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A note of concern: The future of instrumental music tuition in schools



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Education and Skills Committee

To consider and report on matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.



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Conclusions and recommendations

The Committee recognises the many ways in which a music education can benefit young people, as well as enriching both local and national culture and the economy.

The Committee recognises that international evidence demonstrates that music education can play a pivotal role in raising attainment.

The Committee believes there is a lack of clarity regarding whether instrumental music tuition necessary to provide adequate preparation for SQA examinations in the senior phase can legitimately be subject to charging. While COSLA states that instrumental music tuition is not statutory, there is a risk that this position interprets legislation in light of practice rather than adopt practice in light of legislation. The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government clarifies in its response to this report the legal basis for such charges.

The Committee acknowledges that the education delivered by instrumental music tutors supports a core part of the curriculum, and recognises that tutors are vital to ensuring that pupils have access to a diverse range of instruments and a sufficient level of teaching time in order to present for SQA examinations. Consequently, the Committee believes that instrumental music tutors should be considered to be part of core education provision.

The Committee recognises there are differing views regarding whether the status of music tuition is discretionary or part of the core curriculum. The Committee considers that the explicit inclusion of instrumental music tuition in the core curriculum would have practical implications, which would need to be carefully considered. However, the benefits in protecting and enhancing the provision of music tuition in schools could far outweigh these considerations.

The Committee respects the democratic right of local authorities to take decisions about local expenditure and acknowledge the financial choices they face. However, the Committee believes in principle that music tuition should be provided free of charge in every local authority.

The Committee supports the approach proposed by COSLA to ensure that, as a minimum, all children in receipt of free school meals across Scotland are fully exempt from music tuition fees. Although local authorities have the right to set the thresholds of their concessions and exemptions, the Committee recommends that they should explore

other ways in which types of concessions and exemptions (for example, sibling discount) can be more consistently applied.

The Committee was alarmed at the reported drop-off rate in participation in West Lothian following the introduction of fees, to the extent that it has threatened the viability of the service itself. The Committee considers West Lothian Council's experience, and the similar historic experience of Glasgow City Council when it briefly introduced fees, to be emblematic both of the precarious position of instrumental music services and the need for the funding of these services to be re-examined.

The Committee is also concerned at the weight of evidence that charging for tuition still adversely affects those who qualify for concessions and exemptions as well as families with an income just above the thresholds for these. While recognising that those authorities that charge have autonomy to choose their own thresholds, the Committee recommends that local authorities closely monitor the impact of their charging policies.

The Committee does not believe that local authorities are fulfilling the recommendations of the Instrumental Music Group, particularly recommendation 3, which states that pupils' individual circumstances should not be a barrier to their ability to access and benefit from instrumental music tuition.

The Committee therefore welcomes COSLA's commitment to revisit the recommendations of the Instrumental Music Group, and asks them as part of their response to this report to provide an update to the Committee on the implementation of the IMG recommendations and a timescale for fulfilling any remaining recommendations.

The Committee welcomes the proposed introduction of guidance from COSLA to local authorities regarding instrumental music tuition.

The Committee understands that oversubscribed instrumental music services need to make decisions about which pupils can and cannot access their service. However, the Committee believes that aptitude tests, which have a number of legitimate uses, should not be used as the sole basis for selecting pupils for instrumental music tuition and recommends that local authorities avoid doing so in future.

The Committee recognises that parents and carers need to be fully informed about the costs for instrumental music tuition and associated costs for participation in music opportunities such as school or local authority bands. The Committee supports

COSLA's ongoing work to improve local authority communication regarding charging for music tuition. We encourage local authorities to communicate clearly with all parents and carers regarding tuition costs, other costs and the range of exemptions and concessions offered locally.

Where such systems are not already in place, local authorities should consider introducing systems for weekly or monthly payment of tuition fees to assist those who would struggle to make a single lump sum payment.

The Committee is concerned that, without action, the journey of young talent from Scottish state schools into bands, orchestras, and to become the teachers of the future will become more difficult.

The Committee is particularly concerned by the suggestion that not all local authorities provide instrumental music tuition in piano. As performing a piano piece forms part of the audition for admission to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's undergraduate teacher training programme, the Committee believes that this lack of provision at local authority level risks further limiting opportunities for pupils from Scottish state schools.

The Committee encourages the Music Education Partnership Group to examine ways in which the gap between provision and proficiency in particular instruments such as piano can be bridged.

The Committee is of the view that instrumental music tuition should, where possible and where desired, be an uninterrupted feature of any pupil's education from primary school onwards in order to provide those pupils interested in a career in music the best possible opportunity to succeed.

The Committee is not persuaded that a national instrumental music service could perform better than local services.

The Committee agrees that instrumental music services should continue to be managed at local authority level, but also recognises that there are financial pressures on local authorities.

The Committee is also cognisant of the need for any future funding solution to take into account the fact that all local authorities subsidise the cost of instrumental music tuition to some extent, with non-charging local authorities meeting the full cost.

The Committee welcomes continuing support from the Scottish Government for the Youth Music Initiative as a way of introducing young people to music at an early age, and notes its successful delivery at a local authority level.

The Committee recognises the Youth Music Initiative as an example of good practice where a national objective has been achieved through partnership working with local authorities.

The Committee therefore recommends that the Scottish Government should consider extending the Youth Music Initiative or introducing a new initiative to provide support to local authorities which seek to extend support for young people to engage in instrumental music tuition following their initial YMI experience.

The Committee notes that there have been a number of inquiries, reports and strategies produced regarding instrumental music tuition over the last 20 years. While reaching broadly similar conclusions, responses to each have failed to address the 'tipping point' concerns regarding the future of IMT in schools. The Committee believes that unless the fundamental issue of the status of IMT within the curriculum and associated teaching provision is addressed then it will continue to be treated materially differently from other subjects. We urge the Scottish Government, COSLA and local authorities to reflect upon this when responding to this report.

Introduction

1. The Education and Skills Committee ("the Committee") agreed at its meeting on 3 October 2018 to undertake an inquiry into music tuition in schools. This inquiry followed [correspondence from the Music Education Partnership Group](#) on the issue in May 2018.
2. The Committee issued a call for views and received [26 responses](#). These responses were from teachers, parents, schools and other interested parties, and were very useful in shaping the Committee's inquiry.
3. In addition to standard oral evidence sessions on 7 November, 14 November, 21 November and 5 December, the Committee held focus groups with parents, pupils and teachers, as well as with students from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Notes of these focus groups can be found at [Annexe A](#).
4. Members of the Committee attended a North Lanarkshire Schools' Music Group practice session at Coatbridge High School on Friday 9 November. As part of this visit, members spoke with officials from North Lanarkshire Council and participating pupils to gain an understanding of how the instrumental music service operates in one particular local authority.
5. In November 2018, the Public Petitions Committee referred [PE01694 - Free Instrumental Music Services](#) to the Committee. The petition calls for "the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to change the law to ensure that musical instrument tuition is available as of right to all children attending state schools in Scotland who wish it, free of charge." The Committee will formally consider the petition following the publication of this report.
6. The following report draws on evidence gathered through these separate strands of inquiry work, and makes a series of recommendations regarding instrumental music tuition, which the Committee believes should be affordable, barrier-free and consistent for school pupils across Scotland.
7. The Committee would like to thank everybody who contributed to the inquiry.

Benefits of a music education

8. One of the key messages emerging from the Committee's inquiry was the value of a music education both to individuals and to society as a whole.
9. The Committee heard compelling evidence from young people about how they had benefited from the opportunity to take part in instrumental music lessons. The Committee noted in particular the number of young people who referred primarily to the social impact of their learning rather than to their own proficiency. Alice Ferguson MSYP told the Committee:

” I play the trumpet and I have done my grade 8 exams, but I have also made new friends through music and through the extracurricular activities that it provides. I have become more resilient, confident and open minded in everything that I do. From a mental health point of view, I have benefited from the creativity, and feeling that I am part of a community—for example, part of a band—is really good for my mental health.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 07 November 2018, Alice Ferguson (Scottish Youth Parliament), contrib. 16¹

MSYPs Alice Ferguson and Catherine Mackie giving evidence to the Education and Skills Committee on music tuition in schools



Source: Education and Skills Committee, 7 November 2018

10. In focus groups with young people, the academic advantages of a music education were highlighted to the Committee. Students pointed to the transferable skills that

learning to play an instrument can build, such as dexterity, creative problem-solving, and focus. ¹

11. A young person working in the music sector emphasised the wider benefits of music tuition beyond exam success, and described the impact of learning music on her social skills and self-confidence. Had she been charged for music tuition when attending school, she would not have been able to continue and did not believe she would now work in the music sector. ²

12. The Committee also received evidence from teachers and parents regarding the impact on young people who, for financial reasons, had to withdraw from instrumental music tuition. Paul Wood, a former head of East Ayrshire Music Service and former chair of Heads of Instrumental Teaching Scotland, said:

” The worst job I have had to do, as a music educator, is taking an instrument off a child because their parents have not paid their fees. To look into the eyes of a child and say "I'm sorry, I can't teach you anymore" is the cruellest thing I have done. I am sure there are many children out there that have been traumatised by having a teacher take away an instrument from them. There is no dignified way in removing an educational experience from a child because of finance. ³

13. A parent who wished to remain anonymous said:

” I really feel let down by Clackmannanshire Council as they have encouraged the children to play an instrument, to provide opportunities (which is a great thing!) and then take it all away by making it unaffordable for most parents to continue. Most parents would probably expect to pay a small fee for continued music tuition for those children that have shown an aptitude, but this is unachievable for most. ⁴

14. The Educational Institute of Scotland ("EIS") raised the wider attainment benefits which can arise from a music education:

” This cohort of young people are missing out on two fronts: on the many benefits that are intrinsic to learning a musical instrument, and on the wider cognitive, social and emotional, including mental health, benefits which impact positively on achievement and attainment in school beyond the curricular area of music. The benefits to be reaped from learning a musical instrument are lifelong. The disadvantage resultant from being denied access to this valuable learning is also, therefore, lifelong. This is unacceptable injustice. ⁵

15. The Committee was also made aware of a burgeoning suite of academic research which outlines the benefits of a music education. In its written submission, the Music Education Partnership Group (MEPG) summed this up:

- ” In addition to enhanced mental and physical health and wellbeing, the benefits to the child include the development of transferable skills such as team working, resilience, discipline, performing, problem solving, evaluating, abstract thinking, physical and fine motor coordination. The latest neurological research by Dr Anita Collins in Australia points to the lifelong benefits of playing a musical instrument from an early age and is influencing radical change regarding music education delivery in the Australian national education system.⁶
16. George Kelly, a recently retired head of an instrumental music service in a local authority, stated:
- ” It is not an exaggeration to say that there is no other single activity which can have such a profound effect on as many areas of development as learning to play an instrument. A list, which is far from comprehensive, would include, motor skills, hand/eye coordination, mental agility, team working, self-reliance, independence, self-evaluation and listening skills. The benefits to the development of social, emotional, communication and cognitive skills are well documented.⁷
17. Indeed, some made the reasonable point that music education could play a key part in raising attainment levels in Scottish schools. An anonymous teacher suggested:
- ” The ability for a well thought out, equitable instrumental music service, to deliver the four capacities of CFE [Curriculum for Excellence], i.e. successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens is un-paralleled. The investment of 4 million that it would cost to make the entire Scottish Instrumental music tuition scheme free at the point of delivery and fair and equitable to all, is a drop in the ocean and surely an extremely worthwhile investment when placed alongside the substantial benefits it would generate.⁸
18. Alastair Orr, an instrumental music teacher, commented:
- ” Professor Sue Hallam, of the UCL Institute of Research, states in a 2015 report that children receiving music tuition show heightened literacy, numeracy and social skills. A two-year study by Professor Assal Habibi, of the University of Southern California, argues that children taking music lessons display advances in decision making and impulse control. These are high-value skills, vital to children's life chances. Any investment in instrumental and vocal education by local and national governments is more than returned by the contribution of young people to the cultural, educational and social fabric of our country.⁹
19. Councillor Chris Cunningham of Glasgow City Council pointed to this evidence as part of the reason it has retained free music tuition:
- ” It is recognised that music has wider benefits in terms of literacy, cognitive development and language development. The additional benefits that arise from it are at the core of why we regard it as important in the curriculum and why it has been so regarded for years.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Cunningham, contrib. 6²

20. The Committee was also reminded by Kirk Richardson, Convener of the Instrumental Teachers' Network within the EIS, of the wider benefits to the economy of a musically enabled society:

” Scotland accounts for 11 per cent of the UK’s live music revenue, and music tourism brings in around £280 million a year to Scotland and secures more than 2,000 full-time jobs. I have a wee note here that says that, in 2015 alone, 720,000 foreign and domestic visitors came to the country for festivals and major music concerts. If music tuition is allowed to die, there will be a huge commercial loss to the country. We need to wake up to that.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kirk Richardson, contrib. 71³

21. The Committee recognises the many ways in which a music education can benefit young people, as well as enriching both local and national culture and the economy.

22. The Committee recognises that international evidence demonstrates that music education can play a pivotal role in raising attainment.

Current delivery of instrumental music tuition

23. In its [previous report](#) on attainment and achievement of school children experiencing poverty, the Committee set out the requirements of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 regarding charging for elements of school education:

” The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 ("the 1980 Act") states, "school education provided by an education authority shall be provided without payment of fees" and while there are exceptions to this, fees should not be charged if they prejudice "the adequate provision of free school education" (s.3 of the 1980 Act). In addition, education authorities must provide education materials free of charge that "are necessary to enable the pupil to take full advantage of the education provided." (s.11 of the 1980 Act). Ministers have the power to take action if an education authority fails to perform its duties under the 1980 Act. (s.70 of the 1980 Act) ¹⁰

24. In schools, music is taught as a subject by a specialist music teacher (or generalist primary teacher) who is required to be registered with the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS). In addition, all 32 local authorities in Scotland provide an instrumental music service (IMS), to allow teaching of individual instruments in either one-to-one or small group sessions delivered by peripatetic music tutors. The tutors delivering this service are not required to be registered with the GTCS, but can hold affiliate membership.

25. Instrumental music tuition (IMT) is considered by local authorities to be a discretionary service separate and complementary to the music curriculum. In the words of Councillor Stephen McCabe, representing the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA):

” ...the reality is that music tuition is a discretionary service. It is a costly service, and there is a cost involved in getting particular instruments. Legislatively, it is a discretionary service. That is the difference. We are not comparing like with like. The Parliament may choose to change that, and that is entirely a decision for you, but we are dealing with the situation as it stands now and with the very difficult choices that councils have to make.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Councillor McCabe, contrib. 106⁴

26. The Committee asked the Scottish Government to provide its interpretation or definition of the "adequate and efficient" school education for which no fees may be charged. The Scottish Government responded:

” There is no statutory curriculum in Scotland. This means that there is flexibility for local authorities and individual schools to develop and implement curricula at local or school level in the context of the broad curriculum framework. Notwithstanding this, Curriculum for Excellence is the basis of a curriculum framework which contains a range of entitlements.

From age 3 to S3 there is an entitlement for children to experience a **broad general education** with an entitlement to the full range of experiences and outcomes at the third level of the curriculum by the end of S3.

Music is included within the Expressive Arts experiences and outcomes alongside art and design, dance and drama. Within these subjects, further reference is made to performances and presentations. Local authorities and schools have the flexibility necessary to deliver these experiences and outcomes to meet the needs of individual children and young people.

As a result of the entitlement to a broad general education, children and young people develop the knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities to enable them to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Learners are also entitled to a **senior phase**, which takes place from S4 to S6, and is where young people can build up a portfolio of qualifications. The curriculum framework and the qualifications system will provide a range of opportunities to meet the needs of all learners

It is in the context of these general entitlements that education authorities must ensure that they are securing an adequate and efficient school education for their area. Other statutory duties, including those in sections 2 (nature of education provided and views of children and young people) and 3 (pupils experiencing inequalities of outcome) of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, are relevant in this context.¹¹

27. Some witnesses were of the view that IMT is a vital part of the core curriculum. A teacher who wished to remain anonymous commented that:

” there is a difference between classroom music, which aims to give an all-round musical education including: history, composition, theory and listening and instrumental music, which seeks to teach children to play. Classroom music can only provide a limited amount of input into practical instrumental skills. To be effective classroom music needs to be supported by a well-funded instrumental music service.¹²

28. Indeed, the role of instrumental music tutors as compared to classroom music teachers was a key part of the Committee's considerations. Kirk Richardson stated:

- ” As a member of the workforce, I am concerned that the instrumental music teacher is separated from music education in classrooms. It seems to be an accepted policy for local authorities that we can have one without the other, but if we want a proper cultural educational music system in Scotland, we need the instrumental music system and the classroom teachers as well. Year on year, we are cut because we are not in education beside the other teachers in the classroom and we seem to be low-hanging fruit that councils can cut every year. Until that is changed, this may continue to happen. We would like that to change.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kirk Richardson (Educational Institute of Scotland), contrib. 6⁵

Kirk Richardson giving evidence to the Education and Skills Committee



Source: Education and Skills Committee, 14 November 2018

29. Kirk Richardson provided the Committee with his view as a current tutor:

- ” I would like to see instrumental music aligned along with music education in the classroom. We are imperative to the learning of the children and I do not see why we are separated every year and are, as I say, easy to cut away...

...local authorities have a budget and instrumental teaching is an element of the budget that can be cut every year. Once we go, there will be no coming back, so I would like to see our position cemented within the curriculum.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kirk Richardson, contrib. 6⁵

30. This was echoed by RCS students, who considered that music tuition should be viewed in partnership with classroom teaching, including that:

- it was unrealistic to expect classroom teachers alone to get students to the level required to achieve qualifications;
- without tuition the classroom teacher would need to be able to play all of the instruments played by the class they were teaching and that this is not feasible; and
- without peripatetic tutors the standard required to achieve certain qualifications would need to be lowered. ¹³

31. Kenny Christie, Chair of the Heads of Instrumental Teaching Scotland (HITS), talked to the Committee about how current issues were affecting tutors:

” It would be remiss of us today not to speak about the impact on the health and wellbeing of colleagues who are going through what is almost a continual funding cycle—it is run on an annual basis in some areas—and are waiting to see whether there are going to be cuts in their local area, and what impact that will have on staff and on the children they teach.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kenny Christie, contrib. 101⁷

32. This was echoed in a written submission from the Scottish Association of Music Education (SAME):

” Music instruction/tuition in schools across Scotland has seen many challenges over the last few years. In many instances there is evidence of departing instructors (highly skilled members of the workforce) not being replaced and those who are left are spread across a wider allocation. This in itself does not offer equity and opportunity for our young people. ¹⁴

33. An illustration of the stress placed on the service by reducing numbers of tutors was vividly painted by Andrew Dickie, Committee member of the Scottish Association for Music Education ("SAME"):

” We have the situation in which a violin teacher is being trained to teach cello. A range of instruments have been expected, but those instruments are real specialisms—I cannot find anyone who can do both equally well. It is like going to hospital for cardiovascular surgery and being seen by a neuroscientist. As much as he or she is gifted and a specialist in that particular field, it is not what you need. That is what is happening—people are now being taught by non-specialists. That might be part of the degradation in quality that I mentioned. It is not just the numbers that have been lost; specialism has been lost, too.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Andrew Dickie, contrib. 21⁸

Andrew Dickie giving evidence to the Education and Skills Committee



Source: Education and Skills Committee, 14 November 2018

34. Councillor McCabe was sympathetic to the position of instrumental music tutors:

” Councils are under pressure not just to charge for tuition but to reduce the number of music instructors. That is the simple reality. Some councils have reduced, or have savings options to reduce, the number of music instructors—that might involve instructors in instruments that are not particularly popular and where numbers are limited. Councils are looking not just at charging but at savings that might reduce the number of music instructors.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Councillor McCabe, contrib. 78⁹

35. In the focus group with students from the RCS, a number of students reflected on a perceived "disparity of esteem" between instrumental music teachers and classroom music teachers. The students also reported a decline (through no fault of the tutors) in the quality time tutors could spend with students as fewer tutors had less time to spend in more schools, as well as the use of unsuitable settings for these lessons.¹⁵

36. When asked about the status of instrumental music tutors and of the role of instrumental music services by the Committee, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, John Swinney MSP ("the Cabinet Secretary"), stated:

” A change could well emerge from the discussions that we are having with the music education partnership group. I am concerned about the dangers that might lie ahead in relation to levels of participation in instrumental music tuition, so I need to be open to considering the question that Tavish Scott has raised so that I can address that issue.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], John Swinney, contrib. 162¹⁰

37. The Committee believes there is a lack of clarity regarding whether instrumental music tuition is necessary to provide adequate preparation for SQA examinations in the senior phase can legitimately be subject to charging. While COSLA states that instrumental music tuition is not statutory, the legal basis for charging is not clear to the Committee. The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government provides such clarification in its response to this report.

38. The Committee acknowledges that the education delivered by instrumental music tutors supports a core part of the curriculum, and recognises that tutors are vital to ensuring that pupils have access to a diverse range of instruments and a sufficient level of teaching time in order to present for SQA examinations. Consequently, the Committee believes that instrumental music tutors should be considered to be part of core education provision.

39. The Committee recognises there are differing views regarding whether the status of music tuition is discretionary or part of the core curriculum. The Committee considers that the explicit inclusion of instrumental music tuition in the core curriculum would have practical implications, which would need to be carefully considered. However, the benefits in protecting and enhancing the provision of music tuition in schools could far outweigh these considerations.

Charging structure for instrumental music tuition

40. As each local authority manages its own IMS, each is able to set its own fees (if any), hire charges for instruments and, where charges apply, any exemptions or concessionary rates - for example, for those in receipt of free school meals.
41. This local autonomy has therefore resulted in a mosaic of fees and concessions across the country. These differing approaches are collated by the Improvement Service in an annual survey, the latest edition of which was published in December 2018 following the end of the Committee's evidence sessions.
42. The latest Improvement Service survey confirms that four local authorities - West Lothian, East Lothian, Midlothian and South Ayrshire - have introduced fees in 2018-19. The survey also reports that eight local authorities have raised their fees. According to those who provided figures to the Improvement Service, the percentage of the local authority education budget in 2017-18 attributed to instrumental music tuition is highest in Dundee City and Inverclyde, both of which spent 1% of their education budget. ¹⁶
43. Those local authorities which charge fees do not recover 100% of their costs, with the proportion ranging between 5% and 37%. For example, Fife Council, who spend the highest sum of money (£1,955,000) of those local authorities who charge for tuition, collect £466,000, or 24% of their expenditure on IMT, in fees. ¹⁷
44. Councillor McCabe outlined the rationale for charging for instrumental music tuition:
- ” There is a very strong consensus that instrumental music tuition is a valued service that has an important role in education and that, to maintain the service in difficult financial circumstances, retaining the option of charging is crucial...
- Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Councillor Stephen McCabe (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities), contrib. 3¹¹
- ” ...I would like music tuition to be free to every young person in Scotland in the same way that many other things are but, fundamentally, at the end of the day, councils are faced with hard decisions every year around education and every other service that we provide, and we cannot sustain indefinitely things that were previously free.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Councillor McCabe, contrib. 9¹²

Exemptions, concessions and other costs

45. The Committee was keen to understand not only how charging structures affected the delivery of IMT, but who they affected. The Improvement Service survey summary tables include full details of the mosaic of exemptions and concessions offered by each local authority. Each local authority offers exemptions for those sitting SQA examinations, as well as "some form of concession...for families with

low incomes", usually using free school meals entitlement as a criteria for measuring this. ¹⁸

46. The range of exemptions and concessions offered produces some interesting approaches, such as the introduction of sibling discount in 10 local authorities, full exemptions for looked after children in North Ayrshire and Shetland Islands, and full exemption for pupils with Additional Support Needs in North Lanarkshire. The Committee also noted that the concessionary rate for pupils entitled to free school meals or families in receipt of housing benefit/income support in Clackmannanshire is the same as the full charge in Inverclyde.
47. Kenny Christie, who as Chair of HITS assists the Improvement Service in collating the information included in its annual survey, summed up the national picture when it comes to charging:

” We have fee-charging policies that range from some areas... providing free tuition to all to some areas charging up to £524 [per annum]. We have 16 different concessionary rates depending on where people live, one of which is £117. I do not understand why we can provide free tuition in some places while another place has a concessionary rate of £117.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kenny Christie (Heads of Instrumental Teaching Scotland), contrib. 5¹³

Kenny Christie giving evidence to the Education and Skills Committee



Source: Education and Skills Committee, 14 November 2018

48. Kirk Richardson touched on why this jigsaw of different rates and exemptions could affect uptake of IMT:

” I read in the Connect submission that the concessions are a minefield for parents. We have 32 variations of concessions. There are reasons why parents are not keen to fill in forms. There is also the stigma issue. To me, charging is the biggest barrier that I come across on a daily basis. I have just had a primary project with 15 children, who have now all come up to secondary school. They turned up on the first day wanting to continue the process. I said, “Here, take this form home to your parents,” and of the 15, I got one return. The issue is staring me in the face on a daily basis.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kirk Richardson, contrib. 44¹⁴

49. Kirk Richardson elaborated on his point:

” There is a stigma for children that we do not often recognise. At the recent HITS conference, someone spoke about poverty and where it lies. He said that, because children who are in that bracket are ashamed of their situation, they will lie and deceive friends and peers so that they are not exposed. I have evidence of local authorities that have offered some free lessons, free transport and even free accommodation and free residential weekends, but the uptake is not there. Children are refusing that because of the stigma of being found out. That stigma is a huge thing that we really underestimate. People do not come forward. We have to be careful that information on application forms for people who want to participate is not seen by staff and pupils. It should be really confidential.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kirk Richardson, contrib. 36¹⁵

50. The EIS also shared its concerns about this patchwork approach:

” We find it very concerning that concession policies are so variable and that children's access to music tuition can depend so greatly on familial income, which part of Scotland they live in and how their home authority has defined its approach to expanding access.¹⁹

51. Councillor McCabe set out how local authorities could approach concessions and exemption in the future:

” At the previous meeting of the children and young people board, the consensus was that there should be no charging for the SQA exams. I think that that is the case across the board. I think that it was agreed unanimously that every authority should seek to provide free music tuition to children who are entitled to free school meals. That would be the minimum criterion that would be built into any guidance, but it is for councillors to decide whether to introduce other policies that mean that children who are not entitled to free school meals but who come from a family on low pay would get a reduction in charges. Our view is that that should be a decision for democratically elected local councils.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Councillor McCabe, contrib. 7¹⁶

52. However, it was suggested to the Committee by a teacher who wished to remain anonymous that those just above the threshold for exemptions suffered the most:

” A charged for system produces inequality across the piste, especially for the lower end of middle class earners who are "just getting by". For these families the choices often come down to paying the fuel bill or instrumental lessons. As a result, this system produces orchestras, bands and ensembles populated by the children of higher income families. The groups formed cannot be seen as representative of the school population and access is not open to all.²⁰

53. This was echoed by Alice Ferguson MSYP:

” The people in the middle will miss out most—the people who do not earn the most and who are just squeezing by. They have to ask what music tuition will compromise. It will be football lessons and going on school trips, for example. People who cannot afford to pay for music tuition need it most—they need the continuity, the trust and the skill building of music tuition. They will miss out most.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 07 November 2018, Alice Ferguson, contrib. 71¹⁷

54. This was also raised by some of those making submissions. A parent quoted in the National Parent Forum of Scotland ("NPFS") submission said:

” I am sad and angry that my son will no longer have the opportunities and benefits. We are just over the cut off for free school meals so are not able to get any subsidy but were barely able to afford the hire of the instrument so can't afford the new charge.²¹

55. A parent representative on South Ayrshire Education Authority, Euan Terras, echoed this view:

” Whilst those families with free school meal entitlement are exempt from the fees, it is the very large group of families who fall just above the free school meals threshold that suffer the most. How can an authority claim that they are making every attempt to close the attainment gap and complying with GIRFEC [Getting It Right For Every Child] when they are denying children this opportunity?²²

56. Some teachers and professionals who contacted the Committee stated that, had they been liable for fees when they were learning, they would not have continued, and reflected on the impact of charging on their own classes. For example, Paul Wood, a former head of East Ayrshire Music Service, stated:

” Charging for lessons takes the decision away from the child and school and places it directly at the hands of the parent. Allowing parents to make this decision may be seen as a good thing. However, I have seen too many instances of parents, irrespective of their financial background, making educational decisions based on finance and not the need of the child; this is not equity and fall short of Mr Swinney's statement of children having their chances limited by circumstances outside their control. From a personal point of view, if I had gone home with a letter requesting payment for instrumental lessons, I would not have been allowed to start to play due to finances. As our income would have just been above the concession rate, we would have been charged for lessons.²³

57. Even those who have recently introduced fees recognise that is not a perfect system. Councillor David Dodds of West Lothian Council told the Committee:

” The problem is that although the standard charge that we have introduced might be an equal charge, it is not an equitable charge. Families who have a reasonable amount of disposable income will be able to meet the charge, as well as the sibling charge. However, some families who face that charge are looking for money for it once they have paid for the basics such as heating, food and clothing. Every penny that those families have is accounted for, so any charge that we bring in will present them with a big challenge. We will have to think about how we respond to that.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Dodds, contrib. 30¹⁸

58. The Committee were also reminded of the supplementary costs for those who do pursue instrumental music tuition. For example, in 2017-18, three authorities - Angus, Dumfries and Galloway and Dundee - had an instrument hire charge, with other authorities loaning at no cost or including the cost of hiring in their fees. In addition,

” "There are hidden costs of learning a musical instrument. The purchase of music, reusable accessories (strings, reeds, valve oil, etc.), also requires additional parental payment." ²⁴

59. Connect echoed this sentiment in its written submission:

” However, fees are not the only barrier. Many families are not aware of what is available for their child, places can be limited, and some children only get one chance at an assessment. ²⁵

60. As the Committee heard about during the course of [its inquiry](#) into the attainment and achievement of school children experiencing poverty, other subjects - for example, home economics or P.E. - require some form of parental contribution from time to time for materials. When the Committee put this to witnesses, the following argument was made by Kenny Christie:

” People sometimes bring up home economics, physical education and the higher and national 5 drama courses, where people have to see and experience live theatre. The difference is that pupils in those subjects are not paying for the teaching element. In home economics, there are consumable resources and people can go home and enjoy the fruits of their labours. Schools are looking at how they offset some of those costs. The difference is that pupils are not paying for the teaching. That is where we are with instrumental tuition at present.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kenny Christie, contrib. 14¹⁹

Local authority approaches

61. The Committee heard from representatives of three local authorities about the difficult choices faced by local authorities. Perth and Kinross Council has always

charged, West Lothian Council introduced charges in 2017-18 and Glasgow City Council does not charge.

62. Councillor Willie Wilson, Perth and Kinross Council, provided the background to their decision to charge fees:

” We, too, have looked at the budget for the instrumental music service and have tried hard to protect it in a way that ensures that the service is delivered to those who need it. After a six-year freeze, we introduced a 20 per cent increase in fees as part of last year’s budget. In some cases, that meant an increase of £50 per year or £1 per week...At the same time as the increase, we introduced a £35,000 grant for a bursary scheme so that those who are eligible, for a variety of reasons, can apply for financial help.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Willie Wilson (Perth and Kinross Council), contrib. 4²⁰

63. Councillor Dodds pointed out that West Lothian Council's charges subsidise the service rather than recovering the full cost of music tuition:

” none of the councils charges full recovery for music tuition. The key figure is the difference between the amount of money that a council puts into music tuition and the amount that it costs to deliver. We had a budget of £993,000, which was cut to £500,000, so the £340-odd charge that we introduced is to ensure that we recover the difference while maintaining the level of music tuition. That is why there is such a patchwork across the country, and previous surveys have shown exactly that.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Dodds, contrib. 18²¹

64. Local authorities and their representatives argued that the main issue was in local government's funding settlement from the Scottish Government. Councillor McCabe said:

” Since 2011-12, core funding to local authorities has been reduced by £1.64 billion in real terms. No local authority makes the decision lightly to introduce—or to increase—charges for any service. However, the financial situation for local authorities continues to be very difficult and, as a consequence, councils have faced difficult decisions about funding. ..

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Councillor Stephen McCabe (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities), contrib. 3¹¹

” The fundamental issue is not ring fencing funding or protecting services; it is the chronic underfunding of local government over the past 10 years, which the Parliament has presided over.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Councillor McCabe, contrib. 7¹⁶

65. Councillor Dodds agreed:

- ” The general funding level for local authorities needs to be increased, because that is where the problem comes from. If you ring fence music tuition and say that a sum of money will be set aside for instrumental tuition without there being a general increase in funding, you will actually be taking money away from another area and diverting it to instrumental music tuition. You may solve that problem, but it will be at the expense of the finance that is available to other areas of education or to other local authority functions. I do not think that that would solve the problem.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Dodds, contrib. 58²²

Councillor David Dodds of West Lothian Council giving evidence to the Education and Skills Committee



Source: Education and Skills Committee, 21 November 2018

66. However, not everybody fully accepted this reasoning. The NPFS stated:

- ” We appreciate the budgetary pressure local authorities are under, but do not believe that charging for music tuition is ever appropriate.²⁶

67. The Cabinet Secretary disagreed with the premise of COSLA's argument, arguing that:

” I do not think that local government has had to endure a disproportionately greater challenge than the Scottish Government has, and a number of local authorities, including some of our largest authorities, are able to fund free instrumental music tuition. Therefore, choices are being made, but it is important that we do not simply say that the answer is for the Government to provide more resources to local government in general, because some local authorities are attaching a greater priority to the service than others are.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], John Swinney, contrib. 179²³

68. In his submission to the Committee, Ralph Riddiough, the petitioner campaigning for free instrumental tuition across Scotland, observes:

” Local authorities are not charging fees because of a judgement by education professionals that learning to play a musical instrument properly is beyond what schools should be doing, or somehow unconnected to the study of music; they are charging fees because there is a loophole allowing this and they need to find ways of reducing budget gap.²⁷

69. This view was shared by John Wallace, who stated:

” When some of Scotland’s largest population centres, for vastly different reasons, have free music tuition as part of a rich educational and cultural offering, why does the rest of the country not have that? It is just not fair. It is inequitable.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], John Wallace (Music Education Partnership Group), contrib. 4²⁴

Impact of raising fees or introducing charges

70. The Committee was particularly interested in the effect introducing charges had on participation rates. As West Lothian Council very recently introduced charging and has closely monitored the impact of this decision, Councillor Dodds was able to provide the Committee with the most up-to-date statistics:

” Since we introduced charging, the number of primary students in tuition has decreased from 1,128 last November to 234 this year... At secondary level, the number of students has decreased from 1,042 in November 2017 to 514 in November this year...

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Dodds, contrib. 24²⁵

” ...When we set the level of charging, we assumed a maximum drop-off of 30 per cent, but in fact the retention level is closer to 30 per cent. On that basis, what we are offering does not achieve what we set out to achieve, so we will need to look at that, and that will need to include considering a return to some form of free provision.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Dodds, contrib. 81²⁶

71. Councillor Dodds also spoke about the socio-economic spread of those undertaking instrumental music tuition:

” even before we introduced charging, access to instrumental music tuition was not taken up equally across the board. Before we started charging, 12.75 per cent of the pupils who accessed such tuition were in the most deprived quintile and 28 per cent were in the least deprived quintile...

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Dodds, contrib. 14²⁷

” ..I can say that the drop-off follows closely the Scottish index of multiple deprivation profile of the schools—it is much more pronounced in schools in more deprived areas. We will certainly have to think about how we can respond to that.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Dodds, contrib. 28²⁸

72. This echoed the experience of North Lanarkshire Council, who explained during the Committee's visit that the introduction of charging led to an initial 30% drop in participants. When these places were filled in future years, it was suggested that the number of pupils from more affluent families increased disproportionately. ²⁸

73. The impact of the introduction of charging on pupils was explained by Alice Ferguson MSYP, a pupil from West Lothian who participates in instrumental music tuition:

” I am in the school band, and I watched the transition from the free service to what happened after the charges were implemented. The band is just not the same; there are not as many people in it. People almost feel that they have to be in it now because they pay, whereas before people chose to be in it and they did that for themselves rather than because their parents told them that they had to because they pay £382 a year. It is really sad to lose that spirit and that people have lost the feeling that they are doing something for themselves and not because they have to.

A lot of my friends have now dropped out of music because they cannot afford it. That is ridiculous. Why should somebody be denied the opportunity to play something and do something that they want to do just because they cannot afford it?

Source: Education and Skills Committee 07 November 2018, Alice Ferguson, contrib. 21²⁹

74. Alice Ferguson MSYP provided some further details of what the current provision in West Lothian looks like for pupils:

” That covers one 25-minute lesson a week. Sometimes it is one-to-one teaching but sometimes, because of the reduced numbers, it has to be six to 10 pupils because the teacher is travelling. The charge also covers a band, an orchestra or an ensemble for an hour. The cost works out at roughly £10 for a 25-minute lesson, which people can get cheaper if they go private. Ten pounds would get 30 minutes of one-to-one private tuition, so why are people paying £10 for a 25-minute lesson with maybe six other people?

Source: Education and Skills Committee 07 November 2018, Alice Ferguson, contrib. 28³⁰

75. Councillor Chris Cunningham, Glasgow City Council, recounted its own journey towards free provision:

” I understand that about 10 years ago, Glasgow City Council took a decision to introduce charging. As a consequence, the participation levels in music tuition dropped significantly. The decision was made—I think correctly—that those charges should be withdrawn. I am advised by officials that it took several years to build the participation rates in the programme back up again.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Cunningham, contrib. 6²

76. Councillor Cunningham went on to say:

” The big issue there—it is probably a general point—is the huge step between not charging and charging. It is a far bigger step than, let us say for argument’s sake, increasing the charge from £100 to £110. Incremental increases in charges are one thing, but taking the big step of introducing charges seems to me to be the significant step. That is what caused the problem around 10 years ago, and that is what the council stepped back from.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Cunningham, contrib. 22³¹

77. In a written submission, Euan Terras recounted recent events in South Ayrshire following the introduction of fees:

” We do not charge any membership or subscription fees and all our tuition and rehearsals are free to all yet I can see already the effects that the introduction of charging for tuition is having within South Ayrshire. Our numbers within the orchestra are usually around 120 yet already we are seeing a reduction and fewer new members joining when we started our new session in August. Our numbers are now under 100. Numbers playing in school and authority orchestras are also down on last year and the problem will clearly compound itself year on year as more and more children are denied the opportunity to learn. ²⁹

78. In a focus group with RCS students, there was wide agreement in the group that charging for tuition was causing a reduction in participation. One student teacher suggested that when fees were introduced after pupils had been learning an instrument through primary school there was a big reduction in the numbers taking part. Another student teacher highlighted that the number in the school band reduced from 40 to 20. One student teacher said their friend was a tutor for the drums and when their local authority decided to introduce a charge three of their students indicated they would stop their tuition. ³⁰

79. In his written submission, Paul Wood recounted his experience of how the introduction of charging impacted on learning when he was Head of East Ayrshire Music Service:

- ” As a Music Service Manager of a charging service, your goal is to generate the required amount of income for your service. You know that if you fall short of the target, there will be more cuts to your staffing and/or large increases to the fees charged. Your managerial goals become business focused not educational focused. Your job should be about the quality of delivery and educational opportunities not income generation, income processes and procedures.

While being the Music Service Manager for East Ayrshire, I witnessed an initial drop of around 20% in the number of pupils accessing lessons. Numbers did eventually increase, but I noticed that there was a shift in postcode access. This shift in access meant there were schools that I had to move instructors from or reduce their timetables and move them into more “affluent” areas to help generate our income targets. One learning partnership lost all its instrumental provision completely. There is no greater barrier to access than no access at all.³¹

80. This point of view was also reflected in Kenny Christie's evidence to the Committee:

- ” ...if an authority has a charging policy, that becomes more of a barrier to those flexible approaches, because it becomes more of a client-based service, in which someone expects 20 minutes of something for the money that they pay. The opportunity to have more creative approaches and to make them work for different communities and schools is reduced, because there is a very businesslike income-generating structure.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kenny Christie, contrib. 42³²

81. The Committee respects the democratic right of local authorities to take decisions about local expenditure and acknowledge the financial choices they face. However, the Committee believes in principle that music tuition should be provided free of charge in every local authority.

82. The Committee supports the approach proposed by COSLA to ensure that, as a minimum, all children in receipt of free school meals across Scotland are fully exempt from music tuition fees. Although local authorities have the right to set the thresholds of their concessions and exemptions, the Committee recommends that they should explore other ways in which types of concessions and exemptions (for example, sibling discount) can be more consistently applied.

83. The Committee was alarmed at the reported drop-off rate in participation in West Lothian following the introduction of fees, to the extent that it has threatened the viability of the service itself. The Committee considers West Lothian Council's experience, and the similar historic experience of Glasgow City Council when it briefly introduced fees, to be emblematic both of the precarious position of instrumental music services and the need for the funding of these services to be re-examined.

84. The Committee is also concerned at the weight of evidence that charging for tuition still adversely affects those who qualify for concessions and exemptions as well as families with an income just above the thresholds for these. While recognising that those authorities that charge have autonomy to choose their own thresholds, the Committee recommends that local authorities closely monitor the impact of their charging policies.

Guidance to local authorities

85. The Scottish Government established an Instrumental Music Group (IMG) in December 2012 to examine fee charging and make recommendations.
86. The IMG's [report](#) was published in June 2013 and evidenced an increased number of pupils taking music in Scotland and accessing IMT. The report highlighted the high esteem the Scottish system is held in across the UK and Europe both for its quality and inclusivity. The report contextualised local authorities introducing charges for IMT in a situation where
- ” “pressures were building on Local Authorities’ music services in terms of rising demands for instrumental music tuition within shrinking education and culture budgets resulting from the economic situation.” ³²
87. The report made a number of recommendations, which were [accepted in part or in their entirety](#) by the Scottish Government ³³. This included recommendation 3, which stated:
- ” There should be a general principle that pupils’ individual circumstances should not be a barrier to their ability to access and benefit from instrumental music tuition. Local Authorities should review their charging policies and concessionary schemes to ensure that pupils in their area are not prevented from learning a musical instrument because of their background, location, disability or financial circumstances. Local Authorities should be willing to share good practice on availability, access to and the transparency of their concession and charging policies including consultation on these matters. ³⁴
88. These recommendations were last reviewed by COSLA in 2015, but are being revisited as COSLA, working closely with the Scottish Government and the MEPG, is developing guidance on music tuition which will be issued and implemented if approved by COSLA's Children and Young People Board.
89. Councillor McCabe told the Committee about some of the potential content and direction of the guidance:
- ” In the context of respecting local decision making and an extremely challenging financial situation, we are making every effort to ensure that there is access to music tuition for those on the lowest incomes and those who are sitting Scottish Qualifications Authority exams. Through the guidance, we will improve communication between authorities and children, young people and parents on the reasons and rationale for charging and on transparency around decision making.
- Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Councillor Stephen McCabe (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities), contrib. 3¹¹
90. Eddie Follan, Policy Manager for the Children and Young People Team, COSLA, expanded on this:

- ” we are considering writing into the guidance that there should be no charge for the SQA-related tuition, which goes back to the recommendations from 2013. We are also looking at free school meals as the minimum level for exemption, although it is important to recognise that many councils go further than that.

At the same time, we have heard from campaigners that how the decisions around charging are communicated can be quite frustrating for parents and families. We want to get some transparency in the rationale for charging and the explanation of why it needs to be done.

We are also exploring guidance on the consideration of unintended consequences. We know that, sometimes, difficult decisions have consequences that people do not really think about. That issue will be addressed by highlighting good practice. We know that there are examples of really good practice across the country. For example, we have heard about bursaries and other things that can ease the pressure on both the council and the families.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Eddie Follan, contrib. 34³³

91. John Wallace welcomed the guidance, but drew the Committee's attention to previous recommendations made on instrumental music tuition:

- ” Guidance is a great thing to have, but let us look back to the work that Dr Allan did on the 17 [IMG] recommendations in 2013. Guidance has a velocity and works for so long but then it needs to be reinforced. I know that education bills are difficult to get through but we need the minimum standards to be reinforced in statute. Local authorities on their own should not be expected to come up with minimum standards; that is for central Government to do.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], John Wallace, contrib. 73³⁴

92. Kenny Christie later added:

- ” Perhaps recommendations are not enough and we are looking towards a set of stronger guidelines in the future, if not a commonly understood system or set of parameters that local authority music services all operate within.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kenny Christie, contrib. 12³⁵

Charging for SQA examinations

93. Prior to the report of the Instrumental Music Group in 2013, five local authorities charged pupils for instrumental music tuition leading to an SQA examination. The IMG report welcomed the decision of the five local authorities "to either rescind such charges or review them with the aim of ceasing the charge".³⁵
94. During the course of its inquiry, the Committee learned of a recent change by Midlothian Council to funding for the cost of music tuition leading to SQA exams. When asked to provide further information, Midlothian Council wrote to the Committee to confirm:

” Midlothian Council decided last year to introduce an internal recharge to schools for SQA presentations for music exams, which would charge secondary schools the annual cost of providing music tuition for this purpose. This is estimated to amount to £700 per pupil in 2018/19 and will result in sums between £7,000 and £38,000 being recovered from individual secondary school budgets this year.

This decision applies only to Music and not to any other subjects, as across Midlothian there are no other SQA subjects for which tuition is provided by the Council and not charged to the schools. Midlothian Council considers that charging schools for the cost of providing music tuition for SQA presentations provides greater transparency of the total costs being incurred by each of our secondary schools. We were also of the view that the budgets allocated to secondary schools could meet this additional charge, however we committed to keeping the budgets under review.

We have considered the introduction of this charge on secondary schools in the context of the Instrumental Music Group recommendations of 2013 and are of the view that our decision does not conflict with those recommendations.³⁶

95. When asked about Midlothian Council's decision to internally recharge school budgets and whether this could set a precedent, Councillor McCabe replied:

” I do not see that as charging for SQA qualifications. The headteacher of the school will have a devolved budget, which they can choose to use to avoid having to charge. All things being equal, that will mean that less money will be available to spend on other things, but that is the situation that the council faces. If the council had decided to maintain that budget centrally, it would have had to cut something else. That is the harsh reality of life as we face it.

We are having discussions with the Government about further devolution of budgetary responsibilities to schools to empower headteachers. If we keep going in that direction, headteachers will have more such decisions to make. There seems to be cross-party consensus that headteachers should have more power over and accountability for budgets and decision making. Midlothian Council has taken that approach, and who am I to criticise it?

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Councillor McCabe, contrib. 43³⁶

96. The Cabinet Secretary was also asked generally about charging for tuition as part of SQA qualifications. Although he stated he was not aware of pupils being charged, the Cabinet Secretary did qualify that by stating:

” The exception that I am concerned about is what I see Midlothian Council doing, which I think is not consistent with the spirit of that 2013 commitment. It might be just about passable in terms of the letter of the commitment, but not with the spirit of the point that was made in the 2013 report.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], John Swinney, contrib. 136³⁷

Selection procedures

97. The latest Improvement Service survey records that 16 local authorities use some form of selection procedure or aptitude test for those wishing to undertake instrumental music tuition, whereas others offer places on a first-come, first-served basis. Aptitude tests are sometimes used in local authorities not as a means of selecting which pupils receive lessons, but rather to help place pupils with the best instrument and to ensure they are happy with their choice.³⁷

98. Andrew Dickie said that he disagreed with the premise of testing pupils as a means of selecting who should participate:

” Children have been denied an opportunity even to participate at the very beginning with a test that they were never prepared for. Testing is not the right way forward. I always think that the best test for a young person—there are some exceptions to this; we should consider aptitude, embouchure, the physical ability to play and the size of the instrument, of course—is their enthusiasm for the subject.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Andrew Dickie, contrib. 85³⁸

99. Parents who responded to a Connect survey argued that these tests were unfair. One parent quoted by Connect said:

” the current system of testing for aptitude in P4 without warning favours young people whose parents have already invested in music lessons (anecdotally those in my son’s year who have passed the test are all already receiving private music tuition).³⁸

Communication

100. The Committee asked local authorities how they communicated with parents and carers. Councillor Wilson of Perth and Kinross Council confirmed that:

” We regularly publicise that information on the council website and so on, and we are proactive in writing to parents to outline the opportunities that are available. We work through school parent councils and headteachers to communicate with parents as well as using other methods, so that information is widely available.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Wilson, contrib. 91³⁹

101. Councillor Dodds of West Lothian Council, which has introduced charging, outlined its approach:

” We have only one year’s worth of experience. We wrote to every family that was in receipt of instrumental music tuition to outline all the available options [for concessions/exemptions]. We also offer a sibling discount.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Dodds, contrib. 92⁴⁰

102. Eddie Follan confirmed that COSLA hoped to reflect better communication in the updated guidance:

” At the same time, we have heard from campaigners that how the decisions around charging are communicated can be quite frustrating for parents and families. We want to get some transparency in the rationale for charging and the explanation of why it needs to be done.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Eddie Follan, contrib. 34³³

103. The Committee does not believe that local authorities are fulfilling the recommendations of the Instrumental Music Group, particularly recommendation 3, which states that pupils' individual circumstances should not be a barrier to their ability to access and benefit from instrumental music tuition.

104. The Committee therefore welcomes COSLA's commitment to revisit the recommendations of the Instrumental Music Group, and asks them as part of their response to this report to provide an update to the Committee on the implementation of the IMG recommendations and a timescale for fulfilling any remaining recommendations.

105. The Committee welcomes the proposed introduction of guidance from COSLA to local authorities regarding instrumental music tuition.

106. The Committee understands that oversubscribed instrumental music services need to make decisions about which pupils can and cannot access their service. However, the Committee believes that aptitude tests, which have a number of legitimate uses, should not be used as the sole basis for selecting pupils for instrumental music tuition and recommends that local authorities avoid doing so in future.

107. The Committee recognises that parents and carers need to be fully informed about the costs for instrumental music tuition and associated costs for participation in music opportunities such as school or local authority bands. The Committee supports COSLA's ongoing work to improve local authority communication regarding charging for music tuition. We encourage local authorities to communicate clearly with all parents and carers regarding tuition costs, other costs and the range of exemptions and concessions offered locally.

108. Where such systems are not already in place, local authorities should consider introducing systems for weekly or monthly payment of tuition fees to assist those who would struggle to make a single lump sum payment.

Progression into musical careers

109. One of the concerning messages delivered by those working in the music industry and teaching profession related to future educational and career prospects should the number of pupils undertaking IMT fall as a result of charging. The RCS stated in its written submission:

” A child aged between 8 and 10 in 2018, who cannot access instrumental tuition due to the barrier posed by fees, and who is aged 18-20 in ten years' time at point of entry to HE will not be able to demonstrate a skill level sufficient to secure entry to Scotland's national conservatoire. In turn, this will impact upon the quality of Scotland's national orchestras and other ensembles, and its international reputation more broadly.³⁹

110. Jennifer Kelly, a parent and an instrumental teacher, highlighted the wider contribution of musicians to Scotland beyond the teaching profession itself:

” This workforce is the bottom layer of Scotland's cultural pyramid, starting thousands of children on their musical journey and giving them opportunities to learn not only how to play an instrument, but a range of transferable skills and creativity.

Other genres of music are of course also part of this pyramid, with members of bands from Deacon Blue to Admiral Fallow beginning their musical journey with free lessons from their Local Authority Instrumental Music Service. Many of the artists who perform regularly at Celtic Connections also started the same way, as did those from the world of jazz - not least some of the members of the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra. Alumni of our Instrumental Music Services can be found performing all over the world, in some of the UK and Europe's top orchestras and West End shows. But also let us not forget the thousands of musicians who play as adults in community Orchestras, Wind Bands and Brass Bands - where did these people have their very first violin / clarinet / trombone lesson?⁴⁰

111. Sonia Scaife, Head of Music at Dyce Academy, also commented on how declining teacher numbers hurt pupils' progression:

” The decline of peripatetic teachers in primaries has also had an impact on the quality of musician coming into the secondary school. As head of the music school I am seeing a real lack of primary suitable candidates from mainstream schools.⁴¹

112. John Wallace also pointed out:

” Instrumental teachers are essential if people want to go on to a career in music. The curriculum for excellence is brilliant in that many more kids are taking music, but they do not have to read music for the SQA qualifications.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], John Wallace, contrib. 11⁴¹

113. The Committee's informal meeting with RCS students shed a lot of light, both on how they made it to the RCS and the barriers they felt could have prevented them doing so.
114. Several students highlighted that learning in primary school and the early years of secondary school was vital to their musical aptitude, and said that learning the fundamentals in the early years of secondary school cannot be overlooked.
115. Other students commented that the existence of charges before reaching SQA examination level can, for some young people, prevent them from taking up learning musical instruments at an early stage. This can in turn prevent pupils from being proficient enough to pass a National 5 exam as they would have to learn an instrument from scratch within a year.
116. There was a discussion about the proficiency required to be accepted to the RCS' Bachelor of Education degree programme. It was highlighted that, despite a requirement to play an advanced piano piece at interview, most local authorities do not offer piano tuition as part of their instrumental music services, which can present a barrier to those from less affluent backgrounds who are unable to afford private tuition. One of the students noted that they had only started learning the piano in S4, and that it was an uphill struggle to get up to the appropriate level.
117. Some students felt that their schools did not appreciate how prestigious it was to be accepted to the RCS, and that their achievements were not valued in the same way as pupils who were accepted to study medicine. ⁴²

Students from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland meeting members of the Education and Skills Committee



Source: Informal meeting, 22 November 2018

118. During oral evidence, Kenny Christie referred to the risk to future musicians if the diversity of instruments offered by instrumental music services were to narrow:

” If the decision is taken that everybody will just play the keyboard because that is the only tuition that is available, we will end up having a nation of keyboard players and we will not have the feed-in that we need to our local orchestras or our community bands and groups. We want to retain the diversity of music making and the choice that is available to our young people. They do not want to live in an area where tuition is provided in only one instrument, and that is what everyone plays.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kenny Christie, contrib. 24⁴²

119. The Cabinet Secretary picked up on the point made regarding charging at an early age:

” There is another issue, which is what happens prior to S4 participation in national 4, national 5 and other qualifications, and whether access to instrumental music tuition is in any way hindered by the existence of any form of charging. That, of course, gets into the differentiation between authorities that do not charge at all, those that charge something and those that charge quite significant amounts. We have to look carefully at participation levels in order to ensure that no obstacles are, as a result of their preparation before S4, being put in the path of young people who want to access those qualifications.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], John Swinney, contrib. 136³⁷

120. The Committee is concerned that, without action, the journey of young talent from Scottish state schools into bands, orchestras, and to become the teachers of the future will become more difficult.

121. The Committee is particularly concerned by the suggestion that not all local authorities provide instrumental music tuition in piano. As performing a piano piece forms part of the audition for admission to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's undergraduate teacher training programme, the Committee believes that this lack of provision at local authority level risks further limiting opportunities for pupils from Scottish state schools.

122. The Committee encourages the Music Education Partnership Group to examine ways in which the gap between provision and proficiency in particular instruments such as piano can be bridged.

123. The Committee is of the view that instrumental music tuition should, where possible and where desired, be an uninterrupted feature of any pupil's education from primary school onwards in order to provide those pupils interested in a career in music the best possible opportunity to succeed.

Other models for instrumental music tuition and the future of the service

124. Given the current difficulties faced by instrumental music services, the Committee was eager to explore different models of delivering instrumental music tuition, and how Scotland's services could adapt and change to safeguard the future. Some submissions, such as that of St Mary's Music School, suggested that the current model was no longer fit for purpose:

” A consistency of provision across the country is something that needs to be achieved. It is simply unacceptable for children to be excluded from the study of music on grounds of cost due to a "postcode lottery". It never has been sensible, reasonable or pragmatic to entrust the music education of Scotland's Young People to 32 Local Authorities who have had other funding allocations to consider and who, quite understandably, have developed different approaches and policies towards providing music teaching over the past few decades. ⁴³

125. The Committee heard evidence from Kirk Richardson and Kenny Christie that charging can introduce new challenges for instrumental music teachers:

” There is a lack of equity in the access that is given to pupils in charging authorities where the instrumental teachers' time is under financial constraint. Often, the pupils who could be described as the high flyers—the ones who might go on to further education and so on—do not get the one-to-one tuition that they need, because they are in a group situation. That really holds them back. The fact that group teaching is the norm, because time is money, has acted against everybody. If there was a non-charging policy, we would have flexibility in the instrumental teachers' timetable that would enable them to cater for those pupils' needs, but they are being excluded a little at the moment.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kirk Richardson, contrib. 26⁴³

” if an authority has a charging policy, that becomes more of a barrier to those flexible approaches, because it becomes more of a client-based service, in which someone expects 20 minutes of something for the money that they pay. The opportunity to have more creative approaches and to make them work for different communities and schools is reduced, because there is a very businesslike income-generating structure.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kenny Christie, contrib. 42³²

126. Witnesses suggested that, were nothing to change, the nature of instrumental music tuition would alter significantly. Kirk Richardson predicted:

” What could happen in that case is that the lessons could get shorter and the groups could get bigger, which would mean that the quality of the lesson would be diminished. With the exorbitant charges—some of them are way above the cost of inflation—there will be a tipping point with regard to the quality of the lesson and how many pupils are in the lesson.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kirk Richardson, contrib. 100⁴⁴

127. In its written submission, the City of Edinburgh Music School identified a reason why music tuition is expensive to deliver:

” unfortunately meaningful music tuition is by its very nature difficult to deliver cheaply. Business efficiency models or technological 'solutions' do not work. Music has to be done in 'real time'. There is always a large element of individuality. "Economy of scale" is not a solution. If there was a cheaper way to deliver it, that worked - we would be doing it by now. ⁴⁴

128. When asked for international comparators, Professor Jeffrey Sharkey, Principal of the RCS, advised that Finland was a leading light in the field of music tuition:

” It has been investing in the arts and it has a partnership between the national level and the local level that feeds into its world-class elite conservatoire—not elite in standard, but with access for everyone. That institution is very keen to partner and benchmark with us, and we can learn a lot from a nation such as that...

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Professor Jeffrey Sharkey (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), contrib. 3⁴⁵

” ...In Finland they have a partnership that works and their prescription is this: money is provided centrally, but it has to be used for the arts. There is a statutory element to it and the money cannot be used for something else.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Professor Sharkey, contrib. 50⁴⁶

Professor Jeffrey Sharkey, Principal of the RCS, giving evidence to the Education and Skills Committee



Source:

129. The proposal for a new national service for instrumental music tuition was put to local authority representatives, who were not enthusiastic about its adoption. Councillor Wilson of Perth and Kinross Council argued:

” That approach would be worse. It would be a one-size-fits-all solution. Scotland is a diverse country, as we all know, so answers for Shetland, Perth and Kinross and Glasgow are different. It would remove any local control or influence and would diminish parental involvement substantially, which is crucial for our IMS; it would be a major disadvantage. A national approach would shift the problem and increase it. Signing up to IMS would be likely to fall off a cliff, to be blunt.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Wilson, contrib. 40⁴⁷

130. Councillor Cunningham of Glasgow City Council agreed:

” That approach would relieve the local authority of having to make those decisions, but it would simply place that decision—difficult or otherwise—in somebody else’s hands. It would create a situation in which some would be happy and some would be unhappy with the decision, whatever it was. It would not resolve the issue of whether tuition should be free or can be free in its delivery—it would just shift the decision making. Local authorities might say, “That’s absolutely fine; you make the decision”—whoever the “you” may be at the national body—but it would not alter the nature and character of the decision.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Cunningham, contrib. 39⁴⁸

131. Councillor Dodds of West Lothian Council added:

” I do not think that making the decision at a local level is the issue. The question is about competition for funding; if the service were to be moved to national level, it might compete with other funds.

At the local level, instrumental music tuition reflects the musical heritage of the area. West Lothian has a strong mining and brass band traditions—brass is our biggest discipline. In other areas, it might be piping, strings or Scottish traditional music. Local authorities are perfectly placed to reflect musical heritage and to provide a service that responds to it. That would be lost if the service was to become national.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 21 November 2018 [Draft], Councillor Dodds, contrib. 41⁴⁹

132. The Cabinet Secretary was also sceptical, observing:

” I am reluctant to think about the creation of a new national agency to deliver music education tuition. That is not the problem that we have here; we have capacity and capability in the education system to provide instrumental music tuition. The model of a national agency that Ms Mackay raises is something that would be established to address a weakness in that respect that I do not think exists.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], John Swinney, contrib. 198⁵⁰

133. Kenny Christie observed that, in terms of the service itself, a national service would not be beneficial:

” From a national perspective though, the discrepancies are too great in how the system operates. There should be a degree of local autonomy in how the system is delivered at a local level; we were talking earlier about knowing your schools, knowing your communities and designing the best, most effective music service to meet all the needs of children and families in the area. The system is there and working.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kenny Christie, contrib. 61⁵¹

134. However, Kenny Christie suggested that each local service could be challenged:

” There may still be 32 instrumental music services operating at a local level, but they could be challenged in terms of agreed outcomes and any additional funding contribution. What are they doing on local delivery for looked-after children? What are they doing to meet additional support needs? How are they ensuring that children from SIMD 1 and 2 areas can access opportunities that the services are making freely available? What are they doing to share practice and champion excellence across the country? What are they doing for their high-flyers in terms of developing the young workforce and identifying next steps? I would like us to perhaps consider agreeing a series of ambitious goals.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kenny Christie, contrib. 74⁵²

135. This mirrored comments from John Wallace, who mentioned that:

” Behind the scenes, we have been working on other delivery methods...We do not want any more new initiatives, because the education constituency is initiated out. There are subtle things. The approach has to be subtle in Scotland, because we are a developed nation with a very sophisticated model of government. That model is envied throughout the world, and we have a sophisticated model of local government. However, there are ways and means of working together without ring fencing or those ways and means being statutory that already exist, and we should develop them.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], John Wallace, contrib. 81⁵³

136. The Committee was keen to explore what potential solutions could be put in place to fund instrumental music tuition; for example, in its written submission, the EIS suggested that:

” Instrumental music services should be fully funded by ringfenced expenditure in order that the creation of a free service is not provided at the expense of existing jobs. ⁴⁵

137. There was significant pushback from local government regarding a potential ringfenced budget to fund instrumental music tuition.

” COSLA’s position on behalf of local government is that we do not like ring fencing. We think that we are democratically elected in the same way that you are and that we should have discretion as to how we spend the public’s money. If the public are not happy with decisions that we make, they can exercise their democratic right to express that dissatisfaction at the next election.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Councillor McCabe, contrib. 61⁵⁴

” Music provision is part of local authorities’ core budgets. Since 2011-12, because of initiative funding, core budgets have reduced from 98 per cent of the funding that local government receives through the block grant to 88 per cent of that funding. Because of ring fencing of various parts of the budget, including the part for teacher numbers, and the cost of delivering health and social care and so on, the savings that local authorities must make from core budgets can be taken from only 42 per cent of the budget that comes to them. When we talk about core budgets, we are talking about services such as music tuition. The impact of reductions on those core budgets is significant and it becomes more significant every year. In addition, the impact becomes more significant the more ring-fenced pots of money and initiative funding we have.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Lauren Bruce (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities), contrib. 85⁵⁵

Youth Music Initiative

138. A number of witnesses referred to the Youth Music Initiative ("the YMI"). The YMI is funded through the Culture, Tourism and External Affairs budget. The YMI is a £9m fund administered by Creative Scotland which has two distinct strands:
- to support school-based music making; and
 - supporting music making for young people out of school time.
139. The purpose of the first strand, which has a budget of £7.2 million in the current financial year, is on delivering a Scottish Government commitment that “every school pupil in Scotland should be offered a year of free music tuition by the time they leave primary school” and is only available to local authorities and Jordanhill School. The YMI funding must not replace activities that the local authority would otherwise deliver through its own budgets.
140. The second strand is in two parts: funding initiatives that create opportunities for music making for young people (e.g. Sistema, National Youth Orchestras of Scotland), and initiatives that will “undertake strategic action or training that will strengthen the youth music sector”. The 2018-19 YMI Annual Plan stated that “YMI reached an estimated 242,800 distinct young people in 2016-17”. The YMI was praised by respondents to the Committee’s call for evidence and witnesses, although some had concerns that YMI projects can create an interest in music that cannot not then be fully explored by a young person due to the cost of continuing tuition.
141. However, as anonymous teachers stated in their written submission, "Youth Music Initiative is not the same as music tuition and shouldn't be viewed as a replacement"⁴⁶, and commented that, "in a charged for system huge drop off

occurs when YMI funding comes to an end-on transition from primary to secondary- simply because families cannot afford to pay. This produces disappointment all round for parents, pupils and instrumental staff." ⁴⁷

142. Alastair Orr expanded on this point in his written submission:

” It is true that the YMI is reaching many thousands of children across the country. What is never acknowledged is that this project is a brief, time-limited introduction to learning to play an instrument. Many children wishing to continue tuition are then confronted with unaffordable and unrealistic financial demands to gain access to a local authority music service. The government, along with councils, has been using the YMI as a shield to avoid their responsibility to help stabilise music tuition in schools. At present, too many children drop out after the initial funding is withdrawn. ⁴⁸

143. Jennifer Kelly also commented on what she saw as one of the shortcomings of the YMI, and warned against the use of non-public sector provision:

” The Youth Music Initiative must be re-thought, as its aim of allowing all pupils to receive music education by P6 is now no longer fit for purpose. What use giving pupils a chance to try something only to tell them if they wish to carry on, they'll need to start paying up to £524 per year to continue, or worse still that there is no Service left for them to progress in to? Instrumental Music Services should remain within Local Authority control and be part of Education as a whole. Moves towards using community and / or private organisations to provide instrumental music teaching are, in my opinion, dangerous and to be avoided if we want music to remain accessible to all and provision to remain equitable. If it is completely outwith the gift and will of the Scottish Government to ensure that Instrumental Music is provided free of charge across the country, then perhaps considering a cap on charges would be the next best thing? ⁴⁹

144. Ralph Riddiough also observed that the YMI was not immune from issues facing music tuition generally, warning that the YMI:

” ...will fail to realise its full return on investment if local authorities continue to erect financial barriers, and continue to run down the service by cutting staff and increasing the sizes of tuition groups. ⁵⁰

145. This was picked up again by the RCS, who nevertheless felt the YMI was a good model to build upon:

” The Youth Music Initiative, for example, exposes a high number of young people to music making, but does so with a limited number of hours across a school year, after which continued music participation relies - in all but four local authorities - on payment of fees, beyond the reach of many families.

It seems particularly concerning that the YMI reaches upwards of 230,000 young people, but then frustrates the interest that participation in this initiative can inspire by placing a barrier between an excited young person and the continuation of their instrumental musical learning. Additionally, other contingent factors should be borne in mind, including access to quality instruments, travel to lessons, and rehearsal/performance spaces. ⁵¹

146. The Committee were interested to understand what effect removing charges could have on services, and whether it could in fact harm services by vastly increasing demand.
147. The latest Improvement Service survey shows that 8.9% of all Scottish school pupils (10% in non-charging authorities, 8% in charging authorities) received instrumental music lessons in 2017-18. Since 2012-13, non-charging local authorities have seen a 22% increase in uptake while charging authorities have had a 3% decrease in pupil numbers. Only five local authorities stated in their response to the Improvement Service that they were able to offer IMT to every interested pupil in 2017-18.⁵²
148. The Committee heard in an informal focus group that when Dundee City Council ceased charging for IMT in 2013 there was a surge in pupil numbers. However, with the “shackles of charging removed” tutors were free to teach in different ways in order to meet this new level of demand.⁵³
149. Taking all of the above into account, the YMI's structure was suggested by Kenny Christie as a potential model for delivering better outcomes in instrumental music tuition:
- ” Different programmes that receive a central funding contribution, such as the youth music initiative or even the active schools programme, which is funded through sportscotland, have to abide by an agreement or a local five-year plan—the YMI has a one-year plan—with an agreed series of outcomes over a period. You could look at taking that approach.
- Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], Kenny Christie, contrib. 74⁵²
150. The Cabinet Secretary seemed open to this approach, stating:
- ” [The YMI] is an example of the collaborative approach, which can be successful, and it is certainly something that is worth exploring as part of the working group in which we are both participating.
- Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], John Swinney, contrib. 200⁵⁶
151. Despite their scepticism about ringfenced national schemes, COSLA did mention another example of such a scheme that it felt worked well:

” Local authorities will always take pragmatic decisions in the best interests of their communities. If the offer of money were on the table, they would look at it and consider what was in the best interests of their communities.

A recent example is the level of the school clothing grant. There was huge lobbying around that and huge pressure on the Government, and the Government decided that it would come up with extra money for the grant. The level was not determined in legislation, so there was huge variation across councils, but the Government said that it would come up with the money so that everybody could bring the level up to a minimum of £100. Some councils already offered more than £100; others offered significantly less. You could view that as overriding the principle of local democratic decision making, but we took a pragmatic approach. We said, “Fine. If the Government comes up with the money, we will work with it on a voluntary basis and we will come to an agreement.” That is what we did.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 05 December 2018 [Draft], Councillor McCabe, contrib. 11⁵⁷

152. The Music Education Partnership Group will publish its own report into instrumental music tuition entitled "What's Going On Now?" in early 2019. John Wallace summarised the report's initial findings when giving evidence:

” At the moment, it looks as though the recommendations will concern the areas of instrumental music services development; pupil equity; possible enhancements to SQA provision; and the issue of early learners, because work at that level has been proven to have the most beneficial effect on everything else—the instrumental effect of instrumental music. Those are the likely areas. It is not just going to be data, analysis, hot air and lots of lovely pictures; there are going to be hard recommendations as well.

Source: Education and Skills Committee 14 November 2018 [Draft], John Wallace, contrib. 98⁵⁸

John Wallace giving evidence to the Education and Skills Committee



Source: Education and Skills Committee, 14 November 2018

153. The Committee is not persuaded that a national instrumental music service could perform better than local services.

154. The Committee agrees that instrumental music services should continue to be managed at local authority level, but also recognises that there are financial pressures on local authorities.

155. The Committee is also cognisant of the need for any future funding solution to take into account the fact that all local authorities subsidise the cost of instrumental music tuition to some extent, with non-charging local authorities meeting the full cost.

156. The Committee welcomes continuing support from the Scottish Government for the Youth Music Initiative as a way of introducing young people to music at an early age, and notes its successful delivery at a local authority level.

157. The Committee recognises the Youth Music Initiative as an example of good practice where a national objective has been achieved through partnership working with local authorities.

158. The Committee therefore recommends that the Scottish Government should consider extending the Youth Music Initiative or introducing a new initiative to provide support to local authorities which seek to extend support for young people to engage in instrumental music tuition following their initial YMI experience.

159. The Committee notes that there have been a number of inquiries, reports and strategies produced regarding instrumental music tuition over the last 20 years. While reaching broadly similar conclusions, responses to each have failed to address the 'tipping point' concerns regarding the future of IMT in schools. The Committee believes that unless the fundamental issue of the status of IMT within the curriculum and associated teaching provision is addressed then it will continue to be treated materially differently from other subjects. We urge the Scottish Government, COSLA and local authorities to reflect upon this when responding to this report.

Annexe A: Inquiry evidence

Official reports

The Committee took formal evidence during four meetings in November and December 2018. Links to the Official Reports of those meeting are listed below:

- [7 November 2018](#)
- [14 November 2018](#)
- [21 November 2018](#)
- [5 December 2018](#)

Informal discussions and visits

Informal meetings

The Committee invited along a small number of young people and practitioners for an informal dialogue with Committee members immediately before the formal sessions, as well as meeting with students from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

- [Read the notes from the meeting with young people \(137KB pdf\)](#)
- [Read the notes from the meeting with practitioners \(136KB pdf\)](#)
- [Read the notes from the meeting with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland \(288KB pdf\)](#)

School visit

The Committee visited Coatbridge High School on Friday 9 November to observe the North Lanarkshire Schools Music Group practice and to speak with local authority officials and pupils.

- [Read the notes from the visit to Coatbridge High School on 9 November \(123KB pdf\)](#)

Written submissions

You can read all of the submissions to the Committee on this inquiry here:

<http://parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/109900.aspx>

Submissions were received from:

Organisations

- [The City of Edinburgh Music School \(119KB pdf\)](#)

- [Connect \(156KB pdf\)](#)
- [Drake Music Scotland \(127KB pdf\)](#)
- [EIS \(537KB pdf\)](#)
- [Instrumental Music Group\(124KB pdf\)](#)
- [Making Music \(126KB pdf\)](#)
- [Music Education Partnership Group \(205KB pdf\)](#)
- [National Parent Forum of Scotland \(211KB pdf\)](#)
- [Royal Conservatoire of Scotland \(27KB pdf\)](#)
- [Scottish Association for Music Education \(31KB pdf\)](#)
- [Socialist Education Association Scotland \(224KB pdf\)](#)
- [St Mary's Music School \(412KB pdf\)](#)

Teachers

- [Anonymous Teacher 1 \(116KB pdf\)](#)
- [Anonymous Teacher 2 \(110KB pdf\)](#)
- [George Kelly \(13KB pdf\)](#)
- [Jennifer Kelly \(120KB pdf\)](#)
- [Alastair Orr \(16Kb pdf\)](#)
- [Sonia Scaife \(106KB pdf\)](#)
- [Paul Wood \(131KB pdf\)](#)

Parents/ Individuals

- [Anonymous Parent 1 \(112KB pdf\)](#)
- [Anonymous Parent 2 \(108KB pdf\)](#)
- [Emer Kennedy \(107KB pdf\)](#)
- [Ralph Riddiough \(282KB pdf\)](#)
- [Fiona Sloane \(107KB pdf\)](#)
- [Euan Terras \(126KB pdf\)](#)
- [Caroline Wilson \(118KB pdf\)](#)

Extracts of minutes

3 October 2018

6. Work programme (in private): The Committee considered its work programme.

The Committee agreed its work programme for the remainder of 2018 and much of 2019. The Committee agreed to undertake work on:

- music tuition in schools

7 November 2018

5. Music tuition in schools inquiry: The Committee heard evidence from—

Catherine Mackie, MSYP for Glasgow Southside, and

Alice Ferguson, MSYP for Linlithgow, Scottish Youth Parliament.

6. Review of evidence (in private): The Committee considered the evidence it heard earlier on music tuition.

7. Work programme (in private): The Committee considered its work programme. The Committee agreed: • to write to COSLA in relation to music tuition

14 November 2018

1. Inquiry into music tuition in schools: The Committee heard evidence from—

Kenny Christie, Chair, Heads of Instrumental Teaching Scotland;

Andrew Dickie, Committee Member, Scottish Association for Music Education;

Kirk Richardson, Convener, Instrumental Music Teachers' Network, EIS;

Professor Jeffrey Sharkey, Principal, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland; and

John Wallace, Chair, Music Education Partnership Group.

3. Review of evidence (in private): The Committee considered the evidence it heard earlier.

21 November 2018

1. Inquiry into music tuition in schools: The Committee heard evidence from—

Councillor Chris Cunningham, Convenor of Education, Glasgow City Council;

Councillor David Dodds, Executive Councillor for Education, West Lothian Council; and

Councillor Willie Wilson, Vice Convener of the Lifelong Learning Committee, Perth and Kinross Council.

2. Review of evidence (in private): The Committee considered the evidence it heard earlier.

5 December 2018

1. Decision on taking business in private: The Committee agreed to take its considerations of a draft report on the music tuition in schools inquiry in private at future meetings. The Committee also agreed to take its consideration of its work programme in private at its next meeting.

2. Inquiry into music tuition in schools: The Committee heard evidence from—

Councillor Stephen McCabe, Children and Young People Spokesperson,

Eddie Follan, Policy Manager, Children and Young People Team, and

Lauren Bruce, Chief Officer, Local Government Finance, COSLA;

and then from—

John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Scottish Government.

3. Review of evidence (in private): The Committee considered the evidence it heard earlier.

Annexe B: Instrumental Music Group recommendations

COMPLETE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

PREAMBLE

The 32 Local Authorities in Scotland have chosen many different ways to deliver instrumental music tuition in their area taking account of the many variations in musical traditions, cultures, demography and incomes. Some Local Authorities provide this free to participating young people whilst others have introduced charges and reinvest the income in supporting instrumental music tuition provision. Members of the Group acknowledge that charging for this discretionary service in the current economic circumstances is perhaps inevitable. However several members aspire for a situation where instrumental music tuition services are provided free to all participants across the country.

In order to gain a better understanding of instrumental music services across the country, the Improvement Service carried out comprehensive research into the policies and delivery of instrumental music provision by every Local Authority.

From the Improvement Service research the Group recognises that:

- a) When the Group's first met in January some 24 Local Authorities charged for the provision of instrumental music tuition with 5 of those charging for instrumental music tuition associated with an SQA exam.
- b) Local Authorities do not make a profit from the charges they apply for instrumental music tuition. Those that do charge reinvest the income into supporting and further developing provision of their instrumental music service.
- c) There does not appear to be any systematic relationship between charging and the take-up of instrumental music tuition in Local Authorities.

Bearing this in mind and taking other evidence obtained into account, the Group hereby recommends that:-

1. Music Education, including the distinctive part played by Instrumental Music Tuition, would benefit from a National Vision Statement. This should be the subject of a collective approach linking formal and informal providers and which highlights the wider benefits of young people's participation in, and the learning of a musical instrument, including singing.
2. The provision of instrumental music services by all Local Authorities is unique highly valued and helps deliver Curriculum for Excellence. The Group recommends that Local Authorities should continue to deliver this service, notwithstanding the current financial challenges.
3. There should be a general principle that pupils' individual circumstances should not be a barrier to their ability to access and benefit from instrumental music tuition. Local Authorities should review their charging policies and concessionary schemes to ensure that pupils in their area are not prevented from learning a musical instrument because of their background, location, disability or financial circumstances. Local Authorities should

be willing to share good practice on availability, access to and the transparency of their concession and charging policies including consultation on these matters.

4. Further to Recommendation 3, the Group noted the limited and variable provision of instrumental music tuition available for pupils with additional support needs as well as the huge value and life-changing impact that learning to play a musical instrumental can provide. The Group recommends that Local Authorities share best practice in their delivery of instrumental music tuition to all children and young people equally, including approaches to specialist training and continuing professional development for Instrumental staff to broaden out and extend provision, particularly to children with additional support needs.

5. The majority of Councils charge for the provision of Instrumental music tuition and a small number charge for instrumental music provision relating to learners' SQA course work in music examinations. The Group acknowledges that decisions on charging for services sits with Local Authorities and further appreciates the financial pressures on Authorities, especially at this time. The Group notes that when it met for the first time, 5 Local Authorities charged for instrumental music tuition associated with SQA exams and wholeheartedly welcomes the recent decisions by all 5 Authorities to either rescind such charges or review them with the aim of ceasing the charge.

6. In providing instrumental music services in a challenging financial climate, Local Authorities should consider options for economies of scale. The Group noted the varied practice in Authorities' collaboration with Community groups, other Local Authorities and with National music bodies. The Group recommends that Local Authorities should investigate the options for better collaboration with other Instrumental music services and Community Groups in the provision, purchase, repair and sharing of instruments and in the delivery of instrumental music tuition.

7. Local Authorities own and provide instruments in many different ways. The Group noted that the audit being carried out by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland of instruments across the country provides an excellent platform for future repair, maintenance and purchase policies of instruments, consistent with teaching provision and expertise. The Group recommends that Local Authorities use the information from this overview to derive the maximum use, economic efficiency and sustainability from these assets, including maintaining the inventory and ensuring timely repairs. Consideration should also be given to following this up with a baseline study identifying supply chain issues and markets for repair and purchase of instruments which could be addressed by an instrument apprenticeship scheme.

8. The Group noted the different awareness and knowledge of instrumental music activities and opportunities across the country. To provide more consistency and better information for communities the Group suggests that consideration is given to the development and maintenance of a comprehensive user guide of instrumental music opportunities in Scotland.

9. The Group noted the varied but generally modest arrangements by Local Authorities for sponsorship by and partnership with the private and voluntary sectors. The Group recommends a far more pro-active approach should be taken by Local Authorities to seek external sponsorship for instrumental music provision, including at a regional or national level, to bring in support and extend opportunities for learners.

10 The Youth Music initiative (YMI) has been very successful in providing opportunities for young people across Scotland and its success has generated increased demand on local authority instrumental music services for progression opportunities after the initial YMI experience. The Group noted that there is a need at a local level for clarity in the demarcation between the YMI and Instrumental Music Services in schools. The group recommends that the National Vision Statement (in Recommendation 1) should take into account the remit and role of the YMI and other local youth music provision.

11. The Group noted that delivering instrumental music tuition in remote parts of the country and providing opportunities to learn from top professional musicians is challenging. Consistent with the collaboration agenda, Local Authorities should complement individual and group instrumental music tuition and explore the huge opportunities arising from the use of technology to enhance the delivery of a 21st Century instrumental music service.

12 The Group identified several workforce development and planning issues for instrumental music staff including continuing professional development. The Group also notes the aspirations of staff to gain greater professional recognition. Such recognition would be consistent with the provision of a highly valued and professional instrumental music service.

13 The Group recognises the very significant benefits instrumental music learning provides for young people and society as a whole. However little is known about its wider impacts. Accordingly the Group recommends that specific research is carried out to examine the contribution of instrumental music learning to Scotland's economic and cultural capital in an international context and also to children's learning and development.

14 The Group is grateful to the Improvement Service for its comprehensive research into instrumental music services as evidence for this report. The Group welcomes the Improvement Service's offer to create, maintain and provide a standard benchmarking framework to capture in a standard form data on charging policy, current charges, participation and drop-out rates for instrumental music services across Scotland and recommends that, once established, this data should be monitored continuously by service providers.

15 The Group recommends that the current Heads of Instrumental Teaching Scotland (HITS) guidance – 'Guidelines For Instrumental Teaching In Scottish Schools - 2003' be updated in partnership with Scottish Government; Education Scotland; COSLA; and the EIS, to bring it in line with Curriculum for Excellence.

16 The Group applauds:- a) the offer by ADES to sponsor a National Conference on Music Education, including the distinctive part played by Instrumental Music to promote a better understanding of the benefits to young people and society arising from Instrumental Music tuition, and b) the intention by Education Scotland to ensure that a statement commenting on the quality of Instrumental music tuition will be added to the list of obligatory statements in the Report of Inspection Findings for every school from September 2013.

17 The Group recommends that the Scottish Government sets up an Instrumental Music Implementation Group (IMIG) to oversee the strategic progression of these recommendations, support new guidance (recommendation 15) and report back to Ministers by December 2014.

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