

As we close the door on a school term quite unlike any other I wanted to take the opportunity to say thank you. To all our amazing young musicians, their families, our schools and our partners. Thank you for standing beside us as we've seen the rapid and remarkable change to the way Music Education is delivered in Sheffield. I'd like to share with you what we've learned, celebrate some of the amazing achievements and outline some of our thinking for September and the challenges we will face when it arrives.

So first – THANK YOU

- To our dedicated team of [Music Leaders](#), [Accredited Teachers](#) and fabulous [office and tech teams](#)
- To our committed, talented and inspiring young musicians
- Families
- Schools
- Partners

Without your support and backing we wouldn't have achieved so much. I have been in awe of the speed at which our whole musical community has adapted to new ways of working. Over the last term here are some of our achievements

- Over 1000 young musicians have continued their musical learning online – something that didn't happen at all in our organisation before March.
- Particular shout out to our cohort of 75 Looked After Children, most of whom have continued to work with our professional music educators online, 1-1 for 30 minutes every week, the hundreds of young musicians who face barriers to musical progression and are supported to learn through our standard bursaries plus our [Musical Stars](#) and [Furthering Talent](#) schemes.
- We've delivered all 24 of our [music groups](#) online to over 500 young musicians.
- We've collaborated musically on two epic multiplayer videos – the first [Wake me Up](#) included over 500 young musicians and has had over 8.5k views on youtube and 20k interactions on our social media page. Our second – Shotgun is currently in the editing room and included over 550 performers, here is a [preview](#) performed by our team of Music Leaders and Professional Musicians from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire of Music.
- We've worked with over 170 schools in the city supporting them with our weekly [Music at Home](#) resource providing varied musical activity and signposting to the equally fabulous work of our partner organisations.
- We launched two brand new [virtual choirs](#), the secondary choir had over 50 participants over the term.
- We put musical performance at the heart of lockdown life and celebrated hundreds of [garden gigs](#) – a special shout out to a young musician Toby who has completed a garden gig EVERY DAY since lockdown and is now up to performance number 120!

We've managed all of this with very limited access to our day to day computer systems and no access to our offices, store room or teaching spaces. The team have worked with dedication, commitment and good humour to pull this all together.

What have we learned?

We have always known that a young musician flourishes when their family and community share their journey with them. We expected a responsible adult to appear at the start and end of each of our online sessions to ensure that everyone was happy and safe. A beautiful side effect has been the additional conversations our teachers have been having with parents and carers who are in turn sharing more widely the commitment to musical progression. All over the city we are hearing stories of progression going through the roof.

We also know that we haven't been able to reach all of the children and young people we work with – technological barriers are often the cause, or families simply haven't been able to afford lessons during lockdown. We are not happy with this and have already worked hard to understand how, in future we can always reach every child – no matter what.

We're delighted to have secured additional funding from the [Friends and Volunteers of Sheffield Music Hub](#) to support us increase our cohort of pupils on our Musical Stars scheme in September – but we have much more to do here.

The challenges ahead and plans for September

As schools prepare to be fully open again we are ready to shift our programme once more to ensure we continue to work to bring life and joy into schools across the city.

We are ready to stand side by side with our key partners – schools. Together we will plan and professionally risk assess to do our best to get our teachers safely back into school. We will work with the Local Authority and the Public Health team every step of the way. In addition as the Northern rep for our subject association Music Mark I've been busy contributing to this [bespoke guidance](#) for schools.

We will only consider our teachers returning to face to face work if we are totally convinced that it does not add to the risks of the wider school reopening programme. Where we can't begin face to face delivery we are ready with a range of online delivery options – these will vary I'm sure from setting to setting. We anticipate that there will be a blended approach to our work next term to include some face to face delivery (subject to risk assessment) and online work. Please, trust us to be agile to adapt to the quickly changing landscape as September unfolds and we thank you in advance for your patience in what is I'm sure going to be another challenging term.

Now more than ever we need your support and in return we will do everything in our power to make sure that music education plays a key role in a broad and balanced recovery curriculum in every school in Sheffield.

Unfortunately, with such an uncertain landscape in September we are not able to take on any new starters at the moment. We also still don't know when we will be able to access our instrument store so handing over new instruments is currently not possible. If you are interested in joining our movement and receiving lessons from one of our talented teachers you can still complete this [expression of interest form](#) and we will let you know when we will be able to take on new starters as soon as we are able.

We believe that music making is what makes us human. We know the profound effect it has on the wellbeing and development of our children and young people. We are committed to ensuring that this joy and happiness can shine brightly as we face the term ahead.

And, if you need convincing [here are the inspirational words](#) of Bob Cuff, Headteacher at Manor Lodge Primary School in Sheffield, explaining to the national music education sector why he believes music is SO IMPORTANT for our children.

“Music is an educational building block”

WE NEED YOUR URGENT HELP

We know that despite all our hard work we have seen a significant drop in our income and our budget is under extreme pressure. We have a lot to do to ensure that our organisation can continue to thrive into the future.

There are some ways you can help us here:

- ✓ Please do sign up for lessons next term if you have not already – when you do sign up there is the option to donate an additional amount of your choosing to support our work – please do help if you can.
- ✓ Join our friends and volunteers group – this small group of parents raise significant amounts of money to support our work and we need as many hands as we can at the moment!
- ✓ [Donate](#) directly to our Friends and Volunteers and do add gift aid if you can
- ✓ [SUBSCRIBE](#) to our You-tube channel – we need 1000 subscribers by September to be able to Launch our “Music Hub LIVE” channel to support remote learning directly into our classrooms.

Thank you and wishing you all a restful summer

Ian Naylor – Head of Music Education Sheffield.