

THE SHORT GUIDE TO ACCESSIBLE MUSIC EDUCATION



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THE ONLY GUIDE TO ACCESSIBLE MUSIC EDUCATION IN THE UK

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Music Education Council ASN/SEND Working Group

The Short Guide to Accessible Music Education (UK)

What is ‘The Short Guide to Accessible Music Education’?

One of the comments we regularly hear in the course of our work is “Wouldn’t it be great if there was a single website/ resource dedicated to music education and children and young people with Additional Support Needs?”

In the first instance, you can contact your local music service or music education hub to find out what accessible opportunities are available in your area.

In addition to this, we believe it is useful (and somewhat overdue!) to spotlight specific information, resources and opportunities ‘all under one roof’ – for disabled musicians, their parents and carers, music teachers and beyond. It’s worth noting that many of the items listed in this guide will have strong links to individual music services and music education hubs.

So, this is one attempt to meet this need – imperfect, certainly, but hopefully a good start, which can be expanded upon by you. We clearly have gaps – please get in touch!

We haven’t attempted to provide a comprehensive list or database, nor do we offer qualitative opinions because the scale of such an enterprise is beyond our present resources.

What we can hopefully provide is a snap shot of what is currently out there, with scope for you to investigate further at your leisure.

Finally, the focus of this guide is limited to music education, which means we haven’t included links to Music Therapy. We recognise the fantastic work delivered by Music Therapists across the UK and further information can be found via individual music services/ hubs or the British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT) or Nordoff Robbins/ Nordoff Robbins Scotland.

Got something to share?

We’d love to hear from you!

Please contact us through the website contact form at
<https://theshortguidetoaccessiblemusiceducation.wordpress.com>

Important disclaimers:

- Drake Music, Drake Music Scotland and the Music Education Council are not responsible for any content on the links and websites listed in this guide. If you come across any material you consider inaccurate or inappropriate, please contact the website or organisation directly.
- The inclusion of a link, website or product here does not imply an endorsement and forms part of an indicative sample only.
- Drake Music, Drake Music Scotland and the Music Education Council cannot be held responsible for any issues arising from the downloading or use of software mentioned in the guide.
- Wherever possible, all descriptions are quoted directly/ paraphrased from the source website in question. We cannot vouch for the claims, descriptions or language used about individual products and resources.
- All information in this document is correct at the time of going to press.

Access Requirements:

We are working towards making this resource fully accessible. If you require this information in a different format, we are happy to discuss any access requirements.

Please do contact us, we'd love to hear from you.

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Acronym alert!

We've tried to avoid using a lot of tricky acronyms in this guide. The most common one you'll see is 'ASN/ SEN/D' which stands for 'Additional Support Needs/ Special Educational Needs and/or Disabled'. Both terms are used widely across the UK and for the purposes of this guide are treated as interchangeable.

1. Music organisations and music charities

UK wide

- [The Amber Trust](#) Amber's vision is to give blind or partially-sighted children the best possible chance to fulfil their musical aspirations.
- [Association of British Orchestras](#) The ABO champions its member orchestras' and opera companies' education and community work, highlighting the work through publications, briefings, and conferences. *NB:* Many orchestras work with special schools. Although we have highlighted some individual orchestras, there isn't space to include them all – see the [ABO's directory](#) for further information.
- [Jessie's Fund](#) Helps children with serious illness, complex needs, and communication difficulties through the therapeutic use of music.
- [The Music Education Council \(MEC\)](#) Acts as a medium for bringing together in a working relationship those organisations and institutions in the United Kingdom involved in music education and music education training, thereby creating a common meeting ground and opportunities for the exchange of information and the promotion of joint or connected activities. Includes a strategic working group and webpage dedicated to music and ASN/ SEN/D.

England - National

- [Bridge Organisations](#) The Arts Council funds a network of 10 Bridge organisations to connect the cultural sector and the education sector so that children & young people, including those who are disabled, can have access to great arts and cultural opportunities.
- [Drake Music](#) Leaders in music, disability and technology. We use new technologies and ideas to open up access to music for all.
- [Music and the Deaf](#) Aims to enrich the lives of those with hearing loss through the experience of music.
- [Music Education Hubs](#) Music Education Hubs are groups of organisations – such as local authorities, schools, other hubs, art organisations, community or voluntary organisations – working together to create joined-up and inclusive music education provision, respond to local need and fulfil the objectives of the hub as set out in the national plan for Music Education.

- [OpenUp Music](#) Empowers young disabled musicians to build inclusive youth orchestras.
- [Royal National Institute of Blind People \(RNIB\)](#) Information and resources about music for people with sight loss.
- [Soundabout](#) National charity that has pioneered the use of music, rhythm and sound to give even the most disabled children and adults a voice, a way to express themselves and be listened to.

England - North West

- [Billy & Andy's Manchester Music School](#) Provides accessible music workshops for young people with disabilities in the North West.
- [Epiphany Music](#) We deliver – and support – creative, accessible, inclusive music-making in Special Educational Needs and Disability settings.
- [More Music](#) Music and education charity with over 20 years of experience delivering workshops, training, performances and festivals.
- [Music Unlimited](#) We conceive, pioneer, develop and spotlight inclusive pathways into music making.
- [Yorkshire Association for Music and Special Educational Needs \(YAMSEN\)](#) An association dedicated to providing and promoting high quality musical activities and tuition for adults and children with a wide range of special needs.

England - North East

- [Musical Arc](#) An inclusive organisation which supports and inspires people with physical / sensory impairments to play music in a range of styles and to compose original works.

England - South East/ London

- [Heart n Soul](#) Award-winning creative arts company and charity. We believe in the talents and power of people with learning disabilities, providing opportunities for people to discover, develop and share this power and talent as widely as possible.

- [London Symphony Orchestra – LSO On Track](#) Through our Music Service partners, the LSO continues to work with Special Schools and specialist departments of mainstream schools in East London.
- [Sound Connections](#) Develops, enables & empowers young Londoners through high quality music-making opportunities including the Challenging Circumstances Music Network which advocates for young musicians with ASN/ SEN/D.

England - East of England

- [Beat This CIC](#) We use music and technology to help children, young people, adults and people with additional needs develop skills, interact and express themselves through music.
- [The Funky Pie Company](#) Delivers Hertfordshire Music Service's Arts Award Provision to Special Schools and leads on their ASN/ SEN/D provision.
- [The Music Man Project \(Mencap\)](#) Provides daily music sessions for anyone with learning disabilities aged 16 years and above.
- [Pro Corda](#) Innovative life-changing course for children with ASN/ SEN/D using the power of ensemble training to benefit personal and social progression.

England - South West

- [CEDA](#) Independent registered charity and not-for-profit company limited by guarantee which provides learning and social opportunities to disabled people in Devon. Music sessions are delivered as part of an overall arts offer.
- [Music Alive](#) Music Alive aims to improve access to music for disabled people, to initiate and develop creative music making with disabled and non-disabled people and to support disabled people to achieve more independent, fulfilled and integrated lives.
- [Share Music South-West](#) Main aim is to encourage adults with a wide spectrum of disabilities (e.g. physical, learning, sensory) to take part in Workshops where they create and perform original music and music theatre.

Scotland

- [Drake Music Scotland](#) The nation's leading charity creating opportunities for children and adults with disabilities to learn, compose and perform music independently. (NB: this is a separate organisation to Drake Music)
- [Live Music Now Scotland](#) LMN works with a very diverse range of people that rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to experience live music, including work in special schools.
- [Music Services in Scotland](#) All music services/music education hubs in the UK include some provision for disabled children and young people – contact your local service for details. We are aware that there may be inaccuracies within this document but there is no up to date list for Scottish Music Services at present.

Wales - National

- [BBC National Orchestra of Wales](#) Delivers regular inclusive music projects, workshops and concerts for special schools, including Relaxed Performances for young people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions.
- [Live Music Now Wales Cymru](#) LMN works with a very diverse range of people that rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to experience live music, including work in special schools.
- [Music Services in Wales](#) All music services/ music education hubs in the UK include some provision for disabled children and young people – contact your local service for details.
- [Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama](#) Runs a 'Musicians in Focus' Scheme for visually impaired and blind musicians including specialist support for Junior Conservatoire students, an evening class for adults and a summer school.

Wales - South Wales

- [Touch Trust](#) We provide unique creative movement programmes for individuals with learning disabilities, those affected by autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), complex needs, behaviour which challenges, and other vulnerable groups in the community.
- [visiblemusic](#) Works with mainstream, ASN/ SEN/D and NEET young people in schools and communities, providing exciting courses, tuition, workshops and other activities relating to modern music and sound technology.

Northern Ireland

- [Music Services in Northern Ireland](#) All music services/ music education hubs in the UK include some provision for disabled children and young people – contact your local service for details.
- [The Drake Music Project Northern Ireland](#) Provides access to independent music making for children and adults with complex disabilities. (NB: this is a separate organisation to Drake Music)
- [Garden of Music](#) Community Interest Company (C.I.C) We advocate for accessible music making and education, using a capacity building approach for sustainability.
- [Live Music Now Northern Ireland](#) LMN works with a very diverse range of people that rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to experience live music, including work in special schools.
- [Ulster Orchestra](#) Launched a learning and community engagement project in 2016 ('The Music Room') which includes work with special schools.

2. Teaching and Learning

Teaching resources

- [ABC Music for SEN/ ASN](#) A child-centred approach to creative music education, ideal for the SEN/ASN sector.
- [Charanga Musical School](#) Has a specific SEND/ASL section on the website.
- [Figurenotes](#) Award winning Figurenotes notation uses colour and shape to convey all the information of traditional music notation. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) allow pupils taking exams to compose and perform using Figurenotes notation. Bespoke Figurenotes training for individuals and organisations is available from Drake Music Scotland.
- [Freesound](#) Aims to create a huge collaborative database of audio snippets, samples, recordings, bleeps, ... released under Creative Commons licenses that allow their reuse.
- [Golden Chord](#) A business dedicated to providing a high quality personalised transcription service for customers who require music, music-related and other materials in Braille.

- [The Imprevise Approach](#) a refreshingly simple system that enables anyone to make music on an iPad in a free and spontaneous way - no wrong notes!
- [Music4SpecialNeeds](#) I have created this website to share resources and ideas that I have developed in the past years with the aim of making music more accessible and enjoyable for children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.
- [SingUp](#) Drake Music have created accessible singing resources that can be downloaded from the Sing Up Song Bank. These resources are designed to fully involve ASN/ SEN/D children in singing activities (Foundation stage to KS4) including children with physical impairments, communication difficulties and other special needs.

Assessment and accreditation

- [Arts Award](#) (Trinity College London) Through Arts Award's five levels, children and young people aged up to 25 can explore any art form including Music, performing arts, visual arts, literature, media and multimedia.
- [Compose and Perform](#) (Drake Music) Specialist accredited music course created for young people with ASN/ SEN/D who would like to progress further with music.
- [Creative, Media and Performance Arts Entry Pathways](#) (WJEC) Entry Level Pathways courses in the Arts, including 4 units focussing on music skills at Entry Level 2 and 3.
- [MU Basics](#) (Music Unlimited) A robust and logical scheme for assessing an individual's skills in, and understanding of, live performance.
- [Sounds of Intent Assessment Framework](#) Assessing, recording and promoting musical development in children and young people with complex needs.
- [Unit Award Scheme](#) (AQA) Offers learners the opportunity to have their achievements formally recognised with a certificate issued by AQA each time a short unit is successfully completed.

3. Instruments and ensembles

Accessible electronic musical instruments

- [Apollo Ensemble](#) PC software that links together inputs from switches and movement sensors to outputs including sound, lighting and image. It can be used to create accessible musical instruments, interactive spaces and sensory environments to suit a wide range of individual abilities.
- [Beamz](#) The beamz is an interactive music system, allowing you to play impressive music easily and quickly.
- [BIGmack switch](#) Large single button, single message device for quick and easy communication.
- [iPad](#) A touch screen tablet with music making apps.
- [LinnStrument](#) An expressive MIDI controller for musical performance.
- [Makey Makey](#) Turn everyday objects into touchpads and combine them with the internet.
- [OHMI](#) Registered charity whose objective is to remove the barriers to music-making faced by physically disabled people. Entrants to the annual One-Handed Musical Instrument Competition are challenged to develop musical instruments that can be played without the use of one hand and arm.
- [Skoog](#) A revolutionary tactile cube that will change the way you and your family enjoy, create and learn music. Lesson plans and other resources to support use of Skoog in the classroom are also available.
- [Soundbeam](#) An award-winning 'touch free' device which uses sensor technology to translate body movement into music and sound.

Useful music software

- [Ableton Live](#) Software for creating musical ideas, turning them into finished songs, and even taking them onto the stage. Enables audio clips to be controlled by midi controllers and switches.
- [Audacity](#) Free, open source, cross-platform audio software for multi-track recording and editing.

- [musescore](#) and [noteflight](#) Free notation software.
- [Soundplant](#) Turns your computer keyboard into a versatile, low latency sound trigger and playable instrument (can be used in conjunction with Crick USB Switch Box)

Other useful equipment

- [Adin B1BT 10W Vibration Bluetooth Speaker](#) As the speaker transmits sound waves into the solid surface of metal, wood, glass, plastic, porcelain etc, it transforms the surface to a gigantic 360-degree speaker.
- [Crick USB Switch Box](#) This reliable USB switch interface will work with almost all switch accessible software.
- [Konig and Meyer 19722 iPad holder](#) The strong prismatic element with its ergonomic clamping screw allows the iPad holder to be attached quickly and easily to any tubes up to 30 mm diameter.
- [Korg Wavedrum mini](#) Includes a sensor clip that transforms nearly any object into an instrument.
- [Logitech Bluetooth Receiver](#) 'Wire free' audio when using iPads.
- [Variable Friction Arm mounting solution with an Inclusive holder for the iPad](#) This flexible system, with a wide range of adjustment, makes it easy to position an iPad for optimum touch access.

iPad music-making apps

NB: most apps also available to download for Android devices Prices vary for each app.

- [Airvox](#) A unique and precise musical instrument controlled without touch -- only using hand gestures and motions.
- [Beatsurfing](#) This Application lets you to draw a 3-dimensional controller which you can use, like any other, by tapping...you design your own paths until they suit you, follow routes, take turns and cuts with your fingers and collide with objects along the way, triggering melody, beats, effects.
- [Bebot](#) Instead of a keyboard, it has an easy-to-use touch control system. And it's all built into a friendly animated robot, who performs your music while you play.

- [Bloom](#) Part instrument, part composition and part artwork, Bloom's innovative controls allow anyone to create patterns and melodies by simply tapping the screen.
- [Garageband](#) Turns your iPad, iPhone, and iPod touch into a collection of Touch Instruments and a full-featured recording studio — so you can make music anywhere you go.
- [iKaossilator](#) Uses an intuitive X-Y pad to provide expressive musical control.
- [Loopseque](#) A music ecosystem which includes powerful sequencer, sampler, fx processor and record store with many beautiful releases from talented artists.
- [Madpad](#) Turn everyday sights and sounds like your car, an empty soda can, or your friends into the ultimate percussive instrument.
- [Thumbjam](#) You get over 40 high-quality real instruments multi-sampled exclusively for this app.
- [TNR-i](#) Even if you do not have any musical knowledge, you can create music intuitively by "placing" sounds on the 16 x 16 button grid that are performed musically and visually.

Disabled-led/ inclusive ensembles

England

- [Able Orchestra](#) (Nottingham) A group of young musicians with disabilities collaborating with County Youth Art's Musicians and Visual Artists.
- [Orchestra ONE \(Orchestra of New Experiences\)](#) (Kent) a music group for young people to write and perform their own music, influenced by their own tastes, styles and instrumentation.
- [The South-West Open Up Orchestra](#) (Bristol) The UK's only disabled-led regional youth orchestra
- [UP! Orchestra](#) (Surrey) An orchestra that has been specifically put together for young people who require additional learning or physical support.

Scotland

- [Digital Orchestra](#) Scotland's first orchestra for young people with disabilities (Edinburgh) – With a recently launched Junior Digital Orchestra for those aged 12-18.

4. Professional Development

Training courses

NB: Please check individual websites for dates and costs. Other providers run one-off, unaccredited training events – contact individual organisations for details.

- [Trinity Level 4 Certificate for Music Educators](#) (Trinity College London) Designed for music educators who work with children and young people including a module on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- [Post Graduate Certificate in Music and Special Needs: Sounds of Intent](#) Assessing, recording and promoting musical development in children and young people with complex needs.

Conferences

- [Breaking the Bubble Conference](#) (London, normally held October) Breaking the Bubble is an innovation project formed in partnership between Surrey Music Hub, Sound Hub (Kent) and Sound City (Brighton and Hove) to provide advice, training, networks and workshops for special schools.
- [Fast Forward Music Festival](#) (Bristol, normally held June/ July) The Fast Forward Festival is run in partnership with BBC Music Day, the British Paraorchestra and The One Handed Musical Instrument Trust. This fully inclusive event also provides an opportunity for participants to see professional artists in a professional venue; an extremely important part of their musical development.
- [ISME Commission on Special Music Education and Music Therapy](#) (bi-annual conference, different country hosts each time) The commission on Special Music Education and Music Therapy was established in order to contribute to the progressive development of special music education, music therapy, music in special education and other related fields of practice which examine the relationship between music, health, public health and well-being.
- [Music and Drama Education Expo](#) (London, normally held in February) Europe's largest conference and exhibition for anyone involved in music & drama education. Always includes numerous sessions dedicated to music and ASN/ SEN/D.

Guides and toolkits

- [Do, Improve, Review: A quality framework for use in music making sessions working with young people in SEN/D settings](#) (Youth Music, Westrup et al 2016) Drake Music,

one of Youth Music's strategic partners, have shared their expertise on music-making with disabled young people, in a new version of our reflective practice tool.

- [Enabling Young Children with Autism through Musical Engagement. A Music Educator's Toolkit.](#) (Hutchinson 2013) Action research report by Sound Connections.
- [How to make music activities accessible for deaf children and young people](#) (ndcs 2013) This resource provides clear guidance and information to ensure that professionals can design and deliver music activities in which deaf children and young people can fully participate.
- [Music and people with a learning disability](#) A guide for Music Leaders created by Mencap and MusicLeader Yorkshire.
- [Valuing Music in Special Needs Settings](#) (Harris 2016) A training toolkit developed through a collaborative action research project between soundLINCS and Nottingham Trent University.

Research and reports

- [Consultation into disabling barriers to formal music education.](#) (Bott and Westrup 2012) National consultation carried out by Drake Music interviewing young disabled people and their parents as well as musicians and teachers.
- [Engagement with technology in special educational and disabled music settings.](#) (Farrimond et al 2011) Research into the ways in which such technologies are being used for music making with these young people, the legacy of such approaches and the barriers to engagement with technology in these contexts.
- [Music to young ears. Engaging deaf children through music.](#) (Hanson 2013) A study of the benefits of musical engagement, opportunities, best practice and recommendations for future work, commissioned by Music4U.
- [The Provision of Music in Special Education \(PROMISE\)](#) (Welch et al 2016) The paper reports the outcomes of a national survey of music in special schools in England that was conducted in the summer of 2015.
- [Research Into Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Music Education, Northern Ireland](#) (Day 2016) The aim of the research was primarily to explore current music provision in ASN/ SEN/D schools and schools with a Learning Support Centre (LSC) including the accessibility of lessons and training needs for teachers and other school staff.

Effective practice films

- [Drake Music 'Experiences' webpage](#) Showcases videos from a range of education-based projects with a focus on capturing the experiences of disabled young musicians and their teachers. You can find further education videos on the website [here](#).
- [Inspire.music.org](#) A website for everyone involved in music education – school based, community based, formal, informal, non-formal - to be curious, to be inspired and to think about what really works. Includes several case studies focussing on music and ASN/ SEND.
- [Live Music Now on Vimeo](#) Contains several training videos to support delivery of workshops in special schools, including music sessions with young people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions.
- [Sounds of Intent](#) The website contains example videos to demonstrate every 'element' statement on the Sounds of Intent framework.

5. Social media

Online articles, blogs and podcasts

- [James Rose](#) Describes his on-going journey as a disabled conductor on Disability Arts Online.
- [Lost in Music](#) (2016) Jane Douglas examines the difficulties that children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties have in making sense of sound.
- [Ouch: Disability Talk!](#) Blog and podcast on the BBC with a focus on disabled people and diverse stories.

People and hashtags to follow on Twitter

- [@AccessibleMusEd](#) - The Short Guide To Accessible Music Education
- [@FletchSignSong](#) - International Deaf SignSong Performer
- [#iamamusician](#) - Drake Music Scotland - specifically aimed at equality for musicians with disabilities.
- [@kellyjopadmusic](#) - ASN Music Teacher and iPad enthusiast

- [#SENDmusic](#) - General hashtag created by Youth Music to promote accessible music making in the UK
- [@SophieBiebuyck](#) - Schools Instrumental Music Lead Officer for Essex Music Hub and hearing impaired musician
- [@weallmakemusic](#) - Drake Music's inclusive education network for discussion, support & debate

Facebook

- [ASN/ SEN/D Music Teachers & Leaders UK](#) A community for teachers, music leaders & music education staff to come together to share tips, ideas, resources and suggestions for inclusive music making. *NB:* This group is closed for privacy, but all music leaders/teachers/hub staff etc are welcome. Follow the link to request access.
- [The Short Guide To Accessible Music Education](#) The only guide to accessible music education in the UK

6. Accessible music venues and performances

UK wide

- [Attitude is Everything](#) Improving Deaf and Disabled people's access to live music by working in partnership with audiences, artists and the music industry.
- [Autism-friendly performances](#) The National Autistic Society has a webpage listing autism-friendly shows including musical theatre.

Wales - National

- [hynt](#) A new national access scheme that works with theatres and arts centres in Wales to make sure there is a consistent offer available for visitors with an impairment or specific access requirement, and their Carers or Personal Assistants. Includes searchable listings for details of accessible music events and performances.

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