

Evidence Brief: Music Therapy

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Produced by the HEE Knowledge Management team Evidence Briefs offer a quick overview of the published reports, research, and evidence on a workforce-related topic.

Date of publication: December 2022

Please acknowledge this work in any resulting paper or presentation as:

Evidence Brief: Music Therapy. Hannah Wood. 2022. UK: Health Education England Knowledge Management Team

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Key publications – the big picture

[The Allied Health Professions \(AHPs\) Strategy for England](#), NHS England, 2022

This strategy is a catalyst for change. Wherever you work, every member of our AHP community has a part in realising our collective ambitions through its delivery. I therefore encourage you to take a moment to consider how the AHP community can enable the change required to deliver future care today.

[Mental health statistics: prevalence, services and funding in England](#), 2021, UK Parliament

The [Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing in England](#) found that 1 in 6 people aged 16+ had experienced symptoms of a common mental health problem, such as depression or anxiety, in the past week. Women were more likely than men to be experiencing common mental disorders. Prevalence has increased since 1993.

[Adult Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme](#), 2021, NHS England

IAPT is widely-recognised as the most ambitious programme of talking therapies in the world and in the past year alone more than one million people accessed IAPT services for help to overcome their depression and anxiety, and better manage their mental health.

[Written evidence submitted by British Association for Music Therapy](#) (DEL0340), 2020, BAMT

Music therapy is an established psychological clinical intervention delivered by HCPC registered Music Therapists, to help people of all ages – babies, children, adolescents, adults and the elderly - whose lives have been affected by injury, illness or disability through supporting their psychological, emotional, cognitive, physical, communicative and social needs.

Case Studies

[The path to becoming a trainee music therapist](#), 2021

One of the most important things that we are constantly reminded to do as trainee music therapists is to look after ourselves. A lecturer at Plymouth taught me the value of taking time out when things get a little overwhelming, and that is a lesson that I have carried with me on my new course.

[HEE: Case study 5 - independent Arts and Health Consultant](#)

I could support art, music or drama therapists as I am familiar with working in a creative way with other therapists. I could potentially offer placements to other health professionals due to working with all professions in the hospital. It would be useful if the student had completed other placements before so they have knowledge of how an art therapist works in various settings.

HEE Star

More resources and tools are available in the AHP Quick Reference Guides Upskilling section of the [HEE Star](#). Alternatively, search for 'Allied Health' in the search bar.

Statistics

[A Descriptive Analysis of Music Therapy Employment from 2013 to 2019](#)

Results indicate a large portion of music therapists (MTs) have been in the field for five years or less. Though the majority of MTs work full time, there is a high rate of part-time employment.

[Number of Music Therapists from 2008 -2018](#), 2018

[British Association of Music Therapists Workforce Survey](#), 2015
Scroll down to download the file. The 2015 BAMT Workforce Survey was designed for the purposes of a study exploring the profile of the UK music therapy workforce in terms of demographics, training and employment characteristics.

HEE National Data Programme

HEE staff can look at the [National Data Warehouse \(NDL\)](#) SharePoint site to find out more about datasets and Tableau products.

Published Peer Reviewed Research

Leadership, coaching and education

[Nurturing Learning Through the Pre-clinical Music Therapy Supervision Relationship](#), 2022 *Abstract only**

I reflect on my supervisory experiences to highlight the opportunities and demands intrinsic to the relationship, advocate supervisor commitment to an active process of self-inquiry and reflexivity, and recommend strategies to nurture open dialogue, particularly regarding identities, privileges, and sociocultural forces.

[Business Education for Music Therapists: A Qualitative Exploration](#), 2022 *Abstract only**

Our findings indicate that the amount of business education participants received as students did not match the amount of business education they perceived necessary to be business

owners, and that they sought out additional training from a variety of sources.

[Clinical teletraining in music therapy: Two educators' perspectives](#), 2022 *Abstract only**

Among these challenges was the impact of the pandemic on clinical training, as pandemic restrictions limited in-person contact and prompted music therapists to shift to telepractice. These changes in service delivery also prompted changes in clinical training, leaving some music therapy faculty to simultaneously learn, teach, and supervise telepractice.

[Survey of Current Financial Needs of Undergraduate Music Therapy Students](#), 2022 *Abstract only**

This study also compared the needs between BIPOC (Black, indigenous, people of color) and white students. Implications of findings as they relate to music therapy education and further research regarding the financial need and socioeconomic status are also discussed.

[Towards a Model of Leader Character Development: Insights From Anatomy and Music Therapy](#), 2021

Understanding what character is and how it can be developed affords the potential to examine whether strength of character explains how different people function in the same context.

[Safeguarding Curricular Self-Experiences in Undergraduate Music Therapy Education and Training](#), 2021

Educators, clinical trainers, and supervisors who employ SEs are encouraged to implement safeguards toward upholding professional ethics and supporting learners' personal and professional development.

[Music Therapy Degree Program Enrollment Trends: What the Numbers Tell Us](#), 2019 *Abstract only**

Results indicated that music therapy program enrollment and degree attainment at the undergraduate and graduate levels are growing at a faster pace than all other music majors combined—and at all 4-year degree-granting postsecondary institutions.

[Exploring the Creation of Useful Interfaces for Music Therapists](#), 2018

This paper reports the iterative prototype design of a compact and intuitive device designed in close collaboration with music therapists across the globe to promote the usefulness and usability of prototypes.

Community, primary, secondary and tertiary care

[A Transdisciplinary Approach to Promoting Self-Determination: Collaboration Between Special Education Teachers and Music Therapists](#), 2022 *Abstract only**

The authors of this manuscript outline and describe a three-step process for collaboration between music therapists and special educators to promote self-determination among students while also providing a vignette to demonstrate this practice.

[Shifting the Focus to Teachers: A New Approach for Music Therapists Working in Schools](#), 2022

Two practice principles, “focus on the teacher” and “enable sharing,” are presented to provide a framework for music therapists striving to support teachers. Following these principles may allow teachers to grow their musicality, teaching, and self-care practices. This paper concludes with implications of reframing the focus of music therapy practice with teachers for other music therapists working in the current performance-driven schooling system.

[Music Therapy clinical outcomes](#), 2021

The aim of music therapy is to create a fun, interactive musical connection and build on this to achieve longer term goals. Goals can include helping a child or young person develop their coping skills, work on their communication, cognitive, fine or gross motor skills through music, or increase their ability to express how they're feeling.

[Effectiveness of music therapy in reducing the level of anxiety among cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy](#), 2020 *Abstract only**

Music therapy is effective in reducing anxiety levels of cancer patients who are undergoing chemotherapy.

[Attunement in Music Therapy for Young Children with Autism: Revisiting Qualities of Relationship as Mechanisms of Change](#), 2020

Findings suggest that symptom severity is associated with the therapist's ability to attune to the child. They further raise questions concerning outcome selection and user involvement.

[Feasibility of Home-Based Neurologic Music Therapy for Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia: A Pilot Study](#), 2019 *Abstract only**

Introducing and incorporating the principles of NMT earlier in the course of dementia could allow for increased comfort and benefit for people with dementia and their caregivers.

[The impact of a community-based music intervention on the health and well-being of young people: A realist evaluation](#), 2019

Our findings show that the intervention achieved a positive impact on the self-confidence, well-being and engagement of disadvantaged young people. This impact was achieved via an approach personally tailored to the individual needs of the

young people; and an organisational environment characterised by trust, whereby young people felt safe to express themselves.

[Music therapy and dementia care practice in the United Kingdom: A British Association for Music Therapy membership survey](#), 2018

The main factor that would increase music therapy provision in dementia care was seen as 'greater awareness' of music therapy amongst the general public and within the National Health Service. Nearly one-quarter (23%) thought that training and development could help increase provision. This was the largest survey undertaken to date of dementia practice by Music Therapists in the United Kingdom.

[Music therapy in UK palliative and end-of-life care: a service evaluation](#), 2018

Although promising that evidence suggests provision of music therapy in UK PEOLC settings in the past 10 years to have increased, lack of sustainable funding suggests the role to not be consistently accessible.

[A randomised controlled pilot and feasibility study of music therapy for improving the quality of life of hospice inpatients](#), 2018 *Abstract only**

Evidence about the effectiveness of music therapy for improving the quality of life of palliative care patients is positive but weak in terms of risk of bias.

Role progression and development

[Defining Best Practices for the Development and Implementation of Music Therapist Verbal Processing Skills in Clinical Spaces](#), 2022

Themes that emerge through this process include: (1) the power of integrating verbal and musical processing modalities

to optimize clinical efficacy; (2) the impact of therapist theoretical orientation on the positioning of verbal processing; (3) the importance of remaining within ethical and educational scope of practice introducing verbal processing in music therapy spaces; (4) the need for a standard definition of verbal processing in music therapy; and (5) the need for concrete verbal skills training in music therapy education.

[Music Therapy Program Development in a Hospital Setting: A Critical Review of Literature](#), 2022

This research shows that even though there is a large amount of research on music therapy in medical settings, standardization of the field, education and advocacy remain important as the field grows to meet the culture it operates within and the needs of the diverse communities that music therapy serves.

[Understanding the present, re-visioning the future: An initial mapping of music therapists in the United Kingdom](#), 2019 *Abstract only**

As an initial mapping of the current UK workforce, this study offers a pragmatic platform to consider development and strategic priorities and thus to re-vision the future of music therapy in the country. Potential implications for the international music therapy community are also discussed.

Workforce perspectives and mental health

[The Role of Music Therapy in the Emotional Regulation and Psychological Stress Relief of Employees in the Workplace](#), 2022

In the end, it is concluded that music therapy can stimulate employees' creative inspiration, eliminate employee fatigue, and eliminate some potential unfavorable factors. It can also enhance the friendship between employees, improve employee

work efficiency and employees' sense of corporate identity, and reduce employee pain sense.

["There has probably never been a more important time to be a music therapist": Exploring how three music therapy practitioners working in adult mental health settings in the UK experienced the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic](#), 2022

Through data analysis, six common themes were identified: "Music therapists experienced initial impacts on their own mental health", "Music therapists are adaptable", "Online music therapy is meaningful", "There may be barriers to online provision for service users", "Feelings differ between music therapists about adopting extra work" and "Music therapy is more relevant now than ever".

[Joining the workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic: views of Allied Health Profession students](#), 2022 *Abstract only**

Although the transition from student to practitioner continues to be a stressful period, only a minority of participants reported COVID-19 as an explicit stressor. However, as the effects of COVID-19 continue to evolve in the United Kingdom, universities and healthcare trusts must ensure adequate supports are in place for recent graduates navigating this transition during a healthcare crisis.

[Workforce Characteristics, Workplace and Job Satisfaction, Stress, Burnout, and Happiness of Music Therapists in the United States](#), 2022 *Abstract only**

With the inclusion of data on salary, workplace and job satisfaction, stress, burnout, and happiness, a comprehensive picture of the working lives of music therapists emerges. On the whole, music therapists appear to be generally happy with their workplace and job conditions and to experience moderate stress and low burnout.

[Wellbeing and coping of UK nurses, midwives and allied health professionals during COVID-19-a cross-sectional study](#), 2022

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant effect on psychological wellbeing and quality of working life which decreased while the use of negative coping and burnout of these healthcare professionals increased.

[Collective experiences in medical music therapy teams during COVID-19](#), 2021 *Abstract only**

During the COVID-19 pandemic music therapy managers in hospitals were responsible for supporting their teams through relentless planning and implementation of change, including working virtually and in-person. The Creative Arts Therapies Managers' Network was established as a group of eight music therapy managers to formulate and appraise thinking and generate and refine meaningful constructs to sustain their own capacities as managers.

[Receptive music therapy to reduce stress and improve wellbeing in Italian clinical staff involved in COVID-19 pandemic: A preliminary study](#), 2020 *Available with OpenAthens*

The results seem to confirm that in an emergency situation, it is possible to put in place a remote MT support intervention for CS exposed to highly stressful situations.

[Relationship between labour force satisfaction, wages and retention within the UK National Health Service: a systematic review of the literature](#), 2020

Pay was found to influence satisfaction, which in turn affected retention. An increase in wages alone is unlikely to be sufficient to ameliorate the concerns of NHS workers.

[Burnout among music therapists: An integrative review](#), 2019 *Abstract only**

Music therapists, like other helping professionals, are at risk for burnout. Strategies for managing and preventing burnout have been suggested, and those strategies are consistent with research in other fields. However, research is needed to explore the effectiveness of specific strategies.

Diversity and inclusion

[Exploring the Lived Experience of Disabled Music Therapists: A Literature Review](#), 2022

This literature review examines the history of disability studies, disability statistics, disability competencies, as well as the lived experience of three different disabled therapists. Far more research is required in this area of the field, however, there is enough research out there to instigate a need for change.

[Anti-oppressive pedagogy as an opportunity for consciousness raising in the music therapy profession: A critical disability studies perspective](#), 2022

Through introducing these frameworks for socially just, anti-oppressive pedagogies, this article invites consciousness raising in music therapy pedagogy through engagement with critical disability studies theory and philosophy.

[The Lived Supervision Experiences of Disabled Music Therapists](#), 2022

While each participant could identify and describe at least one positive supervision experience, this study revealed that disabled music therapists' supervisory needs were generally not met within music therapy supervisory relationships.

[“Raising the curtain on the equality theatre”: a study of recruitment to first healthcare job post-qualification in the UK National Health Service](#), 2022

The Healthcare Workforce Equity + Diversity Lens we have developed can help to ‘raise the curtain on the equality theatre’ and inform more inclusive approaches to recruitment such as contextualised recruitment or effective allyship between employers and universities.

[Anti-oppressive music therapy: Updates and future considerations](#), 2021

AOMT links critical music therapy theories to increase ethical practice and social justice in music therapy theory, education, research, and practice.

[BAMT Diversity Report](#), 2020

In August 2020, we sent out a survey to better understand the concerns and issues regarding equality, diversity and inclusion within the Music Therapy profession in the UK. The survey was open to all qualified and training Music Therapists gathering important demographic data. We also asked participants to identify three key priorities to address the lack of diversity within Music Therapy and gave an opportunity to share further concerns or experiences relating to discrimination or lack of diversity within the profession.

[A Problematic Conflation of Justice and Equality: The Case for Equity in Music Therapy](#), 2020

If music therapists truly espouse justice, then there should be a critical examination of this in the profession-- in ourselves, our work, our relationship to music, our organizations, and in our education and training.

Competency Frameworks

[BAMT Guide to Professional Practice & Code of conduct](#), 2022

This page gives information on the standards governing practicing music therapists in the UK, including professional members of BAMT. It also gives information about guidance on different aspects of music therapy practice in the UK.

[Development of a digital competency framework for UK Allied Health Professionals](#), 2020

This framework has been developed to support the enhancement of digital competence (knowledge and skills associated with digital technology in practice) for all allied health professions from band 3 to band 9. It is intended to be a developmental and supportive tool that can enable all staff to meet their digital potential.

***Help accessing articles or papers**

Where a report/ journal article or resource is freely available the link has been provided. If an NHS OpenAthens account is required this has been indicated. It has also been highlighted if only the abstract is available. If you do not have an OpenAthens account you can self-register here.

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