

United Kingdom

Claire Flower, BMus(Hons),

Music Therapist

Cheyne Child Development Service at
the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital
London, UK



**L. is saying much more words, very happy, not so cross with everybody.
– Parent of a 3-year-old child with language delay and behavior
difficulties who received music therapy.**

Snapshot

Area

The physical area of the United Kingdom is 242,514 square kilometers, and it is approximately 1,000 kilometers from north to south. The United Kingdom is made up of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Population

61,792,000 (2009)

Official Language

English is the first language of 95% of the population. Welsh is the next most widely spoken language.

Ethnic Groups

92% White; 8% belong to other ethnic groups (2001 census).

Median Age

37 (2001 census).

Children under 5

0-14 years: 18% of the UK population.

Sources

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>

Demographics

There are currently 678 registered music therapists in the United Kingdom (UK). One hundred and seventy therapists work with children of all ages, while 155 describe themselves as working specifically with pre-school children (2011).

Background Information

Until recently, there have been two national bodies representing music therapy in the UK. The British Society for Music Therapy (BSMT) was a charity founded in 1958, which existed to promote the use and development of music therapy. Membership was open to anyone with an interest in music therapy. The Association of Professional Music Therapists (APMT) was established in 1976 to support and develop the profession. Membership was open to trainees and qualified music therapists from recognized music therapy training courses. After a long period of consultation and preparation, the two organizations were recently dissolved, allowing for the creation of a new body, the British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT).

In June 1999, music therapy, along with other arts therapies, became a

state registered profession. In order to practice, therapists must register with the Health Professions Council, the regulatory body established to protect the public and monitor standards in training and professional skills.

In recent years there have been a number of government initiatives which have highlighted the needs of young children and their families. Every Child Matters (ECM) was one such initiative which significantly shaped the way services for children and families were planned and delivered. This year, a government review on Early Intervention was published. The review highlighted the central objective of early intervention as being to “provide a social and emotional bedrock for the current and future generations of babies, children and young people.” Music therapists in the UK have been responsive to these shifts and developments in vision and policy, demonstrating flexibility in the ways in which they engage with children and families.

Resources

Every Child Matters <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/AbouttheDepartment/Page7/DfES%200672%202003>

The Allen Review

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/early-intervention-next-steps.pdf>

Common Approaches

Music therapy is provided to young children in a wide variety of settings. These include children's centers, child development services, specific music therapy centers, family homes, and health settings such as children's hospices. Music therapists are employed by the National Health Service, Local Education Authorities, music therapy trusts or other related charitable bodies, while some music therapists work on a freelance basis. Across the range of settings, close multi-disciplinary working is considered vital.

In some contexts individual or group therapy is offered for children as part of a broader assessment process, or in order to support continuing development. Music therapy might be offered in conjunction with physiotherapy, occupation, or speech and language therapy.

Therapists also employ models which acknowledge and support the needs of parents and the wider family. For example, sessions which offer group work for children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders might also include parallel support groups for parents. Programs such as Shake, Natter and Roll, a London-based group run by a cross-disciplinary team of practitioners for babies and their carers, seek to develop the parents' own capacity to play, sing and engage with their child. Music therapy has an important role to play in supporting developing relationships in the early years and helping to build solid foundations for future growth.

Prominent Literature

- Horvat, J., & O'Neill, N. (2008). Who is the therapy for?: Involving a parent of carer in their child's music therapy.' In A. Oldfield and C. Flower (Eds.), *Music therapy with children and their families*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Hughes, T. (2008). Back to Basics: Community-based music therapy for vulnerable young children and their parents. In A. Oldfield and C. Flower (Eds.), *Music therapy with children and their families*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

- Oldfield, A., Adams, M., & Bunce, L. (2003). An investigation into short-term music therapy with mothers and young children. *British Journal of Music Therapy* 17 (1), 26-45.
- Oldfield, A., & Bunce, L. (2001). Mummy can play too...: Short-term music therapy with mothers and young children. *British Journal of Music Therapy*, 15 (1), 27-36.
- Oldfield, A., & Flower, C. (2008). (Eds.) *Music therapy with children and their families*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Procter, S. (2005). Parents, children and their therapists. A collaborative research project examining therapist-parent interactions in a music therapy clinic. *British Journal of Music Therapy* 19(2), 45-58.
- Woodward, A. (2004). Music therapy for autistic children and their families: A creative spectrum. *British Journal of Music Therapy* 18 (1), 8-14.

About the Author



Claire Flower, BMus(Hons), Music Therapist has many years of experiences as a music therapist in clinical practice, working in a range of settings with a wide variety of client groups. She works now at the Cheyne Child Development Service based at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, London, working primarily with pre-school children with complex needs. Claire is a past Chairperson of the British Society for Music Therapy, maintains a supervision practice and continues to both write about and present her work extensively.

Contact:

Claire.Flower@chelwest.nhs.uk