

**All-Party Parliamentary Group for Music Education, Briefing Minutes
Wednesday 6 July 2022, 4pm**

Opening Proceedings

Parliamentarians present: Earl of Clancarty (Chair), Steve Baker MP, Kate Green MP, John McDonnell MP, Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall, Baroness Perry of Southwark, Baroness Wilcox of Newport

Apologies: Diana Johnson MP

The attending parliamentarians were joined by members of the music education sector.

Welcome: Earl of Clancarty (standing in for Diana Johnson MP)

Deborah Annetts, Chief Executive of the ISM

Presentations

1. Rhianon Passmore, Member of the Welsh Senedd for Islwyn, a musician and former music teacher – the Welsh National Plan for Music Education (NPME)

Rhianon Passmore said there is much to welcome in the Welsh NPME.

Key points

- New Welsh Music Service; this has been called for cross-party across Wales. Aim: money should be no barrier to pupils in Wales accessing music.
- Funding has been increased from £1.5m to £4.5m pa
- There will be a review of music tutors' terms and conditions
- First Experiences programme, giving all pupils the chance to play an instrument for a term
- Making Music with Others programme, giving pupils the chance to gain industry experience
- A new National Library of instruments and resources to allow free access to instruments

Future of music in Wales: aim to have funding sustainability, a qualified and knowledgeable workforce, with evaluation and review of the NPME by the Senedd.

[Read the Welsh NPME](#)

Questions/comments

Baroness Wilcox of Newport: Thank you Rhianon for the Welsh NPME. It is a blueprint for the future and a testament to what we believe in for music education. Hope the English model replicates this. It is particularly needed in areas of deprivation.

Gennaro Castaldo, BPI: It is great to see music education so supported in Wales. The effect of the absence of music on people's well-being, as shown during the COVID-19 pandemic is well evidenced. So important that young people who have been stressed

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during the pandemic have opportunities to access music. It's those who cannot pay who will benefit the most from this access.

Josh Cadman, director of Sing Education: There is a huge disparity in access between rural and urban areas, with much more going on in urban areas. What does the Welsh plan have to say on ensuring equality of access across rural and urban areas?

Answer: This is true and it is important that children are able to travel to access music opportunities such as taking part in ensembles. These kind of ensemble opportunities are just as important as individual instrument lessons. So yes, the plan is trying to address this.

Richard Jones, assistant head of service, Solihull: What about Northern Ireland? They are now an outlier, given that Wales and England now have plans and Scotland is also investing in music services.

Answer: You need to ask them that question yourself. It is important that any music plan is not a piecemeal policy. It has to be a holistic approach that looks at the needs of the area.

Peryn Clement-Evans, Ensemble Cymru: There are many smaller independent music charities, orchestras etc who would like to be involved with this plan. How might we engage with it?

Answer: Absolutely. Please engage with the cross-party group that has been founded. There are various stakeholders that engage regularly with this group, plus the creative education in learning strategy is used to help instrumental performers to visit schools and give pupils the experience of engaging with this kind of music making.

Rhiannon Mathias, author and flute teacher: The plan says that funding will be released to LAs in time for September. Do we have a date for when this will happen?

Answer: The plan will be live from Sept and the funding formula via LAs is already in operation so there should be no delay to work starting in September.

2. Dr Jodie Underhill, Research Associate at the ISM – *Music, a subject in Peril?* report

Jodie Underhill gave an overview of the recent ISM report, *Music, a subject in peril?*, which presented the findings of a survey of over 500 music teachers from all types of schools.

Key findings

- Impact of Covid on music provision in schools has been severe
- Narrowing curriculum, such as 2-year KS3 and arts carousels, is affecting music provision in many schools
- Peri teachers echoed these findings and have been impacted particularly by Covid and cost of lessons as a barrier to access
- There is a huge disparity in funding between independent and state schools
- Impact of accountability measures on music provision (the EBacc and Progress 8) has been devastating

It is good to see so much of what the ISM has been calling for in the new NPME. We will monitor its progress and continue to campaign for the things that are missing, such as increased funding and reform of accountability measures

[Read the full report](#)

Questions

Paul Edlin, Director of Music at Queen Mary University, London: Support all that Jodie has said. Those who work in HE and indeed across music education will recognise these challenges. Have witnessed over the past years a serious decline in young people's ability in the arts, brought about by lack of access to music education. This is a serious issue that drives the long-term sustainability of art education in the state sector. What can we do now to transform the catastrophic decline in access to and quality of music education?

Jodie: Lots of things to be hopeful about in the new NPME – the commitment to one hour a week, improving the perceived value of the subject, some additional funding. We are a little hopeful although we know teacher recruitment is still a problem, but the hours being taught in schools are slowly increasing to 2012 levels. We will obviously keep fighting and we have a lot of people on our side including our parliamentarians.

Deborah Annetts: There are fundamental education policies which we all know are a problem – in particular the accountability measures and the structure of exams at secondary level. The structure of education in England in terms of the core subjects actually dates back to 1904 and this is not good. We need to ask a new government to come up with a system that prepares our children for the 21st century and the first thing we need to scrap is the accountability measures.

3. Simon Toyne Executive Director of Music of the David Ross Education Trust and a member of the expert panel for the refreshed National Plan for Music Education (NPME) – the English National Plan for Music Education

Simon Toyne discussed the English National Plan for Music Education, saying that there are some outstanding examples of music in schools, but there has been a huge decline in provision overall and a resulting increase in disparity of provision, as the ISM *Music, a subject in peril?* report shows.

Key points

- The NPME correctly focuses attention on what children have a right to in terms of music education and looks at the key features of high-quality music provision: this is necessary to address the decline in some schools
- Emphasis on the role that partnerships play in making this happen
- Music curriculum needs to be ring-fenced, with no carousels, and it is a major win that this has been achieved in the plan
- Music leadership: leads in all schools. They must be part of the leadership of the school and given time to develop a programme of co-curricular activities
- It is excellent that the Kevin Rogers model is included in the plan. This is the most helpful articulation of how music works in schools and how budgets need to address this.

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- Greater integration of schools in hubs has huge potential to improve provision in schools.
- Reality check. This can't happen overnight. Need a plan and to steadily progress it. Need mutual progress and support
- The #CanDoMusic campaign run by the ISM and others was helpful during Covid in showing what is happening in other schools. This grass roots momentum driven by schools is what he hopes will happen with the NPNME. Schools are at different stages in their musical journeys and the more advanced need to help the ones that are further behind. Let's demystify how to do music in schools. The plan helps with this. We should all offer to help schools with this and help unleash the power of music in schools.

[Read the English refreshed NPME](#)

Questions

Ian Cross, Emeritus Professor of music and science at Cambridge University: delighted that music education is being taken seriously, as it has been a problem for last 40 years. Key element missing from the plan is that music making enhances our empathy and ability to work with others. It doesn't mean you have to be highly proficient. This needs to be more central in the NPME.

Response: Agreed, there are huge benefit in how music changes us. Society would be a greater place if we were all musicians. The NPME does talk about how music benefits us all and is not just about transferable skills – the sense of music existing as a craft in its own right is important in the plan.

Lissy Kelleher-Clarke, head of operations at Harrison Parrott and head of Harrison Parrott Foundation: Impressed by the emphasis on partnerships and how foundations like ours can get involved with the NPME. We're happy to help, but one of the stumbling blocks is connection – how do we connect the corporates with the schools, especially when they don't have safeguarding training etc? How do we get the support to set up these partnerships to make them work?

Answer: Leadership from MATs is important here. It's also important that these partnerships are mutually beneficial. It's all about mutual learning.

4. Paul Jeeves of the Daily Express, covering the arts – the Daily Express's Strike a Chord campaign

Paul Jeeves described how the Strike a Chord campaign came about after a meeting with a choirmaster from the Halle orchestra, who talked about the orchestra going into schools and finding children who have never sung in their lives. Paul started talking to teachers about what's going on in music in schools and discovered that there is very little music training for primary teachers.

He decided to run a campaign to support music education in schools and the ISM's *Music, a subject in peril?* report was the perfect peg to hang the campaign on.

The Strike a Chord campaign focuses on five minutes of music a day. Easy to fit in and possible for teachers to do even if they have no musical training. However, also want to get proper training for primary teachers to deliver music lessons as there is no budget to bring in specialists.

[The Strike a Chord campaign](#)

Questions

Bridget Whyte, Music Mark: It would be good to link this campaign with the existing projects that are already going on. So much good stuff out there and it's important to share what's already going on.

Paul: Agree it's important to shine a light on the work already going on. Also, the Express campaign has triggered some positive responses from government.

Deborah Annetts: It's great to have an update on the Express campaign. The problem with music education is really about inequality. That's why we need the campaigns and advocacy. The government would probably not have produced the NPME without campaigning from the ISM and others. Until we get equal provision across the country, we will keep campaigning.

Closing proceedings

The date of the next APPG for Music Education meeting will be confirmed and circulated in due course.

All presentations will be available on the [APPG website](#).

The Earl of Clancarty thanked the speakers and declared the APPG meeting closed at 17.15 pm.