

# A report on a meeting of members of the Music Education Sector about the future of the National Plan for Music Education

On the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020 a group of CEOs and senior managers from across the Music Education and Industry sector met together to discuss the key points they felt should be considered as the 'refresh' of the National Plan for Music Education begins to move forward. The meeting, facilitated by Music Mark, pulled together, through a consensus workshop, a set of 11 key areas that were thought to be of particular importance.

This short report provides details of these key areas, the discussion behind them and outlines some of the agreed actions the group felt should follow on from the meeting.

The meeting was set up at short notice so not all those invited were able to attend. A list of those in the room is given at the end of this document.

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The workshop aimed to answer the question (which referenced wording within the DfE's press release about their call for evidence):

## ***What must be in the 'blueprint that promotes equal music opportunities'?***

Those attending the meeting spent time discussing this question in small groups before sharing their answers through a consensus workshop process. Points were expressed using just a few words and written on cards. All of the cards were then placed on a 'sticky wall' and subsequently grouped into themes. These groups were then each given a name to articulate the key message which everyone agreed brought the individual points together.

In answer to the question posed therefore, the group agreed that there were 11 key messages:

### **1. Music for All**

- Ensuring equity of access and progression, with multiple access points and pathways
- Diversity in what can be accessed and experienced as well as who learns and leads
- Inclusion as a principle must be at the core, and throughout, not an additional/add-on area of work
- Affordability – at every level of musical learning, for parents and schools, with fee remissions/financial support available
- Education doesn't start at 5 or end at 18, so Music Education from birth, and, whilst recognising life long musical learning and participation (at whatever level) must be accessible to all, for a National Plan for Music Education the vision and recommendations should cover young people up to 25 to correspond with the DfE's remit

### **2. Place and value of music in the curriculum**

- Without a broad and balanced curriculum which includes music up to and including KS3 in every school there is no universal, equitable music education
- Schools need to understand and be resourced to deliver their statutory role in the music education of children and young people and as an essential partner in the local music education ecology
- Existing accountability and qualification frameworks in schools, such as the EBacc, have the potential to stifle creative learning

- Ofsted should play their part in challenging schools to meet their role in the musical education of children and young people

### **3. Youth Voice and leadership**

- Music education should be child-centric
- Ongoing and embedded youth voice programmes and strategies are essential as a vehicle for making music inclusive and relevant
- By defining what they value as music, the way that they make music, and creating their own music, children and young people can find and celebrate their own musical voice

### **4. All music is valued**

- All genres must be given equal status and value
- Musical learning involves composing, improvising, performing and listening. To enable holistic musical understanding, all three of these must be integrated into all music education opportunities

### **5. The Strategic framework**

- A framework based on aims and outcomes, that values achievement and progress, not outputs against core and extension roles would help delivery to be more equitable, inclusive and diverse
- There is a need to recognise that the framework within which a child accesses music education is broad and varied, it includes schools, but also many other settings and organisations.
- There needs to be more clarity of the relationship the wider sector should have with each other as partners, but also specifically with schools
- The role of the creative industry – as employers and partners – should be reflected and celebrated
- Who has responsibility for what needs to be clearer, with schools as having the primary responsibility for the delivery of music education, supported and enhanced by the others in the local Music Education Hub partnership

### **6. High Quality Music Education**

- Every child and young person should have access to quality musical experiences and musical learning
- Those in leadership at a national, regional and local level should promote the importance of quality, not quantity, through their leadership and vision

### **7. Wellbeing**

- Music can have a significant impact on the wellbeing of children and young people
- Music's holistic role should not be underestimated
- The knowledge and understanding gained as a child/young person through participation in quality music education will enable a lifetime of appreciation and/or participation, supporting personal wellbeing through to adulthood.
- The wider skills of collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and communication are all supported by musical learning and participation.

### **8. Leadership**

- Music Education needs strong leadership from the top down
- Strong, supportive, united messaging from the DfE and DCMS will have an important role to play in ensuring all stakeholders understand their role in the musical learning of children and young people
- Arts Council England have a role to play in leadership, but should also trust and support those leading at a regional and local level, giving them autonomy
- The Music, Music Education and Education Sectors (including schools) must also provide strong leadership and demonstrate partnership working at a national, regional and local level

## **9. Creative industry**

- More should be done to celebrate the significant role the music industry, and more broadly the creative industry, plays in the economy of this country. This billion-pound industry has the same value as construction and finance and is growing five times faster than any other area of industry. The government at a local and national level need to recognise and champion this.
- There are pathways to employment within the creative sector which need to be celebrated and signposted to appropriate students
- Likewise, celebration of the value of the transferable/soft skills learnt is important too.

## **10. Workforce Development**

- Providing an equitable, high quality music education requires a committed, knowledgeable, skilled and confident workforce. This includes teachers and leaders in schools.
- To ensure every child has a great music education in Key Stages 1 & 2 more needs to be done to train primary school teachers and/or to provide specialist teachers and subject leaders
- There is a need to address under-representation in the workforce - diversity in the music (and wider creative industries) starts with equitable access and role models for children and young people.

## **11. Funding**

- To address the other key messages within this report, funding at a realistic level must be available.

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## **The organisations represented at the meeting were:**

- ABO (Association of British Orchestras)
- ABRSM
- Cultural Learning Alliance
- Drake Music
- ISM (Incorporated Society of Musicians)
- MIA (Music Industries Association)
- MfA (Music for All charity)
- MTA (Music Teachers' Association)
- Making Music
- MU (Musicians Union)
- Music for Youth
- Music HE (the membership organisation for those working in High Music Education)
- NYO (National Youth Orchestra)
- Sound and Music
- Sound Connections
- UK Music
- Youth Music
- Plus two of the Trustees and four of the Regional Reps from Music Mark

Additional organisations were invited but were unable to attend, and others have been suggested as important to involve in any future discussions.