



Chair Recruitment Role information

Application Deadline: Monday 16 June 2025

Welcome from the outgoing Chair

Over the last 26 years our committed team of trustees, staff, volunteers and supporters have made Young Sounds UK one of the largest and most respected charities in music education. We're passionate about what we do, collegiate and open in our approach and a lot of fun to work with. The 1,400 young people we're helping depend on the sustained support we provide, and we're committed to be there for them and many more young musicians for the long term.

As I retire from my role as Chair, we're seeking a visionary and strategic leader to support us through our next phase of growth and impact on our journey to give all young musical talent a chance. If you think this could be you, we'd really like to hear from you.



Philip Jones
Chair

Philip



About Young Sounds UK

Musical talent is everywhere but opportunity isn't: family finances and other obstacles too often get in the way. Young Sounds is here to change this.

We support talented young people from low-income families, helping them to overcome financial and social barriers. Whatever the genre or style, our programmes help young musicians from across the UK to fulfil their musical potential.

Whether funding instruments, lessons, courses or other musical costs, expanding their musical networks or giving them opportunities to perform, we do everything we can to give individual support to young people in need.

We not only sustain musical journeys, we also help others to identify and nurture talent wherever they find it.



“Young Sounds gave me opportunities to perform to fantastic audiences, work with some of the best musicians in the industry and build a network of musical friends around the country. Young Sounds’ practical support and their belief in me throughout my teenage years were invaluable and I would have struggled to get to where I am without it.”

Jess Gillam MBE, Alumna Patron



(Left) Jess Gillam as an Award winner in 2013. (Centre) Jess collaborating with an Award winner in 2022. (Right) Jess meeting young musicians on our Connect programme in Sheffield in 2024.



“Rhys began his guitar learning in March 2020. At the time he was struggling to leave the house, he couldn’t sleep or eat and he had a significant mental health illness related to autism. Since he received his Award things have changed dramatically. He felt a huge sense of accomplishment and it boosted his confidence. He felt like someone believed in him – something he had not experienced at school. Music has truly changed Rhys’s life and given him hope. All I can say is thank you so much for helping my son find his smile.”

Alison, mother of Rhys supported by Young Sounds UK



(Left) Rhys performing for supporters in 2024. (Centre) Rhys taking part in our 2022 Awards Day at LIPA. (Right) Rhys performing with blues legend Buddy Guy in America in 2023.

Currently we support over 1,400 young people, and this year over 1,000 teachers will learn how to identify musical talent and potential in children who have perhaps never even touched an instrument.

Our work is nationally recognised. We’re a National Portfolio Organisation with Arts Council England, a National Youth Music Organisation, and we’re delivering the DfE’s Music Opportunities Pilot. Increasingly, we’re taking a leadership role in shaping music education in the UK. Youth Music have been a major long-term funder and Young Sounds has also been shortlisted for awards by both the Royal Philharmonic Society and the Music and Drama Education Awards.

Our funding comes from a broad portfolio: a strong and loyal cohort of private donors; trusts and foundations; legacies, in-kind support and public funders.

We’ve grown nearly 10-fold over the last 10 years but know that there is much more work to do, so we’re developing exciting plans for the future!



Who are we looking for?

As we move into our next phase of development, we're looking for a committed chair with energy, passion and the time to continue to help drive us forward. We want to talk to people who can bring a diversity of life experiences, cultural knowledge and expertise and as a national charity we're keen to attract candidates from all parts of the UK.

Above all we're looking for candidates who are passionate about and willing to advocate strongly for giving those young people facing the most barriers the chance to fulfil their musical potential. We also expect candidates to demonstrate a strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.



The role

The day-to-day leadership and operational management of Young Sounds is delegated to the Chief Executive, Hester Cockcroft. The Chair works closely with the CEO to ensure the charity continues to achieve its ambitions and leads the Board in delivering its responsibility for the overall governance and strategic direction of Young Sounds.

They'll be expected to engage with and support all aspects of the charity, helping to foster stakeholder relationships, representing the organisation regionally and nationally and ensuring strong governance and safeguarding. It's ultimately the Chair's responsibility to ensure that Young Sounds remains focused on its core vision.

As Chair you will:

- Provide strategic leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring the charity fulfils its mission, fiduciary and legal responsibilities.
- Work closely with the CEO to support effective decision-making and governance.
- Lead the Board meetings, ensuring collaborative, productive discussions and clear decision-making.
- Be a key ambassador for Young Sounds UK, helping to build relationships with donors, partners, and other stakeholders, maintaining and enhancing its reputation.
- Ensure the charity maintains high standards of financial oversight and risk management.
- Support fundraising efforts, including identifying and networking with potential donors and supporters.
- Champion our diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies.
- Act as a critical friend to the senior leadership team, offering guidance and constructive challenge.

Time commitment

- Board meetings: Four 3 hour meetings per year (2 online, 2 in London) and an annual Strategy Day, plus preparation time.
- Regular check-ins with the Chief Executive.
- Attendance at one or more of our monthly 1-hour committee meetings.
- Support at young people's events such as our BBC orchestra side-by-side days and our masterclasses.

While this is, of course, an unpaid role, reasonable expenses where incurred, will be reimbursed.

“As someone who has often struggled to find a musical home, being recognised for more eclectic and experimental music has meant so much to me. This Award will help me develop my craft and just being recognised has helped confront my self-doubt in relation to my music.”

Xavier, 18, composer, keyboard and guitar player, singer songwriter and producer

Person specification

Essential criteria

- Passion for Young Sounds UK's mission and a strong belief in the power of music to transform lives.
- Leadership experience at a senior level, in any professional field.
- Experience in governance and Board leadership, with a clear understanding of the responsibilities of a trustee.
- Ability to think strategically and provide oversight of organisational growth and development.
- Experience in fundraising, philanthropy, or income generation for charitable organisations.
- Strong communication and influencing skills, with the ability to engage diverse stakeholders.
- A commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and experience embedding EDI principles into organisational culture.

Desirable criteria

- A background in music, education, or youth development.
- A well-established network within the arts, business, and/or philanthropic communities.
- Experience in the charitable sector and/or dealing with government bodies.

"I'm thrilled to share some wonderful news! I've been accepted to RCM, RAM, and Guildhall, all with full scholarships! I just wanted to say how much Young Sounds helped me with my confidence. Knowing I had such a lovely and supportive community behind me made a huge difference when I walked into those audition rooms."

Teagan, 17, violin

Pictured: Teagan performing at our Autumn Concert, Stationers' Hall, 2023.



Board structure

Currently the Board has 13 members, two of whom are Alumni Trustees. Reflecting the particular circumstances that young people face, Alumni Trustees serve two-year terms. One third of the rest of the Board resign by rotation each year at the Annual General Meeting and may be re-elected to stand for further terms provided they have not at the time served for more than nine years. Current Board members are listed on our website [here](#).



Process and timeline

The application deadline is 12 noon on Monday 16 June 2025

Potential candidates may arrange a pre-application conversation with a Board member. If you're interested in doing so, please email Young Sounds' Chief Executive: hester.cockcroft@youngsounds.org.uk

To make an application please send a CV with a covering letter to Hester Cockcroft at the above email address outlining your motivation for applying and what you feel you'll be able to contribute to the charity. Please include your full contact details and any access requirements you may have.

In line with our Safeguarding Policy, for best practice and to meet funders' requirements it is Young Sounds' policy to request Trustees opt to undertake a DBS disclosure.



General charity information

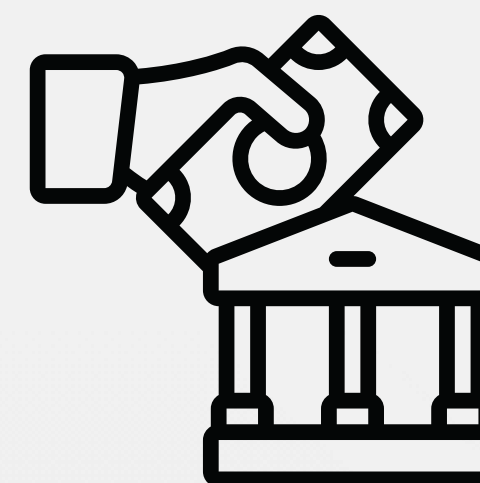
Young Sounds UK is the working name for Awards for Young Musicians. Registered Charity No. 1070994



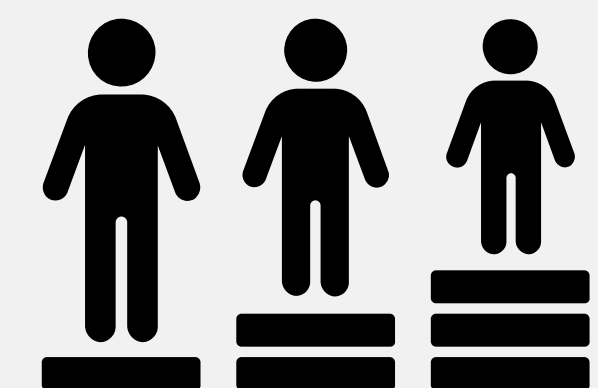
Our website
[Click here](#)



Young Sounds' Safeguarding Policy
[Click here](#)



Annual Report and Accounts
[Click here](#)



Young Sounds' EDI Policy
[Click here](#)

"In the 26 years since Young Sounds founding, when I became its very first Patron, much has changed in music education. Young Sounds has changed too, and is now a significant player in the sector, where it focuses on those most in need. This work is made possible thanks to the ever-growing support of donors and funders across the UK. Sadly Young Sounds' help is now needed more than ever as the arts are increasingly sidelined in schools and music funding constantly threatened. I'm extremely proud of the transformative difference our charity has made to so many young people's musical future."

Sir Simon Rattle OM CBE
Founding Patron





**Young
Sounds
UK**

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