**What do you think the music education landscape will look like in five years’ time?**

In five years’ time the music education landscape will still be positive with many people benefitting from high quality music educational opportunities. This is because we are truly fortunate in having so many committed people who put in massive efforts over and above the call of duty, sharing their passion for and love of music. Technology will also have enabled more people to learn as a pastime.

However, sadly, in five years’ time, a projection based on the current reality has to be that the numbers of young people benefitting will be fewer than at present and largely influenced by their parents’ ability to pay. Pre-school provision together with that in primary, special and secondary schools is still likely to be patchy with some children getting wonderful experiences while others get no music at all, occasional projects, or a narrow curriculum that is neither diverse nor inclusive.

Further and higher education will be under pressure and teacher supply is likely to have been further eroded. Secondary schools will be employing fewer full time music teachers and those that do will be requiring them to spend more time teaching other subjects. There will be a consequent negative impact on extra-curricular activities, examination courses and progression routes. Some children could be having as little as 30 hours’ music tuition during the whole of their school lives.

But it doesn’t have to be like that!

There are many influential people who support music education and who would be appalled if the above negative projections were to become a reality. To avoid this happening two things are required: 1) the sector needs to continue to work together more coherently and assertively, celebrating and sharing quality practice, agreeing a long-term vision and short/medium term priorities; and 2) robust national, rather than anecdotal evidence needs to be rapidly and robustly available so that these negative projections can be mitigated and policies changed. The Music Education Council is working with its members to achieve these.

One challenge will be to persuade heads and governors of the important and unique role music can play as an arts subject in its own right; as a route to employment in the growing creative sector; and as a contributor to personal and social well-being, character and resilience. Other challenges relate to parents fully understanding what music can offer; an adequately trained workforce; the sector continuing to work ever more closely together by engaging more with music teachers in schools and with the academic world of music education, researchers, and teacher training. Current initiatives such as In Harmony and First Access should become mainstream with more effective sharing of good practice that needs to be adopted and adapted, taking account of context and desired outcomes. It is complex, but not complicated.

Every child should have a broad and balanced education, which includes music. It will take longer than five years to provide an entitlement to quality music education for everyone. Patchiness in the music education system has existed for as long as anyone can remember. But, by working together, those involved in music education can build on the best of the past and create a better future.