple partners, stakeholders, and special category data (e.g., Ethnicity or SEND). Improvement being made continually but this remains a key challenge for all partners. This is being addresses as a hub-wide objective to improve data collection and make regular comparisons to local authority population data sets.
Communication	‘Remote’ or peripatetic organisations “don’t know what they don’t know”. Continual comms is needed to break down barriers, change / inform perceptions to stop children and teachers making assumptions on what delivery or provision can be possible.
Schools	Many schools passionately support Music Education and access for all to provision. Some remain the gatekeeper and a barrier to access, which partners continue to work on. There is a need to review the curriculum offer with schools to ensure the offer is one that all young people can identify with.
Capacity	Need is changing constantly but some areas (e.g., small schools with rural isolation) also have a continuing need for financial resource which requires capacity to sustain e.g., through fundraising / bidding. Staffing capacity is often limited and can’t react quickly to settings in need (e.g., timetable availability with the right specialist to support a SEND project)

Priorities and Actions

Priority	Actions / Timeline
Raising Awareness of The Music Partnership's EDI and Charging and Remissions policies.	Publicising and widely circulating remissions policies within the workforce and to schools and parents. Regular communication from partner organisations should highlight to schools and parents that support is available across a range of programmes.
Building networks, approaches, experience, and capacity for support Music and SEND.	Establishing a Hub-wide support network for SEND practitioners in services and schools. Agree a consistent approach for Music and SEND which is widely circulated amongst practitioners. This should include a description of the different pathway options - music education, music for wellbeing, and music therapy.
Regular Equality Diversity and Inclusion training for practitioners.	Ensure delivery teams and partner organisations deliver EDI training regularly. TMP will also prioritise training on decolonising the curriculum to ensure all children have an offer that they are able to identify with.
Plan and deliver a programme of CPD focused on Musical Inclusion.	Improve the CPD offer for teachers to improve inclusive practice, increased the skills set of practitioners so more children are able to start and continue long term with their learning.
Improve data collection to assist with identifying need.	With the aim of targeting need to the individuals and communities who need provision the most, partners should improve their data collection / data sharing so issues like, for example, low income, SEND, isolation can be identified more readily.
Improve support for Gifted & Talented children and young people.	Partner organisations to agree their approach and support for those young people who are identified as 'Gifted and Talented'. Practitioners, schools, and parents to have pathways to enable targeted support.
Improve funding to support Musical Inclusion.	Work on developing 'individual giving' across all parts of TMP, even if via already established partner organisations. Continue diversifying income streams across major funders (e.g., DfE, Arts Council England, Youth Music) and with trusts and foundations.
Source online EDI training options	For any partners, schools, practitioners who don't currently provide an in-house training offer or set of modules.

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The Music Partnership

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