

MUSIC ON SEA NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2026

Welcome to the Music on Sea (MOS) March 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:

- An Update from Kitt Garner
- Key Updates
- Projects and Performance Opportunities
- Sharing Successes
- Safeguarding
- Greater Essex Music Hub (GEMH) Update
- Key Contacts

An Update from Kitt Garner

At the end of the spring term, I'd like to reflect on the amazing musical achievements of young people in our city so far in 2026. With Southend Makes Music in February and partner-led workshops with Conductive Music CIC throughout the term, over 1000 children have had musical experiences outside of their usual delivery this term - creating memories and we hope, a lasting passion for music.

It has been a joy to see and hear pupils stepping outside their comfort zones, discovering new skills and instruments, and showcasing their creativity with such enthusiasm. Our schools and partners continue to demonstrate what can be achieved when a community works together to put music education in focus.

As we look ahead to the summer term, we're excited to build on this momentum with even more opportunities for young people to learn, perform, and thrive through music. You can read more in the rest of our March newsletter about opportunities that are coming up in the new term. Thank you to teachers, families, tutors, and partners who play a part in making Music on Sea such a vibrant and inspiring hub for musical growth.

Kitt Garner, Lead Officer for the Music Service



Key Updates

Service Level Agreements for In-School Tuition

Delivery commitment is via the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between MOS and the school. 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

Amplify (Previously Rock Fest)

We're excited to announce that MOS will be running our annual concert for bands in Southend schools this summer term. This event is always a highlight of the year, giving young rock and pop musicians the chance to perform on a professional stage and celebrate more of the incredible talent across our schools.

This year, Amplify will be taking place at The Fickle Pickle Club, Westcliff-on-Sea, on 13th May 2026.

Schools will receive formal invitations and full event information soon, so please keep an eye on upcoming newsletters and your inbox. We look forward to welcoming your students and showcasing the fantastic work happening in music across Southend. If you have any questions in the meantime, direct any questions to musiconsea@southend.gov.uk.



Bursary Opportunities for Young Musicians

Southend Choirs is delighted to announce that applications are now open for the annual music bursary scheme, operated on behalf of two former charities: the ESU and the Birn Young Musician of the Year. These awards are designed to support the next generation of talented musicians in our community.

The scheme offers two bursaries at £500 and £250 and is open to young musicians up to age 25. Applicants must either be currently studying music at a higher education institution or be in Year 13 and planning to begin a music degree the following September. To be eligible, applicants must live or study in Southend, Castle Point or Rochford.

We encourage all young musicians in the areas to consider applying - contact southendchoirs@gmail.com for more information.

Sharing Successes

Conductive Music CIC Workshops

This spring term, Music on Sea was delighted to partner once again with Conductive Music CIC to deliver a vibrant programme of creative technology workshops across Southend schools. These sessions introduced pupils to the exciting world where music, coding, and digital design meet, offering children a new way to explore their musicality.

Through hands-on activities, pupils experimented with electronic sound, built simple digital instruments, and learned how music and STEM can work together in fun and imaginative ways. The workshops not only encouraged curiosity and problem-solving but also empowered young people to create something uniquely their own.

Music on Sea is proud to support innovative opportunities like these, and we look forward to continuing this partnership to bring even more inspiring experiences to young people across our city.

WCET and Small Group Delivery Plans for Summer 2026

Music on Sea is delighted to report a significant rise in bookings for both Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET) and Small Group tuition for the summer term 2026. Schools across the city have shown enthusiasm for expanding musical opportunities, resulting in one of our highest levels of engagement to date.

This increased uptake reflects a growing confidence in the value of classroom-based and specialist instrumental learning, as well as the dedication of schools and families who champion music as a core part of every child's education. It's encouraging to see so many pupils set to begin their musical journey with high-quality, inspiring tuition.

We look forward to supporting even more young musicians as they learn, experiment, and flourish through music in the months ahead.

Southend Makes Music

In February 2026, Music on Sea hosted its annual Southend Makes Music event with great success - [take a look at our press release!](#)



Safeguarding

A Letter of Assurance to cover MOS staff and tutors is issued to all schools and educational settings (compliance with safer recruitment, vetting, and statutory safeguarding checks). The letter can be found here: [Education | Safeguarding Southend Partnership](#)

Our full safeguarding procedures are detailed in the Greater Essex Music Hub Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, which outlines our responsibilities, reporting processes, and the measures in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of every child we work with. The policy can be accessed here: [Greater Essex Music Hub Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy](#).

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

Greater Essex Music Hub (GEMH) Update

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

Key Contacts

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

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

Music on Sea team

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

