CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Trustees' Annual Report for the period: From 2nd Jan 2025 – To 1st Jan 2026

Charity name: MERYC-England

Charity registration number: 1169504

Objectives and Activities

	SORP reference	
Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	The objectives of the charity are to advance the musical education of all children in England aged 0 – 5 years.
Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.	Para 1.17 and 1.19	The three key areas of activity focus on: 1. Holding in person and online conferences, seminars and networking events 2. Support for training in early childhood music education (ECME) 3. Representation and communication **Activities 2025-26** **1. Conferences and seminars:** The organisation has organised and hosted one online early childhood music education research and practice seminar in this reporting period on June 30th, 2025. The seminar was led by a researcher in the field Mr Ioannis Litos and the theme of this seminar was 'The Music Corner in Pre-school Settings: Bridging formal and informal music making opportunities'. The event was attended by approximately 11 ticket holders. The online nature of these events ensures that we have practitioners and researchers attending from across England, the UK and occasionally from Europe/other international locations. This ensures the ongoing broad reach and impact of the charity and its work, as does the availability of the presentation slides via our website for those wishing to learn more on this topic after the seminar date. On October 19th, 2025 the charity hosted a one day, in person networking meet up day in collaboration with the Royal College of Music and included networking conversations, practical early childhood music education professional development workshops and a concert for attendees who were music educators and early childhood professionals in the field, along with music students form RCM and other HEIs. There

was no charge for this event, and it was attended by approximately 50 people.

There was no in person conference organised by the charity this year as our sister organisation EUNet MERYC were hosting a conference in Klaipėda, Lithuania which was attended by some of our trustees. We are planning an in person MERYC England conference in Reading on October 31st 2026 in collaboration with Berkshire Music Trust.

2. Training

As reported in last year's summary of activity, 2025-26 is the eighth year of operation for the Certificate in Music Education, a flexible, part-time, distance-learning qualification in early childhood music. This is a recognised National Qualification which was initiated by MERYC England in partnership with the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) in 2017. The CME trains practitioners in the ECME field to level 4 standard. It was initially set up to fulfil two objects, namely:

-attempting to increase the quantity and quality of research that will inform early childhood musical experience by supporting research initiatives of all kinds.

- attempting to raise the quality of practice in early childhood music by encouraging evidence-based practice, critical reflection and the adoption of principles of social justice.

The day to day running of the certificate course runs independently of MERYC England, through the Centre for Research in Early Childhood being accountable to Trinity College, London. The course is co-directed by Jane Parker, a former honorary MERYC England Trustee and current MERYC England Trustee Margareta Burrell works on this course as a mentor to students, thus retaining and continuing the strong links between this initiative and MERYC England.

3. Representation and communication

All MERYC England trustees are affiliated within a range of music education organisations or work as advisors to such organisations as Music Mark, Music Education Council, International Society of Music Education, Youth Music, Sound Sense and have been responsible for research papers, presentations and books and publications on music learning. The CIO itself has a corporate membership of the Music Education Council

		(MEC). Three current Board of Trustees members are full time academics working in Higher Education teaching and research in institutions based Manchester (University of Manchester), Birmingham (CREC/Birmingham City University), and Newcastle (Newcastle University). Trustee Dr Jessica Pitt stood down from her role within the charity in November 2025 after more than a decade of association with the charity. We thank Jessica wholeheartedly for her contribution and we maintain links with her and with the Royal College of Music where she works part time through the London Arts and Humanities Partnership Doctoral student that she co-supervises with Dr Julia Partington, MERYC England Chair of Trustees whose research focuses on early childhood music education and the legacy of the work of MERYC England. In the year 2025-26, we have further developed the MERYC England website, in line with our communications strategy, with the aim of making our objects aims and activities clearer and more accessible. In addition, this sets out our links with other organisations and achievements of practitioners and researchers as presented at local, national, and European contexts. The new trustees recruited in 23-24 have brought with them experience of using social media to promote the charity's activities and aims and we have increased our following on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook as a result. In October 2025 (19th October) we were alerted by a former trustee of the existence of a fake website claiming to be MERYC England's website and immediately took the following actions in response: • Notified Action Fraud on 19th October, 2025 and logged the incident. They notified us that that this was not a crime and that they could take no further action. They instructed us to file a Serious Incident report with the Charity Commission. • A serious incident report was logged with the Charities Commission on 19th November. The incident reference number is: 844620. Trustees have regularly monitored the website and the situation to ensure that the website remains incapable of collecting funds and we are still exploring methods of getting the website taken down. • We contacted the abuse department of one.com which was used to create the

website on October 20th requesting the removal of the fake website but this was not granted.

- Contacted the website host Vercel.com requesting the removal of the fake website but this was not granted.

- Lodged a safe browsing report to Google.com so anyone searching for our website will find the correct one first. This has been effective.

- Notified our partners at CREC of the issue. Their legal advisors were satisfied with the actions we have taken in this matter.

- We have regularly posted announcements since this incident to our followers on social media (Facebook and Instagram) that this is not our website and as we do not take funds for membership or via donations, only via platforms such as Eventbrite for events we organise, not to give money to MERYC England via any other means.

- A response to the RSI was received by MERYC England on November 19th 2025 notifying us that the incident had been recorded and that trustees should inform them of any further developments in the matter, of which to the very best of our knowledge, there have been none.

- We are reassured that no money has been gained by this fraudulent website as its donation button are inactive.

PhD student:
Ms. Maria Sanchez continues her LAHP funded Doctoral study on cultural citizenship towards cultural engagement with the support of MERYC England. This project continues to be supervised by charity trustee and lecturer Dr Jessica Pitt at the Royal College of Music (RCM) and Dr Julia Partington (Newcastle University Senior Lecturer in Music and MERYC England Chair) has taken on the role of co-supervisor on behalf of MERYC England. As previously reported, this research study is proving to be instrumental in supporting a range of administrative tasks in relation to our charity activities, including compiling research blogs, and researching links between theory and practice as catalogued in the archival evidence from the last 20 years of both MERYC England's and EuNet MERYC's activities. This research is on pause while Ms. Sanchez is on maternity leave.

		This doctoral study aims to strengthen MERYC England's position and increase understanding of its contribution to the field of early childhood music in England. Furthermore, the establishment of a collaboration with Royal College of Music is proving to be mutually beneficial for both organisations. As reported previously, it was envisaged that the collaboration demonstrates the ways that the contemporary conservatoire reaches beyond its traditional audience to be relevant to wider society. For MERYC England this partnership offers the organisation a platform for developing connections into the music and music education sectors which will raise the profile of early childhood as an important developmental stage deserving of quality musical experiences.
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	Para 1.18	All trustees have familiarised themselves with the 'Essential Trustee' national guidance, have reviewed the constitution of the CIO and regularly explore in our meetings the applicability of principles related to good governance, as defined in the CGC.

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

	SORP reference	
Policy on grant making	Para 1.38	One of our key objects is '*promoting the integration of research, theory and practice by organising and funding meetings for that purpose'.* This year, as with the past three years, we have continued to prioritise holding online seminars and planning in person events at a modest fee for participants, rather than issue multiple grants. No grants have been given in this reporting period to ensure we have reasonable reserves of around £5000-£6000 to enable us to offer online seminars and in person events, ensuring we have adequate funds to cover costs such as venue hire, catering and payment for speakers, given the higher cost of all of these expenditures than in previous years.
Policy on social investment including program related investment	Para 1.38	The charity aims to hold a music education conference biennially, in alternate years to MERYC EuNet. This regular conference acts both as a means to maintain professional connectedness and as a way of building revenue for the charity. We plan to host an in-person conference in Reading in October 2026.
Contribution made by volunteers	Para 1.38	All MERYC England Trustees volunteer their time and energies. Any expenses planned for activities, such as compiling material for the website or organising and attending conferences, are agreed in advance and set to be in proportion to the task. Financial management is under regular review at each Board meeting. Trustees may co-opt participants to share the load as

		agreed in advance by the Board.
Other		

Achievements and Performance

	SORP reference	
Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.	Para 1.20	The key achievements this year have been: **Seminars and networking meet up days** The 2025 online seminar and the in person meet up day at Royal College of Music were attended by a range of high profile academics in the field, along with early career researchers, students and practitioners in the field from across the UK. The seminar series aims to support freelance music practitioners and researchers in the field bringing them together through regular events where both groups are free to contribute and share their work, their ideas and experiences. This approach has resulted in an established network of regular attendees from across England and further afield, engaging with the work of the charity and with each other as a network of professional from across England. This continues to be a particular strength of this online meeting approach combined with in person conferences and informal meet ups. Online seminars and the conference were once again facilitated by the charity trustees who gave their time and expertise to host each one, to organise the discussions and ensure an inclusive environment. To this end the Board set up ground rules for online activities to safeguard participants and facilitators. **Training** Although not directly responsible for the Certificate course, Trustees remain supportive and as an advisory body should it be needed. The involvement of a charity trustee, Margareta Burrell as a course mentor enables regular reporting to trustees on the progress and development of the course at board meetings. **Representation and communication** Individual trustees continued to represent the charity through different platforms this year, particularly through Music Education Council (MEC), Sound Sense and British Early Childhood Education Research Association (BECERA).

Additional information (optional)
You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Achievements against objectives set	Para 1.41	In 2021 we set our objective to become more accessible to a wider audience and this work has continued to be a large part of our work in 2025-26. Continuing to develop our website and social media presence and following as tools to promote the work of the organisation, and to provide useful links to those working in the ECME sector involved collaborative planning and ongoing work to keep the content up to date and engaging for users, while also promoting the events, grants, and resources we have to offer.
Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set	Para 1.41	Our fundraising objectives continued to be deliberately modest in 2025-26, as we prioritised pricing our seminar programme and conference at competitive prices in the understanding that many similar organisations were offering courses in the sector free of charge, or at a very low cost. The numbers of participants in these activities and who attended multiple sessions in the period under review gives the charity confidence that the public service we are providing has been welcomed within the sector.
Investment performance against objectives		N/A
Other		

Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	Para 1.21	At the end of this period the Charity's bank account with the Co-operative Bank showed a balance of £6014.52
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	The policy to hold a reserve is under continuous review by the Board of Trustees We keep this reserve to indicate prudent financial management against risk of activities failing to meet costs, and to ensure there is a balance in the account, when applying for grants.
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	£2000
Reasons for holding zero reserves	Para 1.22	N/A
Details of fund materially in deficit	Para 1.24	N/A
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	Para 1.23	N/A

Additional information (optional)
You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

		The principal source of revenue is from

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)	Para 1.47	CPD seminar fees and biannual conference delegate fees.
Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted	Para 1.46	N/A
A description of the principal risks facing the charity	Para 1.46	The principal risks are the capacity of individual trustees to continue the activities that generate funds. All are totally committed to the purposes and aims and the objectives. All are volunteers.
Other		N/A

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document (trust deed, royal charter)	Para 1.25	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g unincorporated association, CIO)	Para 1.25	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Para 1.25	Trustees are representative of a range of practice and from different regions in England. A balance is maintained between researchers and practitioners, to ensure the charity's objectives are met, according to the constitution document.

Additional information (optional)
You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees	Para 1.51	All trustees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Constitution, with the Charity Commission guidelines for good governance and with the principles of the CGC. Principles are reviewed regularly in the light of current projects and activities. All trustees have been DBS checked. MERYC England adheres to the policies held by CREC in safeguarding and in equality, diversity and inclusion. In the year 2021-22 we established agreed guidelines for online video conferencing and initiated a privacy statement.
The charity's organisational		There are currently nine MERYC England trustees following the stepping down of Dr Jessica Pitt. All Trustees act in a voluntary

structure and any wider network with which the charity works	Para 1.51	capacity, with expenses agreed in advance where applicable, e.g. for specific tasks relating to conference and seminar administration and facilitation. They regularly represent MERYC England on a range of bodies, e.g. Youth Music, Music Mark and Music Education Council. The current Board of Trustees are located and work across various regions of England, north to south, in recognition that in previous years, the location of most trustees was within the south of England, thus potentially limiting the reach and location of activities regionally for the charity.
Relationship with any related parties	Para 1.51	Our website and social media accounts connect with regional and local music education networks across England and also with European and the international music education network, International Society of Music Education.
Other		

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	MERYC-England
Other name the charity uses	
Registered charity number	1169504
Charity's principal address	Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) St Thomas Children's Centre, Bell Barn Road, Attwood Green, Birmingham, West Midlands, B15 2AF Telephone: +44(0)121 464 0020

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Dr Julia Partington	Chair		
2	Dr Ryan Humphrey	Trustee		
3	Margareta Burrell	Trustee		
4	Prof Chris Pascal	Trustee Representing Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC)		
5	Barbara Cavanagh,	Treasurer		

6	Stephen Grocott	Trustee		
7	Vanessa Stansall	Trustee		
8	Danielle Ballantine-Drake	Trustee		
9	Carol Bowden	Trustee		

Corporate trustees – names of the directors at the date the report was approved

Director name		
N/A		

Name of trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity

Trustee name	**Dates acted if not for whole year**	
N/A		

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

Description of the assets held in this capacity	N/A
Name and objects of the charity on whose behalf the assets are held and how this falls within the custodian charity's objects	N/A
Details of arrangements for safe custody and segregation of such assets from the charity's own assets	N/A

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR JAN 25 - DEC 25 MERYC England

Opening Balance:		**£6,235.45**					
			Income		**Expenditure**		
			Feb-25			Feb-25	
				£0	WIX account		£66.62
			SUBTOTAL	£0	**SUBTOTAL**		£66.62
Net Income:		-£66.62					
Closing Balance:		**£6,168.83**					
			Income		**Expenditure**		
			Jun-25			Jun-25	
				£0	Zoom a/c		£155.88
			SUBTOTAL	£0	**SUBTOTAL**		£155.88
Net income:		-£155.88					
Closing Balance		**£6,012.95**					
			Income		**Expenditure**		
			Jul-25	£125		Jul-25	£0
			SUBTOTAL	£125	**SUBTOTAL**		£0
Net Income:		£125					
Closing Balance:		**£6,137.95**	**Income**		**Expenditure**		
			Aug-25			Aug-25	
				£0	Playsong publications	£47.80	
					Ioannis Litos (seminar)		£75.63
			SUBTOTAL	£0	**SUBTOTAL**		£123.43
Net income:		-£123.43					
Closing Balance:		**£6,014.52**					

Additional information (optional)

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Exemptions from disclosure

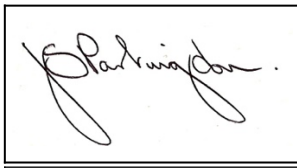
Reason for non-disclosure of key personnel details

Other optional information

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		B.Cavanagh
Full name(s)	Dr Julia Partington	Barbara Cavanagh
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair of Trustees, MERYC England	Trustee and treasurer, MERYC England
Date	26/10/25	