

Trustee Application Information



music makes me happy



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Welcome from the Chair of Trustees

Would you like to join the Board of Music of Life and contribute to supporting children with disabilities through regular music-making activities?

Since 2003, Music of Life has been breaking down barriers to music-making for children and young people with disabilities. Our weekly, term-time programmes support over 1400 children and young adults each year, helping them discover the joy and confidence that music brings.

The charity is at an exciting point in its development, being increasingly recognised for the unique value of its work and the impact it has on children. This recognition, by experts in disability, music and education, is leading to success with major grant-makers and philanthropists and is enabling us to reach more and more children who can benefit from our support.

Music of Life is looking to recruit up to three new trustees to join our enthusiastic and engaged Board. We all bring different skills to the Board but share a common commitment to making a difference for children and young people with disabilities.



This voluntary role offers an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to a small, impactful organisation, which is making a real difference through music. If this challenge appeals to you, we would love to discuss it with you.

Rutger Beelaerts, Chair, Music of Life

Welcome from the Founder/CEO

I am delighted to invite you to explore Music of Life, the charity I started in 2003, driven by passion for making music accessible for children with special needs. This work is rooted in my childhood and years of collaborative work with young musicians with disabilities. Thanks to the enthusiasm and skill of our amazing practitioners and the support and tireless work of many outstanding individuals who've served as patrons and trustees, the charity has empowered thousands of participants through fully accessible music-making and I look forward to sharing the next phase of our journey with more like-minded colleagues.



Maria Teterina, CEO, Music of Life



About Music of Life

Mission

Our mission is to build and strengthen the life skills, well-being and confidence of disabled children and young people through music-making.

Vision

Our vision is for all disabled children and young people to be able to access, and benefit from, music-making opportunities.

Purpose:

Music of Life seeks improved quality of life for disabled children and young people through their long-term engagement in music-making activities.

Positive impact can be traced at many levels – cognitively, physically, emotionally, academically, and socially. Furthermore, our activities positively affect wider groups – families, schools, local communities, and educational bodies.

Workforce (expertise and intent):

All our programmes are designed and delivered by highly qualified and SEN-competent practitioners and underpinned by the professional excellence of our musicians and we see it as a mission of great importance to introduce as many new talented musicians as possible to working with SEN students.

From attracting seasoned professionals with a wealth of experience to running courses at colleges and universities, we want to inspire and enable the growing number of qualified musicians to make working with SEN students part of their everyday professional lives.

Size and growth:

Income has grown from £107K in 2017 to £524K in 2025 with steady growth in most years. [Read our 2025 Annual Accounts and Report here.](#)

Background and Introduction

Music of Life was established in 2003 and since then has supported thousands of disabled children and young people through weekly, term-time engagement. Our vision is of a world where disabled children and young people have free access to life-enhancing, transformative music-making they need. Through long-term engagement in our programmes, our beneficiaries experience the joy of making music, which positively impacts their academic performance, social life, and health. Their schools, families and local communities also benefit from the improved health and well-being of our students.

We support children and young people aged 5 to 25 with a wide range of physical and learning disabilities, both individually and in group workshops in special needs schools. When they are



ready, we help them to integrate into community-based activities such as joining a youth choir or playing in a band, which helps to widen their social circles and gain acceptance from their non-

disabled peers. It also helps non-disabled groups learn how to accommodate the needs of our students and to value their contribution.

All our work is delivered by highly qualified musicians who either have a lived experience of disability or are experienced and knowledgeable in working with special needs.

Impact:

On average, our beneficiaries stay with us for 4-6 years, in some cases much longer (10+). Since 2020, our numbers have been growing rapidly. 2026 was the 6th consecutive record year in which we worked with over 1800 direct beneficiaries, including over 150 students receiving 1:1 music lessons. [Read our 2025-26 Impact report in full.](#)

Current Programmes

Our programmes currently comprise:

- **Choirs in Special schools: running choir sessions weekly in 10 special needs schools in Birmingham, Warwickshire and Cambridge. Three new choirs have been recently introduced in London (Brent) commencing their weekly routine from September 2025. Our first choirs that started in the Midlands in 2014 are still active.**

Method: 10 1-hour sessions per week per school during term time (30 sessions per year per school) delivered by a team of 3 professional musicians: two singers/choral conductors leading the songs and singing games and a pianist. In recent years the schools have increasingly asked us to split the sessions between two groups to accommodate a growing complexity of special needs and achieve better balance of participation for different levels of ability.

- **Weekly classroom music sessions and 1:1 instrumental lessons in 5 schools for Deaf children in four London boroughs and Hertfordshire**

Method: each school receives up to 36 days of music provision per year (every week during term time). One practitioner per school, full day split between classroom sessions in small classes of 5-8 children and 1:1 instrumental lessons. Instruments taught include piano, percussion and woodwind.

- **Individual music lessons across Midlands, London and South East and North for over 150 students**

Lessons as a stand-alone activity are mostly managed by local music authorities – our partners who identify students to benefit from the lessons, match them with appropriate teachers, manage the sessions at their schools and report to Music of Life CEO through our evaluation process. In that way we work with Birmingham Services for Education (40+ students per year, project is now in its 11th year), Resonate Liverpool Hub (10+ students), Wandsworth Music Service (20+ students), In addition, we have a small number of individual lessons we manage ourselves and 1:1 lesson provision at schools for Deaf children and some Warwickshire and Cambridgeshire schools.



- **Performing opportunities in cooperation with our partner organisations**

Our beneficiaries perform regularly at their schools and communities through Music of Life projects; we also support our choirs and Deaf schools in participating in external events, for example schools' festivals organized by their local authorities (Camden and Hertfordshire schools in Royal Albert Hall, Birmingham schools in Birmingham Symphony Hall, etc). Individual students are supported in their exams, recitals, joining youth ensembles and pursuing music careers.

- **Young Leaders: training and work experience opportunities for young musicians with disabilities**

A new scheme launched in September 2025 that allows our older, long-term choir participants to train as music leaders and participate in our projects as part of our delivery team. Sessions with 2 leading practitioners are running 4 times a term for 4-6 disabled young people who learn the essential techniques of leading the songs and apply their newly acquired skills in their own school choir settings before appearing in joint concerts with other choir and being given the opportunity to lead sessions with external groups.

- **Teacher training for musicians in working with children with special needs**

Ongoing recruitment and training for music practitioners at different levels of experience. Based on direct access to our regular sessions – from shadowing and online training to full-on session leading. This work includes our multi-year series of training courses at the Royal College of Music.

Role Summary

Charity trustees hold the charity 'in trust' for current and future beneficiaries. They have several general legal duties:

- ensuring the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- ensuring the charity complies with its governing document and the law
- acting in the charity's best interests
- acting with reasonable care and skill and
- ensuring the charity is accountable.

In practice this means:

Ensuring that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and that its work is focused on achieving these.

Being responsible for the performance of the charity and for its 'corporate' behaviour.

Taking responsible and informed decisions.

Making time to read papers for meetings and prepare effectively.

Being available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis.

All of this is done collectively as part of a team. Each individual member of the Board brings different skills and life experiences, and we all benefit from each other's contribution.



Person Profile

We are looking to appoint up to three new trustees. We welcome applications from everyone but would particularly like to hear from people with lived experience of disability (either personal or as a parent/carer or teacher working with children with disabilities and who understands the need from our service users' perspective), people from the global majority group and those with a background in education.

Trustees should be able to demonstrate

- a passion for helping children from disadvantaged backgrounds
- that they can play an active part in the charity, attending meetings and contributing to specific improvement projects
- their ability to work in a team

We strongly believe in having a diverse team and know that skills and experience can be acquired in many ways through people's personal, volunteering and working lives. You do not need to have been a Trustee before; you will receive a comprehensive induction into the role.

We use accessible locations for our in-person meetings and are happy to make whatever reasonable adjustments we can to make it possible for you to play a full role on the Board.

Expenses and Time Commitment

Being a Trustee is not a paid position. However we are happy to cover any reasonable expenses you incur in fulfilling your trustee role, including travel and childcare. On average, the Trustee role will involve:

- Attending six Board meetings per year (three in person, three online – each lasting around two hours).
- Time to read the papers in advance of those meetings.
- From time to time, Trustees may be asked to join a sub-committee.

Trustees serve a 3-year term and are eligible for re-appointment for two additional terms by mutual agreement.

You may find it helpful to read the Charity Commission's guidance document [The Essential Trustee](#) to learn more about being a charity trustee.

Please visit our website for the current list of trustees of Music of Life:

<https://musicoflife.org.uk/our-team/>



How to Apply

We welcome applications from everyone. Your skills and experience – whether gained through work, volunteering, or personal life – matter to us.

To apply, please send us:

- A short cover note telling us why you're interested in becoming a Trustee of Music of Life, and how you believe you could contribute to our work. This is essential and CVs without a cover letter will not be considered.
- Your CV or a short summary of your professional and voluntary experience.
- The names and contact details of two referees— we won't contact them without your permission.

Please email your application to: Belinda Kembery, Trustee - belinda.kembery@mofl.co.uk

Key Dates:

Deadline for applications: Friday 20 November 2026

Interviews to be held in late November and December

Board meetings for 2026/7

27th November 2026 10:30-12:30 (to be followed by strategy meeting, 14:00-17:00), in person

21st January 2027 AM, online

19th March 2027 AM, in person

4th June 2027 AM, online



If you have any questions before applying or would like to speak informally about the role, please don't hesitate to get in touch via the email above. We'll be happy to arrange a conversation.

Thank you again for your interest in the role and in Music of Life!