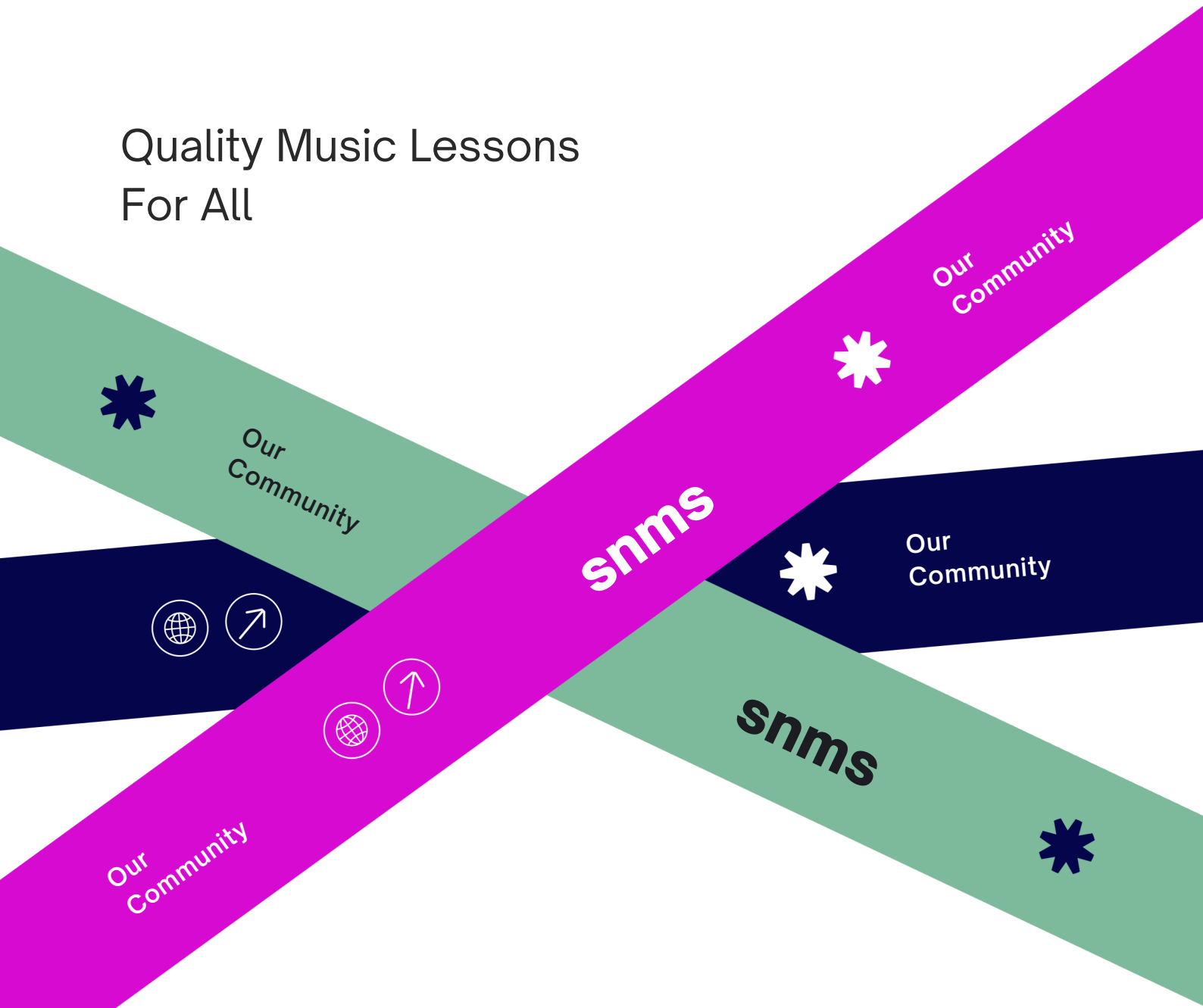




Stoke Newington
Music School CIC

Why We Matter

Quality Music Lessons
For All



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'My son has been attending Stoke Newington Music School for years. He tried different activities but couldn't stick to any of them due to his autism until he was introduced to Stoke Newington Music School and started playing the piano. He felt connected from the start. All staff at the school have a calm and kind demeanour and use their teaching skills to engage children from an early age. Through the opportunity to perform in annual summer and winter concerts, he has built his confidence. This school has played a crucial role in my son's growth. This summer, he volunteered to introduce new children to the piano, which he enjoyed very much. We are grateful to have found this school, which has been an important part of our lives for a long time now.'

Parent of 14 year old student

Welcome to Stoke Newington Music School CIC

Our Journey

Founded in 2016 as UK Pianos Hackney, our journey began with a mission to provide *affordable, high-quality music education* to the local community. In 2022, we expanded by launching **Stoke Newington Music School CIC**, with a dedicated focus on reaching the *underrepresented segments* of Hackney's diverse population. By becoming a Community Interest Company (CIC), we can further our social mission, ensuring that profits are reinvested into making music education more accessible for those who need it most.

At Stoke Newington Music School CIC, we offer lessons in a wide range of instruments, including **piano, guitar, violin, drums, and vocals**. Our ethos is built on the belief that **music should be available to all**, regardless of financial background, ethnicity, or neurodiversity. Transitioning to a CIC structure strengthens our commitment to benefiting the community and opens new avenues for funding to expand our programs while maintaining affordability and quality.

Since our inception, we've had the privilege of teaching **over 1,000 students** from across the local area, fostering an inclusive, vibrant learning environment where everyone feels welcome. Our diverse teaching pool includes instructors from countries from *Mexico to the Middle East*, offering our students a rich, global perspective on music and culture.

By becoming a CIC, we reaffirm our dedication to serving low-income, ethnic minority, and neurodivergent students, ensuring they have equal opportunities to discover their musical talents. This structure allows us to better support our community through increased funding and partnerships, helping us grow and further our impact.



Paige Palmer
Founder & Managing Director



Company Name

Stoke Newington Music School CIC

Location

Hackney, N16

Founded

- 2017: originally as UK Pianos Hackney
- 2022: transitioned into Stoke Newington Music School CIC

Business Structure

Community Interest Company (CIC), meaning the organization operates primarily for the benefit of the community, and profits are reinvested into the mission rather than distributed to shareholders

Mission

To provide affordable, high-quality music education to underrepresented segments of the Hackney community, focusing on students from low-income families, ethnic minority groups, over 65's and neurodivergent individuals.

Vision

To build an inclusive, culturally diverse music community where every person, regardless of background, age or ability, has the opportunity to develop their musical talents and express themselves creatively.

Services

- Offering music lessons in piano, guitar, violin, drums, and vocals.
- Providing tailored music programs for neurodivergent learners.
- Organizing performances and recitals to promote student confidence and community engagement.
- Partnering with local community organizations to increase accessibility to music education.

Key Milestones

- Taught over 1,000 students since inception, positively impacting the local community.
- Transitioned to a CIC in 2022 to solidify our community-focused mission and better access funding opportunities.
- Established a diverse teaching pool with instructors from around the world, reflecting the global cultural diversity of Hackney.

'The music school has a very supportive approach with the emotional well-being of all students - providing and setting a culture of which provides a sound and strong foundation of community'

Mum of Student aged 9



Target Audience

- Primarily young people from low-income backgrounds
- Ethnic minorities
- Over 65's
- Neurodivergent individuals
- Interests within Hackney and surrounding areas.

Community Impact

Our programs foster personal growth, boost self-confidence, and provide creative outlets, especially for underrepresented groups who may lack access to extracurricular activities. As a CIC, we commit to reinvesting profits into scholarships, expanding access to music education, and enhancing our program offerings

Governance

Board of Directors responsible for overseeing the strategic direction, governance, and financial health of the school. Directors ensure the school adheres to its community interest purpose and remains compliant with CIC regulations.

Future Goals

- Expanding our reach to serve more students, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Developing partnerships with local schools and community centers.
- Creating new funding streams to offer **scholarships** and subsidized lessons.
- Launching community events and performances to further integrate the school within Hackney's cultural landscape.



'We have tried several private teachers in the past and since joining the school I can say that my son's experience has been wonderful. My son has a disability and his teacher has been amazing with him. He looks forward to his lessons and always finishes his lessons happy. As a mother seeing him so happy and enthusiastic about his lessons is a blessing. His love for music and confidence to playing an instrument has tremendously improved.'
Parent of Student Aged 10



Amplifying the Voices in Underrepresented Communities

At Stoke Newington Music School CIC, our mission is simple: to provide **accessible, high-quality, affordable** music education to three underrepresented corners of our community.

These are:

- Young people from **low-income backgrounds**: We aim to break financial barriers to music education.
- **Over 65's** : Promoting cultural diversity in music through active participation and celebration of heritage.
- **Neurodivergent individuals**: Providing inclusive, tailored learning experiences for those with diverse learning needs.

Through music, we believe in nurturing talent, building confidence, and fostering a sense of belonging in these communities.

Our Vision

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Our vision is to create a vibrant, inclusive musical community that reflects the diverse fabric of Hackney and London at large. We are driven by the belief that music can be a transformative tool for personal growth, community connection, and social change

By 2026



30%



Of our students will receive subsidized or scholarship placements

20%



Student population will include neurodiverse students

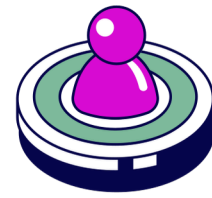
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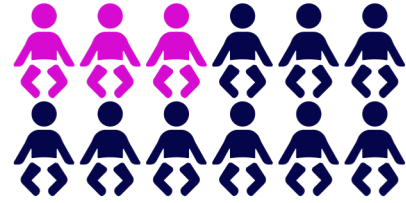
Of our students are over 65

Why is this important?

- Access to music education is often unequal: We believe that everyone, regardless of background, age or ability, should have the opportunity to explore their musical potential.
- Cultural representation in music: Our program reflects the rich diversity of Hackney and provides a platform for students to express their unique cultural identities.
- Music as a universal language: It has the power to bridge divides, offering a creative outlet that transcends socio-economic and neurological differences



25% of children under 16 live in Hackney reside in low income households*



with a current population of 260,000. This means approximately 63,000 are living in poverty



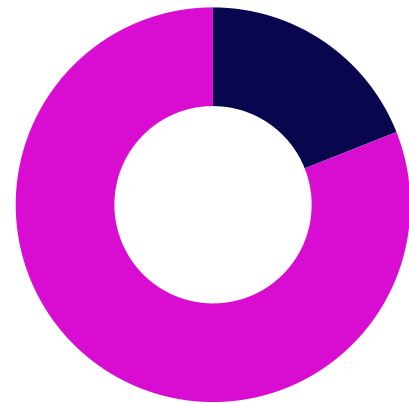
40%

of Hackney residence over 60 live in low income households

Nationally, around 45% of adults over 65 experience loneliness

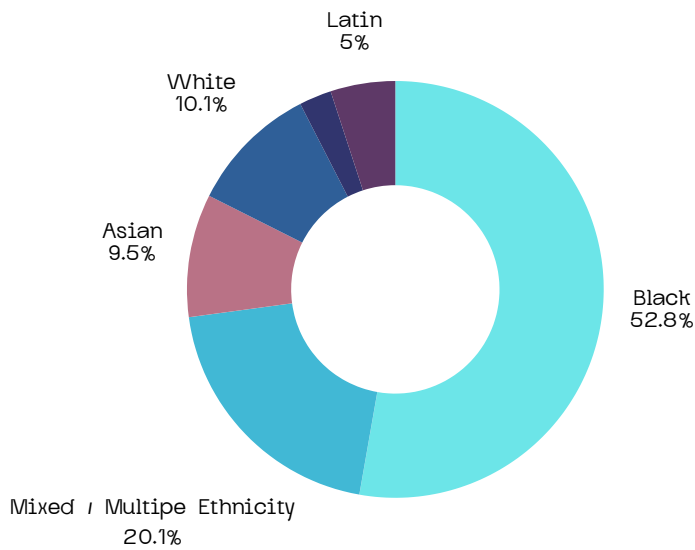


Given Hackney's socioeconomic challenges, the problem may be more pronounced locally



19% of Hackney residence are neurodiverse

Approximately **6,100** children receive free school meals due to household income levels



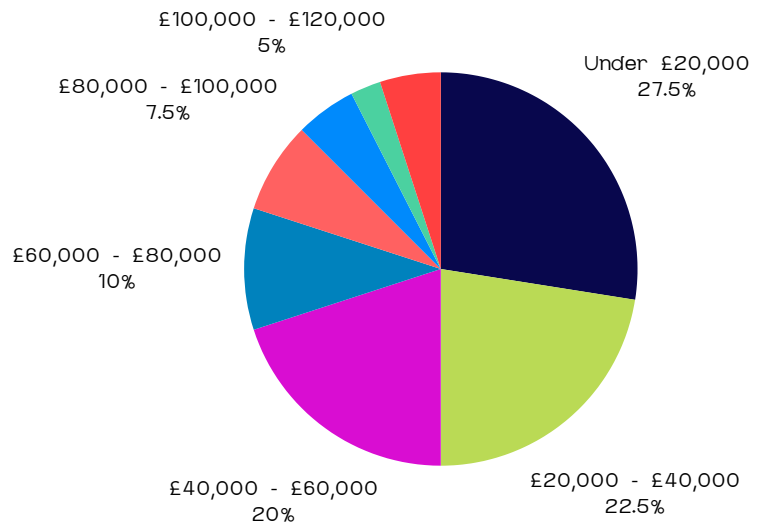
Over 85% of our students are from BAME.

Research shows that students from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds often encounter disadvantages in terms of access to music resources, mentorship, and higher education opportunities, particularly when pursuing careers in music education or performance *. The disparities are compounded by the broader socio-economic inequalities, where students of color are less likely to have the financial support or cultural capital that can help them thrive in a competitive educational environment

More than 1/4 of our student population are from low income families

In the UK, there is a clear disparity in access to extracurricular activities for children from low-income households. A study by the Social Mobility Commission highlights that **children from wealthier families are three times more likely to participate in extracurricular activities such as music and sports compared to those from poorer backgrounds.** For example, 32% of children from high-income families engage in music activities, compared to only 11% of children from the poorest families.

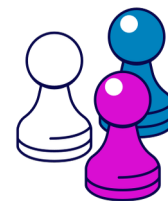
These inequalities stem from a range of barriers including the high costs of activities, and a lack of confidence among disadvantaged children who fear they may not fit in. Additionally, families in the lowest income brackets are less likely to invest in private tuition or extracurricular programs due to financial constraints.



SNMS CIC serves a population where a quarter of students come from households earning under £20,000, these national trends around limited access to extracurricular activities are particularly relevant. This suggests that many of our students may face challenges in participating in enriching activities outside school unless there are targeted interventions or support programs in place to help bridge this gap.

For Children and Young People

According to **ArtsCouncil England**, children involved in music are 20% more likely to excel in subjects like math and English than their peers . Additionally, studies show that learning an instrument can raise a child's IQ, while group music activities boost self-confidence, teamwork, and social engagement .



For Adults

UK-based studies indicate that adults who participate in music or learn an instrument experience long-term cognitive benefits, which can help delay the effects of aging. Community music groups provide a sense of belonging and support, reducing feelings of isolation and increasing well-being.



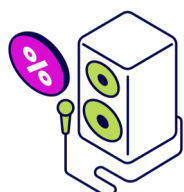
For Special Educational Needs

Music provides vital support for individuals with SEN, aiding communication, social interaction, and emotional regulation. Nordoff Robbins found that music therapy helps non-verbal children communicate effectively, with a 50% increase in engagement during sessions. Music supports sensory processing and social skills for children with autism and helps regulate focus and behavior for those with ADHD. These benefits make music a versatile and inclusive tool, particularly valuable in SEN programs.



Older Adults

Music provides cognitive and emotional support for older adults, especially those dealing with dementia or Alzheimer's. UK music programs like **Singing for the Brain** have shown that music therapy can improve memory recall by up to 40% in people with dementia, enhancing their overall quality of life and reducing feelings of loneliness. Music reconnects seniors with cherished memories and promotes social bonds, improving their sense of community and well-being.



Since our inception as a Community Interest Company (CIC), we have remained committed to listening to the needs of our community, adapting and evolving to best serve those we aim to support.

Our focus has always been on providing **accessible, impactful** services that address the specific challenges faced by local families and individuals. Whether it's offering educational support, promoting inclusion, or fostering creative opportunities, we strive to be a responsive and dynamic organization.

Below are the projects we have launched and continue to develop in order to achieve meaningful, lasting impact within our community.



Learn to Play Open Day



Student Work Experience



Adaptive Teaching for SEN students



Pay What You Can Summer Lessons

'My daughter has been attending Stoke Newington Music School (SNMS) for 3 and a half years. At the start of her music journey at the school she was unable to read notes which we believed was attributed to her speech and language troubles in school. In only 6 months my daughter was able to read notes and ready for her Grade 1 piano exam, which she passed with a merit. She has now achieved a Grade 5 piano and working towards her Grade 5 theory exam. My daughter loves SNMS so much especially the help and support she receives from her talented and wonderful teacher. The attention to detail, encouragement and enthusiasm of the teaching staff and positive vibes of students makes the place very special. I would highly recommend the Stoke Newington Music School.'

Parent of Student Aged 11

Our **Learn to Play Open Day** was created to address the growing need for accessible music education within Stoke Newington and Hackney. In partnership with the **Music For All Charity**, we aimed to give children the rare opportunity to try multiple instruments and explore musical interests without financial barriers. Music For All's mission to break down barriers to music aligns closely with ours, making them an ideal partner for this event. As a charity, they work to ensure that anyone, regardless of background, can access music, supporting programs that build confidence, skill, and social connection.

Our Mission

Our mission with the Learn to Play Open Day was to introduce a wide range of instruments—piano, guitar, drums, violin, and more—to children who may not have had the chance otherwise. By targeting local schools and communities with minimal access to music resources, we aimed to inspire a passion for music among diverse groups of young people. According to the Arts Council, children who engage in music are more likely to experience benefits such as increased concentration, higher self-esteem, and enhanced emotional expression. Offering these instruments in a welcoming and supportive environment allowed us to create a positive, memorable experience for each child, encouraging future exploration.

Our Results Our outreach extended through local schools, community venues, and hubs, resulting in **41 registered students, of whom 85% were beginners**. This high percentage of first-time learners demonstrates the community's unmet demand for music education. The day provided these students with a fun, hands-on introduction to music, often helping them overcome initial anxieties and doubts about learning an instrument. As one parent shared, *"My child never had the chance to try music before this event. Seeing them light up when they tried the drums was unforgettable."*

The event reinforced the importance of inclusive, accessible arts programs and set the foundation for future engagement with music.



Our **Work Experience Program** started in Summer 2024, providing young people with the opportunity to gain real-life skills in a supportive environment. This program is open to local secondary school students interested in exploring careers in music, teaching, or both. With Hackney having one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in London, meaningful work experiences are invaluable for students' personal and career growth. Our work experience covers essential teaching techniques, class management, and the fundamentals of working with children, which many young people find relevant and inspiring.

Skills Learned

Volunteers in the program learn to communicate effectively, manage a classroom, create lesson plans and collaborate with music instructors to adapt lessons based on students' individual needs. This exposure teaches patience, flexibility, and active listening, which are critical skills in both education and many other fields. According to the UK Music Skills Academy, early exposure to teaching and leadership roles can significantly boost self-confidence, career readiness, and life skills in young people. Through this program, participants learn the practicalities of lesson planning, working with children, and teaching foundational musical techniques, experiences that can enhance both personal development and employment prospects.

Results

Of the seven students who completed the work experience, two now volunteer weekly, assisting instructors and building long-term relationships with students. This has not only fostered a sense of pride in their own abilities but also created positive role models for younger students. By establishing connections within the wider musical community, these young people gain a deeper understanding of the industry and confidence in their abilities, setting them up for future success.



Hackney’s population includes a significant number of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)—approximately 17%, according to local government data. Music has been shown to enhance cognitive and emotional development in SEN students, offering them new avenues for self-expression and social connection. As SNMS grew, we received numerous inquiries from parents seeking inclusive music lessons, often after their children had been turned away from other programs due to accessibility challenges. Understanding the therapeutic and social benefits music can provide, we created a specialized program in 2022 which is led by an SEN tutor to meet this vital community need.

Our Lessons

We partnered with a local SEN specialist with extensive experience in both education and music to volunteer with SNMS. With her guidance, we have introduced sensory learning techniques and adapted instruments to make lessons accessible. This approach helps us create an inclusive learning environment, focusing on each student’s strengths and adapting to their unique needs. Our SEN tutor has provided critical support and training to our staff, ensuring that we’re using the most effective, student-centered techniques, which has led to stronger engagement and progress in SEN students.

Results

Our SEN student population has increased significantly—from 8% to 19% over the past three years. This increase reflects the growing need for adaptive music education within our community. Parents have praised the impact these lessons have had on their children, with many students showing enhanced confidence, communication skills, and enjoyment in learning. One parent shared, **“This is the first time my child has felt understood and included in a music setting. It’s life-changing.”**

Our efforts continue to bridge the accessibility gap, making music a joyful and therapeutic outlet for all.

‘My daughter has been attending violin classes at Stoke Newington Music School for more than five years now (there were some gaps during Covid years of course). She has already passed the grade 1 level and can play the violin nicely and she is improving all the time with lessons and practices. She loves music so learning a new skill is helping her confidence increase as well as helping her socially such as making new friends etc. I have only good things to say about the school. Ms Paige, the director/tutor of the school, is great; she is very helpful with lessons/payments, any questions/requests etc. she is always there to help. The teachers my daughter has had are really good; friendly and smiley. The prices are also affordable. So I highly recommend the school.’

Parent of Student, Aged 11



Our Impact - Pay What You Can Summer Programme 08

Our **Pay What You Can Lessons** allow families to pay according to their financial capacity, creating a supportive system where contributions from those who can afford more help subsidize the costs for those who cannot. This model enables us to offer music education to low-income families during the summer, when affordable and meaningful activities are often limited. The initiative addresses the barriers many families face, ensuring that music lessons remain accessible without compromising the quality of resources or instruction. Launching this in Summer 2023 and continuing for the follow Summer of 2024, we were honoured with the overwhelming results from our community.

Our Purpose

The Pay What You Can model was introduced after we recognized that many families, despite their children's interest, couldn't commit to regular lessons due to cost concerns. In Hackney, over 37% of children live in poverty, limiting their access to extracurricular activities like music. Although SNMS had previously offered free trials, we understood that temporary exposure was insufficient for sustainable learning, so we designed Pay What You Can as a bridge between access and affordability. Additionally, offering this program during the summer—a time when low-cost community activities are sparse—meets a vital need for structured, skill-building opportunities.

Results

Eight children from diverse backgrounds participated, forming a supportive group that learned the basics of piano over two weeks. This unique opportunity allowed them to experience learning within a mixed-income, multicultural setting, enhancing community bonds and broadening social perspectives. As parents noted, these lessons offered children a way to develop self-expression, patience, and a strong sense of accomplishment. The Pay What You Can program directly addressed socioeconomic barriers and fostered a sense of community by bringing together students who might not have met otherwise.



Our Over 65's Music Lessons were launched in April 2022 to provide seniors with an enjoyable daytime activity, encouraging them to engage in music and connect socially. Recognizing that many older adults face limited recreational options and social isolation, we designed a 15-week course of group lessons to create a supportive and friendly environment for shared learning and connection.

Our Mission

Our goal was to make music education accessible and enjoyable for seniors, fostering a sense of community and new skill development. To accommodate financial constraints, we offered these lessons at a reduced rate of £5 per session, after finding that the regular price was a barrier for many. This affordable rate allowed participants to attend regularly, building confidence and creating friendships as they learned instruments together.

Results The response was highly positive, with participants enthusiastically attending and supporting one another in the learning process. One student noted, *“It gives me a reason to leave the house and try something new. Knowing we are all in the same boat and beginners is fun. We all support each other to continue and have a good time. I've made some great friends here and even meet up for lunch during the day.”*

The program fostered social bonds, boosted well-being, and left a lasting impact on the lives of our senior participants.



Mother of Two says:

My kids' musical abilities also have helped them socially where they can teach younger children at family/friends any group gatherings and gives them something really interesting to talk about. They take great pride in their skills and have learnt that hard work does pay. In particular my daughter who tends to worry about things is now able to walk confidently to any piano and play beautifully.

Mother of two girls aged 10 & 13

5 Years of Growth & Joy

My son started at SNMS when he was 5 years old and is now 10 years old, since then, SNMS has been part of his growth not only teaching him to play a musical instrument but developing his self-confidence. As mother I am very grateful for choosing SNMS from minute one the staff and teachers have always been there to support us.

Family have attended for 5 years

An Inclusive & Supportive Space

The music school has an inclusive and welcoming environment for students of all needs and reasonable adjustments are made for students who have diverse needs

Parent of Child Who Has Attended for 6 years

Performance Opportunities

The regular concerts throughout the year put on the music school is such a lovely experience for all students, family, friends and community to not only showcase all the students hard work but also building the confidence of all students.. The music school is an asset to the local community and provides opportunities to students that would otherwise be accessible

Review from parent receiving subsidized lessons

Confidence Boosting

We find the school really supportive and encouraging which boosts Alice's confidence and interests even away from the piano.

Mother of 9 year old student

Emotional Stability

The school has also inspired my 2 sons who have autism to not only learn how to read music and play instruments to a high standard, but has also helped them regulate their emotions through music

Parent of Autistic Children aged 10 & 14.

Encouraging and Nurturing

Teachers adapt lessons to individual needs and learning styles, providing a supportive and encouraging environment. Through these approaches, the school helps students grow as musicians and individuals. When I asked my older son to tell me what he likes about Stoke Newington Music School he said the teachers and the atmosphere. He formed a bond with his guitar teacher which motivates him to strive for the best and learn more not just at the school but also at home. *Parent of Two aged 8 & 15*

Thank you for taking the time to learn about our work and our dedication to supporting our community. At the heart of our mission is the belief that every individual deserves access to resources, opportunities, and support to thrive. Our commitment to listening, responding, and creating programs that meet real needs drives every project we undertake.

To continue this work and expand our reach, we rely on the generosity of supporters and the essential funding that allows us to keep these programs accessible to all. Every contribution enables us to do more, impacting more lives and building a stronger, more connected community. Together, we can continue making a meaningful difference.



Warmest Regards

Paige Palmer
Founder & Managing Director



Website

www.snmusicsschool.co.uk



E-mail

director@stokenewingtonmusicsschool.co.uk



Socials

[@stokenewingtonmusicsschool](https://www.instagram.com/stokenewingtonmusicsschool)

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