



The Clarion, as featured in the Guide to Buying Adaptive Musical Instruments | Photo source [National Open Youth Orchestra](#)

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COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION PROGRAM AIMS TO IMPROVE MUSIC ACCESSIBILITY

 NONPROFIT & SOCIAL CAUSE

The initiative focuses on improving the supply chain for adaptive instruments for schools and adapting music production software for use by visually impaired, among other goals

Spotted: The Accessible Instrument Challenge is a collaborative project that aims to make playing music more accessible for a range of differently-abled people. It was launched following a research project which found that most music retailers were not aware of or adapted instruments, and just half of all music educators knew where to source adapted instruments.

The goal is to enable greater access to music for everyone. It is supported by a range of institutions, including Creative United, Birmingham City University, UCL, Plexel, Steinberg and Arts Council England. Eight teams are collaborating to address, “a series of innovation challenges, focusing on the design, manufacture and supply of non-standard musical instruments and assistive equipment for both disabled and non-disabled musicians to use”, the organisers told Springwise.

Teams are focusing on areas such as improving the supply chain for adaptive instruments for schools; adapting mainstream music production software for use by visually impaired music producers; improving the design and manufacturing process for a one-handed 3D printed recorder; improving the accessibility of the bagpipes, and developing a prosthesis violin bow holder.

According to the Accessible Instrument Challenge, they are looking to, “bring together expertise in digital innovation and design technology, musical instrument making and lived experience of disability.” The project aims, “to take further steps forward in making adaptive musical instruments more affordable, making music education in schools more inclusive and uncovering new solutions that haven’t been tried before.”

Accessibility is a vital issue and one which we follow avidly here at Springwise. Some of the innovations in this space that we have seen recently include a system that helps the visually impaired use [touchscreens](#) and an improved interface for robots that help those with [motor impairments](#).

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Website: accessibleinstruments.com

Contact: accessibleinstruments.com/contact-us

Takeaway:

Music education may seem like a minor need, but being able to access music learning is important to providing the differently-abled with an inclusive environment in schools and in the job market. As the organisers told Springwise: “Music is a universal language – or at least it should be.” Although a number of products have been designed for disabled players, many of these are bespoke and thus very expensive. By focusing on accessibility and reduced cost, the Challenge hopes to encourage musicians everywhere.