



Lewisham Music
First Floor
The Fellowship & Star
Randlesdown Road
Bellingham SE6 3BT

020 3637 8088
info@lewishammusic.org
www.lewishammusic.org

Rt. Hon. Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

8th September 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

Music Education Hubs and Cultural Recovery

We write to you today as a group of Music Services and Music Education Hub lead partners, charged with delivering the promises of the Government's National Plan for Music Education, to raise concerns regarding the on-going impact on our operations and finances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. We are delighted that the Cultural Recovery Fund was established to 'help maintain England's cultural ecology by supporting culturally significant organisations' and were pleased that Music Education Hubs were invited to make applications to this fund. Some of our colleagues have taken advantage of that offer. We are writing, however, as the second round for application closes, to explain that whilst we are not applying to the fund at this time, we have concerns about the future viability of our organisations.

Music Education Hubs have led the way with digital innovation during the COVID-19 pandemic, quickly moving existing programmes online and creating new opportunities. This has enabled us to continue supporting thousands of young musicians during lockdown.

However, the pandemic has had a significant impact on our operation, as the blanket ban on face-to-face delivery by Music Education Hubs from March effectively forced us to cease trading. Whilst online provision may have generated some revenue, it has been a fraction of the usual traded income, which constitutes the majority of our annual budget, having a devastating impact on our organisations' finances.

Despite some Hubs utilising the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to cover staffing costs usually covered by traded income, most Hubs are predicting significant losses at the end of the 2020-2021 financial year.

We have not applied for further support from the Cultural Recovery Fund, at this time, because we do not identify ourselves as being "at imminent risk of failure". However, the significant challenges that we will face in this new academic year could mean that we will find ourselves "at risk" in the near future if:

- the costs of development of alternative delivery models continue to mount,
- schools will not allow us on site to restart activity, despite Government guidance,
- out of school programmes continue to be severely limited by group size,
- there are ongoing costs for PPE and mitigation measures,
- and, most significantly, if there are further lockdowns locally or nationally, which would further prevent traded activity from taking place.

With the end of the Job Retention Scheme, Local Authority COVID grants and other additional areas of support, our future is based on the ability to resume traded activity. If this is not possible, we will then find ourselves in danger of financial failure. This is compounded by the fact that the National Music Grant for Hubs has not been confirmed by DfE post-March 2021.

We are raising an early warning flag to the Department for Education that Music Education Hubs may need additional financial support within this academic year, to ensure that the expertise of our workforce, our organisational infrastructure and a decade's worth of Government investment in music education is protected. We are asking that music education organisations, who find themselves in our position can be assured of future support, if needed, similar to that currently being offered through the Cultural Recovery Fund.

Thank you for your time, we look forward to working with you through these challenging times to support pupils and the education workforce.

Yours sincerely,

Charly Richardson

Chief Executive Officer

Lewisham Music

charly.richardson@lewishammusic.org

CC: **Nick Gibb, MP**

Department for Education

Arts Council England

Music Mark

Supporting signatories

Dame Joan Ruddock

Chair of Lewisham Music Board of Trustees

Peter Smalley

Chief Executive

Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust

Lead partner for Northamptonshire Music Education Hub
and Rutland Music

Alison Bell

Hub Lead

Norfolk Music Hub

Laura Worsfold

Chief Executive Officer

Severn Arts

Sue Wakley

Hub Manager

Milton Keynes Music Hub

Dan White

Chief Executive
Wandsworth Music

Stuart Whatmore

Head
Tri-borough Music Hub

Ian Bangay

Head of North Yorkshire Music Service

Elisabeth Wigley

Chief Executive
Merton Music Foundation

Glyn Bowen

Director
Somerset Music

Ruth O'Keefe

Head of Service
Trafford Music Service
Trafford Council

Cliff Woollard

Managing Director
Encore Enterprises CIC (Herefordshire)

Michael Armstrong

Music & Arts Education Manager
Music & Arts Team (SoundStorm & Wave)
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council

Daniel Somogyi

Director
Music & Arts Team (SoundStorm & Wave)
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council

Georgina Biddle

Senior Specialist Music Service
Music Partnership North Newcastle

Caroline Peirson

Chief Executive
Richmond Music Trust