



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Trustees' Annual Report for the period: From 2nd Jan 2024 – To 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2025

Charity name: MERYC-England

Charity registration number: 1169504

### Objectives and Activities

	SORP referenc e	
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"><li>1. Holding in person and online conferences and seminars</li><li>2. Support for training in early childhood music education (ECME)</li><li>3. Representation and communication</li></ol> <p><b>Activities 2024-25</b></p> <p><b>1. Conferences and seminars:</b></p> <p>The organisation has organised and hosted one online early childhood music education research and practice seminar in this reporting period. The seminar was led by a researcher in the field, Ms. Rebecca Shrewsbury and the theme of this seminar was 'Children's Home Musical Experiences'. The event was attended by approximately 15 ticket holders. The online nature of these events ensures that we have practitioners and researchers attending from across England, the UK and occasionally from Europe/other international locations. This ensures the ongoing broad reach and impact of the charity and its work, as does the availability of the presentation slides via our website for those wishing to learn more on this topic after the seminar date.</p> <p>On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the charity hosted a one day, in person conference in collaboration with Music and The School of Arts and Cultures at Newcastle University. The conference title was 'Early Childhood Music in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Exploring Possibilities in a Changing World'. A call for papers in early 2024 resulted in a high volume of abstracts and proposals and as a result, the conference programme was vibrant and varied with presentations given by leading academics in</p>

	<p>the field, poster presentations given by practitioners and postgraduate researchers in the field and practical workshops on pedagogy.</p> <p>The conference was attended by 42 delegates from across the UK, plus 8 trustees and 3 free places were offered to undergraduate and postgraduate music students from Newcastle University to ensure the charity's support of the next generation of early childhood music researchers and practitioners. The charity gave 6 grants of £200 through an online application process to support the travel and accommodation costs of delegates who would not otherwise have been able to attend the event. This was to ensure inclusive access and also to ensure that those who may have to travel long distances to the northeast of England would not be excluded by cost. It is important to the charity trustees that our in-person activity take place in various locations around England and not solely in London/the south of England to ensure maximum participation.</p> <p>Trustees agreed to maintain reasonably affordable ticket costs for the seminar and conference to participants, so as to be affordable for early years music education practitioners and researchers, in line with the overall aims and purpose of the charity. As such, and also due to the current higher price of food in terms of catering at the conference, we did not make any profit on the conference event, but this has not impacted our financial reserves and we were still in a position to offer the attendance grants.</p> <p>The conference was felt by all to have been highly successful in meeting the aim of the charity to support both existing/ongoing and emerging research and practice in the field and delegate feedback was wholly positive.</p> <p><b>2. Training</b></p> <p>As reported in last year's summary of activity, 2024-25 is the seventh year of operation for the Certificate in Music Education, a flexible, part-time, distance-learning qualification in early childhood music. This is a recognised National Qualification which was initiated by MERYC England in partnership with the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) in 2017. The CME trains practitioners in the ECME field to level 4 standard. It was initially set up to fulfil two objects, namely:</p> <p><i>-attempting to increase the quantity and quality of research that will inform early childhood musical experience by supporting research initiatives of all</i></p>
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		<p><i>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, through the Centre for Research in Early Childhood being accountable to Trinity College, London. The course is co-directed by Jane Parker, a former honorary MERYC England Trustee and current MERYC England Trustee Margareta Burrell works on this course as a mentor to students, thus retaining and continuing the strong links between this initiative and MERYC England.</p> <p><b>3. Representation and communication</b></p> <p>All MERYC England trustees are affiliated within a range of music education organisations or work as advisors to such organisations as Music Mark, Music Education Council, International Society of Music Education, Youth Music, Sound Sense 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). Three current Board of Trustees members are full time academics working in Higher Education teaching and research in institutions based Manchester (University of Manchester), Birmingham (CREC/Birmingham City University), and Newcastle (Newcastle University).</p> <p>Trustee Dr Jessica Pitt stood down from her role within the charity in November 2025 after more than a decade of association with the charity. We thank Jessica wholeheartedly for her contribution and we maintain links with her and with the Royal College of Music where she works part time through the London Arts and Humanities Partnership Doctoral student that she co-supervises with Dr Julia Partington, MERYC England Chair of Trustees whose research focuses on early childhood music education and the legacy of the work of MERYC England.</p> <p>In the year 2024-25, we have further developed 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. The new trustees recruited in 23-24 have brought with them experience of using social media to promote the charity's activities and aims and we have</p>
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		<p>increased our following on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook as a result.</p> <p><b>PhD student:</b>  As noted above, Ms. Maria Sanchez continues her LAHP funded Doctoral study on cultural citizenship towards cultural engagement with the support of MERYC England. This project continues to be supervised by charity trustee and lecturer Dr Jessica Pitt at the Royal College of Music (RCM) along with Dr Mary Stakelum (RCM) and Dr Julia Partington (Newcastle University Senior Lecturer in Music and MERYC England Chair) has taken on the role of co-supervisor on behalf of MERYC England. As previously reported, this research study is proving to be instrumental in supporting a range of administrative tasks in relation to our charity 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 is being fed into trustees' objectives for the next year and Ms Sanchez presented her ongoing work in a poster presentation at the 2024 conference to trustees and delegates.</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 is proving to be mutually beneficial for both organisations. As reported previously, it was envisaged that the collaboration demonstrates the ways that the contemporary conservatoire reaches beyond its traditional audience to be relevant to wider society. For MERYC England this partnership 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 developmental stage deserving of quality musical experiences.</p>
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	Para 1.18	All trustees have familiarised 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	
	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</i>

Policy on grant making		<p><i>purpose</i>'. This year, as with the past two years, we have continued to prioritise holding online seminars and planning the conference at a modest fee for participants, rather than issue multiple grants for practitioners.</p> <p>Nevertheless, we offered six bursaries of £200 in 2024 to ECME researchers and practitioners who wished to attend the MERYC England conference in Newcastle to support costs associated with attending and received a number of applications, which were reviewed and appraised by trustees. The successful applicants created a blog post for our website about the conference experience for the benefit of those who were unable to attend.</p>
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 MERYC EuNet. This regular conference 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 Reading in November 2026.</p> <p>The ongoing seminar series continues into 2025-26, along with in person meet ups to support professional networking in the field in both the south, midlands and north of England to maximise the charity's reach to practitioners and researchers wishing to participate.</p>
Contribution made by volunteers	Para 1.38	<p>All MERYC England Trustees volunteer their time and energies. Any expenses planned for activities, such as compiling material for the website or organising and attending 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.</p>
Other		

## Achievements and Performance

	SORP reference	
Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to	Para 1.20	<p>The key achievements this year have been:</p> <p><b>Conferencing/seminars</b>  The 2024 conference was well attended by a range of high profile academics in the field, along with early career researchers, students and practitioners in the field from across the UK.</p> <p>The seminar series aims to support freelance music</p>

the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.		<p>practitioners and researchers in the field bringing them together through regular events where both groups are free to contribute and share their work, their ideas and experiences. This approach has resulted in an established network of regular attendees from across England and further afield, engaging with the work of the charity and with each other as a network of professional from across England. This continues to be a particular strength of this online meeting approach combined with in person conferences and informal meet ups.</p> <p>Online seminars and the conference were once again facilitated by the charity 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><b>Training</b> Although not directly responsible for the Certificate course, Trustees remain supportive and as an advisory body should it be needed. The involvement of a charity trustee, Margareta Burrell as a course mentor enables regular reporting to trustees on the progress and development of the course at board meetings.</p> <p><b>Representation and communication</b> Individual trustees continued to represent the charity through different platforms this year, particularly through Music Education Council (MEC), Sound Sense, plus Music HE.</p>
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#### 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 to be a large part of our work in 2024-25. Continuing to develop our website and social media presence and following as tools 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 2024-25, as we prioritised pricing our seminar programme and conference 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>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.</p>
Investment performance against objectives		N/A

Other		
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## 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 £6,235.45
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 deficit	Para 1.24	N/A
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. 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 currently nine MERYC England trustees following the stepping down of Dr Jessica Pitt. All Trustees act in a voluntary capacity, with expenses agreed in advance where applicable, e.g. for specific tasks relating to conference and seminar administration and facilitation. They regularly represent MERYC England on a range of bodies, e.g. Youth Music, Music Mark and Music Education Council. The current Board of Trustees are located and work across various regions of England, north to south, in recognition that in previous years, the location of most trustees was within the south of England, thus potentially limiting the reach and location of activities regionally for the charity.
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, International Society of Music Education.
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		
2	Dr Ryan Humphrey	Trustee		
3	Margareta Burrell	Trustee		
4	Prof Chris Pascal	Trustee Representing Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)		
5	Barbara Cavanagh,	Treasurer		
6	Stephen Grocott	Trustee		
7	Vanessa Stansall	Trustee		
8	Danielle Ballantine-Drake	Trustee		
9	Carol Bowden	Trustee		

### 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	N/A
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held in this capacity	
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

#### **Additional information (optional)**

#### **Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)**

<b>Type of adviser</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>

#### **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**

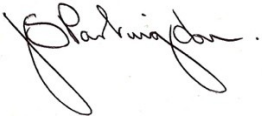
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#### **Declarations**

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**

28/10/25
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## **INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR JAN 24 - DEC 24**

**Opening Balance:** £7,314.25

**Income**  
Jan-24  
Eventbrite  
Ticket sales

**SUBTOTAL**

Net Income: £175.55

**Closing Balance:** £7,489.80

**Income**  
Feb - April 24

**SUBTOTAL**

Net Income: -£99.02

**Closing Balance:** £7,390.78

**Income**  
Jun-24

**SUBTOTAL**

Net Income: £220.54

**Closing Balance** £7,611.32

**Income**  
July-Aug 24

**SUBTOTAL**

Net Income: -£465.08

**Closing Balance** £7,146.24

**Income**  
Aug-Dec24

**SUBTOTAL**

Net Income: -£910.79

**Closing Balance** £6,235.45

Other expenditure to come - Zoom A/c Approx £129.90 (taxes to b  
To be agreed at Board meeting 23.4.24 Wix hosting Approx £194  
BC to be reimbursed **DONE**

**Seminar Summary**

Jan-24	Children's outdoor musical play
Feb-24	How to write an abstract
Jun-24	Home musical impact on education

**Conference summary**

**Expenditure**

Jan-24

Ticket refund

£163.55

£24.00

£187.55

**SUBTOTAL****Expenditure**

March-April 2

Domain name

Email

£0

£0

**SUBTOTAL****Expenditure**

Jun-24

Seminar fees direct  
Eventbrite

£48

£172.54

£220.54

**Expenditure**

July-Aug 24

Wix A/c

Zoom A/c

Rebecca Shre

£0.00

**Expenditure**

Aug-Dec24

Bursaries:

Ellen Warburt

Conference sales  
Eventbrite

£2,052.01

Kate Maines-I  
Rachel Pollard  
Janey Maxwe  
Fiona Murray  
Yuki Nishioka

postage S Gr  
Keynote Spee  
Conference C

£2,052.01

oe added)

Apr-24 (every year)  
June 24 (every 3 years)

Other expenditure to come

21 tickets sold  
15 tickets  
22 tickets sold

£187.55  
FREE  
£220.54

42 tickets sold

£2,261.58 (gross)  
£2,052.01 (net)

£12

£12

to be agreed at board meeting 23.4.24

DONE

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e

£32.40 (every 3 years)

£66.62 (every year)

£99.02 ( Barbara C to be reimbursed)

(paid in Augu

£0

£0

£259.20

£155.88

newsbury fee £50.00

£465.08

ton

£200



Beasley	£200
d	£200
ll	£200
	£200
	£200
ocott	£32.90
ech	£400
atering	1,329.90
	£2,962.80

2                      Bursaries                      £600  
    actually gave out £1,200 6 bursaries @ £200 each

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