

# 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](#) <sup>[1]</sup>).

## 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](#) <sup>[2]</sup> and [Find an Apprenticeship website](#) <sup>[3]</sup>.

## 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 21 - 25 of 30 matches

## MA in Art Therapy

University of Chester

[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
  - [hscadmissions@chester.ac.uk](mailto:hscadmissions@chester.ac.uk) [6]
  - 01244 511000
- Region
  - North West
- Admissions address
  - Riverside Campus
  - Castle Drive
  - Chester
  - CH1 1SL

## MA in Music Therapy

Guildhall School of Music & Drama

[View course](#) <sup>[7]</sup> 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
  - [music.therapy@gsmd.ac.uk](mailto:music.therapy@gsmd.ac.uk) <sup>[8]</sup>
  - 020 7382 7392
- Region
  - London
- Admissions address
  - Silk Street
  - Barbican
  - London
  - EC2Y 8DT

## MA in Music Therapy

Bristol, University of the West of England

[View course](#) <sup>[9]</sup> Opens in a new window

- Study mode
  - Part-time
- Duration of the course
  - 3 years
- Leading to a career in
  - Art, Music or Drama therapies
- Contact details
  - [admissions@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@uwe.ac.uk) <sup>[10]</sup>
- Region
  - South West
- Admissions address
  - Glenside Campus
  - Blackberry Hill
  - Stapleton
  - Bristol
  - BS16 1DD

## MSc in Art Psychotherapy

Ulster University

[View course](#) <sup>[11]</sup> Opens in a new window

- Study mode
  - Part-time

Duration of the course

2 years

Leading to a career in

Art, Music or Drama therapies

- Contact details

[ft.murphy@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:ft.murphy@ulster.ac.uk) <sup>[12]</sup>

028 95367549

- Region

Northern Ireland

Admissions address

Ulster University

York Street

Belfast

Co. Antrim

BT15 1ED

## MA in Music Therapy

University of Derby

[View course](#) <sup>[13]</sup> 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

[askadmissions@derby.ac.uk](mailto:askadmissions@derby.ac.uk) <sup>[14]</sup>

- Region

East Midlands

Admissions address

Britannia Mill

Mackworth Road

Derby

Derbyshire

DE22 3BL

- [Load more Load more results](#) <sup>[15]</sup>

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Enter your location or postcode

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## Other roles that may interest you

- [Creative therapy support roles](#) [16]
- [Dramatherapist](#) [17]
- [Art therapist/art psychotherapist](#) [18]
- [Clinical psychologist](#) [19]

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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.chester.ac.uk/postgraduate/art-therapy> [6] [mailto: hscadmissions@chester.ac.uk](mailto:hscadmissions@chester.ac.uk) [7] [http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/music/principal\\_study/music\\_therapy/](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk/music/principal_study/music_therapy/) [8] [mailto: music.therapy@gsmd.ac.uk](mailto:music.therapy@gsmd.ac.uk) [9] <https://courses.uwe.ac.uk/B99942/music-therapy> [10] [mailto: admissions@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@uwe.ac.uk) [11] <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/courses/202324/art-psychotherapy-30379> [12] [mailto: ft.murphy@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:ft.murphy@ulster.ac.uk) [13] <https://www.derby.ac.uk/postgraduate/therapeutic-practice-courses/music-therapy-ma/> [14] [mailto: askadmissions@derby.ac.uk](mailto:askadmissions@derby.ac.uk) [15] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/printpdf/348?page=5> [16] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/Explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/creative-therapy-support-roles> [17] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/dramatherapist> [18] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/art-therapistart-psychotherapist> [19] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/clinical-psychologist>