

## Taking stock and informing forward planning

### Report on activity April 2022

#### Background – what did we want to do?

The Instrumental Music Service (IMS) sits within Education and Children's Services in Aberdeenshire. In Autumn of 2021, as part of a taking stock exercise in the IMS, an exercise in self-evaluation was designed by the Strategic Development Officer in the Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships Service. This was a strategic intention to capture a picture of the delivery across the Service involving those engaged in the delivery of Instrumental Music and to build capacity around self-evaluation going forward.

This work was undertaken across a backdrop of the pandemic, three severe storms and also some expected change in the organisation of the IMS.

#### Methodology - how did we go about this?

The Interim Instrumental Music Manager, Justin Brook, together with the Strategic Development Officer, Sue Briggs, created a survey to gather an initial evaluation from staff involved in direct delivery. Thirty three staff responded. The Education Scotland six point scale for evaluation was adopted.

Key messages are captured in **Appendix 1**. Full feedback details available.

Building on this – an In-Service programme (**Appendix 2**) was designed to engage the same staff group in building knowledge and skills for evaluation. It also introduced more rigour around use of the six point scale for evaluation. It was planned for two 1.45 hour sessions on two separate dates with up to twenty five staff attending each event. The events were introduced by the Head of Service.

Education Scotland provided advice and guidance in the initial layout and they also delivered a presentation (**Appendix 3**) and workshop introducing the concept of self-evaluation and the importance of gathering evidence to underpin the picture we have of “how we are doing”. In-house Aberdeenshire Associate Assessors with Education Scotland provided facilitation time along with two experienced colleagues from Aberdeen City.

The focus was on:

1. How good is...the Quality of what we deliver – our “offer”
2. How good is...the Impact on those we work with – learners

## **Results - What did we learn?**

Following the workshop delivery an evaluation form was circulated with a return rate from participants of over 50%. The feedback combined with comments from the interactive post-it session at the actual event (**Appendix 4**) is informing planning and ways of working going forward.

A great deal of dialogue took place across this initiative but below we have captured some key and recurring points of value:

1. Our snapshot initial survey found that almost all staff feel very positively about the service they deliver both in terms of quality of provision and impact upon those we work with. The evaluations of very good in this regard, however, were not always secured in evidence in the information gathering we undertake.
2. Although obviously enforced, the online learning offer during the pandemic has unlocked our own learning about what can work and what presents challenges. Staff proved highly adaptable in the circumstances faced by the pandemic.
3. We have lost participants through unavailability of face to face opportunities but the quality of what was offered was felt to be very good. There are recognised benefits in both online and face to face delivery.
4. Self-evaluation is a skill to be developed and we can do more to build our confidence and the accuracy of our evaluative practice. Almost all staff involved engaged productively in the Taking Stock workshops and there were numerous contributions with ideas for further development.
5. Our perceptions of the quality of what we deliver is undermined if we do not have good evidence to back this up. Evidence gathering is an important element of successful self-evaluation.
6. Our reach in terms of gathering information from stakeholders could be better – we have some very good feedback from those involved in our programmes, but this is inconsistent and not always captured in a concrete way.
7. Communication and access to professional learning has been hugely extended during lockdown and also now in the recovery phase – a high degree of upskilling has taken place to enable staff to operate successfully online. Peer learning and support has been a feature of this.
8. Our use of ALDO (Aberdeenshire Learning and Development Online) has increased. However, our use of platforms such as GLOW has been at times problematic which will hamper progress in the longer term.
9. Across the Instrumental Music Service there is a picture of differing levels of communication and connection to the schools which we work with. This can

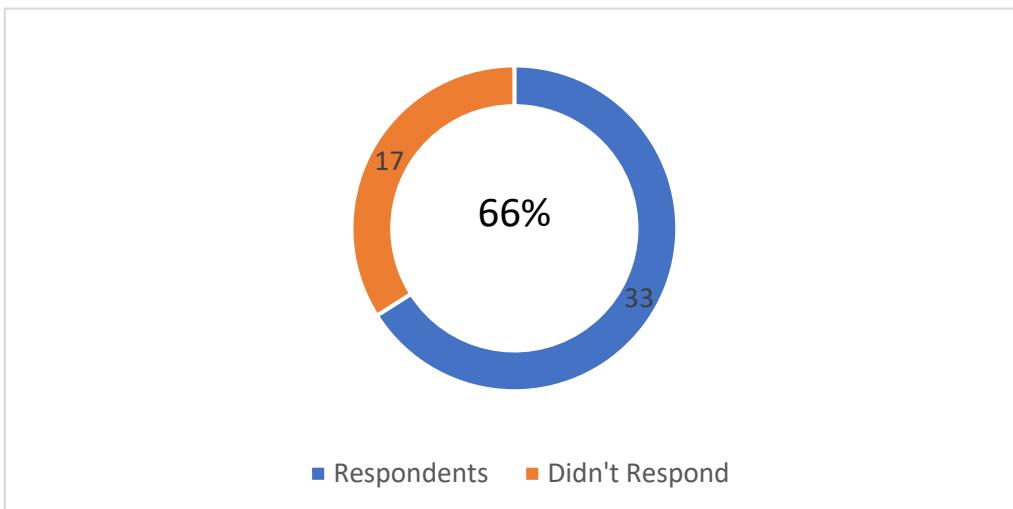
create an incoherence and affect delivery across the geography we cover in our delivery.

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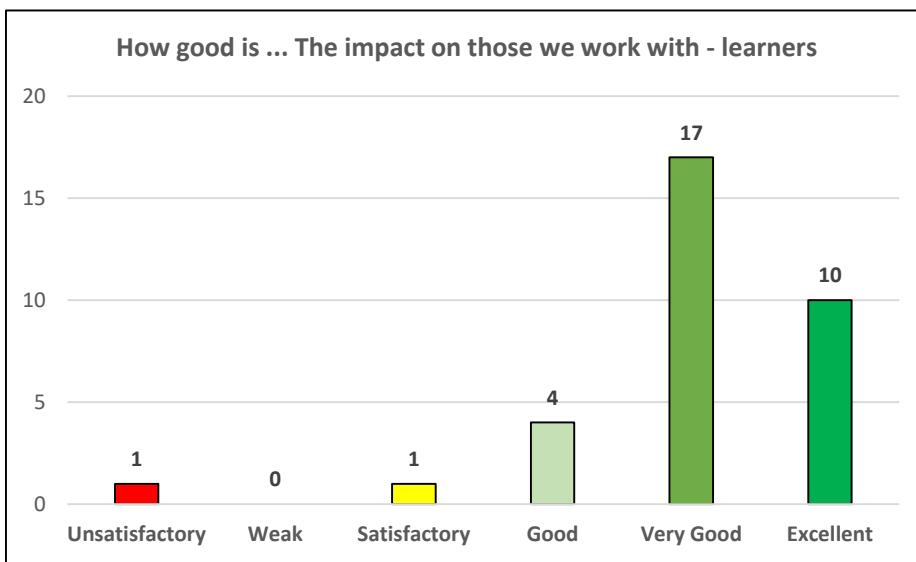
### **For consideration going forward**

1. Develop effective and consistent approaches to delivering our offer through a hybrid model of face-to face and online activity, both achieving balance and meeting needs
  2. Further strengthen self-evaluation practice building on what has been done so far.
  3. Using our learning so far, build approaches to evidence gathering to underpin our success stories and areas for improvement including robust arrangements for feedback from parents, carers and learners themselves
  4. Explore and agree routine use of platforms – in particular GLOW and Paritor in order to create consistency
  5. Continue to promote online access to professional learning for staff in recognition that this opens doors to workforce development
  6. Consolidate and strengthen links and communication between the Instrumental Music Service and schools.
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## APPENDIX 1 – initial survey results



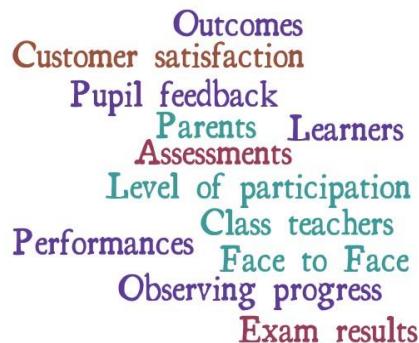
How good is....?	Overall
The quality of what we deliver – our 'offer'	Very Good
The impact on those we work with – learners	Very Good
The impact on our staff and volunteers - stakeholders	Very Good



10.05.22.

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How do we know that the learning offer meets the needs of learners/participants?



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How do we ensure the learning we offer is consistently delivered to a high standard and provides a high quality learning experience?



## APPENDIX 2 – Outline programme



### Aberdeenshire Council Instrumental Music Service

## Taking stock and informing forward planning

### Programme

This snapshot self-evaluation exercise presents an opportunity to both look backwards at what has gone well and to inform future planning for our important work. It covers, through reflection, the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021 – 18 months, including a very challenging time of pandemic and extraordinary circumstances.

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022 – Aberdeenshire Education In-Service date**

Time	Activity	Lead person
1.30pm	Welcome	Avril Nicol Head of Service Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships
1.35pm	Introduction to the event	Sue Briggs Strategic Development Officer Education Children's Services
	Self-evaluation – practical use and how it can strengthen and improve practice	Alona Murray HM Inspector Education Scotland
2.00pm Focus 1	Break Out Rooms Activity 1  How good is our “offer” to learners – how do we know?	Jam Board for comments
2.20 Focus 2	Break Out Rooms Activity 2  How good is the impact on those we work with – how do we know?	Jam Board for comments
2.45pm	Big Group Key messages and questions	
2.55pm	Big Group – closing remarks	Justin Brook Instrumental Music Service Manager

#### **Facilitators:**

Sue Briggs – Aberdeenshire Council, Strategic Development Officer, CLD

Philip Boath – Aberdeenshire Council, Interim Service Manager CLD

Fiona Clark – Aberdeen City, Service Manager Libraries and Community Learning (15<sup>th</sup> only)

Colin Wright – Aberdeen City, CLD Manager (16<sup>th</sup> only)

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Useful link [Self-evaluation | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

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## APPENDIX 3 – Education Scotland slides

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### Self-evaluation

Aberdeenshire Instrumental Music Service  
February 2022

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators  
Do luchd-ionnsachaidh na h-Alba, le luchd-foghlaim Alba

#### Why self-evaluate

**Self-evaluation** is essential to be able to;

- plan services that best meet learner's needs, including changing needs
- understand what's working best and should be built on
- identify what isn't working well and to change it
- explore who isn't benefitting that could
- be able to report to stakeholders including funders

**It asks three questions:**

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

Do

## Types of evidence

- **Stakeholders' views** Information from those we work with is essential to understand the impact of our work. Gathered as they start, whilst they are using and at the end and in some cases after they have finished using our services.
- **Direct observation** of the inputs of staff/volunteers and the outcomes for participants/learners.
- **Performance data** such as statistical information relating outcomes, levels of participation, learner hours completed, qualifications gained.
- **Relevant documentation** Consider which documents demonstrate the impacts you are having? Examples could include; performance reports, reviews of plans showing progress against targets, minutes of meetings showing decision making

Do

### How good is our...



- ❑ Education Scotland self -evaluation frameworks; **how good is our school**, **how good is our community learning and development**, and with VOCAL **how good is our culture and sport**
- ❑ To explore strengths, areas you need to develop, what evidence you have
- ❑ Each made up of quality indicators that let you look more closely at different aspects of your work
- ❑ Each quality indicator has an illustration of what very good work could look like and challenge questions

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## **Some challenge questions from HGIO**

### **how good is our school 3.3 Creativity and employability**

How well are learners creative endeavours acknowledged and celebrated?

### **how good is our community learning and development**

#### **1.2 Improvements in equality, diversity and inclusion**

How well do we ensure all our participants are respected, treated fairly, know their rights and are valued by us?

### **How good is our culture and sport 2 Impact on the people we work with**

How well do we support the people we work with to develop and progress?

How well do we support individuals and groups who are not realising their potential?

Are we helping people to achieve a wide range of positive outcomes including good mental and physical health and wellbeing, a strong sense of identity, creativity and purpose?

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## APPENDIX 4 – Jam-Board post-its Instrumental Music Service 15<sup>th</sup> / 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022

### Slide 1: How good is the quality of our delivery – our 'offer' ? What has worked well?

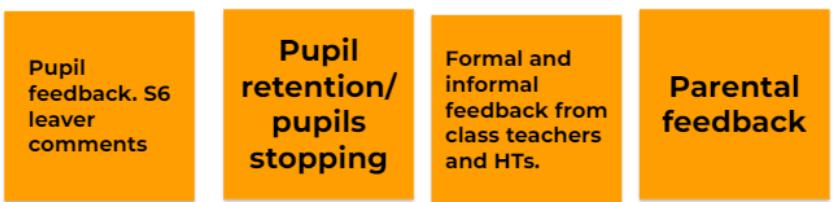
Communication with parents and ability for them to see what we do and get involved.	Would be useful if YMI-style "hard evidence" could be adapted for instrumental instructors	Ability to reach vastly increased numbers of pupils with pre-recorded materials during pandemic was very good (and this can be extended to increase exposure to music lessons in "normal" times)	Peer led approach to teaching methods - learning from others	Video conferencing has been useful during the period of the pandemic	Providing the "norm" for students during a time of uncertainty.	<b>Online exams</b>	A lot of pupils showed greater progress and stayed engaged.	adaptable
<b>Every pupil needs an individual approach</b>	Having a chance to review material and expand our offer including what is now available online.	Instructors often work on their own or alongside very few other instructors and so it can be difficult to know the wider picture of how the service is performing. I feel the service is working well but under serious threat.	<b>ICT skills have definitely rocketed!</b>	<b>Adaptability in terms of development of materials</b>	Allowing video conferencing (unfortunately too late, was not approved By Council) to deliver video tuition	Only contact with pupils during the pandemic was online. Pupils and instructors were both kept motivated	<b>Teaching pupils from different schools in shared video sessions.</b>	Being able to see pupils regularly online was beneficial to them to have a regular contact
It has been wonderful to get back to teaching students face to face and offer them live musical support	Lots of different delivery methods during Covid. A worry that senior management see things like video conferencing as the norm rather than as an enhancement	Many parents commented that the online lessons provided by IMS were looked forward to every week as it gave them some face to face contact (I)	<b>Utilisation of Glow</b>	<b>Being able to quickly adapt to circumstances</b>	Video conferencing has kept the good work going until times we can go in Face to Face permanently in schools	Online music lessons were a highlight of the week for some children during lockdown	<b>Keeping in touch with pupils with during lockdowns.</b>	Using Figurenotes has continued to be useful for pupils with ASN.
Instructors under immense pressure to deliver lessons under very difficult circumstances. We have been really resourceful about how we have adapted to teach during pandemic (I)	Since returning to face-to-face sessions, there are more positive outcomes.	with someone they knew and a break from school work and siblings. Great for their mental health.(2)	I think our delivery is very good but under very difficult circumstances	Creating resources online to help with learners progression which I can continue to use now.	Not all pupils have the necessary equipment to follow online lessons such as laptop/tablets if learning from home, which then lead to a lot of pupils stopping lessons.	Parent/carers are regularly kept up to date	<b>Examinations</b>	What has worked well is the freedom in which we were given to continue the service over lockdown restrictions.
but transition to being back in schools still not where it should be due to still dealing with restrictions (2)		Students who had online lessons learned some new skills they otherwise might not have had to learned for a long time - eg. tuning instruments.	It's been useful to learn how to use IT to deliver tuition	I find it hard to know how the service is doing as a whole. I'm part time and don't often encounter my fellow instructors.	I feel that we managed to deliver a decent level of service during a very difficult & rapidly changing time	GLOW is awful. Parents and pupils hadn't used it for years and needed to be taught how to use it	<b>Learner online fatigue</b>	Credit should go to instructors on how well they have managed Glow and the help they have given to pupils and parents/carers on accessing this.

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## Slide 2:

### How good is the quality of our delivery – our 'offer'?

#### How do we know?



<p>The fear is that changes being made now (due to temp. freezes) will become irreversible and so have a huge negative impact to our service and our "offer"</p>	<p>Pupils continuing with music and musical friendships into adulthood.</p>	<p>Email feedback from parents, comments during online sessions</p>	<p>Pupils have come prepared for lessons</p>	<p>Visible growth in confidence of learner</p>	<p>pupils practicing well and coming prepared weekly, very encouraging!</p>	<p>Pupils have benefitted from accessing the resources made during lockdown. Became more confident in their playing</p>	<p>Send a feedback questionnaire to parents/carers when a pupil stops</p>
<p>Very little student drop out. Students start and for the most part, stick around until they leave school. Parents are also very supportive</p>	<p>Learners actively engaging in sessions and contributing to development of their learning</p>	<p>VC lessons-ok to make some progress but the quality of sound of a piano in a conference call is awful and you cannot comment on tone, dynamics, etc or play along due to time lag.</p>	<p>To provide an excellent VC lesson all parties would need a proper set up ££</p>	<p>Positive feedback from parents and pupils</p>	<p>Comparator EIS Network</p>	<p>Waiting list is growing - many pupils keen to learn an instrument</p>	<p>Google Classroom has given us the opportunity to keep contact and conversations going throughout the terms even if a pupil can't make the lessons</p>
<p>iMS instructors, missing link in terms of improvement evidencing</p>	<p>Quality of what we deliver can also depend on morale and motivation of staff which at times could appear "disjointed" where the idea of "team" disappears in the background..</p>	<p>Pupils/parents are not asked what did we do well, or what have we done better. When any pupil stops lessons, left school, stopped for any reason, a questionnaire could be sent to both the parent and pupil.</p>	<p>Uptake at SQA level can be a good indicator too. Also strengthens the links with schools.</p>	<p>AYO, flagship has disappeared, shop window missing</p>	<p>possible opportunity to look more closely at quality as opposed to quantity?</p>	<p>no formal way of checking apart from feedback from parents</p>	<p>No formal way (not all pupils do external exams or SQA qualifications) but good feedback from pupils and parents</p>
<p>Comments from parents about stability during on line teaching. It was almost a break from home schooling</p>	<p>Often receive positive feedback from Music Centre concerts, however Music Centre is becoming more and more squeezed and irregular. Verbal communication of disappointment from pupils as it's not regular</p>	<p>group teaching - individual lessons - pros and cons in lockdown</p>	<p>nothing from outside feeding back except music centre</p>	<p>current pupil retention</p>	<p>Exam results</p>	<p>not conversation happening amongst staff to share good practice</p>	<p>feedback from asking pupils, parents, class teachers verbally or by email</p>

## Slide 3:

### How good is the impact on those we work with – learners? What has worked well?

High morale in terms of our teaching, perhaps not so much within the service. Uncertainty and changes have been unsettling.	Open relationship/approach, at a different level than classroom interaction with teachers. Learners enjoy the stress free, no pressure atmosphere.	<b>schools families and others tell us our work is making a difference</b>	I receive letters and cards from pupils when they leave school that say the only thing that kept them coming to school was their lessons.	<b>positive contribution to other learning</b>	<b>remember - impact on us at not being able to play</b>	Allows pupils to meet like minded pupils from other schools, especially for groups at Music Centre. Life long friends made
GIRFEC references to benefits of music not emphasised in ALDO etc	<b>Mental health positive impacts</b>	positive and open relationships with instructors/teachers	pupils that have kept going during the last 2 years shows significant positive impact	pupils very much enjoying face to face lessons, more committed and engaging.	<b>Pupil drop off during covid has been of great concern</b>	Pupil retention is much better with face to face lessons - some pupils need that in person support and encouragement to have the confidence to continue.
Sessions in schools with vulnerable/ASN pupils led to sharing practice with teaching staff who have adopted techniques	The positive side of the pupil drop off is the amount of pupils that have actually been retained and what the IMS has meant for those pupils	Financial constraints are obstructing the service from growing in terms of pupil numbers	For the pupils who engage the impact has been great, as a teacher it has forced me to come up with new and different music for the pupils to learn	For piping and drumming pupils the outcome is ultimately playing in the schools pipe band, and this has a great impact on child's development	Recorded sessions have allowed learner to go back and review enhancing practice	

## Slide 4:

### How good is the impact on those we work with – learners? How do we know?

<b>Parental feedback</b>	pupil participation in performance - Clap for NHS initiative	<b>Positive impacts are noted by CTs.</b>	Pupil feedback re their enjoyment of tuition	positive feedback from stakeholders on managing to retain service	longer term impacts, including long term friendships	memberships of orchestras and other professional level playing
Pupils continuing with music and musical friendships into adulthood.	Online delivery allowed families to take part and support, and gave opportunities for feedback	<b>positive informal comments</b>	Video conferencing lessons were the highlight of the week for many IMS pupils during lockdown.	Learners independently developing creative links with other learners leading to group work, performances, e.g. talent shows	class teacher feedback in eg confidence	verbal feedback from teachers bnot recorded
<b>regular feedback from parents</b>	only informal feedback on wider experience of learners	There is some evidence but it is not comprehensive. Missing links between IMS and stakeholders. Often school do not communicate with IMS instructors.	All slides take a 'positive' look to what we do, what about the points where we need development? Staff wellbeing could impact the learners & our quality of delivery. (1)	<b>How have I improved as a practitioner</b>	Communication between all stakeholders needs exploration	More feedback on impact from schools (classroom teachers or HT's) welcome. Feedback forms from parents/pupils could have the opposite impact and appear more like an exercise.
suggest feedback form as per YMI?	<b>What about the impact on IMS staff?</b>	little formal recording of evidence	How is this gauged/monitored if we are not asked as a team? (2)			