

Adult leisure-time music – the statistics

Making Music is the UK association for leisure-time music groups, **3,600+** groups in membership, comprising around **200,000 individual (adult) hobby musicians**

- We have around 100 members which are youth groups
- A number of our members include people of all ages from teenagers to 90 year olds, but generally over-18s
- We only capture an estimated 25-30% of all groups, meaning there are an **estimated 14,000 groups with 800,000 individuals in the UK**

Other useful statistics:

- **Our Creative Talent 2008** (DCMS/ACE, England only): 10,000 music groups (including Scotland, Wales, NI that would have meant approx. 12,000)
- Separate European Choral Association research & Voices Now research in 2016 both estimated approx. 2m singers and up to 40,000 choirs (incl. school and church ones) in the UK
- Even on those very approximate data, there are currently **at least 1-2m adults making music in their leisure-time every week in the UK**

General population statistics:

- **School population is 10m**, most of them exposed to some sort of music education during their time at school
- **Adult population is 53m**
- **Taking Part survey** by government, (focus on arts participation data up to April 2018) **27.7% had participated in musical activities, that's about 14.5m people**
- Taking Part latest adult survey by government (up to March 2019) says 53.4% participated in arts activity in the last 12 months, that's about 28.3 million people

The shape and future of adult music learning

Symposium on 25 September and next steps

Hosted by: Making Music

Attendees: a wide range of representatives from the music sector, including organisations (ABRSM, Creative United, MU, Sound Sense, Youth Music, ISM, Music Mark, Sing for Pleasure, British Kodaly Academy, ABCD, Association of British Orchestras, MIA, Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance), businesses (Warwick Music Group, musicgurus.com, Hal Leonard), freelance professionals (piano teacher, flute teacher, community musicians), leisure-time music groups, and more

Topics covered in...:

Jennie Henley's provocation

- who is 'allowed' to be a musician/be creative? (professional vs. amateur/ hobbyist) – feeds into issues of confidence
- what is progress and how is it made? Peer-learning; group-learning
- is a continued emphasis on 'excellence' counter-productive? What is excellence and who defines it?
- can only 'specialists' teach? How about role-modelling adult music making, in all its forms

Who are the adult learners?

Describing adult hobby musicians revealed a wide range in terms of age, ability, musical background, disability, and motivations

Common barriers:

- lack of confidence
- lack of opportunities or lack of awareness about them
- time
- vulnerability
- financial constraints
- life getting in the way

The current shape of adult music learning – discussed by the panel:

Christine Macgregor, ***Cobweb Orchestra***: their open access model enables adults to return to an instrument or pick up one for the first time and immediately be part of a group; a stock of instruments and skilful arranging are part of a winning formula which could be replicated elsewhere; conductors need strong people management to ensure all feel included.

Lincoln Abbots for ***ABRSM***: in 2017-8 13% of their exams were taken by adults. 63% are retired. 75% have a teacher. ABRSM are working on making their resources less child-focussed and on supporting teachers better to feel confident in teaching adults.

Linda Nottingham, ***freelance piano teacher and examiner*** of many years' experience, mainly teaching adults. They often come with emotional 'baggage' (told as a child that they are not musical, e.g.) the teacher needs to unpick. Everyone can make progress – but adults sometimes expect it too fast ('value for money'). Their main barrier though is self-doubt.

Derek Harrison, conductor of ***Hertford Choral Society*** and other non-auditioned inclusive choirs, talked about the balance of musical aims with the well-being and social aspects of a weekly music group. Repertoire and group leaders' skills are crucial. His *Welcome to Choral Singing* is available to buy from www.hertfordchoral.org.uk.

Mary-Alice Stack, **Creative United**: their Take It Away scheme makes instruments available with interest-free finance. Their recent research, *Make Some Noise*, discovered there was little information on instruments available to the 3.9m disabled people in the UK, in the case of adults often with health- or age-related or acquired disabilities.

The future of adult music learning – conclusions and recommendations

The discussion focussed on four areas:

1. Lobbying and advocacy
 - a. Who does the lobbying?
 - b. Who is any advocating aimed at? Policy makers, but also general public
 - c. What is needed for effective lobbying? Research and data, public campaign
 - d. What to advocate for? Societal benefits of making music
 - e. Interaction with under-18 music education: not 'just' a talent pipeline
2. Teaching resources
 - a. Gather feedback from adult learners
 - b. Exam boards to respond to needs of adults
 - c. Information and help with adaptive instruments and technology
 - d. Access to high quality teaching resources, incl. for adult self-learning
 - e. Resources to help adults engage in group music activity
3. Support for professionals engaged with adult learners (teachers, MDs)
 - a. Qualifications for music teaching
 - b. CPD for teachers
 - c. Emotional support/networks for individual teachers (isolation)
 - d. Disseminate proven training models for leaders of all kinds of groups
 - e. Help with practicalities: managing committees, volunteers
4. Access (physical, geographical, financial, psychological)
 - a. Language, representation – make sure all included, it is 'for people like me'
 - b. Standards – how to join in if you don't know what 'grade' you are?
 - c. Knowledge and visibility – so information and opportunities are accessible
 - d. Finance
 - e. Rehearsal or practice space

Next steps

These brief recommendations (and any others which may emerge) need to be further discussed, so Making Music will be hosting a follow-up afternoon in January to flesh out more detailed actions and involve more organisations in this discussion.

If you'd like to be involved in the next steps and weren't there on 25 September, please email xenia@makingmusic.org.uk