



Arts Council England's support and advocacy for music education and participation dates back many years, covering a wide range of audience development initiatives, family and school concerts and artist-led creative projects with schools and communities. This work has had one thing in common – the desire to share and create music with receptive audiences and participants. The long-term investment made in music education, including the formation of Youth Music in 1999, has enabled many of our funded organisations to make high quality work with children and young people a core part of their artistic mission.

This substantial growth in music learning activities for children and young people has led us to commission Burns Owen Partnership to establish a clear picture of the existing music education provision delivered by the Arts Council's funded organisations. Their report considers the impact this work has on young people and the role these organisations play in the wider music education landscape.

The report makes a number of interesting insights and recommendations and highlights the effect of years of sustained investment and advocacy for music education. The findings show a real enthusiasm and commitment from our funded music organisations to work in this area, with 84% of them now engaging in education work, to the benefit of children and young people across the country. The research found that these organisations invested £17m in music education work during 2008/09, with the figure rising to £23m when musically active combined arts organisations such as venues and festivals are included.

The unique contribution Arts Council funded organisations make to music education provision is also revealed, with the report showing that many have become expert and trusted providers of learning opportunities, with a real reputation for excellence. It shows that working alongside talented professional artists is a great inspiration for children and young people, helping to motivate them and raise their aspirations.

Alongside the headline findings, the report also makes a number of recommendations for both the Arts Council and the music organisations we fund. These recommendations include the need for Arts Council funded organisations to join up with other providers, and for the sector to focus on more demand-led programmes and increase the availability of best practice guidance.

We hope that the report will provide a useful insight into the unique role and impact our funded organisations have in the wider music education landscape. We also hope that the guidance and recommendations in the report will be of use to our funded organisations, helping them to make even more of their distinctive offer and identify some of the characteristics of good practice to inform their future planning. The findings will also feed into the final version of our ten-year strategic framework, *Achieving great art for everyone*, which will be published later in the year.

In recent years we've worked hard to give children and young people access to world-class music opportunities, and as we move into a time of increased pressure on public spending it is going to be even more important that we, and the organisations we fund, focus our energies to provide these opportunities in the most effective way possible.

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