

HOW MUSIC AND ACCESS TO MUSIC TUITION PROMOTE POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

General wellbeing

Numerous studies have concluded that music and music education have a statistically significant impact on the wellbeing of participants. A year-long study by [Noise Solution](#) found that, following music outreach, the percentage of participants experiencing a low level of wellbeing decreased to less than 20%. Another study by [Rhythmix](#) concluded that many young people find that music can help them to take steps towards improved mental health and wellbeing.

Reduces anxiety and depression

Singing has been proven to reduce anxiety and depression. A study by the [Sidney De Haan Research Centre](#) shows that singing reduced participants' feelings of mental distress, anxiety and depression, and improved their mental wellbeing more generally. [Research](#) has also concluded that there are a range of health and wellbeing benefits associated with participating in a choir, including physical relaxation and release of physical tension, emotional release and reduction of feelings of stress, a sense of happiness, positive mood, joy and elation.

Cognitive growth

Neuroscientists are demonstrating that there is a causal connection between music study and cognitive growth. A report from [The Royal Conservatory](#) found that 'music education is a powerful tool for attaining children's full intellectual, social, and creative potential'. It speed 'the development of speech and reading skills', training 'children to focus their attention for sustained periods', and helping 'children gain a sense of empathy', all of which are conducive to positive mental health.

Wellbeing among parents

[Evidence](#) suggests that participating in music lessons with their child/children allows parents to feel 'among equals'. Parents feel recognition and connected with a group, reinforcing a sense of competent parenting and parental sensitivity. A safe place is created for both child and parent.

Increased self-esteem

In her report [The Power of Music](#), Susan Hallam describes how playing an instrument provides a means of self-expression and leads to a sense of achievement, increased confidence and self-esteem, self-discipline and persistence in overcoming frustrations when learning is difficult. Moreover, as part of his impact evaluation research into the [UK's Sing Up Programme](#), Professor Graham Welch cited attitudinal data revealing that children with experience of Sing Up are significantly more positive about themselves, have a stronger sense of belonging to their community and of being socially included.

Social development

Music makes a major contribution to the development of self-identity during adolescence. [Reports show](#) that participating in musical groups promotes friendships with like-minded people, social and networking skills, a sense of belonging, team work, co-operation, responsibility, commitment and mutual support.

Emotional intelligence

[Music has been linked](#) to an increased capacity to recognise and be sensitive to emotions, traits which are both related to the development of emotional intelligence.

Imagining future possible selves

The [concept of possible selves in music](#) is a powerful one that conveys the transformational potential for children and young people's meaning-making experiences in music. Because of the experiences children and young people have, it is possible for them to imagine a role for music in their lives and to strive on their own and with others to achieve this. A [research partnership commissioned by Music Generation](#) with DCU found that there is a range of possible selves, which might include being connected to others through music, to being musically creative, innovative and inventive with music, taking a leadership role in music, or simply having music as a significant, personally expressive part of one's life.