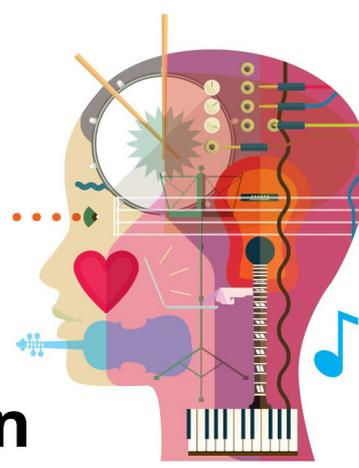


# EARLY YEARS MUSIC MAKING IN WILTSHIRE

## Key findings from a mapping and consultation



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Wiltshire Music Connect wanted to find out more about music making for under 5's taking place in the county. We commissioned a report to map current music activities and to consult with music specialists, early years practitioners and teachers. We wanted to find out what educators and musicians think are the issues and priorities in early years music, as a first step to considering how the Hub could support and develop musical learning for under 5's. These are the main findings from the mapping and consultation report, grouped into 3 themes.

### Music specialists who work in early years...

- ◆ For many music specialists, their work in **early years is a small proportion of their working week**, in addition to teaching older children or doing other kinds of work.
- ◆ Music specialists would like **more professional development**, particularly around working with children with additional needs (eg. SEND or EAL), and supporting child-initiated music making.
- ◆ Wiltshire Music Connect's Associate Providers scheme provides quality assurance to the freelance music education workforce. **Responses to a proposal to expand this scheme by creating a category of Early Years Associate, were mixed.** The report recommended that criteria for an Early Years Associate should have parity with criteria for existing Associates (a requirement to demonstrate skills and experience relevant to the areas of practice).

### Early years practitioners & teachers...

- ◆ Very **few early years practitioners had undertaken CPD which had a music focus** although some spoke of music featuring in other training courses (eg. behaviour management). Practitioners said that they would welcome music CPD courses, but were not aware of any opportunities and they did not know of how to find out.
- ◆ Whilst **early years practitioners said they would like music CPD**, and seemed happy to pay for it, the pressure on settings' budgets is particularly acute (in part due to the 30 hours of funded childcare initiative), therefore **settings may find it difficult to follow through** from this intent. Requirements of mandatory training and staffing ratios have an impact on practitioners' ability to attend CPD courses.

#### Who took part in the consultation?

Data collection for the report involved online surveys, desk research and interviews with a range of professionals who work in the music education or the early years sector, including nurseries and pre-schools, reception teachers in schools, children's centres, arts venues and festivals, early years music specialists and other music educators.

Thanks are due to the settings, practitioners, musicians and organisations who took part in the consultation, and also to Wiltshire Council's Early Learning and Development team who provided much of the statistical data presented in the full report.



# Stakeholders, partnerships & sector development...

- ◆ Information given by schools and early years settings suggests that **there are a lack of clear links between musical learning in pre-school and nursery settings, with music making in reception year in schools.** The exceptions to this were a few settings where there is a specific programme in place such as Start the Music, and music-based activities in Letters and Sounds Phase One during the pre-school year.
- ◆ **The mapping and consultation discovered many music specialists and areas of activity previously unknown about by the Hub.** There are a significant number of family music making groups (both private groups and franchises) some of which are long established. **There is not an equitable geographic spread of family music groups in the county,** as they are generally centred around urban areas which are considered more affluent.
- ◆ The consultation aimed to further understanding about people's **perceptions of the quality of practice and different types of music provision.** Perceptions that franchises would not engage with the consultation were unfounded, as many franchises were generous with their time and information. The supposition that early years music practice is a short-term 'stop-gap' for those wishing to work part-time was also unfounded in the case of several music specialists. Whilst early years practitioners acknowledged that they and their colleagues **lacked confidence in music making,** there was little reference to practice not being good enough.
- ◆ Several **music specialists said they would like to expand their early years work but there were a lack of opportunities.** Many settings which responded to the questionnaire said they would like the input of a musical specialist but felt that financial resources were a barrier, particularly for small voluntary-led pre-school playgroups.

## Suggested actions & next steps



The report suggested actions which Wiltshire Music could take in response to the key findings, which include:

- ◆ Promoting the Hub's CPD Bursary Scheme to EY music specialists.
- ◆ Supporting CPD courses offered by local providers and augmented by providers from further afield.
- ◆ Providing CPD and networking events which appeal to both pre-school practitioners and reception teachers, enabling an exchange of practice and building of a shared early years music pedagogical approach.
- ◆ A range of ways to improve information about early years music opportunities for families, settings, and CPD for practitioners and music specialists.



Wiltshire Music Connect are considering what practical steps can be taken to respond to the report. A new [early years page](#) has been created on the Hub website, which will be updated with developments.

### About Wiltshire Music Connect

Wiltshire Music Connect is the **Music Education Hub** for Wiltshire. **Music Education Hubs** are funded by the government through Arts Council England and are a key part of the [National Plan for Music Education](#).

We connect children and young people in our county with a broad range of music making opportunities and experiences to compliment and support what schools offer. Because music is excellent for developing young minds.

As well as **working with schools and music teachers** we work with a growing group of people involved in a much wider range of music activity, including **bands, clubs and groups, promoters, festivals and venues** – with both **professional and volunteer musicians and music supporters.**

Get in touch, find out more or sign up for our email newsletter

[info@wiltshiremusicconnect.org.uk](mailto:info@wiltshiremusicconnect.org.uk)

[www.wiltshiremusicconnect.org.uk/early-years-music](http://www.wiltshiremusicconnect.org.uk/early-years-music)

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