



Squeaky Gate is an extraordinary and creative charity, empowering people through music and the arts. We deliver a wide programme of live performance, creative training and accredited learning, focusing on producing and performing strong and original work.

Squeaky Gate works collaboratively to improve people's mental health and wellbeing and facilitate their social and economic inclusion through music. We proactively target our services at people at risk of social exclusion and work closely with partners from education, health, community and business sectors.

**How long has Squeaky Gate been running – how long has it been offering this great positive outreach to people with mental health problems through music?**

Although Squeaky Gate in its current form has only been around since 2009, I have been working on projects for vulnerable adults for over a decade. Many of our tutors and colleagues were involved in these projects too, so it was a case of formalising us all into a single organisation!

**How did it all get started?**

After having a very eclectic career as a trombonist, I was given both the opportunity and the money to plan an 18<sup>th</sup> month project working with people with mental health issues in Cambridge. Using the city of Cambridge as our inspiration, we developed an original piece that we performed in a sold out Kings College Chapel. It was a life changing moment for me and many of the other people involved, as I saw the power of creativity and music unfold in front of my eyes. From that moment on I knew that I wanted to give as many people as possible that opportunity.

**How big is the team at Squeaky Gate?**

Across our two offices, in Cambridge and London we have a team of seven, plus twenty highly skilled tutors who deliver our sessions. We are also supported by many volunteers who help out at the workshops.

There is an extensive list on their portfolio of various past productions raising awareness on mental health since 2005 through the empowerment of live music performances.



**However, I see the list runs out towards the end of 2011, what happened for 2012?**

2012 has been so busy for us that we have barely had time to update our website! This year, our students have performed as part of Brit Floyd's European tour at the Hammersmith Apollo, Birmingham NIA and Cambridge Corn Exchange, and we are now putting together the third phase of our project, Inside An Unquiet Mind, which will involve flash mob-style performances at all kinds of venues from community centres to supermarkets and even the Barbican. We have also established new partnerships including Birmingham Symphony Hall, an inspiring venue where we provide our Music Production courses, and moved our London base from Deptford to Spitalfields. Phew!

**What will the future hold for Squeaky Gate?**

We are excited about the brand new partnerships we are currently working towards, particularly linking with local colleges and also organisations such as the Single Homeless Project. We're hoping to support Brit Floyd once again next year. Most of all, we want to give more students the opportunity to take part in Squeaky Gate courses!

**Squeaky Gate Workshops: London, Cambridge, Huntingdon and Birmingham.**

"Additionally we offer regular music workshops in Bethlem Royal Hospital as well as music courses in prisons - most recently we've been in Littlehay Prison."

Squeaky Gate runs both regular and one-off workshops offering students the chance to find their feet, learn skills, get qualifications and spread their wings. For many, our workshops provide a vital step towards employment. Most of our regular workshops are OCN accredited Music Performance and Technology. They gain a Level 2 qualification (equivalent to 5 GCSE's grade A-C) whilst creating material and having fun.



**Squeaky Gate recently opened their first community recording studio in Cambridge with a range of multi-purpose facilities for hire (performance space, community recording studio and mac-suite/teaching room).**



**Must be amazing with fresh vibrant talent walking in 'straight off the streets', coming in to record in the studio. Have any of the people attending the workshops/recording studio been successful in a new music career?**

We definitely encourage our students to pursue professional opportunities where appropriate, and it's always great to hear when one of our students finds employment, in any sector. There's so much new, untapped talent out there and our courses give people the opportunity to find their hidden talents, so watch this space!

**Why music? How does music help mental health patients to cope?**

Our students have a keen interest in music, whether that's playing an instrument or music production. Giving people a chance to express themselves creatively in a supportive, inclusive environment increases their wellbeing through building their confidence, improving their sense of self-worth and increasing their sense of purpose, as well as their practical music skills. For many students, it is a second chance at education that they might have missed out on before. It's also an opportunity for students to socialise with people who have a similar interest, which is especially important when many vulnerable adults feel marginalised by society. Any art form can do this, but we choose to specialise in music.



**What instruments are most popular at the workshops?**

Many students have experience of guitar, drums or singing, but we give them the opportunity to try out different instruments as well. In our Music Production and Urban Music courses, the students use software like Garageband and Logic to create their own sounds.

**What kind of music do you do? Classic/rock/folk/jazz/pop?**

We're very open to what our students want to explore, but the Live Music sessions usually consist of working on classic rock or pop covers, alongside original compositions and songs that the students have written. In Music Production, the students can work on whatever genre they wish, and Urban Music focuses on that particular genre from writing lyrics to producing tracks.

**Who teaches at the workshops?**



We have a team of experienced and skilled tutors who deliver our workshops. Some are recording artists in their own right, such as rapper Tor Cesay, others are from a teaching background and they are all passionate about music!

**What age are the people that join the workshops? Any kids?**

Our workshops attract people of all ages and backgrounds, from 16 to 70! We do run some projects in schools, but our main focus is adults at the moment.

**Are the workshops free to attend?**

For many of our learners, the courses fees are free. There is a £25 enrolment fee, which gives the learner access to their courses for a whole year. Our focus is on giving everyone a chance to take part regardless of their background. If the student is not eligible for free tuition, we ask for a reasonable contribution or look for alternative funding.

**Can you bring your own instrument?**

Students are very welcome to bring their own instruments to our sessions if they wish to, but we do provide instruments for those who don't own them.

**Are the workshops at night/weekends open?**

Our sessions take place between Monday and Friday and the majority are open to anyone, as long as there are spaces available.

**Are they held all over the UK?**

We currently provide workshops in East London, South East London, Cambridge and Birmingham.

**SHINE ON – Campaign**  
**'Empowering people through music'**

*"My brother, Syd Barrett, was one of the founding members of Pink Floyd. He was an imaginative, gifted person whose music and paintings inspired and continue to inspire many people. I have been closely involved with Squeaky Gate as a Trustee for several years. We work with a range of people who have mental health problems, are homeless or who for many different reasons are at risk of social exclusion. Squeaky Gate provide opportunities for people to express themselves creatively, improve their musical skills, gain qualifications and improve their self esteem. The harsh reality is that one in four of us will experience a mental health problem at some time. This is a direct appeal for you to help this unique and wide reaching charity. I know that Syd would have loved to be involved with Squeaky Gate and this is why I am 100% behind it ask you to support us.  
Thank you, Rosemary Breen"*