

Submission – Special Educational Needs – Fiona Speller – 27 April 2015

I understand that Education & Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel is undertaking a review into Special Education Needs within the island.

I am the only qualified music therapist working in Jersey and since qualifying have worked at Mont A L'Abbe School. At present I work 2 mornings a week and 1 hour on another morning. This is funded between the school and Jersey Music Service. Jersey Music Service should have a full time music therapist to work, not just with Mont a L'Abbe School, but any child in the island.

At present I have a case load of 17 children I work with, 4 on the waiting list and many more who could benefit from music therapy, but are unable to access due to my time in school. Of the 17 on my books, I have to work on a rotation system as I am unable to work with all of the children in the time available. Some children receive a 6 week block of therapy, others receive sessions in alternate terms. For some children this is ample, for others it is definitely not enough.

In the UK a special educational school of this size would have their own full time music therapist on site. If not full time, then certainly part time. At present in the island only a handful of children have access to this therapy.

Music Therapy is an established clinical discipline and gained State Registration in the UK in 1999. Music Therapy specifically interacts with physiologic function to alter and re-pattern brain function into adapting more efficient responses to the environment.

As Williams states in the 2002 book,

"Music has the most important of all places in the lives of those who find the realm of the mind a place of rusty cogs and heavy effort - the stuff of overload, shutdown, information processing delay and the sensory chaos that ensues."

I hope this brief explanation helps cultivate an understanding of music therapy and where it should be within special educational needs in Jersey.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Fiona Speller
B.Ed. (Hons), Music Therapist