

All-Party Parliamentary Group for Music Education, Briefing Minutes Tuesday 1 March 2022, 4pm

Opening Proceedings

Parliamentarians present: Earl of Clancarty, Lord Aberdare, Simon Baynes MP, Lord Black of Brentwood

Apologies: Diana Johnson MP, David Warburton MP, Baroness Bonham-Carter, Marion Fellows MP

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

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

Presentations

1. Georgina Burt, England Development Manager, Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) – the impact of poverty on access to music

Georgina Burt presented findings from CPAG's report, *The Cost of the School Day*, launched on 1 March. Researchers spoke to 4.5K children over two years on how school costs impact their engagement and opportunities.

Headline findings

- Poverty impacts engagement with the curriculum and makes it harder for children to learn and achieve at school.
- Music has one of largest participation gaps and children from low-income households are less likely to take music at GCSE.
- There is a lack of sustained free opportunities in school music provision: eg a term of free tuition but then students have to pay to continue.
- Cost of instrument lessons and the purchase or hire of instruments are barriers.
- Extra-curricular activities are also affected: eg access to school productions is more limited if you haven't learnt an instrument.

[Read the full report](#)

Questions

Lord Aberdare: What is the best way for charities providing free music resources to get them into schools where they are most needed?

Response: This issue is relevant in every school we work in. We need to support all children, regardless of the context of the schools.

Tony Harris: Dean at the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance: There's a danger of focusing solely on instrument learning, and a disconnect between schools and what's going on in wider musical cultural (eg rap is free). Let's do more to encourage this kind of participation.

Response: Agree, but CPAG research looked at participation that costs money.

Emma Coulthard, Head of Oxfordshire Music Hub: Some schools do make music tuition free. Can we use them as examples to shame other schools? Hubs can't do everything.

Response: There were comments in the chat that this was not a good idea.

Simon Baynes MP: Agree with Tony Harris on the range of music that's taught in schools and the shift in what children want to learn.

2. Deborah Annetts, CEO of the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) – What's happening to music education in schools?

Deborah Annetts outlined the findings of the ISM's recent survey of music teachers in England ahead of a report to be published later this month.

Survey findings

- Covid is still having an impact
- Lack of funding for music departments in state schools really stood out
- Nearly 100% of respondents were in favour of being consulted on the refreshed National Plan for Music Education
- Reform of accountability measures
- More diverse curriculum
- Increase funding for music departments in the state sector and ensure funding is ring-fenced

The ISM is calling on the DfE to consult teachers on the NPME before publication and provide more funding for music education.

Questions

Ben Stevens, Director of Music, Hertfordshire Music Service: Hub funding works out at around £7 per pupil. Is there a magic number for funding that will allow us to get the best out of music provision in schools?

Response: Money is part of it, but policy change is also vital. We need to look at accountability measures, which have a major impact on what schools offer. Equity and equality means allowing all children to access those subjects that may be more costly such as music. We must go back to first principles and ensure what we're offering our children is fit for purpose and then look at properly funding it.

3. Phil Castang, Director of Creative Learning & Engagement at Bristol Beacon Hub and Chair of the Music Education Council (MEC) – The future of Music Education Hubs and the NPME

Phil Castang, a member of the Expert Panel for the refreshed NPME, talked about his hopes for the revised plan, although he was unable to reveal details.

- Role of partnerships should be restated and amplified.
- Inclusion must be hard-wired into it.
- Hubs and schools need deeper relationships with each other but must develop relationships with other organisations too.
- Unintended consequence of first NPME was dismantling of the Visiting Music Teacher (VMT) career path because funding was lost in the switch from LA music services to Hub so many VMTs forced to become freelance. NPME should be a best practice charter which supports the workforce properly.

Questions

Simon Baynes MP: When is NPME to be published?

Response: Can't answer this, but hopefully not too long.

Lord Aberdare: There was little thought about how the last NPME was going to be implemented. Look forward to seeing how the music world will get together to drive the new plan forward.

Tim Bennett-Hart, Director of Academic, RSL Awards: Agree with idea of partnerships being useful. Music industry needs to get involved with helping make the curriculum more diverse. Also needs to be measured – what does success look like?

Response: Hopeful that there will be a strong role for industry to play in the NPME. It needs to be more joined up. If you come from a non-performance background (eg sound engineer), there needs to be something for you.

Barbara Eifler, CEO, Making Music: Any thought given to investment into well-being of pupils and the soft skills that employers want? Amateurs as well as professional musicians need the well-being and social benefits that music education brings.

Response: ACE are talking to Hubs about this a lot. In Hubs' work with schools, recovery from the pandemic and the health and well-being of pupils are front and centre.

Closing proceedings

The date of the next APPG for Music Education meeting will be confirmed and circulated after the refreshed NPME plan is published.

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

The Earl of Clancarty thanked the speakers and declared the APPG meeting closed at 17.02pm.