Questions to the Secretary of State for Education - 12 October 2020

Briefing by the Incorporated Society of Musicians

This is a briefing by the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) for Oral Questions to the Secretary of State for Education, which will be taking place in the House of Commons on Monday 12 October 2020. For more information please contact Liam Budd, Senior External Affairs and Policy Manager at Liam.Budd@ISM.org.

Suggested Questions

- To ask the Secretary of State when will the refreshed National plan for Music Education will be published.
- To ask the Secretary of State how he has ensured that blended learning provision for pupils required to isolate will take into account the practical needs of music students?
- To ask the Secretary of State for Education how students who have been unable to practice their chosen musical instrument in school during the Coronavirus pandemic, will be provided for in the forthcoming GCSE and A-Level Music exams?
- To ask the Secretary of State what steps he is taking to ensure that music education is not marginalised or removed from the curriculum during the Coronavirus pandemic?
- To ask the Secretary of State what guidance his department can offer to schools to ensure that their risk assessments do not lead to reduced access to music rooms and equipment?
- To ask the Secretary of State what additional measures can be offered to self-employed peripatetic music teachers, who are still unable to work, but will see their SEISS support reduced to 20% from 01 November?

About the ISM

- The Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) is the UK’s oldest professional representative body for musicians, set up in 1882 to promote the art of music and to protect the interests of all those working in the music sector. The ISM has over 10,000 members right across the U.K. We are one of two subject associations for music education and have many thousands of music teachers in the membership working in every conceivable setting including the classroom and music education hubs. The ISM provides the secretariat to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Music Education which published the acclaimed State of the Nation report last year focusing on music education.

Summary

- When schools teach creative subjects, the whole of our society and economy benefits. The music industry in Britain is worth £5.2bn a year to the economy. Music education is essential to the talent pipeline, which delivers so much value for our country, both culturally and economically.

- Restrictions for activities involving singing and woodwind and brass playing were finally lifted in updated guidance from the DfE published on 28 August. Although this guidance outlined a range of mitigating measures for music to continue being taught safely, the timing was too late for many schools to change

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1 https://www.ukmusic.org/research/music-by-numbers/
their existing plans. Research currently being conducted by the ISM suggests that music is being marginalised further and, in some cases, removed from the curriculum completely for some children.

- The National Plan for Music Education (NPME) is due to expire this autumn with no date given by the government as to when it will be refreshed.

What is music education?

- Music has been part of the statutory school curriculum for children aged 5 to 14 since the National Curriculum was published in 1988/9.

- Children and young people’s understanding of music is about developing their knowledge of music and skills in music making through the core musical activities of making music (performing, composing/producing and improvising) and responding critically and in an informed way to music from a wide range of genres and traditions. The National Curriculum for Music has practical music making and diversity and inclusion at its heart.

- It has been long-recognised, however, that whereas curriculum music in school should form the foundation of children and young people’s music education, it is not enough on its own. Most schools, as a result, provide a range of extra-curricular opportunities for young people to develop their musical interest, such as school orchestras, choirs and other ensembles.

The music sector workforce

- The music workforce in schools generally consists of classroom music teachers, visiting whole class instrumental teachers and individual instrumental teachers. Some primary schools employ visiting staff to teach music to cover Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time. Visiting instrumental teachers may be employed through the Local Authority music service or Music Hub or self-employed.

Impact of Covid-19

- Over a two-week period in late May and early June 2020, the ISM surveyed 478 self-employed professionals working in the music sector. Findings from this survey show that instrumental teachers, professional musicians and other freelance working people have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 with many self-employed professionals struggling to financially survive even with support through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). However, the survey shows many self-employed professionals in the music sector, including instrumental teachers, cannot even access this scheme.³

- Lack of access to technology and broadband coupled with a lack of specialist resources has meant that many children have missed out on music education as a result of school closures during COVID-19. As schools have now fully returned, research currently being conducted by the ISM suggests that some children’s classroom music lessons will continue to face disruption and even removal from the curriculum for up to a full academic year, as will extra-curricular musical opportunities.

³ https://www.ism.org/campaigns/self-employed-survey-results
On 7th April, the Department for Education published a list of online education resources for home learning. These include subject specific resources for English, maths, science, PE, wellbeing and special educational needs and disabilities. The list was updated on 24th June and the subjects remain the same. Despite many additional subject resources freely available online, they have not been included in the DfE list, creating an unnecessary hierarchy of subjects.

The Oak National Academy was launched in April 2020 and in June 2020 it was announced that the Government would fund the initiative for the 2020/21 academic year at a cost of £4.3 million. The planned 2020/21 curriculum offer from Oak states that KS4 Music lessons are ‘not offered’. Latin is the only other subject which features in Oak’s KS3 offer but not KS4. The reasons for excluding Music in this way is unclear.

DfE guidance and the re-opening of schools

Guidance from the DfE for the full reopening of schools in September was updated on 28 August (just days before the majority of schools in England returned for the Autumn Term, and over a Bank Holiday weekend). The updated guidance outlined a range of mitigating measures for teaching classroom music, following scientific research, and allowed the return to singing, woodwind and brass playing as well as confirming that peripatetic instrumental teachers could resume their work in schools.

The Government has committed £1 billion to a COVID-19 catch up package, intended predominantly for small group tuition. However, schools have been told that they should use their existing resources when making arrangements to bring all children back in September and that there are “no plans at present to reimburse additional costs incurred as part of that process.”. If all pupils are to be given the same musical opportunities within their statutory National Curriculum entitlement, music departments will need financial support to provide additional classroom instruments (to avoid sharing) and other resources which can be transported between classrooms where specialist rooms are closed.

ISM’s global literature review & risks management

The ISM commissioned a Global Literature review of the current research and information relating to COVID-19, transmission and risk management in both the performance and music education space. The first review was published in July, with an updated second version published in August. A third review is planned for November. The purpose of the documents was not to give guidance but rather to bring together the wide amount of available information and share it with the rest of the music community.

 Whilst music teachers waited throughout July and August for the DfE to publish more detailed guidance for music in schools, there was much to be learned from other countries’ approach to music education in the current pandemic and the consideration that had been given to mitigating any potential risks, allowing children and young people to continue practical music making both in and out of the classroom.

The Global Literature Review considered 32 separate pieces of guidance from 10 different countries. Of these, less than 20 per cent advocated discontinuing either singing, choirs or woodwind and brass playing. 38 per cent acknowledged the potential increased risk in aerosol transmission but provided a

5 https://www.thenational.academy/oaks-curricula
7 IBID
range of detailed mitigating measures to reduce them for both students and teachers.\(^8\) The guidance across countries was generally consistent and many of the mitigating measures that were discussed were later adopted in the DfE’s music guidance.

### National Plan for Music Education

- The Music Education in England report, otherwise known as the ‘Henley Review’, was published in 2011 and set out recommendations for the minimum expectations of what any child going through the English school system should receive in terms of music education. It highlighted high quality and sustained music education in the school curriculum as the cornerstone of every child’s music education.\(^9\)

- The Henley Review also highlighted challenges and threats to music education, including inappropriate accountability measures which worked against the Arts, insecurity of funding, patchy provision that led to inequality of access and issues regarding training, recruiting and supporting the diverse workforce.

- The National Plan for Music Education (NPME) was born out of the review and is based on its recommendations. It was launched in 2012 and is due to expire later this year. The NPME is an ambitious, aspirational document which sets out clear objectives with regards to delivery, access, progression and excellence in the music education sector.\(^10\)

- A consultation was held earlier this year between 9 February and 13 March in order to inform proposals for an updated NPME which was due to be released in the Autumn. However, on 22 July in the House of Lords, Baroness Berridge could not provide a time frame for when the plan would be refreshed.\(^11\) Given the recent decline in music education, and the ongoing challenges the sector faces, the NPME must not be allowed to lapse.

### Self-Employment Income Support Scheme

- The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) provided much-needed help for those eligible, but many musicians were among the estimated three million workers excluded from the scheme. This may be because they commenced self-employment in the tax year 2019-20, operate under a limited company or with profits of over £50,000 to claim – even though a similar cap was not used for the furlough scheme.

- Visiting instrumental teachers may be employed through the Local Authority music service or Music Hub or self-employed. Music teachers who combine teaching with freelance performance, and have not been able to return to either role, have fallen through the gaps for both furlough and SEISS support.

- For those who do qualify for SEISS, the Winter Economy Plan reduces SEISS support down to just 20% of average monthly trading profits, which is not be an adequate safety net for our members when they cannot generate any income at all.

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\(^11\) [https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-07-22/debates/A4FF28E3-628D-484A-8A6C-6389FF12C797/SchoolsArtsTeaching](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-07-22/debates/A4FF28E3-628D-484A-8A6C-6389FF12C797/SchoolsArtsTeaching)