



Special issue
**Music therapy in Europe:
 Paths of professional development**

in partnership with the
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UNITED KINGDOM

Country report on professional recognition of music therapy

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HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Music therapy in the UK is a young profession. After World War II, the use of music in hospitals was first documented and in the 1950s various professionals formed a specialist interest organisation named the Society for Music Therapy and Remedial Music. This became the British Society for Music Therapy (BSMT) in 1967 and led to the first training course – directed by the French cellist Juliette Alvin – being established at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 1968. Mary Priestley, who trained with Alvin, developed the idea of Analytical Music Therapy. In 1965 Paul Nordoff and Clive Robbins published *Therapy in Music for Handicapped Children* and in 1974 Sybil Beresford-Peirce (a graduate of Alvin's course) invited them to teach their approach in London. This led to the formation of the Nordoff Robbins charity which continues to run a training programme in London and now also in Manchester. Where Alvin's method was considered to draw more on psychoanalytic theories in addition to music, Nordoff and Robbins pioneered a more music-centred approach. With the development of other training courses (at University of Roehampton, University of the West of England, Anglia Ruskin University, Queen Margaret University and University of South Wales) and state registration, a shared core syllabus was developed.

In 1976 the Association of Professional Music Therapists (APMT) was formed. It supported the development of the profession as well as acting as a central point of contact for music therapists providing information regarding music therapy, practice, training and events. In 2011 the BSMT and the APMT merged to become the British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT).

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IMPORTANT STEPS IN THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

The development of recognition was a long process, involving England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (the UK). In 1982 the National Health Service (NHS) recognised music therapy as an effective form of treatment and a formal pay scale was established. With pioneering and committed work from key members of the profession, state registration of music therapy, along with art therapy and drama therapy, occurred in 1999. All qualified music therapists are now required to be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). The UK music therapy profession has much to thank the late Tony Wigram, Leslie Bunt and Helen Odell-Miller for their tireless and committed work to enable registration.

RECOGNITION AND APPROVAL

All seven music therapy training courses in the UK are at Master's level and are approved by the HCPC. The professional title 'music therapist' has been protected by law in the UK since 1997. Music therapists who have successfully completed one of the approved training courses in the UK are eligible for registration with the HCPC (www.hcpc-uk.org). There are over 3400 arts therapists (art, drama or music therapists) registered with the HCPC. Standards of proficiency for all qualified arts therapists can be found here: www.hpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/standards/standardssofproficiency/.

As part of the regulation of the profession, continuing professional development (CPD) for UK therapists is monitored by the HCPC. Every two years, 2.5% of registrants are selected for audit at the time of renewal of registration. This audit requires the submission of a log of all CPD activities, evidence and a profile of how the relevant standards have been met (for more details, see www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/cpd/). BAMT offers advice and support to those selected.

Music therapy in context in the UK

Music therapy in the UK is thriving, with a recent increase in jobs being advertised and new work opportunities being created. Music therapists who qualify from training courses frequently find innovative and creative ways to begin work.

The HCPC is an organisation that exists to enforce threshold standards and protect service users. Music therapists continue to benefit from the knowledge, protection and support from BAMT, which also advises the HCPC on professional matters. BAMT holds a register of members, an additional register of approved supervisors and consultants, and has public facing services such as a 'find a therapist' service on the website, and a twitter account (@musictherapyuk). BAMT has over 1000 members, of which 650 are music therapists. Professional BAMT members benefit from guidelines for professional practice, a wide range of

clinical networks and from the work done by central committees such as the 'Training and Education Committee'.

BAMT engages with policy makers and regulators to ensure that music therapy provision continues to meet the highest professional standards and is based on the best available evidence. This means representation and contribution to the work of the Department of Health (including Allied Health Profession Clinical Experts), the Centre for Workforce Intelligence, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (including contributing to guidelines about specific diagnoses/conditions).

SELECTED LINKS

- ❑ British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT): www.bamt.org
- ❑ British Journal of Music Therapy: www.bamt.org/british-association-for-music-therapy-resources/journal.html
- ❑ EMTC country information: <http://emtc-eu.com/country-reports/united-kingdom/>

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