



July 2022 Newsletter

Roundup from

Phil Castang

Chair's welcome

Speaking at the recent MTA conference prior to the launch of the refreshed National Plan for Music Education, I conveyed the sentiment that, regardless of the plan, we must *"do it for ourselves"*. Although this sounds like a Nike slogan, what I meant by this was, those of us working in the music education sector already hold the key to successful musical outcomes for children and young people. The plan exists to unify an approach and to replicate this approach across England. The plan is not there to dictate the content in minutia. At the recent Music Mark/MEC NPME seminar this sentiment was echoed by Stefano Pozzi from the Department for Education who said, *"make it your own"*. According to Google, a plan is "a detailed proposal for doing or achieving something". With 80 pages and supporting documents this plan has quite a lot of detail. Quite deliberately, the plan does not answer all the questions and allows for local partnerships to determine the character or essence of music education in that region.

Many thousands of children across the UK, supported by amazing music teachers or working in a self-guided capacity, connect with music as singers, players or beat makers. They listen and compose; they rap and chat about their musical culture. Much of this happens quite naturally without any knowledge of being part of a grand plan. As the DfE's recent 'Call for Evidence' confirmed, many people were completely unaware of plans, hubs, or any of it.



So, what's the point of having a plan? I hear you ask. The purpose of the plan is to bring together everyone concerned with ensuring children and young people can realise their musical potential and develop a lifelong love of music, and that we are united in working together to guarantee it happens. The plan is there to remove the happenstance of the postcode lottery.

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Yes, the plan might fail, but it might succeed. Making its contents statutory would be the ideal and Ofsted taking more of an interest would also be a game-changer, but for now, we have what we have. The failure of a grand plan is often the result of entrenched territorial attitudes or plain old negativity, like a child complaining about untasted food. Partisan attitudes can also be a barrier to adopting the principles of a perfectly good plan and thus diminishing its effect.

Although the refreshed plan seems to have landed well there are many unanswered questions about the future of music education with funding and workforce being two key areas of concern.

MEC, along with the MU, Music Mark and ISM are meeting to explore the effect of the cost-of-living crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic on teacher pay and conditions. We hope these meetings will lead to a better understanding of how conditions can be improved.

Ultimately, it's up to the music education sector to make the best of the refreshed plan and placing children and young people at the heart of our thinking can be the driving force to positive change.

The Five Functions

MEC's chair Phil Castang explores the NPME's Five Functions

Although hubs are expected to continue programmes commensurate with the original core roles, the move away from quite explicit core and extension roles towards five key functions represents a less prescriptive programme and a drive towards new ideas and innovation.

Partnership

Partnership is the first of the five functions and establishing successful partnerships is key to making sure all children and young people, in and out of school settings, have access to the most expansive musical programme possible. Providing such a wide-ranging offer requires all those working in music education to combine resources and thinking. A 'Local Music Education Plan' will support this, joining-up pathways and connecting to industry pipelines. We must recognise that no single organisation can provide all the many musical experiences young people might want to explore. Music hubs will use local, regional and national partners to co-curate a programme of musical activity that supports the interests of young people in the community. Yes, we have been doing this already and this is an effort to underscore the fact that where there are great and sustainable partnerships we see the very best of music hubs and the huge benefits to children and young people.

A National Plan for Music Education must provide a framework that recognises the diverse nature of young people’s musical interests

Schools

Revising the relationship between music hubs and schools is the second of the five functions. This is perhaps the most important factor in ending the postcode lottery that arguably resulted from the first incarnation of the NPME. The refreshed plan goes to great lengths to explain the relationship between music hubs and schools - in a way that headteachers and school senior leadership will understand and hopefully get on board with.

CPD was previously an extension role. I think we all probably agree that one of the most effective ways to ensure high-quality music education is at the heart of a school is to give schools the internal expertise to deliver music education programmes themselves. Music leadership programmes can be truly transformational and an effective way of channelling resources. I have seen first-hand the transformative effect of having highly skilled music leads in primary settings. In Newham, the LSO’s primary music leadership programme and in Bristol, Sing for Pleasure’s Vocal Leadership programme are just two examples.

Across England there are schools that excel at music through their own internal expertise. These schools often support other feeder schools or academy partner schools with musical activities in the same way the local music hub does. The new requirement of ‘Lead Schools’ opens the door to a more concrete relationship with these schools and will hopefully be a way to add resources, knowledge and capacity to support others, much like Maths Hubs.



Progression & Musical Development

The third of the five functions is Progression and Musical Development: *“Support children and young people to develop and progress with music, including into national or specialist opportunities, higher education, and employment so that the chance to be involved in high-quality music-making is shared more widely in our society. Support CYP to access the wider world of music including live performance and community music”*.

This function is essentially what formed the core roles in NPME 1. Since the original plan in 2012, music hubs have come a long way. Music has never been more pervasive and accessing it has never been more instantaneous. It is mobile, portable and affordable. Young people can share and find music on social media and discover music via online gaming, and through music and film streaming services like Spotify and Netflix. Music is truly global and a young person’s relationship with styles and genres has never been more fluid. The musical world young people inhabit is eclectic and wide-ranging. This is of course a wonderful thing. Access to such a broad and expansive musical world means young people seek to explore all

kinds of instruments, technology and learning opportunities. They want to play, make and perform in all kinds of formats, spaces and places.

This means a National Plan for Music Education must provide a framework that recognises the diverse nature of young people’s musical interests. Whether a child wants to be a spoken word artist and play the flute or wants to sing and be a turntablist, the music education sector needs to be able to support all young people to realise their musical potential.

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Inclusion

Inclusion was little more than a footnote in the first NPME. For the refresh, it was the first item on the agenda and now sits as the fourth key function of music hubs. With a new requirement for music hubs to have an inclusion strategy and a named inclusion lead, music hubs will be required to “drive broad access to music education, so every child has the opportunity to participate irrespective of their circumstances, background, where they live or their SEND”. Excellence in inclusion and inclusive practice will also be a focus of one of the four new National Centres of Excellence.



Sustainability

Sustainability is split into four areas of good business practice that will underpin financial and operational stability.

“Sustainability: Ensure the strategic, financial and operational sustainability of the Music Hub by: (i) supporting a dynamic and well-trained workforce, (ii) leveraging DfE funding to develop wider investment into young people’s music from a range of sources and revenue streams, (iii) being accountable and transparent by publishing plans, needs analysis and impact data; and (iv) considering and acting on the hubs environmental responsibilities”.

- i. There are not enough qualified music teachers to go around and not enough visiting music teachers. Many music teachers are underpaid and work unpaid hours, travelling or preparing lessons and writing reports. Supporting a dynamic and well-trained workforce is critical. Teacher terms and conditions are going to need a complete overhaul and the whole sector needs to get behind this.
- ii. We will always need to make the case for greater funding. Beyond the investment music hubs receive as part of the NPME, schools, orchestras, concert venues, youth music

organisations and NYMOs all have funding to contribute to the ecosystem. This funding must be joined-up to leverage the funds required to ensure every child can access a music education.

- iii. Making the case for greater funding requires evidence of impact. Although, as a sector we collect quite a lot of data for various stakeholders, we haven't quite managed to provide a united story of pathway to pipeline impact. Much more needs to be done to demonstrate need and evidence the impact of our work. There is still work to do on the reporting and monitoring of the refreshed plan and MEC will continue to work with sector colleagues and the DfE, DCMS and ACE to improve matters moving forward.

Considering and acting on the hubs environmental responsibilities is a significant concern for the whole of society and is an issue young people in particular rightly feel close to. Although we all love to hold a printed programme in our hands, we must think very carefully about the costs to the environment.



[The Power of Music to Change Lives](#)

A National Plan in Wales

MEC Trustee Richard Jones responds to the Welsh National Plan for Music

The Welsh National Plan for Music was published last month. Without doubt it has taken some leads from NPME 1 in England and maybe there are some turns of phrase which echo those in the refreshed English NMPE 2. It also recognizes that the Covid pandemic has had an impact on children and young people's music making and that music has an important role to play in recovery and health and well-being.

The plan is due to last five years but only three years funding has been committed. This works out at £9.60 per head of children in education in Wales, slightly more than the £8.55 allocated per head in the English Plan, but less than the £8.70 per head in Scotland given to achieve free musical tuition in 2021/22.

Inclusion is at the heart of the plan with a focus on low-income households, disadvantaged learners and under-represented groups

Inclusion

Inclusion is at the heart of the plan with a recurrent phrase - that the plan will "focus on children and young people from low-income households to help access tuition, as well as supporting disadvantaged learners and those from under-represented groups to join music ensembles" in each programme of work. As might be expected there is also an emphasis on the promotion of Welsh Culture.

National Music Service

What is unclear is how the National Music Service lead body will be created. This body will have a significant role to play in co-ordinating music education across the nation in terms of setting up a national instrument, resource and equipment library, co-ordination of professional learning support, developing initiatives on addressing equity, diversity and inclusion, and ensemble development. It is not meant to replace music services where they exist but the intention to review current terms and conditions for those employed by music services is due for completion by the summer of 2024. The intention to develop an

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accredited list of instrument repairers to protect the investment in instruments is also of interest.

Wales is a land without academies and as such the plan emphasises the work that music services will do to support the Curriculum for Wales due for implementation in September whilst recognising that it is the schools themselves which have the decision as to what is included in their delivery of the Expressive Arts Area of Learning and Experience.

Nine Programmes

The Plan identifies nine programmes of work, the first four of which emphasise music in schools.

In schools there will be a **“First experiences”** programme which, differing from England, will give broader opportunities by delivery through playing, singing, composing or having music-technology sessions - although there is now greater flexibility than before within England’s WCET equivalent in NPME2. The Welsh programme will be offered to all schools over the next three years and team taught.

The **“Musical Pathways”** programme recognises that musical progression is multi-faceted and that children and young people should have a voice in the activities that are available to them. The aspiration goes beyond that of the English NPME1 in that links with industries and opportunities to work in the creative industries will be signposted. It is also anticipated that the lead body will contribute to a review of GCSE Music.

Students taking GCSE and A level music students, (but not apparently vocational courses) will not have to pay fees for music tuition and the **“Music Tuition”** programme will seek to address barriers in access, cost, range and diversity.



Partnerships are mentioned throughout the plan and the **“Live music experiences”** programme and all education settings are expected to be able to access high quality live or digital musical experiences.

To support music in schools and the wider community there are three programmes. In the **“Professional learning”** programme there will be an annual co-ordinated programme for

music services with schools expected to ensure that the First experiences programme aligns with the Curriculum for Wales.

The programme will support musical activities in schools which focus on well-being

The **“Improving EDI”** programme focuses on ensuring that regardless of status, partnership working will afford children and young people fair and consistent opportunities to participate in musical activities.

The **“Music for lifelong learning, health and well-being”** programme seeks to support those whose social, emotional and physical well-being have been impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic. Nursery settings will be supported to foster children’s musical skills and the programme will support musical activities in schools which focus on well-being including music therapy and music as an intervention to support mental health.

Outside of school the final two programmes, **“Making music with others- music activities and ensembles”** and **“Making music with others -performing and creative industries”** builds on the **“Musical Pathways”** programme and supports the need to recover and re-build participation in ensemble participation and ensure that geographical location is also not a barrier for the same. Further to this there is the ambition to signpost pathways to higher and specialist music courses and also to broaden the horizons of children and young people to careers in the creative industries.

This is a bold plan which is well aware of the issues of music education in Wales but also signposts many of the challenges which many nations face as they seek to ensure that children and young people have an equitable access to high quality music education regardless of their background.



[National Plan for Music Education: Wales](#)

Upcoming Events

Next MEC Seminar: Funding Music Education: 6th October

MEC’s next seminar will be on the **6th of October** and will include the AGM. **‘Funding Music Education’** explores the funding landscape for music education. Hear the views of fund managers from large and small trusts and foundations as well as fundraising advice from leading development directors working in music and music education. In addition, we will hear from the music industry on the many ways music education is being supported across the UK.

Put the date in your diaries, more information to follow soon.

Next steps for the Music Curriculum in England and implementation of the new National Plan: 27th September

*Including: **Bridget Whyte**, Chief Executive Officer, Music Mark and **Deborah Annetts**, Incorporated Society of Musicians; **Ian Burton**, Nottingham Music Hub; **Phil Castang**, Music Education Council; and *Music for Youth*; **Yogesh Dattani**, Music Mark and Ealing Council; **Deborah Kermode**, *Mac Makes Music*; **Dr Louise Lansdown**, Birmingham City University; **James Manwaring**, *The Windsor Boys’ School*.*

This conference will examine the next steps for the music curriculum in England. Stakeholders and policymakers will discuss priorities following Ofsted’s review of music

education - and with the expected publication of the new National Plan for Music later this year.

<https://www.westminsterforumprojects.co.uk/conference/Music-Education-22>

And Finally...Music Matters BBC Radio 3

Tom Service discusses access and the postcode lottery of music education in schools with Phil Castang, chair of MEC and Georgina Burt, Development Manager at Child Action Poverty Group (<https://cpag.org.uk/>) List on catch-up <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0017m0v>

Tom Service is joined in the studio by Jamie Njoku-Goodwin, chief executive of UK Music; Kate Whitley, composer and founder of the Multi-Story Orchestra in southeast London; and Olivia Giovetti, music journalist and editor of VAN Magazine, who joins the panel from Berlin. They deliberate on the pressing issues concerning the music industry this year. The panel also responds to Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay as he presents the new National Plan for Music Education, which applies to England only, and sets out the government's vision for music education running to 2030.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0018qlg>

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