

A Scoping Study of Training Opportunities in Wales for Practitioners Working in Music with Young People with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and/or Disabilities

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Executive Summary

This scoping study was commissioned by the National Music Service for Wales in order to understand the current landscape of training opportunities for practitioners working in music education with children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) and/or disabilities in Wales, in Spring 2023. In order to understand current training opportunities, three phases of research were undertaken.

Firstly, a general internet search was conducted to identify training opportunities that were openly available and advertised. Secondly, key individuals and organisations in the sector were approached to understand their approach and training offer. Finally, an online survey was developed to understand the training experiences and priorities for future training of practitioners working in music education with children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities in Wales. This survey was granted ethical approval from the Faculty of Life Sciences and Education ethics panel at the University of South Wales (approval reference 230102LR) and built and disseminated through JISC Online Surveys. The survey was open for two weeks in February and March 2023. The findings from all three phases were triangulated to seek to understand the current training landscape in Wales.

It is openly noted from the outset that this study is limited in its scope and reach since it was a small, time-limited study. The outcomes may favour South Wales since this is where the researcher is situated and has access to professional networks. Future research should take steps to ensure it is representative of the wider Welsh context, and critically should be developed with disabled musicians and disability-led organisations.

The findings demonstrate that there is a significant lack of training opportunities in the field of music education for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities in Wales, although there is much rich practice in this area. The general search revealed no specific training opportunities but did identify some contextual and related training of relevance.

The findings from the second phase of the research demonstrated that some organisations have detailed, rigorous and robust internal training programmes but that this training is usually not accessible externally, beyond their organisation or subscription model. Other organisations noted that their training is more responsive to needs that arise and is arranged as necessary and as guided by practitioners. Some organisations noted that they don't engage in any specific training in this field, despite practising in this area.

The online survey received 31 responses and therefore is not representative or generalisable due to its small sample size. The sample may also be skewed by the recruitment strategy, which saw 26% of respondents in senior, leadership or managerial roles. It is possible that their responses are representative of their wider organisations, but this cannot be known. Of the 31 respondents, 55% had not engaged in any training in this field. When asked why this may be, 88% of those

respondents noted that they hadn't been offered or weren't aware of any relevant training opportunities. Of those who had engaged in training, several of the sector-leading organisations discussed in the second phase of the research were cited as employers or providers of training. Some university level courses were cited, including music therapy programmes, as well as continuing professional development (CPD) beyond music education or music in general.

When asked whether respondents were aware of any barriers to learners with ALN and/or disabilities accessing music education, the following were identified as themes in the data: attitudes and assumptions, barriers in 'mainstream' provision, lack of progression pathways, and necessary skills and training.

When asked about priorities for future training in this field, responses centred around the following key areas: social model of disability and reframing emphasis, knowledge and understanding, practical and tangible training requests, increasingly holistic understand of music's potential, and recognising good practice and opportunities for growth. An area without consensus was the positioning of training, including whether there should be training for all teachers and practitioners, or whether a specialist training pathway for some practitioners was more relevant.

Overall, the various phases of the research indicate that there is a lack of openly available training in the field of music education for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities in Wales. There is no accredited training and there is a lack of understanding about the potential of music education for learners with ALN and/or disabilities and its distinction from music therapy.

Several of the revisions to the National Plan for Music Education in England, including collaborating with disabled musicians to inform developments, strengthening the provision for learners with special educational needs (SEN) and making clearer the distinctions between music education and music therapy would be valuable considerations for the National Plan for Music Education in Wales. Inclusive and disability-led music and arts organisations in Wales have much insight and expertise in developing accessible provision, and would be valuable partners in developing this work.

There is certainly scope for the development of training opportunities in music education for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities in Wales, guided by examples from the evidence-base and examples of best practice in the sector. However, any training offer must be developed with and by disabled musicians and disabled-led organisations, should not be tokenistic and should nurture a culture shift to further value disabled people's experiences, contributions and music, and avoid perpetuating a deficit-based position.

Note - As many resources as possible have been included in this report via hyperlinks, with a view to making it a functional repository of information on this topic at this time.

Introduction

As part of the development of the National Plan for Music Education in Wales ([Welsh Government, 2022](#)) and National Music Service for Wales ([National Music Service Wales, 2023](#)), this small-scale scoping study was commissioned to provide an indicative summary of the landscape of training opportunities for practitioners working in music education with children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) and/or disabilities in Wales. This opportunity was developed in response to enquiring how the National Plan for Music Education in Wales and the National Music Service in Wales would ensure its provision was meaningful and accessible to learners with ALN and/or disabilities. Before developing any bespoke training to address this priority, it felt important to understand current training opportunities available and to learn from best practice in the sector.

The limitations of this brief study are recognised, in that there was a relatively short time scale, findings are limited to what was accessible on a general internet search, through professional networks and through a brief online survey that was open for two weeks. The internet search was impacted by the breadth of language used to describe and discuss this work and the absence of shared language. Despite disseminating the survey nationally and reaching out to organisations across Wales, the findings are likely to be biased to South Wales, where the author practices and has awareness of local provision and networks. It will be important that future research is more representative of the whole of Wales, and values practices in place and developing nationally.

Some national and international provision of note is referenced in the Results and Discussion section in order to contextualise the Welsh findings and provide potential indications of the trajectory of developments.

The guiding questions for this scoping study were:

1. What training is currently available for those working in music education with children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) and/or disabilities in Wales?
2. What should the priorities be for any future training for those working in music education with children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) and/or disabilities in Wales?

While the study was originally intended to be desk-based, the inclusion of the online survey felt necessary to capture and reflect the perspectives of current practitioners across Wales.

A lack of consultation and collaboration with disabled musicians is acknowledged as a shortcoming of this initial study, and should be the priority for subsequent research.

Music Education for Learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and/or Disabilities

The scope of this task wasn't intended to include a thorough or systematic literature review. However, it feels pertinent to recognise the dearth of literature and research in this field, and to acknowledge that many (but not all) of the resources available are out-dated and deficit-oriented. By this it is meant that much research and practice in the field of music education for disabled children and young people uses a medical model philosophy, focusing on how to adapt normative practice to those who otherwise cannot access it. This perpetuates a pathologising of disabled young people and doesn't present any challenge to existing practices which may be exclusionary and disabling in themselves (Penketh, 2016). This also doesn't reflect the creative and emancipatory potential of inclusive practices and the richness this can bring to music making and to the practices of those involved.

A number of open-access, strength-based resources have been developed to facilitate inclusive music making with children, young people and adults with a range of different experiences.

A selection are highlighted here, but this list is not exhaustive:

- Little Soundabout and Soundabout Life ([Soundabout, 2023a](#)) are developed for young children with complex needs and young adults with complex needs, respectively. These resources are a series of online cards with simple ideas and activities that families, carers and professionals can use to support musical and personal development.
- [The Amber Trust \(2023\)](#) has a rich collection of resources on its Amber Sound Touch website, organised according to: working with children in the early years (Little Amber), instrumental and vocal tuition (Amber Music Awards), working with visually impaired children with complex needs (Amber Plus) and working with visually impaired children with neurodegenerative disease (With Music in Mind). Each programme has a breadth of open access, online resources to support engagement and evidence-based provision, informed by the Sounds of Intent model of musical development (Welch *et al.*, 2009; [Sounds of Intent, 2023](#)).
- [SoundLincs \(No Date\)](#) provides a thorough repository of research and resources on music and Deafness.
- The [British Dyslexia Association \(2020\)](#) developed a guide entitled 'Music and Dyslexia' which discusses what dyslexia is, how dyslexia intersects with musical experience, teaching strategies and discussion of exam syllabi.
- [Beth Pickard's \(2021\)](#) article is an evidence-based, strength-based approach to music education for learners who have Down's Syndrome.

A repository of resources on this topic is provided to accompany the revised National Plan for Music Education in England ([HM Government, 2023](#)). This page includes a

wealth of information and resources from organisations across the UK, organised according to area of focus and provision. While it is now somewhat dated, Lines *et al.*'s (2018) '[The Short Guide to Accessible Music Education \(UK\)](#)' resource includes a snapshot in time of provision across the UK, with many of the organisations and resources listed still operational and impactful.

It is also relevant to note that following the announcement of [Trinity College London's \(2022\)](#) new accreditation pathway for learners with additional and/or complex needs and/or disabilities, a wealth of resources are in development by Professor Adam Ockelford (Forthcoming) which will be a very welcome addition to the literature in relation to music provision for learners with additional learning needs (ALN) and/or disabilities. These are in addition to the recently published 'Count Me In' ([Pickard, 2022](#), [Live Music Now, 2023c](#); Ockelford *et al.*, 2023) resources which are a rich, strength-based approach and resource which would align particularly well with the 'Music in Schools' and 'Making Music with Others' programmes of the National Plan for Music Education in Wales.

Accessible Music Education in Wales

A landmark event in the evolution of music provision for learners with ALN and/or disabilities in Wales was the 'We are all musical / Rydyn ni i gyd yn gerddorol' conference, hosted by Live Music Now, Disability Arts Cymru and Anthem Music Fund in 2021 ([Live Music Now, 2023a](#)). The conference resource page ([Live Music Now, 2023b](#)) remains a vital repository of valuable information from that event which is highly relevant to this study.

A resource of particular note on this page is [Professor Graham Welch's \(2021\)](#) 'Consultation on the Provision of Music in Special Schools in Wales, Summer 2021'. Of the schools who participated in the consultation (39% of Welsh special education settings), only 41% provided instrumental tuition to pupils. This is an important statistic for the ambition of the National Plan for Music Education in Wales which seeks to ensure that all pupils in Wales have access to instrumental tuition ([Welsh Government, 2022](#)).

Another study focusing on the experiences of young disabled musicians (and artists) in Wales was published by [Disability Arts Cymru \(2020\)](#). This report explored "what involvement young disabled/Deaf people between the ages of 16 and 30 years, had in arts activities across Wales." While some of these respondents are older than the remit of the National Music Service for Wales, this survey offers a valuable insight into the current trajectory for young disabled musicians in Wales.

Themes identified in the report included:

- Barriers in physical access,
- Lack of access provision,
- Transport barriers,
- Appropriate marketing,
- Limited opportunities,
- Technology,
- Monetary issues,
- Lack of confidence,
- Failure of identifying training needs,
- Attitudinal barriers,
- Lack of feeling welcome,
- Lack of role models.

[Disability Arts Cymru \(2020\)](#)

Two clear themes in the recommendations from respondents, including young disabled people, appear to be around training provision, and collaboration and partnership working with disabled people. These recommendations will be returned to later in this report.

[Anthem Cymru's \(No Date\)](#) 'Initial Mapping Report' ([Holford, 2020](#)) is a valuable resource to understand the landscape of youth music and music education in Wales at a point in time, and interestingly notes 'special educational needs' as one of the "areas of need which are most well-served" by the 55 respondents completing its survey.

"Inclusion/equality/equity in its many forms was the most highly mentioned need, followed by financial support for lessons/instruments' social, personal and wellbeing outcomes; and support for schools."

[\(Holford, 2020, p. 5\)](#)

In relation to the remit of this study, it is also of note that those with sensory impairments were amongst the groups of people "least well-served" in Holford's (2020) report.

The [Anthem and Youth Music \(2020\)](#) report on 'Making and Learning Music in Wales: A Conversation with Young People, May-June 2020' consulted 45 young people aged 7-23 about making and learning music in Wales. It identified a "lack of tailored opportunities... particularly [for] learning-disabled young people" (Anthem and Youth Music, 2020, p. 3):

"Consultation with autistic young people and young people with learning disabilities highlighted a number of barriers including sensory sensitivity (to loud music and bright lights) and feeling overwhelmed or uncomfortable in

large groups of people. Safe spaces, working in small groups or one-to-one would help.”

[Anthem and Youth Music \(2020, p. 4\)](#)

The report acknowledges a lack of engagement with physically disabled young people and those with profound and multiple learning disabilities and will seek to address this through future consultations.

Experiences of Young Disabled Musicians in the UK

Two further reports were published about the musical experiences of disabled children, young people and adults in England; one by Make Some Noise Research in 2018 ([Take It Away, 2018b](#)) and the other by [Youth Music \(2020\)](#).

Shared outcomes include:

- Evidence of a significant lack of access to music teachers willing, able or trained to teach music to disabled young people.
- Lack of awareness of and access to adapted instruments and their potential, involving all stakeholders (disabled musicians, teachers and retailers).
- Significant financial barriers to accessing music tuition that’s accessible for disabled people.

Summary

Looking across the evidence-base at resources available to inform music education for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities in Wales, there is a growing body of contemporary, strength-based resources which are replacing outdated, deficit-oriented literature. New accreditation and progression pathways in music education for learners with ALN and/or disabilities are emerging across the UK. Research into the experiences of young musicians with ALN and/or disabilities in Wales and the UK has identified significant barriers to accessing provision, including attitudinal barriers, lack of provision, lack of opportunities and lack of access to instruments. The original research in this study will seek to better understand the training opportunities available for those working in music education with children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities in Wales, to inform future developments and training provision through the National Music Service for Wales.

Method

There were three phases to this brief study. Firstly, a general internet search was conducted to identify training opportunities in Wales for practitioners working in music education with children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities. It was recognised that a range of terms, phrases and language may be used to describe this practice, and so a wide range of search terms were used. It is also recognised that some training of this nature may not be publicly accessible or advertised. This led to the second phase, which involved contacting leading individuals and organisations in the sector directly.

The second phase of the study was to reach out to practitioners and organisations working in this field to understand their training approach and offer, particularly if it was unlikely to be accessible through the aforementioned search. Some organisations were identified through the general search, others were known to the researcher through practice and professional networks. Some contacts were provided by the Co-Ordinator of the National Music Service for Wales. Discussions were held online to understand the organisations' provision and training offer in more detail. The outcomes of phases one and two are summarised in the Results section in Table 1.

The third and final phase of the study was an online survey which sought to gather insights from practitioners working in music education with children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities in Wales. This survey was granted ethical approval from the Faculty of Life Sciences and Education ethics panel at the University of South Wales (approval reference 230102LR) and built and disseminated through JISC Online Surveys. The survey was open for two weeks in February and March 2023 and circulated via the researcher and the Co-Ordinator of the National Music Service for Wales' networks and via social media (see flyer in Appendix 1).

Targeted invites were sent to all who participated in phases one and two, to every music service lead in Wales, and to the National Arts in Education Network ([RCCA & NAEN, 2023](#)). These stakeholders were asked to disseminate the survey further through their networks and services.

The findings were triangulated to understand the current landscape of training provision in Wales relating to working in music education with children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities, and to identify potential priorities for any future training developments.

Results and Discussion

Following an initial, general internet search, key stakeholders within the sector were directly approached to understand their practice and training offer. The outcome of both of these initial phases are summarised here. The findings revealed different levels of and approaches to training provision. It is of note that several of the same organisations approached during this phase of the research were highlighted as examples of best practice through the subsequent online survey, affirming their standing in the sector.

The stakeholder who discussed the most detailed training package, with potential to commission and access it beyond their organisation was [Live Music Now \(2023d\)](#).

Live Music Now

Live Music Now (LMN) kindly shared a detailed insight into their comprehensive training programme for musicians employed to practise in special schools: 'INSPIRE'.

"INSPIRE is a training programme for Live Music Now musicians, teachers and classroom staff working with children and young people with additional learning needs. It equips LMN musicians with the skills and experience necessary to support young people's musical development. It enables school staff to build confidence and skills in classroom music-making. The INSPIRE Framework underpins this approach, to ensure that sessions are young-person centred, engaging and relevant. It embeds the principles of [Sounds of Intent \(2023\)](#) to support children's musical progression. Since the programme launched in 2016, we have trained over 130 musicians, working in 70 schools with 1005 staff, and reaching 2,500 children and young people throughout the UK. We believe that every child, in every special school, should have the opportunity to benefit from high quality evidence-based music provision".

This programme has been delivered in 9-10 special schools in Wales in recent years. To date, this training has been shared beyond LMN to music service tutors in England and Music Education Hubs in South West England, with scope for a similar offer in Wales. It is estimated that a level 1, 3-day 'INSPIRE' project, led by an LMN mentor working with up to 4 music tutors would cost in the region of £2300. There is also potential for a more bespoke provision through further discussion.

LMN are also currently developing a training model in relation to working in music in Autism Resource Bases, led by Alex Lupo ([No Date, a](#); [No Date, b](#)), and hope to have a model to share in Wales by Summer 2024.

LMN are currently working in partnership with Cardiff and Vale Music Service to pilot the *Count Me In!* approach ([Live Music Now, 2023c](#)) in special schools in Wales in Summer 2023, with potential for development of a wider training package for this approach. LMN are also currently working in partnership with Powys County Council School Service and Gwynedd and Anglesey Music Service to deliver 'Musical Mondays' concerts, in person and online respectively through the medium of English and Welsh.

LMN are also developing a partnership with the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD) to improve training and opportunities relating to inclusive music practice, with connections to the new National Open Youth Orchestra opening at RWCMD in September 2023 ([RWCMD, 2023a](#); [National Open Youth Orchestra, 2023](#)).

There were a number of organisations who provided a thorough, targeted and evidence-based training package to develop their workforce, but this was not available publicly or outside the organisations' subscription model.

Open Up Music

[Open Up Music \(2023a\)](#) shared that they have a thorough and ongoing training and mentorship programme for their practitioners who deliver the Open Orchestra provision across the UK, with 55 Open Orchestras across special schools in England and Wales at present, making it the “biggest SEND and music training programme for ensembles in the UK”. This training is only currently available to subscribing orchestras and is not accredited.

There is also an internal induction programme for music leaders who deliver rehearsals for the National Open Youth Orchestras (NOYO), including the forthcoming Open Orchestra at Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD) ([National Open Youth Orchestra, 2023](#)). This training is also not accessible beyond the organisation at present.

Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD)

[Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama \(2023b\)](#) is the national conservatoire for Wales, offering opportunities to “focus on you and the musician you want to be; developing your skills as an individual, a collaborative artist and as a musician who will contribute to society.” Their music degrees include opportunities to develop instrumental teaching skills alongside performance skills, and so enable enrolled students to access training for future music education practice.

In collaboration with [National Open Youth Orchestra \(2023\)](#), RWCMD is launching Cardiff's National Open Youth Orchestra (NOYO) in September 2023, embedded within the Saturday Junior Conservatoire. This is an exciting development in two significant ways.

Firstly, it expands the potential for RWCMD students and graduates to learn how to deliver instrumental tuition to learners with more diverse needs, potentially opening up a different or additional career trajectory ([Pickard and Rushton, 2022](#)). Secondly, this provision nurtures a generation of disabled musicians who could be the teachers or role models of a subsequent generation of disabled and non-disabled musicians, informed by the provision and opportunities afforded by NOYO. This diversifies and enriches the music education workforce and provides opportunity for expertise through lived experience *and* subject experience to be valued.

RWCMD are eager to develop further training stemming from this collaboration, including creative opportunities and placements for RWCMD student composers and advanced student teachers, with NOYO mentorship and industry lines into professional placements with partner institutions and schools. Arts Management placements during the consultation period and with industry collaborators (e.g. [Ty Cerdd, 2023](#)) have already proved the worth and value of the work, and have identified potential and need.

These developments will shape the teaching practice of future graduates involved and potentially the wider culture of the institution too.

This training offer is currently available to RWCMD students, enrolled on undergraduate or postgraduate music programmes.

There were a number of organisations who provided a more responsive offer of training, often bespoke to the needs that arose within the workforce.

Welsh National Opera (WNO)

[Welsh National Opera \(2023\)](#) “offers a range of resources to support teachers and educators, as well as singing, music and digital workshops (...) in schools. Workshops are led by our professional opera singers, orchestral players and amateurs and can be tailored for your school or SEND [Special Educational Needs and/or Disability] needs from Key Stage 1 through to 4.” WNO provide training to their own facilitators who work in school settings and this has been from external freelance practitioners, such as Alex Lupo (Lupo, [No Date, a](#); [No Date, b](#)), Geth Tomos ([Cerdd Amdani, 2023](#)), partner schools and specific training providers like The Makaton Charity ([Makaton, 2023](#)).

WNO hasn't offered training externally or to the general freelance population to date. They recognise that there is a desire for this but have struggled to find training

opportunities with a relevant combination of musical training and training relevant to the context.

BBC National Orchestra of Wales (BBC NOW)

[BBC National Orchestra of Wales \(2023\)](#) offer schools visits from members of the orchestra to facilitate interactive concerts and activities with pupils of “all ages” and “all abilities”. Whereas BBC NOW used to organise specific concerts for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities, these opportunities are now being incorporated into the core concerts. They do however offer bespoke workshops to Special Schools to “cater to any specific needs more closely”.

BBC NOW provide training sessions to musicians working with learners with ALN and/or disabilities, with [Samantha Mason \(2021\)](#) running an online session for players most recently, and Geth Tomos ([Cerdd Amdani, 2023](#)) in the past. Their main initiative will be collaborating with RWCMD on the opening of the Cardiff NOYO Centre in September 2023.

Forget-Me-Not Productions

[Forget-Me-Not Productions \(2023a\)](#) are cited on their website as “leaders in inclusive arts, disability and assistive technology...specialis[ing] in working with people with complex physical and cognitive disabilities, using assistive technologies to make the arts accessible for all.” Their portfolio includes a range of art forms and delivery across the life span. There are masterclass opportunities for pupils as well as trainee practitioners, including in school, further and higher education. Workshops are delivered in educational contexts, including as part of the [Arts Council of Wales’ \(2020\)](#) Lead Creative Schools scheme ([Forget-Me-Not Productions, 2023b](#)). Information for case managers discusses training and collaborative working with opportunities for accredited outcomes for participants’ musical engagement ([Forget-Me-Not Productions, 2023c](#)).

A training offer for music practitioners is not discussed, but under ‘Information for Schools’, the following training is offered:

- Eyegaze assessment and advice for ongoing development,
- Switch access – when? how? what switch? how to go beyond cause and effect,
- Alternative mouse – training and advice on when to use a joystick/rollerball and how to teach the skill,
- From cause and effect to choice making and beyond,
- Use of sensory play to support learning,

- Training and advice in use of mobility platform and specialist controls for wheelchair driving including wheelchair driving training profile.

[\(Forget-Me-Not Productions, 2023d\)](#)

Other organisations specialised specifically in this field, but did not necessarily provide or discuss provision of training to others.

UCAN Productions

[UCAN Productions' \(No Date\)](#) music projects aim to reduce accessibility barriers for engaging with music technology, with the blind or visually impaired total beginner in mind. UCAN's practice also "goes a bit further than music i.e. creative use of sound, voice, speech, breathing, posture, microphones and recording to stimulate creativity and even personal development in our members". A number of projects are highlighted on [UCAN Productions' \(No Date\)](#) website to showcase their approach.

UCAN are interested in developing a training offer in the future, but this is not currently available.

Arts Active

[Arts Active \(2023\)](#) share online that they deliver inclusive music sessions to adults with learning disabilities and autism as part of their 'Soundworks' project. It is not known what training offer Arts Active provide to their practitioners and whether this could be transferrable to music education for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities.

Drake Music

[Drake Music \(No Date\)](#) noted that they currently work in two main areas: partnering with organisations who want to develop their inclusive practice and facilitating this through training, mentoring, conducting observations and setting up peer networks; and working with disabled musicians to develop the skills to become music leaders themselves. Neither is done through a formal training course or programme at present, and therefore is not accredited.

Drake Music are very receptive to conversations about developing the inclusivity of music education provision in Wales, as they have been through ongoing discussions with the Department for Education about the development of the National Plan for

Music Education in England.

Visible Music

[Visible Music \(No Date\)](#) deliver accredited units in recording and music to those with ALN in Special Schools in Wales, as well as after-school activities, and other music and sound-based projects. There are a range of examples of their rich practice on their website, but no discussion of training in their approach.

Another strand was that organisations might buy in the training of an experienced freelance practitioner with regards to facilitation in this area.

Alex Lupo

Alex Lupo ([No Date, a](#); [No Date, b](#)) was named by several organisations as an experienced and talented facilitator who has provided valuable training in the field of music education for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities. Alex has worked with Drake Music, Open Up Music and Live Music Now amongst others, as well as being a qualified music therapist, composer and performer.

Samantha Mason

[Samantha Mason \(2021\)](#) was cited by BBC NOW as a trainer, providing “hands on CPD training” for teachers, pupils and organisations. Samantha also leads a National Youth Orchestra Centre with Open Up Music. She has worked with several schools as visiting specialist and composer in residence, and has been the music specialist at Linwood School in Bournemouth for several years “working specifically with PMLD students and developing exciting and inclusive music opportunities across the school.”

Andy Pidcock

A well-known and highly regarded inclusive music practitioner in South Wales is [Andy Pidcock \(2023\)](#) who has worked across many mainstream and special education settings, and developed a wealth of online resources which are free to access. Andy has also collaborated heavily with BBC NOW in their inclusive concert series and while not currently practising, is a highly regarded colleague in this field.

Geth Tomos (Cerdd Amdani)

Geth Tomos ([Cerdd Amdani, 2023](#)) has also collaborated with WNO and BBC NOW and now practises as ‘Cerdd Amdani’, providing a range of specialist and whole

school CPD in music education through the medium of Welsh or English. Geth Tomos has experience and specialism in working with learners with ALN and/or disabilities and in providing training in this area to others.

Professor Adam Ockelford

Professor Adam Ockelford (2008, 2013, Forthcoming) is a pioneer of music education for children with ALN and/or disabilities, and his research and practice is cited through various initiatives across the sources informing this report. In particular, the Sounds of Intent framework of musical development (Welch *et al.*, 2009; [Sounds of Intent, 2023](#)), and the postgraduate degree in Sounds of Intent ([University of Roehampton, 2023](#)), discussed later in this report, are fundamental tools in developing inclusive music provision for learners with PMLD and/or complex needs across the UK.

There were some examples where an organisation had developed their provision in collaboration with a skilled individual within the service.

Swansea Music Service

Swansea Music Service have made a commitment to increasing the accessibility of their provision through investment in a portfolio of accessible instruments, promoted as the 'Music for All: ALN Music Packs'. Guided by a music specialist in one of their schools, Swansea Music Service provides access to the six sets of instruments to the 34 Specialist Teaching Facility (STF) Units and 2 Special Schools in Swansea on a half-termly, carousel basis. Rather than adaptive instruments such as those featured in the 'Guide to Buying Adaptive Instruments' ([Take It Away, 2022a](#)), these packs include kalimba, singing bowls, steel tongue drums, digital and electric drum kits, band jam ([Enabling Devices, 2023a](#)), music machine set ([Enabling Devices, 2023b](#)), mini carillon ([Enabling Devices, 2023c](#)), boom whackers, and other switch activated musical instruments and toys.

Discussion with the Head of the Swansea Music Service affirmed that an ongoing training programme on inclusive and effective engagement with the equipment will be integral to the sustainability of the project.

One organisation was in the process of scoping the potential to develop a mentoring programme to enable young people to develop their skills in this field with a view to establishing a career path.

It was exciting to learn from discussions with [National Youth Arts Wales \(2023\)](#) that they are scoping the potential of developing a pilot programme to offer opportunities for young adults aged 18-25 to learn more about facilitation skills, working musically in an ALN setting and pathways to music therapy work through a workshop and mentoring programme. This proposal was in its early stages, but there was strong resonance with its aspirations and the focus of this research.

There are also Welsh professional networks where practitioners and educators can connect and access informal training and professional development.

Anthem Cymru and Atsain Network

[Anthem Cymru \(No Date\)](#) is a Welsh music fund which supports young people in Wales “to make, learn and celebrate music, and to experience the life-changing benefits that brings. We support them, and those who work with them through funding, partnerships and initiatives.” Atsain Practice Network is a relatively new group that Anthem has set up specifically for organisations working with young people and music across Wales. Atsain Practice Network currently has approximately thirty members who meet quarterly for knowledge sharing, networking and to foster collaboration across the sector.

During the research for this study, Anthem Cymru’s Atsain Practice Network held an online meeting, focusing on ‘Making Projects Accessible’ ([Anthem Cymru, 2023](#)). Speakers included Rosey Brown from [Disability Arts Cymru \(2023\)](#); Jonny Cotsen ([Unlimited, No Date](#)), Deaf Artist, Performer and Storyteller; and Alex Rees from [UCAN Productions \(No Date\)](#). Discussion focused on the social model of disability, and acknowledging and addressing potential barriers faced in music practices.

Some organisations didn’t provide any specific or targeted training in this area, but their practitioners worked with pupils with ALN and/or disabilities regularly and readily.

Finally, some organisations provide training that could be relevant to music education for learners with ALN and/or disabilities, but is not explicitly focused on this topic. The importance of collaboration with partners involved in community music and other related practices is highlighted by the National Plan for Music Education in Wales.

Community Music Wales

Established in 1992, [Community Music Wales \(2023\)](#) offer a wide range of courses, workshops and continued professional development (CPD) opportunities. This includes a “five-day introduction to community music course”, a “16-week full course which can be tailored to a variety of arts settings including music and multi-arts sessions” as well as full or half day CPD sessions in a variety of disciplines, including a focus on “working with specific needs”, covering academic and practical principles of community music practice ([Community Music Wales, 2023](#)).

Further details were sought and kindly provided about the five-day ‘Introduction to Community Music’ course. While not explicitly about music education for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities, many of the principles and approaches discussed on the training are relevant in this field, including “empowerment”, “including everyone”, “how to vary activities and keep everyone engaged”, “coping with new challenges”, and “developing an understanding of the importance of adapting material to suit particular groups”.

Prices of training courses vary from £10 for a concession and £20 for a full price place on a one-day training, to £80 concession and £120 full price on a five-day training course. Marketing materials mention bursaries available, and bespoke provision can be developed ([Community Music Wales, 2023](#)).

Touch Trust

[Touch Trust \(No Date, a\)](#) is a charity providing “inclusive, creative, movement and multi-sensory sessions for adults and children with a variety of multi-sensory needs, learning disabilities and ASD”. While Touch Trust’s provision is not music education explicitly, it is delivered in schools and involves significant musical elements. Alongside accredited and non-accredited training, [Touch Trust \(No Date, b\)](#) also offer one-off CPD for organisations. Training offers on Touch Trust’s (2023b) website currently include:

- The Touch Trust Certificate Course,
- Bespoke CPD Sessions,
- Membership.

[\(Touch Trust, No date, b\)](#)

The Touch Trust Certificate Course includes two modules: ‘Principles for Movement Studies with Carers’ which is largely a theoretical module, and ‘Movement Studies for Carers’ which includes a focus on practice/placement. It is noted that the course “usually takes up to 1 year, with a maximum of 2 years if registered with Agored, to complete but this does depend on the individual learner. The training days are set dates, but the theory and practical side will be flexible around the individual”.

Course fees for the Touch Trust Certificate Course are listed as £650 per person, accredited by Agored Cymru with an additional cost of £100 per person. It is noted that the dates listed on the website are currently from 2021, so there may be revisions to details and costs.

Bespoke training is offered to organisations by negotiation. Membership enables accredited facilitators to lead Touch Trust sessions at a Provider Member setting.

Disability Arts Cymru

Disability Arts Cymru (2023) isn't currently actively involved in music education for disabled young people in Wales, but supports disabled musicians in Wales later in their careers and thus would be a very valuable partner and collaborator in understanding the lived experiences of disabled musicians in Wales.

As advocated by the recommendations in [Disability Arts Cymru's \(2020\) Report](#):

"A] Organisations need to centralise support and accessibility into the funding of opportunities for young artists. There needs to be clear dialogue with young disabled people to understand access needs, and ensure appropriate support is available and advertised at the point of disseminating information about activities. This will raise confidence amongst young disabled people and ensure accessibility is taken seriously by arts organisations.

B] Disabled people need to be embedded within such organisations, notably at positions of influence and authority. This will lead to a focus on improving accessibility and disabled people's participation. Disabled people are experts on inclusion and accessibility, and their contributions should be valued and included within the functioning and design of our arts-based organisations."

[\(Disability Arts Cymru, 2020\)](#)

While these points, made by young people attending a workshop around barriers identified in the arts audit, pertain to involvement of disabled/Deaf young people aged 16-30 across Wales in the arts; they are equally applicable to the development of accessible musical opportunities for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities through the National Plan for Music Education in Wales.

An important next step in this research will be to consult young people with ALN and/or disabilities to understand their experiences of music education.

Further organisations known to be working in the sector were contacted but are not listed here since responses were not received during the relatively brief time frame of the research.

Organisation	Training Offer	Who is it for?	Accredited?	Cost?
Live Music Now	'Inspire' programme for working in music in special education; <i>Count Me In!</i> training	LMN Practitioners; has been opened up to music service tutors in England and Music Education Hubs in South West England. Potential for bespoke commission.	No, but forms part of LMN internal training package	Varies; it is estimated that a level 1, 3-day 'INSPIRE' project, led by an LMN mentor working with up to 4 music tutors would cost in the region of £2300
Open Up Music	Training in Open Orchestras approach, facilitation and associated matters; National Open Youth Orchestra (NOYO) music leaders' induction	Open Orchestra and NOYO Practitioners	No	N/A
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama	Advanced teaching skills, collaboration with National Open Youth Orchestra (NOYO) and Open Up Music	RWCMD Students	Yes (undergraduate and postgraduate degree studies)	BMus(Hons) degree £9000 per year for 4 years full time from 2023 for UK students, MMus from £15,180 for 13 months intensive study to £12,570 per year for 2 years full time study
Welsh National Opera	Bespoke and responsive in relation to practitioner needs	WNO Practitioners	No	N/A

BBC National Orchestra for Wales	Bespoke and responsive in relation to practitioner needs	BBC NOW Practitioners	No	N/A
Forget-Me-Not Productions	MUSIC-CAN Framework; training on engaging with assistive technology	Targeted at schools and case managers	No	Not known
Samantha Mason	Hands on CPD training for teachers and pupils	Teachers, pupils, organisations	No	Varies
Alex Lupo	Training in accessible, inclusive music making, music technology	Teachers, pupils, organisations	No	Varies
Andy Pidcock	Website and musical resources	Classes, teachers, home learning, staff	No	Free to access, donations welcome
Geth Tomos / Cerdd Amdani	Whole school CPD, Expressive Arts staff training, rock school workshops, rhythm and samba workshops, confidence building for students and staff, Garage Band workshops, pop composition workshops	Pupils, teachers, organisations	No	Varies
Community Music Wales	Various, including Introduction to Community Music and bespoke CPD	Musicians with an interest in developing their practice and working with others	Yes (optional)	From £10 concession / £20 full price for a 2 day course to £80 concession

				/ £120 full price for a 5 day training
Touch Trust	Touch Trust Certificate Course, Bespoke CPD, Membership	Those caring in the disability sector, have an interest in creative arts or have a passion for supporting and empowering others who are multi-sensory learners	Yes (optional)	From £650 per participant for Touch Trust Certificate Course (but website costs from 2021 so may need to be updated)

Table 1 – Outcomes of General Internet Search and Discussions with Practitioners and Organisations Working Musically with Children and Young People with ALN and/or Disabilities in Wales

Online Survey Results

The final strand of the study was an online survey circulated through the National Music Service Co-Ordinator's and the researcher's networks, and publicly through social media. The call out for participants is available in Appendix 1 and the full survey questions are available in Appendix 2.

Sample: demographic, practice, training experiences

The survey was completed by 31 participants over the two-week period. While this is clearly not representative or generalisable due to the small sample size, the findings are a useful insight into practitioners' perspectives and experiences. The nature of the sample was potentially impacted by the dissemination of the invite, with eight (26%) responses from those in senior and/or leadership roles, including 'Head of Service', 'Headteacher' or 'Director' of organisations. It is possible that these responses are representative of the training provided to and available to their respective organisations, but this is only speculative and cannot be known for certain.

17 of the 31 respondents (55%) noted that they had not engaged in any training pertaining to music provision for learners with ALN and/or disabilities. When asked if there were any clear reasons for not engaging in such training, 15 out of the 17 respondents (88%) noted that they either weren't offered or didn't know of any such opportunity. One respondent cited financial barriers to accessing training in addition, and two respondents noted that they had ample professional and lived experience and thus didn't pursue further training. While this is a small sample, there feels to be a strong theme here that a lack of training experience equates with a lack of access to training opportunities in this field.

Those who had accessed training (14 of the 31 respondents, or 45% of the sample) cited some of the opportunities listed above, including Live Music Now, Sounds of Intent online tutorials, Soundabout, Community Music Wales and the National Music Service for Wales training event. Some non-musical trainings were mentioned, such as training from the [National Autistic Society \(NAS\) \(2023\)](#), but the respondent noted that this hadn't felt particularly relevant to their music practice or experience of autistic participants.

University studies were mentioned by 6 participants (19%): three citing an MA Music Therapy, one a Masters including Music Psychology, one the PGCE at UWIC (now Cardiff Met), and one the BA(Hons) Creative and Therapeutic Arts at the University of Sout Wales (music pathway no longer active). Several respondents also referenced more informal, online CPD, often completed during the Covid-19 pandemic, but rarely naming any specific course, focus or provider.

Barriers to Accessible Provision

When asked what barriers respondents perceived that children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities may face in accessing musical provision or instrumental tuition, there were some overarching themes in the responses.

Attitudes and Assumptions

There was a definite theme throughout the responses which recognised that one of the primary barriers to accessing musical opportunities are the attitudes, beliefs and assumptions of those designing, developing and providing the musical opportunities. This is a widely recognised dimension of the social model of disability, which acknowledges that often societal attitudes are more disabling than an individual impairment (Goodley, 2017).

Some of the phrases included: “fears, ignorance”, “low expectations”, “attitudes of others”, “ill-formed perceptions”, and an assumption that music provision is “fairly high-brow” and only accessible to those who are “academic or gifted”. Other responses identified that there is often a deficit-based mindset when considering the potential of musical provision for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities and that the emphasis is wrongly on the young person’s impairment and an inaccurate assumption about what they will or won’t be able to access or succeed at. A number of respondents reflected on a “seeming unwillingness of some teachers to accept anything other than the ‘traditional’ way of teaching/learning and ignoring needs being communicated” as well as an “obsession with exams”.

This collection of responses indicate that within the sample, there is a recognition of positions which are unhelpful in advocating for musical opportunities for learners with ALN and/or disabilities, as well as a cohort of practitioners with strength-based perspectives and a readiness to develop accessible provision.

Barriers inherent in ‘mainstream’ provision

A second theme which was quite prevalent was recognition of ways in which “mainstream” (respondents’ word) provision was not accessible to children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities. This included stating this fact, as well as multiple respondents identifying “sensory” barriers within music provision. This echoes the findings of the [Anthem and Youth Music \(2020\)](#) report strongly. Some respondents recognised that a ‘mainstream’ approach is “too regimented” and doesn’t allow the time needed for pupils with ALN and/or disabilities to engage in a meaningful way. Another respondent identified that for provision to be accessible it “needs to cater to individual needs”, which is a suggestion that this often wasn’t possible within a ‘mainstream’ offer.

One respondent mentioned that “as pupils are often unable to be part of the mainstream group, financial difficulties due to extra time requirement”. It is unclear whether the financial burden is considered in relation to the pupil, the service/provider, or both.

Several respondents mentioned “time”, “access to instruments” or “adaptive instruments”, and “accessible spaces” as barriers for young people with ALN and/or disabilities to access musical opportunities, echoing the findings of the [Disability Arts Cymru \(2020\)](#) report, the Make Some Noise Research [\(Take It Away, 2022b\)](#) and [Youth Music’s \(2020\)](#) Reshape Music Report.

The most repeated word was “time”, indicating that this is a true shared experience for participants. Further research is needed to understand the exact connotation of this word here. For example, whether there is not flexibility of timetable to adapt provision to pupils’ optimum session duration, whether there is not time to get to know pupils and understand their access needs, whether there is not enough time to develop practitioners’ practice and resources, or another application of the word “time”. This seems to pertain to the “mainstream” or current offer, and calls for flexibility and innovation to reconceptualise how effective and inclusive musical provision could be offered.

Progression Pathways

A definite theme in a cluster of responses was either a lack of awareness of or an actual lack of progression pathways for musicians with ALN and/or disabilities. One respondent recognised a lack of progression following music therapy provision and how pupils might commence instrumental tuition from that position. Other respondents identified “pathways for success” and “different ways of assessing progress”. These are tangible concepts which there are some resources and schemes available for, but also this is a clear area of practice which could be developed, in Wales specifically. Two respondents mentioned progression in musical opportunities beyond the remit of the National Music Service and into adulthood too, which is a valid and important point.

This theme is particularly timely as Professor Adam Ockelford (Forthcoming) is developing a series of resources to accompany the recently announced [Trinity College London \(2022\)](#) accreditation pathway aligned with the Sounds of Intent framework of musical development (Welch *et al.*, 2009; [Sounds of Intent, 2023](#)). While this progression pathway has only recently been launched, there is significant potential for this scheme to address the gap identified by respondents in relation to assessment and progression for musicians with ALN and/or disabilities, as well as potential for engagement with this scheme to vivify and transform how the musical potential of learners with ALN and/or disabilities is understood in Wales.

Necessary Skills and Training

The final theme identified a range of ways in which the necessary skills and/or training were not available to facilitate accessible provision. One respondent identified this at the level of the service, suggesting that the “service needs to adapt”. Another identified the challenge at the level of engaging with schools: “getting the provision into schools”. Others recognised a gap in availability of practitioners able to offer accessible provision: “shortage of trained staff... specialist input” and “lack of experience”. Finally, some respondents recognised the need for further training and resources to be available: “resources and support for staff” and “visibility of tutor training rarely seen”.

Again, this is a viable and concrete recommendation from this study, and mirrors the findings of the earlier phases of this research. There appears to be a lack of training available for practitioners and services eager to develop the inclusivity of their music provision for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities.

Priorities for any Future Training

Since the intended focus of this scoping study was to determine the current training landscape with a view to understanding the potential for development of any future training, respondents were asked what their priority would be for any future training in this area, from the National Music Service for Wales. There were six themes in the rich data submitted in response to this question, which is arguably the crux of the survey.

Social Model of Disability, Reframing Emphasis

Firstly, there were several responses which agreed that training should be informed by the social model of disability and include awareness of the experience of disabled people in an ableist society. Several respondents suggested an emphasis in training on “understanding individual needs”, “rethinking what ‘achievement’ means”, and “recognition of the pupil as an individual with a voice (...) often perceive their needs have not been identified/seen and they have not been listened to”. This was the focus of the Atsain Practice Network Meeting ([Anthem Cymru, 2023](#)) with a particularly informative presentation from [Disability Arts Cymru \(2023\)](#), and is at the heart of [Drake Music's \(No Date, a\)](#) philosophy.

Knowledge and Understanding

Following on from this, several respondents were eager to access further information

and insight into “how different people learn”, “neurodiversity needs”, “overview of difficulties to consider” and “more of an understanding of ASD and ADHD”. Prior to the training that the researcher delivered for the National Music Service in January 2023, it was identified anecdotally that this is often what practitioners seek in order to inform and advance their inclusive practice. This is not unanticipated since many practitioners may have little if any lived experience of engaging and collaborating with disabled people. However, there is a danger in training which centres around these ideas to perpetuate pathologising tendencies and avoid considering the inclusivity of the offer:

“‘Inclusive’ strategies based around specific impairments are offered [see Jaquiss and Paterson, 2005, for a musical example] that create problematic representations of disability and [music] education. Seemingly pragmatic solutions can promote assumptions about the role and nature of [music] education and appear to reinforce totalising attitudes toward disability... The focus is on provision for the ‘practical problem’ of the disabled learner, and future teachers are rarely challenged to consider the politics of disablement inherent in contemporary curricular, pedagogy and assessment practices.”

(Penketh, 2016, p. 133)

While lack of experience and knowledge can correlate with a lack of confidence and perceived skills, a training programme which took a pathologising approach could further segregate and specialise music provision children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities, and an opportunity would be missed to transform how diversity is understood and valued, with potential to vivify and enrich provision. As [Bell \(2014\)](#) suggests:

“In a music education context, when a barrier is encountered, rather than focusing on what is ‘wrong’ with the individual, we should be accountable for what is wrong with the situation.”

(Bell, 2014, p. 344)

Practical, Tangible Training Requests

A further series of responses were much more direct and practical in nature, and identified specific elements that would be beneficial to include in a training offer. These included “Clarion training” ([Open Up Music, 2023b](#)), “benefits of technology”, “creative use of technology and exploration of its accessibility”, “an audit of music technology” and “adaptive instruments”. These are aspects that can be readily developed and the impetus for them is apparent.

Another respondent suggested that content about “adapting repertoire and teaching methods” would be valuable, while another mentioned “different approaches and resources”. Content about universal design for learning (Rose, Meyer and Hitchcock, 2006) and a critical discussion about differentiation could be useful vehicles for

exploring these ideas. One respondent suggested “specific training on [making] specific instruments [accessible]” would be useful, however perhaps the aforementioned approach of introducing the principles of universal design for learning could facilitate meaningful adaptation to various instruments according to the pupil’s access requirements, rather than a more prescriptive offer.

It is also relevant to mention [Bell et al. \(2020\)](#)’s discussion of “hacking” in music education, and the notion that there will be necessary, reactive adaptations which can’t be anticipated in complex, nuanced musical interactions. Awareness of this practice and the necessity for flexibility and creativity in collaboration with disabled musicians could be a valuable contribution to training.

In terms of the style of training, a useful comment suggested that “show and *do*” training with a heavy practical component would be more impactful than “a traditional show and *tell*.”

Increasingly Holistic Understanding of Music’s Potential

The next theme included several contributions which recognised the potential that music has to offer all pupils beyond a career choice or the skill of playing an instrument. In this theme, respondents suggested that “ideas to communicate through music with those who are non-verbal”, “using music as expression”, “wider approach than instrumental provision” and valuing a “sense of achievement” were important considerations. One respondent felt that there should be an emphasis on “participation over attainment of outcomes”, reflected in the National Plan for Music Education in Wales’ [\(Welsh Government, 2022\)](#) ‘Improving Equity, Diversity and Inclusion’ programme of work which proposes:

“We want young people to have authentic, purposeful and rich experiences, but the core should be about the joy of music in whatever form without the pressure of having to get better.”

[\(Welsh Government, 2022, p. 21\)](#)

Another respondent felt that there should be support for music as a hobby or for its impact on wellbeing as much as a career choice. A further respondent suggested that “benefits to mental health and wellbeing” should be recognised and central in any training offer.

This is reflected in the National Plan for Music Education in Wales and its emphasis on improving health and well-being through music as well as the distinction between ‘First Experiences’ and ‘Live Music Experiences’ programmes providing opportunities to “play, sing, take part in, create or experience the joy of music-making and live music performance”, whereas the ‘Music Tuition’ and ‘Music Pathways’ programmes support those “wishing to pursue study of a musical instrument or singing to progress

along the learning continuum, in developing complexity, control, depth and independence in musical understanding” ([Welsh Government, 2022, p. 11](#)).

There was also a contribution which recognised that it is important that there are opportunities for “lessons for all” and that “it is not simply music therapy that is offered because music education is quite different”. This distinction is indeed imperative to understand and maintain, and anecdotally, it appears there is some misunderstanding about this across the sector. Increased clarification on this in the revised National Plan for Music Education in England ([HM Government, 2022](#)) is helpful:

“Teachers in special schools should also be clear about the distinct forms and benefits of music education and music therapy. Both can support children with SEND, but schools should be clear about the differences. Children in specialist SEND settings should not miss out on an accessible provision of curriculum music.”

([HM Government, 2022, p. 45](#))

Recognising Good Practice and Opportunities for Growth

In this theme, several respondents were eager to “discover good practice” and to see a “spotlight on good practice across contexts”. Multiple respondents suggested that this should be achieved through a training offer that collaborates with sector leading organisations, such as Open Up Music and Drake Music. It is interesting to note that there is clear awareness and respect for the impact of these organisations’ provision, although it is not currently possible to train with them aside from as a member of their organisation. Another respondent advocated “us[ing] experienced practitioners in SEN [Special Educational Needs]” to develop and deliver training: celebrating the good practice already established. This notion of collaboration felt important with an aspiration to extend the reach of impactful philosophy and practice further into music education and music services.

Multiple respondents noted that these opportunities to engage with good practice would “increase teacher confidence”, which is identified in the literature as a key determinant of the likelihood and success of providing inclusive provision (Salvador, 2010; Van Weelden and Whipple, 2014; Hammel & Hourigan, 2017; Pickard and Rushton, 2022). There were some detailed suggestions of what a package could involve, such as:

“A developmental pathway from immersion, to further development, higher skills and ensemble training, all linked to external partners like Live Music Now and Open Up Music.”

(Survey Respondent)

This desire for collaboration with industry leaders is reflected in the National Plan for Music Education in Wales ([Welsh Government, 2022, p. 22](#)) which advocates “developing partnerships with music organisations from across the UK and beyond, to broaden horizons for the children and young people of Wales in relation to understanding the diverse range of music”.

Positioning of Training Offer

An aspect which did *not* receive a consensus was the positioning of a training offer. This may again reflect the recruitment strategy of the survey, which saw freelance practitioners, school teachers, instrumental tutors and those in management positions within and beyond music services responding.

Some respondents felt that training on “special school engagement” was a priority, while others felt “inclusive practice for whole class teaching music in primaries” was the priority. Several respondents agreed that any such training should be “general training for all, not a separate option” and that “all teachers should receive training”:

“Training for all staff, thereby encouraging all staff to see inclusion as part of their responsibility – not just that of a few with special expertise.”

(Survey Respondent)

Conversely others felt that there should be a programme of musical development and associated training aimed firmly at children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities, with “specific training for specific roles”. This debate reflects a discussion point in [Kivijärvi and Rautiainen’s \(2021\)](#) recent publication, which advocates for:

“Mov[ing] the conversation beyond special and inclusive music education, and aims for music educators to become better-skilled at how they gear their teaching towards equity.”

([Kivijärvi and Rautiainen, 2021, p. 92](#))

Several contributions reflected on the potential and positioning of any training offered by the National Music Service for Wales, with numerous responses valuing the opportunity for a “pan Wales approach to training and guidance”. Others recognised the potential for the National Music Service for Wales “to develop benchmarks for good practice”, with a priority to develop “adequate training and specific resources” to support this.

“Encouraging to see this as a central component of future planning for the NMS in Wales”.

(Survey Respondent)

National and International Examples

Since the training provision around music education for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities in Wales was relatively sparse, some highly regarded and recognised national training opportunities in the field are highlighted here. It is important to note that a thorough and exhaustive search of all opportunities was beyond the scope of this study, so these opportunities are largely ones known to the researcher or mentioned during this study.

University of Roehampton, 'Music and Children with Special Needs: Sounds of Intent'

The [University of Roehampton \(2023\)](#) offers an “internationally unique” postgraduate degree entitled 'Music and Children with Special Needs: Sounds of Intent'.

Developed and delivered by Professor Adam Ockelford, this part time, one year, 60 credit masters level course includes three modules which are both theoretical and practical: exploring, understanding and applying the Sounds of Intent (Welch *et al.*, 2009; [Sounds of Intent, 2023](#)) model:

“Music and Children with Special Needs: Sounds of Intent offers students an introduction to the framework of musical development for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). At the same time, the 'Sounds of Intent' programme offers professional development for music practitioners interested in working with children with learning difficulties. The idea of reflective practice lies at the heart of this innovative course.”

[\(University of Roehampton, 2023\)](#)

The course can be taught face to face or entirely online and lasts one year. The 2023 fees are listed as £2500 ([University of Roehampton, 2023](#)). Live Music Now recognise the relevance of this approach and qualification to their practitioners, and have funded six practitioners to study this programme, although none in Wales, to date.

Soundabout

[Soundabout \(2023b\)](#) is a national charity who provide “unique in-classroom training” to schools to support the specific needs of those working with participants with ALN. Soundabout's wider provision includes community sessions for children, young people and adults, as well as inclusive choir programmes. During the development of this scoping study, [Soundabout \(2023c\)](#) also released an online training offer, which includes a library of short “ready-to-go” training courses.

Module topics include:

- Simple Soundabout Techniques for Home or the Classroom,
- First Steps for Using Ukulele for SEN Music Making,
- SEN Music in the Early Years,
- The PMLD Band,
- Introduction to Using Resonance Boards,
- How to Use the Soundabout Family Resources.

[\(Soundabout, 2023c\)](#)

Each topic includes 4-6 “bite sized” course modules, with option to purchase a course module for £10 or a whole course for £30. There are also Soundabout Training Membership options [\(Soundabout, 2023d\)](#), ranging from £75 for individual membership for 12 months’ access to £500 for organisations with 20+ paid staff for 12 months’ access.

Spitalfields Music

[Spitalfields Music \(No Date, a\)](#) “place artists at the heart of our work and are committed to nurturing their boldest and most insightful work.” Of particular relevance to this research is their Trainee Music Leader Scheme: a “6-month long training programme for emerging music leaders to develop their skills in learning and community settings through practical experience, mentoring and training”. This programme is a “paid, practical training programme for musicians of all genres who are passionate about creative music making in community settings”. Spitalfields Music work with national partners [Britten Pears Arts \(2021\)](#), [Orchestras Live \(2023\)](#) and [Southbank Sinfonia \(2023\)](#) to recruit trainees from across the UK.

[Spitalfields Music \(No Date, b\)](#) also facilitate the Skills Lab Academy which is a “four-day training course for musicians wishing to hone their skills to work in a range of community settings”. Prices are £55 per day for individuals/freelancers and £95 per day for people supported to attend by organisations. This year’s sessions focused on making music in a criminal justice setting, music-making with others, music inspired by place, and youth voice.

MAC Makes Music

[MAC Makes Music \(2023a\)](#) is “an award-winning programme providing innovative music making opportunities for children and young people with limited access to music provision”. They support “five music education hubs to increase and embed inclusive practice into their offer”, “reflect on inclusive practice across the sector” and have focused “a significant amount of time and energy on devising resources and materials for dissemination to young people and the groups that support them to

ensure that music support and opportunities are offered to all”. There are case examples from different music hubs available on MAC Makes Music’s website, which could be valuable models to explore in informing developments within the National Music Service for Wales.

Further, [MAC Makes Music’s \(2023b\)](#) ‘Training & Networking’ page serves as an excellent repository of forthcoming events and courses, including several events with Dr. Phil Mullen ([MAC Makes Music, 2023c](#); Mullen, 2021), and supporting resources, such as top tips on inclusive music practice with primary aged young people ([MAC Makes Music, 2023d](#)).

Dr. Phill Mullen’s courses are accessible as forthcoming events ([MAC Makes Music, 2023c](#)) or recordings of past seminars. Online seminars are priced at £21.50 for a full day’s training.

“Moving Forward with Inclusive Practice is a set of online training days facilitated by Dr Phil Mullen, a leading expert in musical inclusion. Each session will build on ideas introduced in his Social, Emotional and Mental Health training, and delve deeper into areas of inclusive music practice explored in his recent publication, ‘Challenging Voices’.”

([MAC Makes Music, 2023c](#))

Audiovisability

[Audiovisability’s \(No Date\)](#) website suggests that they “provide insight and training into the world of music and musical forms, opening avenues to music practice so far denied to deaf communities and deaf children”. Audiovisability’s Artistic Director, [Ruth Montgomery \(2023\)](#), was mentioned in discussions around music education for learners with ALN and/or disabilities in Wales, having trained at RWCMD.

Music Mark

[Music Mark \(2023\)](#) are a membership organisation, subject association and charity within the music sector. Their Training and Events pages list a wealth of training opportunities across the UK, including in this field.

Organisation	Training Offer	Who is it for?	Accredited?	Cost?
University of Roehampton	One year, part time postgraduate degree in 'Music and Children with Special Needs: Sounds of Intent'	The Sounds of Intent qualification will support those seeking work in special schools, or with pupils/students with special educational needs/disabilities, and community music contexts	Yes	£2500
Soundabout	In-Classroom Training in Schools; Online video series (full package through membership option or can purchase courses or course modules)	Online training aimed at parents, support staff and school teams	No	Online training: From £10 for one course module to £30 for one course; or training membership options from £75 for individual membership for 12 months' access to £500 for organisations with 20+ paid staff for 12 months' access
Spitalfields Music	Skills Lab Academy (four day training course); Trainee Music Leader Scheme (12 month programme)	Musicians looking to develop their skills in community contexts	No	Skills Lab Academy: £55 per day for individuals/freelancers and £95 for people supported to attend by organisations; Trainee Music Leader Scheme: paid (fee not noted)
MAC Makes Music	Online resources; seminar series with Dr. Phil Mullen	Musicians, music students, teachers, community musicians, and other professionals who have an interest in working with these young people	No	£21.50 per online seminar (10.00am-5.00pm)

Table 2 – Selection of Training Opportunities for Those Working Musically with Children and Young People with ALN and/or Disabilities Across the UK

Conclusion and Recommendations

In combining the findings from the three phases of this scoping study, it is apparent that there is a lack of widely available training opportunities in the field of music education for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities in Wales. Several organisations have developed highly regarded training packages for their practitioners, but few of these are accessible beyond the organisation or subscription model.

Through the online survey, one of the most prominent shared points was the desire for the opportunity to be taken to develop a “pan-Wales approach” with the opportunity for a “national offer”, “national guidance” and “national benchmarks” through the National Music Service for Wales. The online survey respondents as well as practitioners, employers and organisations in the field recognised the absence of and desire for evidence-based training in this area.

At this early stage in the development of the National Plan for Music Education in Wales ([Welsh Government, 2022](#)), it is relevant to note that the second iteration of the National Plan for Music Education in England ([HM Government, 2022](#)) has been launched. In relation to the focus on inclusivity of provision and accessibility to children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities, the revised National Plan for Music Education in England ([HM Government, 2022](#)) has developed this dimension of its philosophy significantly ([Stanley, 2022](#)). This is partially due to the important work of the Inclusive Music Consortium Partners, including [Creative United \(2022\)](#), [The OHMI Trust \(2023\)](#), [Open Up Music \(2023a\)](#), [Youth Music \(2023\)](#), [Drake Music \(No Date\)](#) and [Music for Youth \(2023\)](#), who consult with the Department for Education regularly. It is also recognised that in developing the National Plan for Music Education in England, disabled musicians were heavily consulted and enabled to contribute. This is an area with potential for development in the National Plan for Music Education in Wales.

Following an historically deficit-oriented evidence-base, a new generation of strength-based approaches and resources are emerging in the field of music education for children and young people (and adults) with ALN and/or disabilities. The development of [Trinity College London's \(2022\)](#) new accreditation pathway for learners with additional and/or complex needs and/or disabilities using the Sounds of Intent framework (Welch *et al.*, 2009; [Sounds of Intent, 2023](#)) is a timely and significant milestone in the sector which could be an excellent vehicle for developing this aspect of the National Music Service for Wales' provision. Connecting with the international literature on inclusive music education, there is a need for music education in Wales, as elsewhere, to “transform its professional discourses to fully address the issues of inclusion and diversity” ([Laes and Westerlund, 2018, p. 35](#)), “mov[ing] the conversation beyond special and inclusive music education, and aim[ing] for music educators to become better-skilled at how they gear their teaching towards equity” ([Kivijärvi and Rautiainen, 2021, p. 92](#)).

Recommendations from this scoping study are to:

- Collaborate with young musicians with ALN and/or young disabled musicians to understand their experiences of music education at present.
- Collaborate with disabled musicians and disabled-led organisations to foster their expertise and insight to inform future developments in the sector.
- Provide education on and raise awareness of the distinction between music therapy and music education for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities, affirming the importance of children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities' right to access music *education*.
- Highlight, celebrate and disseminate examples of good practice in the field, learning from sector leading organisations and considering how approaches can be shared to benefit more young people.
- Develop the knowledge, skills and confidence of *all* practitioners to work in music education with children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities. This should be wider than provision of adapted instruments alone.

There is a gap in any training provision in this field in Wales, whether short term, long term, accredited or not. This gap could be addressed by the National Music Service for Wales through the development of training opportunities.

- Any training provision developed in this field should:
 - Be developed with and delivered by disabled musicians and disabled-led organisations,
 - Take a strength-based approach to music education for children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities,
 - Avoid the continued pathologising of disabled people,
 - Seek to nurture a culture shift to valuing young disabled people's music, experiences and expertise through understanding the social and interactional models of disability.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Call out for participants,

Appendix 2 – Full online survey questions.



Gwasanaeth Cerdd
Cenedlaethol Cymru
National Music
Service Wales

Holiadur ymchwil i ddeall y tirwedd presennol o Ddatblygu a Darparu Addysg Gerddorol a Hyfforddiant Offerynnol i Ddysgwyr ag Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol (ADY) ac/neu Anableddau yng Nghymru

A ydych chi'n ymarferydd / athro / addysgwr / tiwtor sy'n darparu addysg gerddorol a/neu hyfforddiant offerynnol i ddysgwyr ag Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol (ADY) ac/neu anableddau yng Nghymru?

Os felly, byddem yn croesawu eich cyfraniadau i'r arolwg byr ar-lein hwn a fydd yn llywio datblygiad darpariaeth y Gwasanaeth Cerddoriaeth Genedlaethol ar gyfer dysgwyr ag ADY a/neu anableddau.

Mae gennym ddiddordeb clywed gan ymarferwyr / athrawon / addysgwyr / tiwtoriaid, p'un a ydynt yn gweithio i ysgol, coleg, gwasanaeth cerdd, elusen, neu sefydliad arall neu mewn capasiti llawrydd/hunan-gyflogedig.

Ni ddylai'r arolwg ar-lein gymryd mwy na deng munud i'w gwblhau a gellir ei gyrchu drwy'r linc canlynol:

southwales.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/a-scoping-survey-into-the-current-landscape-of-developing

Bydd yr arolwg ar agor tan 11.59pm nos fawrth 28ain Chwefror 2023.

Os oes gennych unrhyw gwestiynau am yr ymchwil, cysylltwch â'r ymchwilydd:

Dr. Beth Pickard
beth.pickard@southwales.ac.uk

A Scoping Survey into the Current Landscape of Developing and Providing Music Education and Instrumental Tuition for Learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and/or Disabilities in Wales

Are you a practitioner / teacher / educator / tutor providing music education and/or instrumental tuition to learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and/or disabilities in Wales?

If so, we would welcome your contributions to this short online survey which will inform the development of the National Music Service's provision for learners with ALN and/or disabilities.

We are interested to hear from practitioners / teachers / educators / tutors, whether they are working for a school, college, music service, charity, or other organisation or in a freelance/self employed capacity.

The online survey should take no more than ten minutes to complete and can be accessed via the following hyperlink:

southwales.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/a-scoping-survey-into-the-current-landscape-of-developing

The survey will be open until 11.59pm on Tuesday 28th February 2023.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact the researcher:

Dr. Beth Pickard
beth.pickard@southwales.ac.uk

www.gwasanaethcerdd.cymru
www.musicervice.wales

Appendix 2 – Full online survey questions.

1. In which context do you work/practice (please tick all that apply):

- ☐ Mainstream primary school,
- ☐ Mainstream secondary school,
- ☐ Special primary school,
- ☐ Special secondary school,
- ☐ Pupil referral unit,
- ☐ Community centre,
- ☐ Private music school,
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

2. How would you describe your role/roles (please tick all that apply)?

- ☐ School teacher,
- ☐ Music tutor in music service,
- ☐ Music tutor/teacher in private practice,
- ☐ Freelance/self employed music practitioner,
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

3. What instruments do you teach to learners with ALN (please tick all that apply):

- ☐ Piano/keyboard,
- ☐ Voice,
- ☐ Strings (violin, viola, cello, double bass),
- ☐ Guitar / bass guitar,
- ☐ Brass,
- ☐ Woodwind,
- ☐ Percussion,
- ☐ Music technology/digital instruments,
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

4. A) Have you ever engaged in any training relating to music and additional learning needs?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

B) If yes, please tell us what this was (topic, training provider) and your experience of it.

C) If no, are there any reasons that you have not engaged in any training relating to music and additional learning needs to date?

5. How would you describe your approach to music education/instrumental tuition for learners with additional learning needs?
6. Have you explored any of the following in your practice (please tick all that apply)?
 - ☐ Alternative notation,
 - ☐ Adapted instruments,
 - ☐ Adaptation of music space/room e.g. lighting, different space,
 - ☐ Adaptation to your pedagogical approach,
 - ☐ Different repertoire,
 - ☐ Research and literature about music education/instrumental tuition for learners with ALN.
7. Are there specific elements which you would appreciate training opportunities about? If so, tell us about these.
8. What do you think should be priorities for a training provision through the National Plan for Music Education about music education for learners with additional learning needs?
9. Do you perceive that there are any barriers for learners with additional learning needs to engage with music education or instrumental tuition?
10. Is there anything else you would like the researcher to consider in relation to developing the National Plan for Music Education's provision for music education and instrumental tuition for learners with ALN?
11. If you would like to be contacted about participating in a working group with the National Plan for Music Education on this topic, or to contribute to future developments, please include your email here (OPTIONAL):