**Actions, Attitudes and Expectations 1**

This is the first of several blogs I hope to write over the summer, prompted by three events: a series of summer seminars held by the UK’s Music Education Council; the UK Government’s announcement regarding additional funding for music education; and my attendance at the International Society of Music Educators’ world conference.

At a time when there are financial pressures nationally and locally, the UK Government has increased the protected funding allocated to music education hubs and allowed local authorities in England to continue to make local decisions with regard to whether they choose to spend some of the Education Services Grant on music.

What actions will colleagues take to ensure that this funding is used to maximum effect? If we can demonstrate what we can achieve with this additional £18 million, surely we make the case for what we would be able to do with a further £18m as the economic recovery continues.

What is our attitude to these decisions made in support of improving music education? Are we going to complain that we still don’t have enough money, or are we prepared to be positive and celebrate the excellent work we can achieve?

What are the Government’s and the Arts Council’s expectations? Are they realistic?

We all know that high quality music education is essential for the transformative benefits of music education to be realised for all young people. We know that progression routes are not available for all those who wish to continue and that it is the economically disadvantaged who suffer the most. So how will colleagues choose to prioritise the available funding? Will we offer more first access without available and affordable progression routes? Will we pay for services for which schools are already funded, but choosing not to prioritise?

Funding and policy matter. But it is what we in the music education sector ***actually do*** that ultimately counts for the young people. It is up to each and every one of us to stand up for quality music education and to be realistic about what precious public funding can achieve. We must agree what best practice looks like and emulate it, taking full account of our differing local contexts.