



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Trustees' Annual Report for the period: From 2nd Jan 2022 – To 1st Jan 2023

Charity name: MERYC-England

Charity registration number: 1169504

Objectives and Activities

	SORP reference	
Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	The objectives of the charity are to advance the musical education of all children in England aged 0 – 5 years.
Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.	Para 1.17 and 1.19	<p>The three key areas of activity focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Holding conferences and seminars2. Support for training in early childhood music education (ECME)3. Representation and communication <p>Activities 2022-23</p> <p>1. Conferences and seminars:</p> <p>The organisation has continued to provide online seminars this year that focus on research and practice in early childhood music education. We recognised that hosting these events online, an approach originally adopted out of necessity due to the COVID 19 pandemic, enables early childhood music educators and researchers to attend these events, regardless of geographical location. As a result, the charity has been able to ensure wider access to seminar events for public benefit for which our constitution was set up.</p> <p>The year's activities continued the theme of 'Hear & Be Heard'. This theme was selected by trustees in recognition that the longer-term impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, along with the emerging cost of living crisis, have impacted those working in early childhood music education. Challenges noted through anecdotal evidence provided by those working in the sector include lost income, needing to rebuild projects/participant groups post-pandemic, promoting and sustaining practice and research-based activity in the face of growing financial challenges for families, early education settings and funding bodies. Trustees are cognizant of the need for support and ongoing professional education for the workforce which is primarily freelance and therefore at a</p>

		<p>disadvantage in the current financial landscape.</p> <p>As in the previous year, trustees agreed to maintain the costs of our activities at a modest level both to assess the need we had perceived anecdotally and to be affordable for music education practitioners.</p> <p>Online seminars on the selected theme followed on from the November 2021 online 'Hear and Be Heard' conference and sought to offer participants opportunities to access presentations and discussions relating to common concerns and challenges in the Early Childhood Music Education (ECME) field, while also celebrating successes and exploring solutions. Between January 2022 and January 2023, we ran two online seminars as follows:</p> <p>March 2022: 'Building Communities of Practice Post Pandemic'.</p> <p>June 2022: 'Sing Our Stories: Personalised Song writing with Children & Families'.</p> <p>A free, in-person, one day meet up event was held in July 2022 at the Royal College of Music. This was hosted by trustees, was well attended and feedback from participants was wholly positive. Participants reported that the opportunity to reconnect in person to reflect upon and to share practice and research were highly appreciated and valued. Opportunities to engage in person are designed both to further the charities objectives while also encouraging participation in the online activity offered by the charity.</p> <p>As a direct result of the 2021 conference, the keynote speaker at that event, esteemed music therapy academic and practitioner Leslie Bunt collaborated with trustee Margareta Burrell to provide a longer-term course of mentoring/coaching sessions for those ECME practitioners/researchers who wished to develop specific aspects of their practice within a supportive framework.</p> <p>2. Training</p> <p>2022-23 is the fifth year of operation for the Certificate in Music Education, which was initiated by MERYC England in partnership with the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) in 2017. This trains practitioners to level 4. It was set up to fulfil two objects as set out in the charity's 5 year strategic development plan 2017-22, namely:</p> <p><i>-attempting to increase the quantity and quality of</i></p>
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	<p><i>research that will inform early childhood musical experience by supporting research initiatives of all kinds;</i></p> <p><i>- attempting to raise the quality of practice in early childhood music by encouraging evidence-based practice, critical reflection and the adoption of principles of social justice;</i></p> <p>The day to day running of the certificate course runs independently of MERYC England, being accountable to Trinity College, London. The Course Director is Jane Parker who works with Youth Music funded project, Take Art till Nov 2024, SoundWaves Network SW. She maintains the link with MERYC England through the role of honorary trustee.</p> <p>Dr Jessica Pitt and Dr Julia Partington, both trustees of MERYC England acted as academic supervisors of students on the Music pathway of the MA in Early Childhood Education during the reporting period, thus maintaining this partnership and promoting the values and mission of the charity at this academic level.</p> <p>3. Representation and communication</p> <p>All MERYC England trustees are affiliated within a range of music education organisations or work as advisors to such organisations as Youth Music and Music Mark and have been responsible for research papers, presentations and books and publications on music learning. The CIO itself has a corporate membership of the Music Education Council (MEC).</p> <p>In the year 2022-23, we have continued to develop the MERYC England website, in line with our communications strategy, with the aim of making our objects aims and activities clearer and more accessible. In addition, this sets out our links with other organisations and achievements of practitioners and researchers as presented at local, national, and European contexts.</p> <p>All seminars and training or discussion opportunities are promoted through Facebook and Twitter as well as the website and CREC and word of mouth.</p> <p>PhD student: Trustee and lecturer Dr Jessica Pitt at the Royal College of Music (RCM) led on the proposal for a collaborative fully funded doctoral award from the London Arts and Humanities Partnership, LAHP. This was successful and in March 2022 the student, Maria Sanchez was appointed. The recipient has been supported in this year by MERYC England trustees, Ex-Chair, Dr Alison Street acts as supervisor on behalf of MERYC</p>
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	<p>England, academic supervision provided by Dr Jessica Pitt and DR Mary Stakelum from RCM. This research study is proving to be instrumental in supporting a range of administrative tasks in relation to our activities, including compiling research blogs, and researching links between theory and practice as catalogued in the archival evidence from the last 20 years of both MERYC England's and EuNet MERYC's activities. This research will feed into trustees' objectives for the next three years and the student will present the ongoing work to the trustees at regular intervals from spring 2023.</p> <p>This doctoral study aims to strengthen MERYC England's position and increase understanding of its contribution to the field of early childhood music in England. Furthermore, the establishment of a collaboration with Royal College of Music will be mutually beneficial for both organisations. As reported last year, it was envisaged that for RCM the collaboration demonstrates the ways that the contemporary conservatoire reaches beyond its traditional audience seeking to be relevant to wider society and for MERYC England it offers the organisation a platform for developing connections into the music and music education sectors which will raise the profile of early childhood as an important life stage deserving of quality musical experiences. Initial reflections on this collaborative work indicate that these intended outcomes are already being successfully realised.</p> <p>Trustee links</p> <p>Dr Julia Partington: In September 2022, Julia took over from Dr Alison Street as Chair of Trustees for MERYC England. Prior to this, Julia had contributed to the planning of the MERYC England 2021 conference. Julia holds the role of Lecturer in Music Education at Newcastle University and her role here, along with her location as an ECME practitioner and researcher in the North East of England broadens the geographical representation of the Board of Trustees. Julia leads a number of undergraduate and postgraduate modules/student research projects that relate to ECME, music education and community music. She is also on the committee of Music HE a UK wide membership organisation that promotes and supports the study of music in higher education (including conservatoires). Through this connection, Julia is able to advocate for the importance of ECME research in Higher Education.</p> <p>Dr Jessica Pitt:</p> <p>Jessica sits on the advisory board for Talent25 raising the profile of MERYC England's activity to social science researchers.</p>
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		She is a commissioner for the early childhood music education committee of ISME (International Society of Music Education) and is a trustee of the UK Community Music charity, Sound Sense. She leads a number of modules at RCM for both undergraduate and postgraduate students and is deputy chair of the RCM's Research Ethics Committee.
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	Para 1.18	All trustees familiarise themselves with the 'Essential Trustee' national guidance, have reviewed the constitution of the CIO and regularly explore in our meetings the applicability of principles related to good governance, as defined in the CGC.

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

	SORP reference	
Policy on grant making	Para 1.38	One of our key objects is ' <i>promoting the integration of research, theory and practice by organising and funding meetings for that purpose</i> '. This year, as last, we have continued to focus on holding online seminars at a modest fee rather than issue grants for practitioners to research or meet in person. This was in response to the uncertain landscape relating to in person events and travel following the pandemic related lockdowns of coincided with the intermittent lockdown periods during the pandemic. Our grant awarding policy will be reviewed in the 2023 financial reporting period.
Policy on social investment including program related investment	Para 1.38	<p>The charity aims to hold a music education conference biennially, in alternate years to EuNet MERYC (next conference, Barcelona July 2023). This regular conferencing acts both as a means to maintain professional connectedness and as a way of building revenue for the charity. We plan to host an in-person conference in England, in the autumn of 2024.</p> <p>The ongoing seminar series continues into 2023 with a theme of 'Overcoming Challenges: Finding Solutions', fulfilling the object of promoting the importance to young lives and families of research informed practice and research founded on quality music making with young children.</p> <p>.</p>
Contribution made by volunteers	Para 1.38	All MERYC England Trustees volunteer their time and energies. Any expenses planned for activities, such as compiling material for the website or organising conferences, are agreed in advance and set to be in proportion to the task. Financial management is under regular review at each Board meeting. Trustees may co-opt participants to share the load as agreed in advance by the Board.
Other		

Achievements and Performance

	SORP reference	
Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.	Para 1.20	<p>The key achievements this year have been:</p> <p>Conferencing/seminars The 2021 'Hear and be heard' seminar and conference series attracted music and early childhood practitioners who were keen both to share their practice and to ask questions related to materials, approaches, ways of conceptualising music and creativity, so as better to serve families in their communities. As outlined above, we continued this work during 2022. The Research into practice seminars have continued to be coordinated by Dr Jessica Pitt with masters students at CREC to help them facilitate presentations relating to their MA research findings.</p> <p>The seminar series aimed to reach out to and to support freelance music practitioners post pandemic during which many have felt uncertain about their professional and financial future. It has brought music practitioners and researchers together and became regular events where both groups felt they belonged and contributed. The emerging network of regular attendees from across England is a particular strength of this online meeting approach.</p> <p>The charity trustees consider the online seminars a particular success again this year. They were facilitated by trustees who gave their time and expertise to host each one, to organise the discussions and ensure an inclusive environment. To this end the Board set up ground rules for online activities to safeguard participants and facilitators.</p> <p>Also of note was the success of the mentoring course in terms of participants engaging with a longer term (6 weeks) programme of activity. Additionally, the one day in person meet up held at RCM was a success in the view of both trustees and participants. We hope to be able to offer more of these in a variety of regions/locations in future to maximise participation throughout England.</p> <p>Training Although not directly responsible for the Certificate course, Trustees remain supportive and as an advisory body should it be needed. The new director Jane Parker reports regularly to trustees on the progress and development of the course.</p> <p>Representation and communication Individual trustees continued to represent the charity through different platforms this year, particularly through Music Mark and Music Education Council (MEC) plus Music HE.</p>

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Achievements against objectives set	Para 1.41	In 2021 we set our objective to become more accessible to a wider audience and this work has continued into 2022 and will be a large part of our work in 2023. Continuing to develop our website as a tool to promote the work of the organisation, and to provide useful links to those working in the ECME sector involved collaborative planning and ongoing work to keep the content up to date and engaging for users, while also promoting the events, grants, and resources we have to offer.
Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set	Para 1.41	<p>Our fundraising objectives continued to be deliberately modest in 2022, as we prioritised pricing our seminar programme at competitive prices in the understanding that many similar organisations were offering courses in the sector free of charge, or at a very low cost.</p> <p>Our priority was to continue to provide an attractive relevant and affordable forum for practitioners and researchers to develop their practice, research and professional networks. Nevertheless, we succeeded in more than covering costs and raised a total of £1150 through seminars and the online mentoring course.</p> <p>The numbers of participants in these activities and who attended multiple sessions in the period under review gives the charity confidence that the public service we are providing has been welcomed within the sector and the focus of our efforts and activities is relevant to a workforce hungry for connection and professional development as we navigate the landscape in our sector post-pandemic.</p>
Investment performance against objectives		N/A
Other		

Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	Para 1.21	At the end of this period the Charity's bank account with the Co-operative Bank showed a balance of £7422.53
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	The policy to hold a reserve is under continuous review by the Board of Trustees We keep this reserve to indicate prudent financial management against risk of activities failing to meet costs, and to ensure there is a balance in the account, when applying for grants.
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	£2000
Reasons for holding zero reserves	Para 1.22	N/A
Details of fund materially in	Para 1.24	N/A

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Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	Para 1.23	N/A

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)	Para 1.47	The principal source of revenue is from CPD seminar fees and biannual conference delegate fees.
Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted	Para 1.46	N/A
A description of the principal risks facing the charity	Para 1.46	The principal risks are the capacity of individual trustees to continue the activities that generate funds. All are totally committed to the purposes and aims and the objectives. All are volunteers.
Other		N/A

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document (trust deed, royal charter)	Para 1.25	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g unincorporated association, CIO)	Para 1.25	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Para 1.25	Trustees are representative of a range of practice and from different regions in England. A balance is maintained between researchers and practitioners, to ensure the charity's objectives are met, according to the constitution document.

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees	Para 1.51	All trustees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Constitution, with the Charity Commission guidelines for good governance and with the principles of the CGC. Principles are reviewed regularly in the light of current projects and activities. All trustees have been DBS checked.
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		MERYC England adheres to the policies held by CREC in safeguarding and in equality, diversity and inclusion. In the year 2021-22 we established agreed guidelines for online video conferencing and initiated a privacy statement.
The charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works	Para 1.51	There are seven MERYC trustees, one being an honorary position as director of the Certificate course (see above), who is herself Soundwaves Network Project Leader active in Take Art, a regional network in SW England. All Trustees act in a voluntary capacity, with expenses agreed in advance where applicable, eg for specific tasks relating to conference and seminar administration and facilitation. They regularly represent MERYC on a range of bodies, e.g. Youth Music, Music Mark and Music Education Council.
Relationship with any related parties	Para 1.51	Our website and social media accounts connect with regional and local music education networks across England and also with European and the international music education network, ISME.
Other		

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	MERYC-England
Other name the charity uses	
Registered charity number	1169504
Charity's principal address	Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) St Thomas Children's Centre, Bell Barn Road, Attwood Green, Birmingham, West Midlands, B15 2AF Telephone: +44(0)121 464 0020

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Dr Julia Partington	Chair	Began as Trustee in June 2022, took over as Chair, September 2022 - present	
2	Jane Parker	Honorary Trustee Director CME:EC SoundWaves NetworkSW		
3	Margareta Burrell	Trustee		

4	Prof Chris Pascal	Representing Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC		
5	Dr Jessica Pitt	Trustee		
6	Barbara Cavanagh,	Treasurer		
7	Stephen Grocott	Trustee		
8	Dr Alison Street	Chair	Retired and stood down September, 2022	
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Corporate trustees – names of the directors at the date the report was approved

Director name		
N/A		

Name of trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity

Trustee name	Dates acted if not for whole year	
N/A		

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

Description of the assets held in this capacity	N/A
Name and objects of the charity on whose behalf the assets are held and how this falls within the custodian charity's objects	N/A

Details of arrangements for safe custody and segregation of such assets from the charity's own assets	N/A
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Additional information (optional)

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

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Exemptions from disclosure

Reason for non-disclosure of key personnel details

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Other optional information


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Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)

	B.Cavanagh
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Full name(s)

Dr Julia Partington	Barbara Cavanagh
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Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair of Trustees, MERYC England	Trustee and treasurer, MERYC England
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Date 18/10/23