**National Perspectives**

The Music Education Council supports music education throughout the UK. However, the perspectives and particular priorities in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales depend on the local context as education policy and funding are devolved to each nation. For this reason, MEC is adopting two key approaches this summer in support of excellence in music education throughout the UK: The Music Education Awards – celebrating *the best in music education practice in the UK* (formerly the National Music Council Music Education Awards), have bespoke submission forms for each nation (<http://www.mec.org.uk/music-education-awards/>); and MEC’s summer seminar roadshows will have a specific national focus under the title of Music Education for all, 2016 to 2020 and beyond.

The **Music Education Awards** have been re-branded, re-launched, and refreshed. This year, MEC is working in collaboration with Rhinegold Media & Events and *Music Teacher* magazine.  The major award will be announced and presented as part of the Music Teacher Awards for Excellence, which will take place during the 2016 Music Education Expo. Shortlisted submissions will be announced in the autumn and a representative from each shortlisted submission will be invited to the ceremony at which the major award winner will be announced.

Special awards for exemplary practice will be shortlisted by October 1st and their submissions will be put forward for consideration as part of the Music Education Expo best practice seminar programme. It is anticipated that those shortlisted for the Special awards will be featured at an event prior to the Schools’ Prom on Monday November 23rd 2015. The Jazz awards will be presented on December 1st

The awards celebrate the work of hubs in England and music services in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that demonstrate imaginative, inclusive and all round high-quality music provision. Drawing attention to such best practice allows colleagues to learn from each other and share their exemplary practice more widely. These awards also offer the opportunity to promote widely the value and importance of everybody’s work, helping to secure the future of high quality music education for all.

**Music Education for All 2016-2020 and beyond: Summer Seminars.**

Now that we know the makeup of the UK Government for the next five years it is vital that the music education sector comes together to agree the priorities that we need to push with the returning / new Secretaries of State and Ministers; and the priorities over which the sector should be proactive within the resources available.

Following on from the hugely productive seminars last summer the MEC Executive and action groups have continued to work on the vision for the future into which delegates at those seminars fed. It is now time for the wider sector to again come together to take that vision further. All are welcome at two seminars – **29th June in London** (NCVO conference suite, Kings Cross) and **30th June in Leeds** (Leeds College of Music) – to help formulate sector-wide views on issues such as:

* Early Years
* Hubs and partners, including schools
* Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development
* Music Technology
* Progression, including Gifted and Talented
* Youth Voice (to 18 and to 25)
* Research – and how to use it for advocacy
* Adult Wellbeing

SEND is the subject of a more specific and focussed event being held in **Bristol on July 3rd.** Discussions at that event will feed into the wider vision. However, if your particular interest is SEND and you are unable to attend the Bristol event you will still be welcome at one of the wider seminars as the theme is Music Education for All and access and other issues will form part of the wider discussions.

Separate events are being discussed with representatives from Wales, Scotland and Northern

Ireland, but all are also welcome at the England-based seminars. We welcome multiple delegates from a single organisation so that they can join more than one discussion group in order for the MEC vision to be formed from a truly representative voice.

The next elections for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are in 2016 whilst in England this autumn will see the spending review that will determine funding for at least the next 3 years. It is essential therefore that we provide evidence that we are spending public funds effective and efficiently in this time of austerity and continue to celebrate and share best practice. Working together under the umbrella of MEC we can do this.

Richard J Hallam MBE MEC Chair

June 2015