

Music therapist

Music therapists use the power of music to help people deal with feelings they cannot put into words.

Working life

You'll use music to help their clients achieve therapeutic goals through the development of the musical and therapeutic relationship.



You'll facilitate positive changes in people's emotional wellbeing and communication through engagement in live musical interaction.

Central to music therapy is the relationship you'll establish with the people you'll work with. You'll use a wide range of instruments, including voice, and the music created is often improvised. Using music in this way, people can create their own unique musical language in which to explore and connect with the world and express themselves.

You'll work with the natural musicality of people. You'll use a wide range of musical styles and genres including free improvisation to offer appropriate, sensitive and meaningful music interaction. You'll work one-to-one or in groups, depending on the needs of the client.

Apprenticeships logo

Music therapy can be particularly helpful when emotions are too confusing to express verbally. This could be because of communication difficulty or when words are too much or not enough.

You'll work with people of all ages and use music to help clients through emotional or mental problems, learning and/or physical disabilities, developmental disorders, life-limiting conditions, neurological conditions or physical illnesses. You could work in a variety of health, social care and educational settings including hospitals (NHS and private), day centres, schools and prisons.

How to become a music therapist

You need to do an approved Masters degree in music therapy and then register with the Health and Care Professions Council ([HCPC](#) ^[1]).

Entry requirements

You are likely to need a music degree. If you don't, you'll be required to have an undergraduate degree or professional qualification in a relevant field such as social work or teaching. You'll also have to demonstrate your musical proficiency.

It can be helpful to have some pre-training work experience. This does not have to be music-related but you will need to have undertaken a professional role where you have been responsible within a caring profession for the welfare of a vulnerable person.

Degree apprenticeship

A level 7 apprenticeship for arts therapists, including art therapists/art psychotherapists, dramatherapists and music therapists is available but opportunities are currently limited. You'll need to apply for an apprentice position with a health care provider. You can search for vacancies on the [NHS Jobs website](#) ^[2] and [Find an Apprenticeship website](#) ^[3].

Skills and personal qualities needed

You'll need:

- a high level of musicianship including improvisation skills
- excellent communication skills
- creativity, intuition and imagination
- an ability to relate to people from all backgrounds and to provide a safe environment
- flexibility, adaptability and openness
- resourcefulness
- a non-judgemental approach
- emotional strength and resilience
- sensitivity and maturity and to be able to reflect on their own emotions

Where the role can lead

Some music therapists choose to specialise in a particular clinical area of interest such as child development, neuro-disability, mental health or palliative care. Dementia is an increasing area of specialisation for music therapists. Other music therapists choose to work in two or three clinical areas depending on their interests. New developments in the UK for music therapy include working with children pre-operatively and in special care baby units.

Music therapists hold both employed and self-employed posts, with some choosing to work both for an employer and at the same time offering a private practice.

As an experienced practitioner, there are opportunities to develop your skills and take on more managerial roles such as consultant music therapist, where a key task is managing a team of music therapists. Music therapists also hold posts such as head of arts therapy, managing a

team of therapists including music therapy as well as other therapists such as art therapists or dramatherapists. In some contexts there are opportunities to take up lead roles within a multi-disciplinary team.

Experienced music therapists may choose to train and supervise other practitioners and students or develop their academic and research interests by undertaking further study through a PhD.

Pay and benefits

Most art therapists in the NHS work part-time hours and posts typically start at band 6 of the [Agenda for Change pay rates](#) [4]. You'll also have access to our generous pension scheme and health service discounts, as well as 27 days of annual leave plus bank holidays.

• Find your course to become a music therapist

Region	Type of qualification	Full or part time
- Any - ▼	- Any - ▼	Search ▼

Displaying 16 - 20 of 30 matches

MA in Art Psychotherapy

Goldsmiths, University of London

[View course](#) [5] Opens in a new window

- Study mode
 - Full-time
- Duration of the course
 - 2 years
- Leading to a career in
 - Art, Music or Drama therapies
- Contact details
 - course-info@gold.ac.uk [6]
- Region
 - London
- Admissions address
 - Goldsmiths College
 - London
 - SE14 6NW

MA in Art Psychotherapy

Goldsmiths, University of London

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- Study mode
 - Part-time
- Duration of the course
 - 3 years
- Leading to a career in
 - Art, Music or Drama therapies
- Contact details
 - course-info@gold.ac.uk ^[6]
- Region
 - London
- Admissions address
 - Goldsmiths College
 - London
 - SE14 6NW

MSc Art Psychotherapy

Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

[View course](#) ^[7] Opens in a new window

- Study mode
 - Full-time
- Duration of the course
 - 2 years
- Leading to a career in
 - Art, Music or Drama therapies
- Contact details
 - admissions@qmu.ac.uk ^[8]
- Region
 - Scotland
- Admissions address
 - Queen Margaret University Drive
 - Musselburgh
 - EH21 6UU

MSc Music Therapy

Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

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- Study mode
 - Full-time
- Duration of the course
 - 2 years
- Leading to a career in
 - Art, Music or Drama therapies
- Contact details
 - admissions@qmu.ac.uk ^[8]
- Region

Scotland
Admissions address
Queen Margaret University Drive
Musselburgh
EH21 6UU

MSc Art Psychotherapy

Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

[View course](#) ^[7] Opens in a new window

- Study mode
 - Part-time
- Duration of the course
 - 3-4 years
- Leading to a career in
 - Art, Music or Drama therapies
- Contact details
 - admissions@qmu.ac.uk ^[8]
- Region
 - Scotland
- Admissions address
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• Live vacancies

Find a vacancy

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Other roles that may interest you

- [Creative therapy support roles](#) ^[11]
- [Dramatherapist](#) ^[12]
- [Art therapist/art psychotherapist](#) ^[13]

- Clinical psychologist [14]

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Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#HCPC> [2] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/> [3] <https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates> [5] <http://www.gold.ac.uk/pg/ma-art-psychotherapy/> [6] [mailto: course-info@gold.ac.uk](mailto:course-info@gold.ac.uk) [7] <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/postgraduate-study/2022/msc-art-psychotherapy/> [8] [mailto: admissions@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@qmu.ac.uk) [9] <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/postgraduate-study/2022/msc-music-therapy/> [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/printpdf/348?page=4> [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/Explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/creative-therapy-support-roles> [12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/dramatherapist> [13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/art-therapistart-psychotherapist> [14] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/clinical-psychologist>