

MUSIC ON SEA NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

Welcome to the Music on Sea (MOS) January newsletter! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out via musiconsea@southend.gov.uk.

In this edition of the newsletter, you will find:

- A Welcome Back from Kitt Garner
- Key Updates
- Projects and Performance Opportunities
- Key Stakeholder Update, Including the Greater Essex Music Hub (GEMH)
- Safeguarding
- Key Contacts

A Welcome Back from Kitt Garner

Happy new year! 2026 has begun with a wonderful sense of energy and purpose for music across Southend. As schools have returned after the Christmas break, it has been fantastic to see classrooms once again filled with singing, instrumental work, and the excitement of new musical projects taking shape. There is already so much to look forward to in the months ahead, and the commitment from teachers, parents, and young musicians is setting a truly positive tone for the spring term.

This January we celebrate the successful opening of our new Southend Music Centre, and it has been wonderful to see young people already engaging with the new creative opportunities now available. As the Music Centre continues to grow, it is already becoming a vibrant space for progression, collaboration, and wider community music-making. You can read more about this in the Key Updates section below.

To school leads, I look forward to visiting you soon as we strengthen our partnership working across the city. Thank you, as always, for your enthusiasm, collaboration, and unwavering support for music education in Southend.

Kitt Garner, Lead Officer for the Music Service



Key Updates

Southend Music Centre

Southend-on-Sea is celebrating a major boost to music education with the recent launch of the Southend Music Centre, a new after-school community hub designed to widen access to high-quality music-making for children and young people. Delivered by MOS, Southend City Council's Music Service, and funded by the Department for Education through Arts Council England (ACE), the centre marks a significant investment in creative opportunities across the city. The new centre, based at Southend High School for Boys, offers weekly sessions every Monday evening during term time and provides a vibrant space for students aged 7–18 to explore, learn and perform.

Speaking at the launch, Kitt Garner, Lead Officer for the Music Service, said: "Southend Music Centre represents a new chapter for music education in our city. We want every young person—regardless of background or experience—to feel that music is something they can be part of. This centre gives them a place to learn, to create, and to belong. We're incredibly proud to bring this opportunity to our community. The centre is also the new home of MOS's historic Rock School, a long-running rock and pop ensemble that has played a key role in Southend's emerging gig scene for over twenty years. Brining it under the umbrella of the new Music Centre means even more young musicians can benefit from its energy, creativity and performance opportunities."

Southend Music Centre offers three specialist pathways: Rock School - a dynamic band-based programme for guitarists, drummers, vocalists, bassists and keyboard players, focusing on collaboration, creativity and live performance. Southend Brass Academy - weekly 30-minute small-group lessons for beginners on trumpet, tenor horn and trombone, including free instrument hire for the first 12 months. The Southend Strings Project - weekly 30-minute small-group lessons for beginners on violin, viola and cello, also with free instrument hire for the first 12 months.

Tuition is priced at £30 per 10-week term, with financial assistance available. Further details can be found at www.musiconsea.co.uk.

Parents and carers can register their child using the following link: <https://www.southend.gov.uk/xfp/form/34>. For further information, please contact MOS at: musiconsea@southend.gov.uk

MOS Strengthens Tutor WCET Delivery

This January, our MOS tutors came together for a focused evening of CPD centred around whole class ensemble tuition (WCET), an area we are committed to growing as part of our support for school music provision. The session provided an opportunity for tutors to explore effective approaches to group musicianship, share best practice, and reflect on strategies that engage and inspire entire classes of young learners.

As WCET continues to play a vital role in broadening access to high-quality music education, investing in the ongoing development of our peri tutor team is essential. The collaborative atmosphere underlined the strong sense of commitment to delivering consistent, inclusive, and inspiring musical experiences for every child.

We are excited to see this learning put into practice across Southend on Sea schools over the coming terms. By equipping tutors with the tools, confidence, and support they need, MOS is continuing to expand the impact of whole class teaching across the city—ensuring more children have the opportunity to make music together, discover new talents, and build lasting musical foundations.



Please [complete this form to book your sessions](#) for WCET in summer 25/26 and direct any questions to musiconsea@southend.gov.uk.

Service Level Agreements for In-School Tuition

Delivery commitment is via the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between MOS and the school. You will have already or will soon be receiving your SLA for the spring term, and here is a reminder of the process that we follow:

1. Book: Schools contact musiconsea@southend.gov.uk emailing the details of new pupils or classes required.
2. Check: Tutors confirms all hours that they will take on - directly with the school.
3. Confirm: SLAs issued to the school. Schools confirm with MOS that this is correct and share details of any pupils who receive financial assistance.
4. Invoice: Invoice sent to the school for the term, as laid out in the SLA.

The MOS 25/26 booklet lays out the provision on offer. Music leads are to familiarise with [booking terms and conditions](#).

Financial Assistance

MOS offers financial support to ensure every child and young person can access music opportunities. Families on low incomes, pupils receiving Free School Meals, Looked After Children, and young carers qualify for assistance, as laid out below:

- Instruments
Hire instruments for eligible families at half price (£15) and Looked After Children at no charge. Discounts can be requested via the instrument hire form.
- Ensembles
Free membership for pupils on Free School Meals, young carers, and Southend Advantage Card Category C holders. New members can enjoy a free trial session. Apply through the ensemble membership form.
- HMRC's Assisted Instrument Purchase scheme (AIPs)
Save VAT on instrument purchases for pupils in full-time education who are eligible, such as receiving lessons or being part of an ensemble. Approval must be granted via the application process before purchase.
- Tuition
Children Looked After or Previously Looked After can access free in-school lessons through MOS tutors. Families should apply via their school.

For full details and application forms, [visit the financial assistance page on our website](#).

Project and Performance Opportunities

Southend Makes Music

Thank you for the fantastic level of engagement from schools across the city for Southend Makes Music 2026. We are delighted to see so many settings preparing their young performers for Southend's largest celebration of youth musical talent! With the event now just around the corner, excitement is building for what promises to be an inspiring week of performances at the Palace Theatre.



All participating schools have now received their confirmed performance slots, along with details of the information required in advance of the event. If you are performing and are still unclear about any details surrounding Southend Makes Music, please contact us with your query as soon as possible.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming participating schools and their pupils to the theatre next week. If your school or group was unable to secure a place during the main application period and you wish to be considered for the waiting list, please contact us via musiconsea@southend.gov.uk to register your interest for Southend Makes Music 2027.

Key Stakeholder Update, Including the GEMH

This can be found here: [Home - Greater Essex Music Hub](#)

Safeguarding

A letter of assurance is sent to all schools and settings about compliance to vetting and checks for all MOS staff (tutors and officers). For MOS this was sent on behalf of Amanda Champ. The Safeguarding Policy for MOS can be found here: [Greater Essex Music Hub Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy](#).

Key Contacts

Your first point of contact is Ted Groves at musiconsea@southend.gov.uk.

Kitt Garner	Music Service Lead Officer & Designated Safeguarding Lead
Edward (Ted) Groves	Music Service Support Officer
Julie Hollingsworth	Senior Advisor and Manager for the Service
Amanda Champ	Head of Performance, Partnerships & Safeguarding

Who Do I Contact If I Have a Question?

I have a safeguarding concern/disclosure	Kitt Garner, DSL	kittgarner@southend.gov.uk
I'd like to request music provision	Ted Groves	musiconsea@southend.gov.uk
I have a challenge with a tutor	Kitt Garner, DSL	kittgarner@southend.gov.uk
I have a challenge with a provider/partner	Kitt Garner, DSL	kittgarner@southend.gov.uk
I'd like to discuss a sensitive matter	Kitt Garner, DSL	kittgarner@southend.gov.uk
I have a query about an SLA/agreement	Ted Groves	musiconsea@southend.gov.uk

Safeguarding Contacts

DBS Update Service: 0300 020 0190 / customerservices@db.gov.uk

MASH+ Children's Social Care, Southend-on-Sea City Council: 01702 215007 or 0345 606 1212 (out of hours for urgent referrals) / fct@southend.gov.uk

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer): lado@southend.gov.uk

Safeguarding Advisor: Sharon Langston 01702 534591 / safeguardingforchildren@southend.gov.uk

