



**Do, Review, Improve...**  
**A quality framework for use in music-making sessions**  
**working with Disabled young people**

**Youth Music with additional content by Drake Music**

## What is the quality framework?

A quality framework is a tool to help you understand, measure and evaluate quality in your work. Youth Music's quality framework – *Do, Review, Improve* - gathers together all the criteria we believe demonstrate quality in a music-making session. It's based on evidence we've been gathering from the projects we've supported since we began in 1999. The framework has been designed to promote a common understanding of quality, to provide the language to explain it, and to help individuals and organisations improve their professional practice.

We ask all organisations funded by Youth Music to use *Do, Review, Improve* to reflect on their practice. We ask anyone applying to us for funding to show how they would build it into their project. However, it's not just for those holding Youth Music grants: the quality framework can be used by anyone leading a music-making session for children and young people.

You can use *Do, Review, Improve* for planning, peer observation or self-reflection. It's not intended to be a test, and you don't need to score yourself or rank yourself against others. Instead, the quality framework is designed to help you think about your practice and the principles behind it, and to identify areas you may wish to develop.

## Updated and improved

The Quality Framework was first published in 2014. In the revised edition, we have sought to create a document that is easier for practitioners to use. Following feedback from grantholders, as well as consultation with academics, project managers and musicleaders, we have reduced and simplified the criteria. We have also added a section that outlines the important responsibilities of organisations when managing a music-making project. These include safeguarding, contracting, pastoral support and programme planning.

## Why have we created a new version for projects working disabled young people?

Youth Music's quality framework is flexible and can be used for any kind of music-making project. However, the criteria might look different in different kinds of settings.

Youth Music believes in the social model of disability, which states that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment. This version of the quality framework aims to support practitioners working with disabled young people by offering additional information to help remove participatory barriers, as well as exemplifying best practice.

This version of the quality framework was developing in partnership with Drake Music, one of Youth Music's strategic partners. They're experts in inclusive music delivery and using technology to break down barriers to music-making.

## Using the framework

The framework is intended for session planning, observing the face-to-face interaction between young people and a music leader, and reflecting afterwards. Having said this, sessions don't usually take place in isolation, and the evidence for some criteria may emerge over a number of sessions. In these instances a wider and ongoing conversation with the music leader may be necessary.

We encourage you to use the Quality Framework in a way that's appropriate to the capacity and starting point of your organisations or project. Examples of how organisations have used Do, Review, Improve include:

- For planning and termly reflection sessions among the music leader team
- For peer observations between music leaders
- To observe the music leader team to prioritise workforce training needs
- As part of training and induction for music leaders
- To help identify professional development needs in appraisals or supervision
- As a source of evidence for workforce outcomes

## Glossary

**Music leader** – the person leading the music-making activities.

**Project staff** – this refers to the adults who are involved in leading or supporting the project and could include: project managers, youth workers, pastoral support staff, supporting music leaders, trainee music leaders and volunteers.

**Young people** – the participants in the activities, aged between 0-25.

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

**Activities** – this refers to the task or process the young people will be undertaking in the session (what they will do).

**Learning outcome(s)** – the skills, knowledge or understanding that will be gained or enhanced from the session. Activities should be planned to enable the young people to achieve the learning outcomes.

## Part 1: Organisational responsibilities criteria

### Health and safety of all

**H1** Appropriate Health and Safety policies and procedures are in place

**H2** A Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is in place to protect the welfare of young people and staff (including conducting [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) checks).

### Contracting and support for music leaders

**C1** Contracts include time for structured reflection and evaluation activities with key staff or volunteers involved in planning and delivery.

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**Drake Music:** *Many music leaders who work with Disabled young people can feel professionally isolated at times. Meeting up face-to-face or connecting online with other colleagues is a great way to share ideas, issues and experiences and be reassured that 'I'm not the only one out there!'*

**Example:** *A music charity hosts a weekly chat looking at key issues in the world of music education, running on Twitter. They decide to highlight examples of effective inclusive practice, and invite an experienced music leader to host it and to lead the conversations. Because it's online and lasts only an hour, many more music leaders can join in the conversation in real time or read a summary of the chat later on.*

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**C2** Contracts include clear expectations around music leader planning, including short, medium and long-term planning. Plans should be flexible and adaptable.

**C3** Roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the planning and delivery of sessions are clearly outlined.

**C4** Organisations support the emotional wellbeing of staff with regular catch-up/supervision sessions

**C5** Organisations seek to support music leaders' training and development needs.

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**Drake Music:** *Appropriate training and ongoing mentoring is vital to ensure the materials and equipment chosen for music making are utilised to full effect by music leaders. This is especially relevant for assistive music technology and young musicians with additional needs.*

**Example:** *A Music Education Hub invests in twenty iPads to be used as part of their Arts Award delivery with young Disabled musicians in schools. The iPads are popular but some of the music leaders struggle with the different apps and settings and this often slows progress down. The music leaders request a half-day iPad training event and the trainer agrees to provide paid email support for the team in the event they have any follow up questions.*

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## **Pastoral and progression needs**

**PP1** Appropriate pastoral support is provided for young people

**PP2** When participants are referred by another organisation, information is requested to inform planning and communication (for example about musical ability and experience, pastoral needs, access requirements)

**PP3** Organisations enable music leaders to develop up-to-date knowledge of progression routes, so that young people can be signposted to relevant opportunities beyond the programme.

## **Planning and evaluation**

**PE1** Programmes are planned to ensure that duration of contact time and frequency of engagement are sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes.

**PE2** Evaluation activities are devised and scheduled before delivery commences

**PE3** Organisations ensure that evaluation activities are carried out as planned

## Part 2: Session criteria

### Young people centred

**Y1** Music-making reflects the young people's interests, with recognition of their existing musical identities

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**Drake Music:** *Many Disabled young people have less opportunity to make choices and be 'in charge' than their non-disabled peers. Access to music-making can increase these opportunities.*

**Example:** *A music leader initiates a 'call and response' music activity with a musician with a learning disabled musician. Each time, the music leader and support worker wait for the participant to begin playing before they respond. The young musician can enjoy the power of keeping the others waiting in silent suspense.*

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**Y2** Young people experience equality of engagement and no participant is discriminated against. Their views are integral to the session.

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**Drake Music:** *We believe in the social model of disability in which people are disabled by society, not by their medical condition or impairment. Be aware of 'disabling barriers' to participation in music-making (for example buildings which are hard to access, instruments which are unsuitable, or warm-up exercises/other group activities that not everyone can join in with), and ensure music leaders have access to Disability Equality Training.*

**Example:** *A music hub organises an open access music session on a Saturday for both disabled and non-disabled young musicians. On offer is a range of both 'music tech' instruments (e.g. iPads and Skoog) as well as guitars, drums and keyboards. All young people are given the choice of which instrument they'd like to play with no assumptions made based on whether they face disabling barriers or not. The music leaders employ a range of approaches to try and ensure each musician can independently access the instrument of their choice.*

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**Y3** The young people's musical, personal and social development are monitored, and achievements are celebrated and valued. Young people are supported by music leaders to set their own goals and targets.

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**Drake Music:** *Real (not token) participation in a group or one-to-one session is a valuable indicator of achievement for disabled young musicians. Performance and technique are skills to be aspired to, as much as by their non-disabled peers.*

**Example:** *A music leader working with young musicians with complex needs uses the Sounds of Intent framework, which breaks down all aspects of participation into very specific elements. This means that they are able to track development that might otherwise have been too subtle to notice, but that could turn out to be significant.*

**Drake Music:** *Many people in education have low expectations of what Disabled pupils and students can achieve in formal music education. Expectations of what young musicians can achieve must be high.*

**Example:** *A music leader arranges a planning meeting for a music project that will take place in a school and includes Disabled participants. She asks the class teacher questions about the musical interests of the participants and any previous musical experiences they might have had. She highlights some key aims for the project e.g. 'participants should be empowered to initiate their own movements when learning to play music' and invites the teacher and support staff to sign up and support these aims.*

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**Y4** Young people received clear feedback on their work, identifying next steps for individual improvement. Young people are encouraged to participate in this process through structured peer and self-reflection. Comparison to others is only made where appropriate.

**Y5** The music leader and/or project staff identify the need for any additional pastoral or other support, and seek to provide or signpost to this.

## Music leader practice

**M1** The music leader has relevant musical competence, and is both an able practitioner and a positive role model.

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**Drake Music:** *Music leaders who work regularly with young musicians with additional needs often have a wide portfolio of experiences and skills in music. There's no magic formula to becoming an effective inclusive practitioner but a flexible, child-centred approach is the best foundation, along with an understanding of the social model of disability.*

**Example:** *A Disabled musician has a song-writing residency in a special school. She has played and toured in bands all her life and currently sings and uses Thumbjam on her iPhone as an instrument. She has real life experiences as a working musician and facilitator and is an inspiring role model for the young Disabled musicians she works with, several of whom would like to follow in her footsteps.*

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**M2** The music leader has a clear intention and has planned the session accordingly, while retaining room for flexibility.

**M3** The music leader plans sessions that enable young people to make progress and nurtures their understanding of what it means to be a musician.

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**Drake Music:** *Providing appropriate progression routes for young Disabled musicians requires a flexible, patient approach to teaching and learning and the confidence to make judgements around assessment.*

**Example:** *A new Music Co-ordinator in a school wants to offer an accredited music course for her KS4 class. She researches the options and chooses the best fit, both for herself and the access requirements of her pupils, and then attends some relevant training on assessment.*

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**M4** The music leader regularly checks young people's understanding. They reflect on their own practice: activities are reviewed and adapted over the course of the session according to how the young people respond.

**M5** All project staff are actively engaged with activities. Music leaders and other project staff communicate before, during and/or after the session and collaborate in planning activities. Roles and responsibilities are clear to all involved.

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**Drake Music:** *Communicating the intent of each session and project overall is also useful for support staff. The more they understand the methods, the greater their support and encouragement can be.*

**Example:** *A music leader is delivering a music project at a school and arranges a planning meeting at the beginning of the new academic year. She understands the key role that support staff will play in the success of the sessions she is planning, and therefore suggests meeting immediately to enable more of the staff to attend. She also provides a short briefing document explaining the aims of the music sessions, to be shared with colleagues who couldn't attend the planning meeting.*

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## Session content

**S1** Activities are engaging, inspiring and purposeful. They are clearly explained and/or demonstrated to the young people.

**S2** Ownership of session content is shared between the music leader and young people. Participants contribute to decision-making and have the opportunity to take on leadership roles where appropriate.

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**Drake Music:** *Amplifying and promoting the voices of Disabled young musicians is a crucial aspect of improving provision.*

**Example:** *A music leader wants to ask a class of Disabled young musicians some questions as part of her on-going evaluation of the sessions. One of the participants uses a Voice Output Communication Aid (VOCA). After asking for advice, the music leader emails the questions to support staff in advance. This gives them time to elicit the young musician's answers and programme them into his VOCA, enabling him to independently answer each question when asked.*

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**S3** Young people are supported to create and make their own music, and broaden their musical horizons over time.

**S4** Activities are designed and delivered in a manner that is accessible to all and tailored to each individual whenever possible, taking account of their starting points and aspirations. Group dynamics and pace of learning have been considered.

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**Drake Music:** *Music sessions involving young musicians with additional needs commonly have an increased time allowance, both to ensure personal comfort and to enable individuals to work towards personal and musical outcomes in an unhurried atmosphere.*

**Example:** *A school is running an accessible music course for its Key Stage 4 class. The majority of the young musicians have physical impairments and many of them use a VOCA to communicate. The music leader plans the weekly lessons around a 'whole morning' delivery time. This enables enough time for a 30 minute comfort break as well as sufficient time for the class to fully access the practical activities, carry out assessment tasks and express their opinions independently.*

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## Environment

**E1** There is a suitable ratio of young people to music leaders (and other project staff where required).

**E2** Consideration has been given to the physical space, with available resources being best used to make it accessible and appropriate for the target group.

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**Drake Music:** *Many spaces provided for music-making are less than ideal; but for many young Disabled musicians, getting the environment right can limit distractions and make a crucial difference to them engaging with the experience.*

**Example:** *A music leader is given the school hall to use for music-making sessions involving young autistic musicians. The hall is large with boomy acoustics and features strip lighting which quietly hums. In addition, other classes use the hall as a cut-through to other rooms and kitchen staff prepares lunch in the adjoining room. Some of the young musicians become distracted by these unintended disruptions and after a few weeks of trying to make it work, the music leader requests a new space with natural light and/or standing lamps, improved sound-proofing, and in a quieter part of the school site.*

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**E3** There are sufficient materials and equipment to support the activities.

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**Drake Music:** *Inclusive, properly equipped music sessions often look and sound different to 'normal' music rooms. iPads, BIGmack switches, open tuned guitars, Soundbeams and EyeGaze technology commonly perform together in the same space.*

**Example:** *Two music leaders have been invited to set up a Saturday music group in a local concert hall with Disabled and non-disabled young people. In the first few weeks the music leaders bring a wide variety of musical instruments and music tech, to try and ensure everyone can get involved. As they get to know the young people and their support staff better, they learn about how individuals access music in school or communicate more widely. Over time they integrate this equipment and these approaches into the sessions.*

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## Further reading

Below are the experiences, evaluation and research Drake Music used to make additions to the quality framework.

### Drake Music

- Westrup, J., Bott, D. 'Consultation into Disabling Barriers to Formal Music Education' (2012)
- Three commissioned consultations/ reports involving 14 Music Education Hubs and 22 special schools in total (February 2013 – July 2015) 'Breaking the Bubble'; 'Sound Hub Kent'; 'Music Connections East'.
- Westrup, J., Noble, D., 'Top 10 Needs Analysis for Music Education Hubs and SEN/D provision' (October 2015). Based on the evidence from the three commissioned consultations/ reports above.
- Evaluation reports from previous Drake Music projects including feedback from: Music Education Hubs; disabled children and young people, their teachers and support staff, and music leaders.
- Experience of using the Youth Music Quality Framework as part of Drake Music's 'Rhapsody in Ealing: A four year musical adventure', one of Youth Music's four-year 'Exchanging Notes' projects (2013 – 17)

### Other publications

- Welch, G. F., Ockelford, A., PROMISE (Provision of Music in Special Education): A Report on a Research Project Funded by the Esmee Fairburn Trust with Support from RNIB Paperback – Aug 2001
- Welch, G.F., Ockelford, A., Carter, F-C., Zimmermann, S-A., & Himonides, E. (2009). 'Sounds of Intent': Mapping musical behaviour and development in children and young people with complex needs. *Psychology of Music*, 37(3), 348- 370.
- Welch, G.F., Ockelford, A., Zimmermann, S-A., Music education for pupils with severe or profound and multiple difficulties – current provision and future need. *British Journal of Special Education* Volume 29, No. 4 (December 2002)