



'HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE CREATE THEIR OWN MUSIC'

## Youth Participation Policy

### **Our commitment**

We believe that young people have a right to have their views and wishes heard and taken seriously.

We put young people at the centre of what we do.

The core of our approach to participation is our day to day engagement with young people. We aim to maintain and develop a listening culture throughout the organisation passing on important information in both directions. We expect formal and extended participation activities to grow out of this, rather than replace it.

### **What do we want to do?**

We want young people to be involved in our decision making processes in ways that are meaningful and relevant for them without expecting too much too soon.

This policy is about giving young people the choice to be involved, recognising their rights, encouraging them and affirming them in their abilities.

We want young people to have opportunities to influence the things that are important to them. For example:

- Appointment of tutors
- Review of existing tutors
- Choice of venues
- Deciding which equipment to buy
- Ideas and plans for new developments and projects
- Review of existing projects.
- Planning and running gigs
- Deciding what holiday activities to run
- Input to web site.
- Input to evaluation and reports
- Representing Music Makers at Conferences and other events

### **Why?**

We believe this will improve the quality of what we offer, enabling us to plan, target and evaluate our work more effectively. By drawing on the experience of skills of young people we can be more certain to get our decisions right about what young people need and how to provide it.

We also believe that this will help young people feel part of Forest of Dean Music Makers, bringing many benefits, for example, increased commitment, increased security of equipment and willingness to contribute as volunteers.



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## How are we going to do it?

The main decision making power in Music Makers lies with the Project Leader and with the Trustees. Young people need to be able to have direct access to these people. This will be made possible by:

**Direct contact with the project leader** - through regular visits to projects, meetings with young people and access by phone, or email.

**A termly open young people's meeting** with a facilitator, when issues can be identified and discussed and then presented to the Project Leader or Board of Trustees as appropriate.

Young people will also be involved in the following ways:

**Being asked their views** at Music Makers activities, either verbally or on evaluation forms and that information being passed on by tutors to the project leader.

**Appointments** - We will continue to build a pool of trained young people who can be involved with both appointments and staff reviews.

**Planning groups** set up for specific activities e.g. summer challenge.

**Consultations** - when new developments, directions or new equipment purchases are being planned.

We will follow these principles:

Both adults (board members and staff) and young people will be able to set the agenda for participation.

We will take the needs of young people as our starting point and avoid putting excessive demands on any individuals or groups.

We will make resources available to properly support participation – providing training and facilitators for young people, providing appropriate food, expenses and rewards.

We will adapt to the changing needs and interests of young people and allow for new approaches to develop.

Tutors and other staff will be made aware of this policy and will be required to support it in their work.

## What do young people get out of it?

They will gain knowledge, skills and experience that can be transferred into other parts of their lives such as increased self esteem and skills in leadership, communication, decision making and negotiation.

There will be opportunities to have fun and build friendships.

They will gain a greater sense of responsibility, of ownership and of active engagement in Music Makers.

They will be kept informed of the outcomes of their participation

Rewards will be made available for those who get involved, such trips, food, extra access to recording.



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They will gain a level of influence and an element of choice about the provision offered and gain understanding of their own wants and needs.

**Is this policy set in stone?** – No, this policy is seen as a starting point. We expect our approach and policy to develop in response to experience. The core values and objectives expressed are not expected to change.

**MB/GS - 30/03/2005**

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