

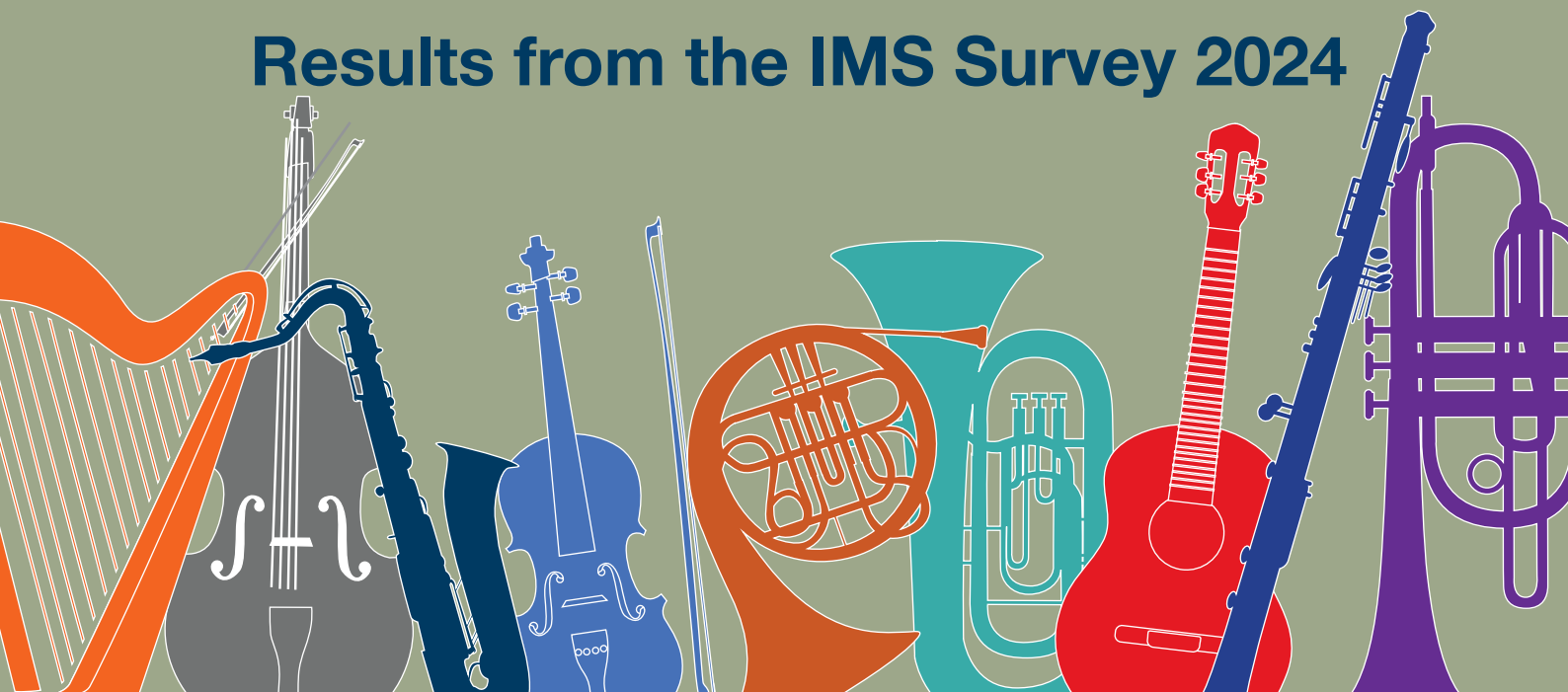
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Instrumental Music Services

Results from the IMS Survey 2024



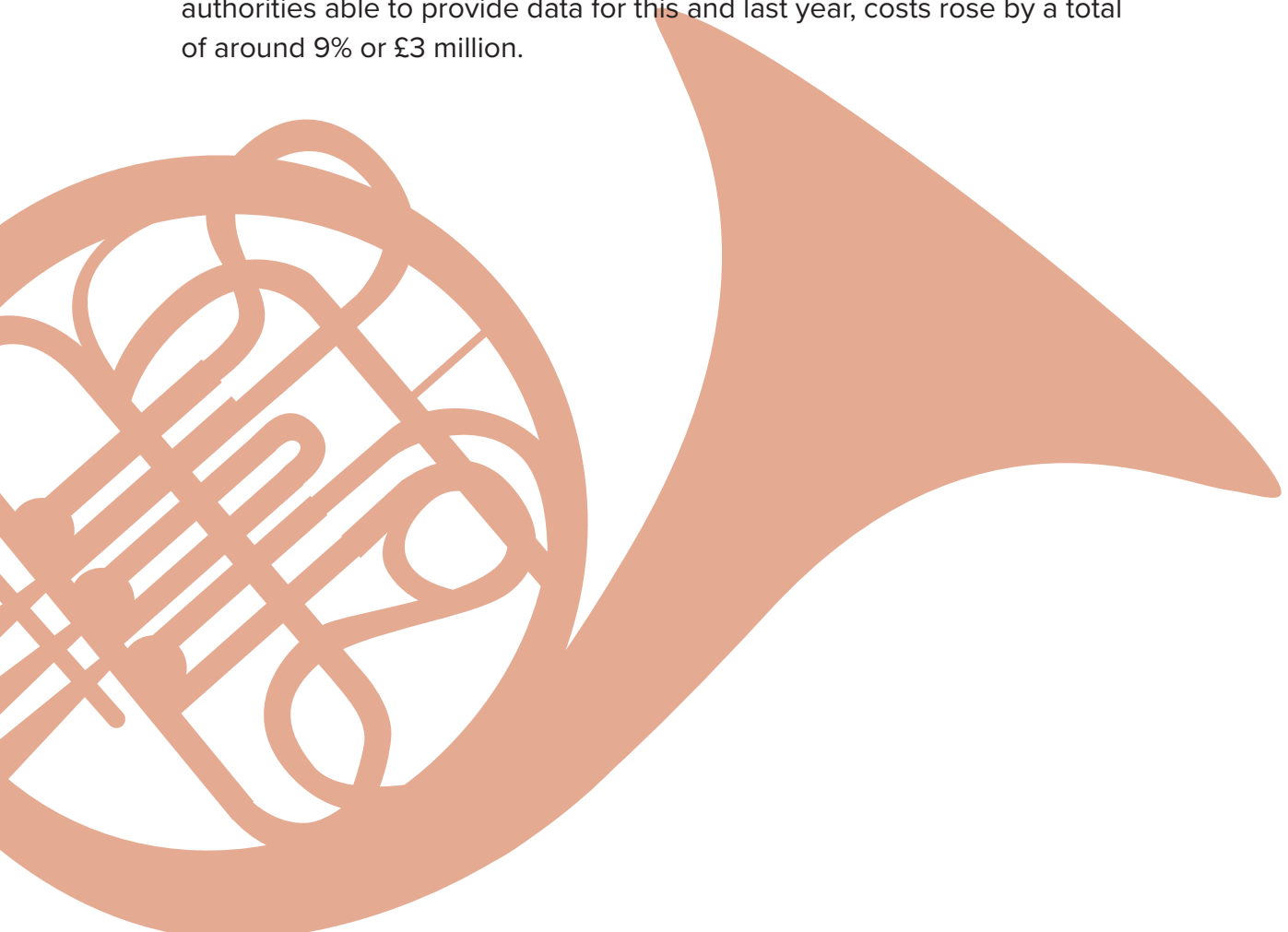
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Key Points

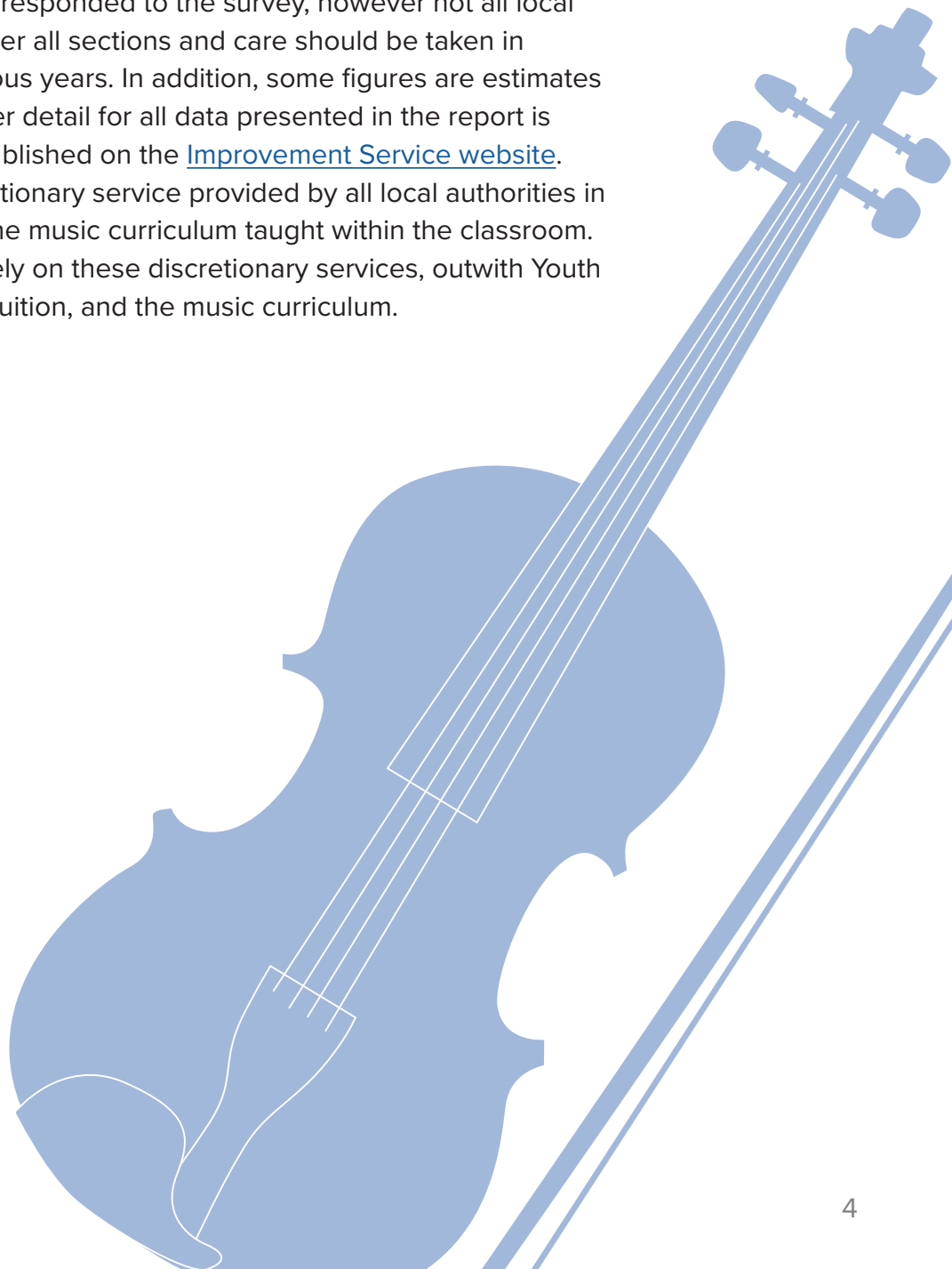
- All lessons and instrument access were provided completely free of charge to pupils.
- More pupils than ever recorded took part in instrumental music lessons in 2023/24. This was true in both absolute and proportional terms, with 65,985 or 9.5% of the school roll participating. This represented a 7% year-on-year increase in numbers.
- Only three local authorities were able to provide lessons to all interested pupils, down from five in 2022/23. Most areas maintain waiting lists, sometimes with several hundred pupils.
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data shows that pupils from more deprived areas of Scotland were over-represented within instrumental music services (IMS). 23% of IMS pupils were from the 20% most deprived areas, compared to 21% of all school aged children and young people. This was driven largely by Glasgow, with just three local areas showing overrepresentation amongst these pupils.
- Instructor numbers grew in 2023/24, but more slowly than pupil numbers. In the last year this increase was less than 1%, and full time equivalent (FTE) remain 3% lower than in 2013/14.
- Costs of delivering the service also rose in 2023/24. For the local authorities able to provide data for this and last year, costs rose by a total of around 9% or £3 million.



Introduction

This report contains the key findings and messages from the twelfth annual national Instrumental Music Survey. The survey was carried out between May and December 2024 and was completed by Instrumental Music leads in all local authorities. The questions cover all aspects of these services, including fees and charges, participation numbers, concessions and inclusivity, instrument uptake, instructor and tutor numbers, service delivery costs, and extra-curricular activities. The survey is carried out on an annual basis by the Improvement Service on behalf of Heads of Instrumental Tuition Scotland (HITS). The aim of the survey is to highlight the current state of instrumental music services (IMS) in Scotland and to identify and share best practice.

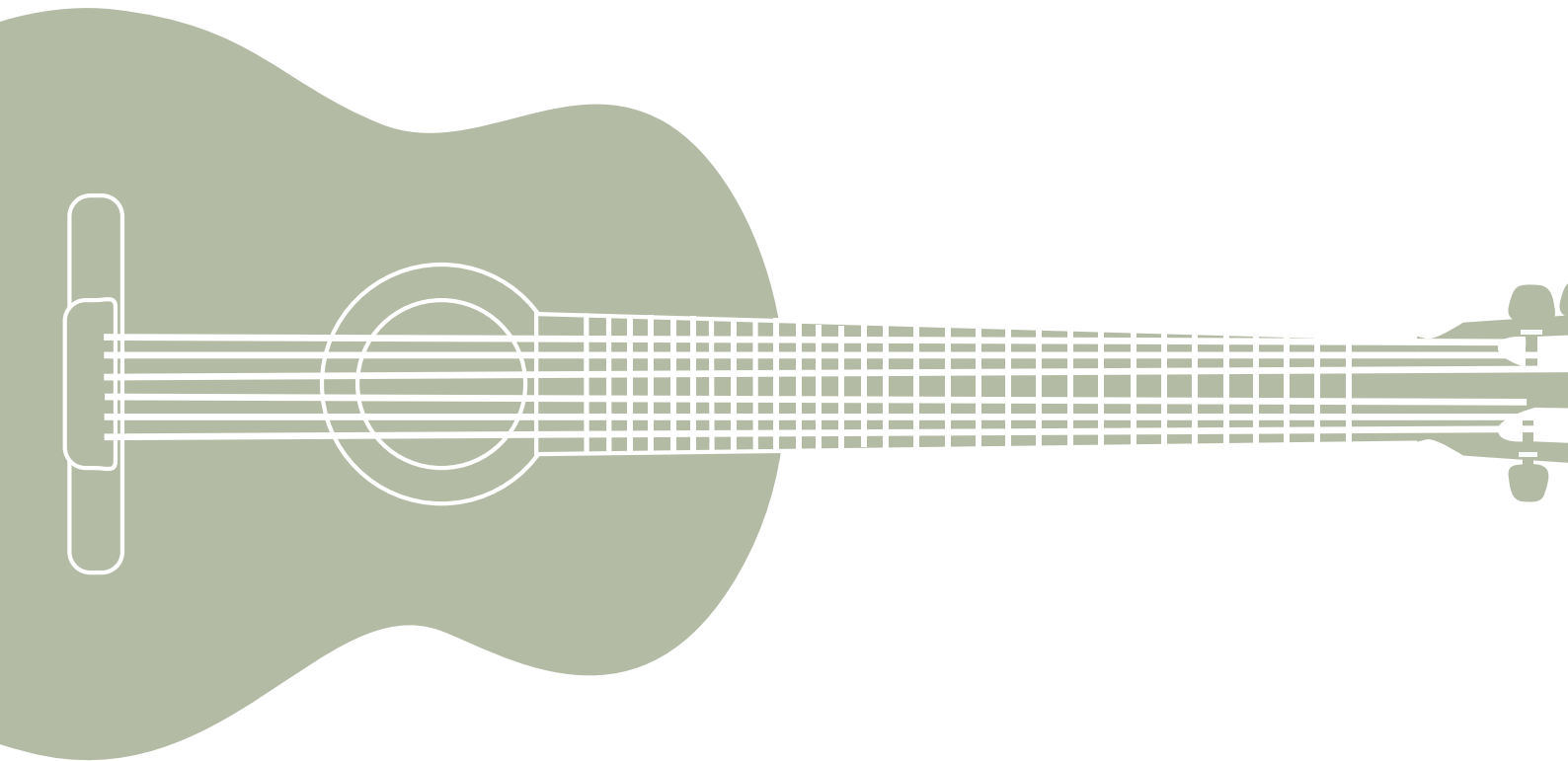
All thirty-two local authorities responded to the survey, however not all local authorities were able to answer all sections and care should be taken in comparing figures with previous years. In addition, some figures are estimates and subject to change. Further detail for all data presented in the report is available in the dashboard published on the [Improvement Service website](#). Instrumental music is a discretionary service provided by all local authorities in Scotland and is separate to the music curriculum taught within the classroom. This survey concentrates solely on these discretionary services, outwith Youth Music Initiative (YMI) funded tuition, and the music curriculum.



Charging Policy

Local authorities have not charged for instrumental music lessons since the 2020/21 academic year. 2023/24 was the third year where no fees were charged and, as with last year's results, some local authorities noted that it has led to increased interest in and demand for the service.

Prior to 2021/22 most local authorities charged fees for instrumental music provision. Historic charges can be seen in the survey data available through the accompanying dashboard, available on the Improvement Service website.



Hiring Policy

As was the case in all years since tuition fees were removed, no local authority charged pupils who took part in instrumental music lesson for the hire or loan of an instrument. All local authorities were able to provide instruments to pupils for the duration of their studies, albeit with some restrictions or limitations. These included the range of available instruments, with larger instruments, such as drumkit or piano, unavailable for hire or loan in some authorities, while some local authorities noted that they had a limited number of instruments available for hire. Others offered loans only for a fixed period of time, although this was always flexible so that the ability to purchase an instrument was not a barrier to any pupil.

In several local authorities, pupils are encouraged to purchase their own instrument if financially viable, particularly as they progress in ability. This was again never enforced, however, and instruments were available to loan should a pupil choose to do so. Some local authorities, including City of Edinburgh Council, Shetland Islands, and Perth and Kinross Council have VAT free purchase schemes to support access to instruments.

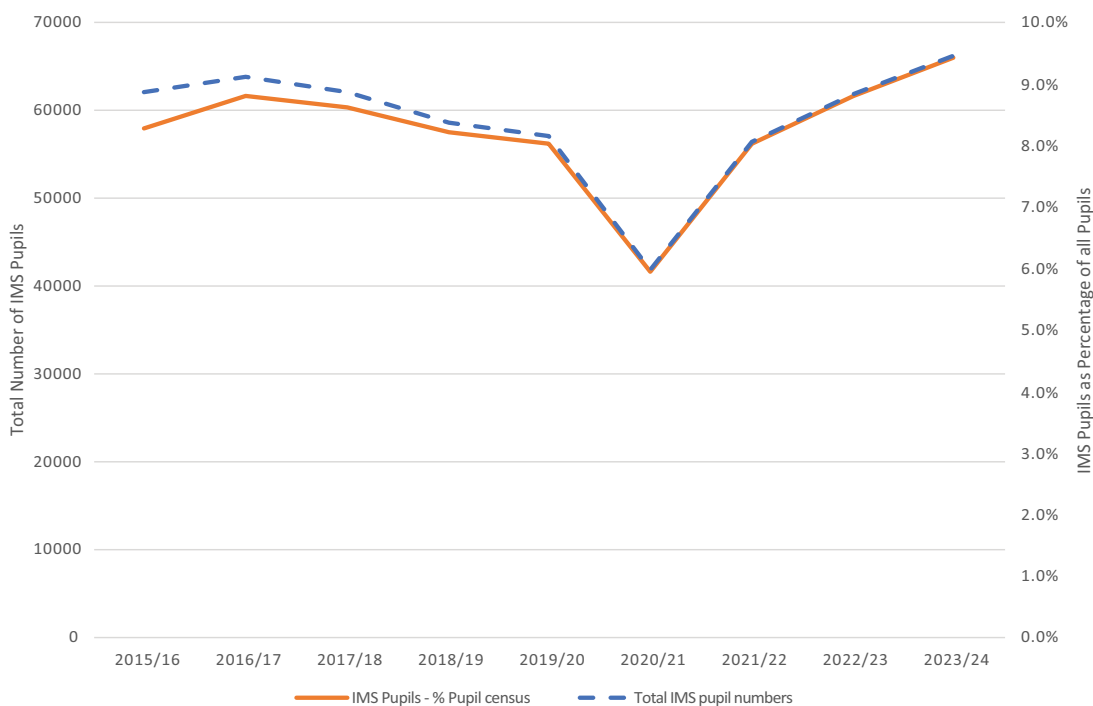


Pupil Numbers

In 2023/24 65,985 pupils participated in instrumental music lessons, a figure higher than in any year since this survey began. This represented a 7% increase since 2022/23 and a 59% increase since the low point of the pandemic-disrupted year of 2020/21. This uptake also represents the highest proportion of the school roll participating in IMS since 2017 at 9.5%. This compares with 8.9% in 2022/23, 8.1% in 2021/22, and 6% in 2020/21. These changes are displayed in Figure 1.

These high pupil numbers reflect continued recovery from the pandemic and may demonstrate the ongoing and increasing impact of the removal of fees. Removing fees may have removed a financial barrier for some pupils and increased demand. As reported below, most local authorities are operating at or above capacity and were unable to provide for all interested pupils. In addition, the extent of unmet demand is unknown. Increased numbers may also reflect changes in the number of available places. This could have been impacted by funding or tutor numbers, but also changes in practice, some of which may have been introduced as a result of the pandemic. Some local authorities highlighted the resumption of face-to-face lessons and the provision of full-class lessons as improving uptake, for example. Further research is required to understand the extent to which the removal of fees has impacted demand.

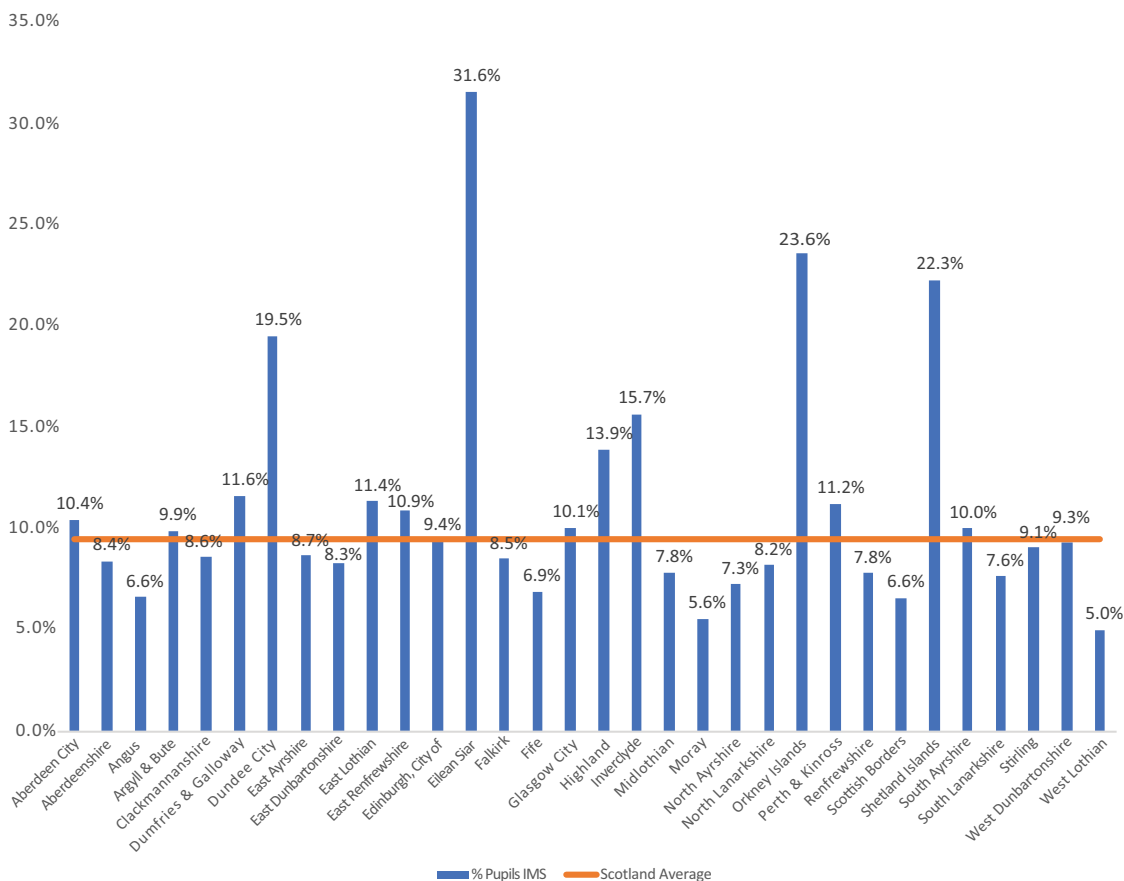
Figure 1 - Number and proportion of pupils that participated in instrumental music lessons 2015/16 – 2023/24



At an individual local authority level there is considerable variation in uptake of instrumental music lessons. In West Lothian Council 5% of pupils participated in lessons in 2023/24, while this figure was 32% in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, not including Gaelic Singing lessons that are offered to all pupils in Primary School. These percentages are displayed in Figure 2.

Ten local authorities saw declines in the proportion of pupils participating in lessons. In the main, these were relatively small declines. The largest declines were in Dundee City Council, where numbers dropped by around two percentage points, and West Lothian Council with a fall of one percentage point. Pupil numbers tend to fluctuate at a local authority level and may be indicative of a number of factors, including smaller pupil cohorts.

Figure 2 - Proportion of pupils taking instrumental music lessons, 2023/24



The number of participating pupils per local authority from 2016/17 to 2023/24 is shown below in Table 1. Most local authorities saw an increase in pupil numbers between 2022/23 and 2023/24 with ten decreasing. In six local authorities, pupil numbers remain lower than pre-pandemic, 2019/20, numbers. These figures and years prior to 2016/17 are available in the dashboard.

Table 1 - Number of Instrumental Music Pupils

Local Authority	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Aberdeen City	3371	3300	1700	2224	1431	1821	2504	2718
Aberdeenshire	3060	3171	2965	2888	1636	2001	2734	3050
Angus	932	954	950	1052	696	920	918	987
Argyll & Bute	1141	1056	1185	1017	534	976	898	978
Clackmannanshire	392	432	309	299	303	586	553	562
Dumfries & Galloway	1166	809	750	735	537	1070	1774	2130
Dundee City	3677	3793	3987	3619	4181	3674	3954	3566
East Ayrshire	1242	1194	1214	976	738	961	1165	1354
East Dunbartonshire	1382	1191	1226	1147	691	1032	1070	1445
East Lothian	1341	1245	1119	1022	857	1358	1525	1719
East Renfrewshire	1732	1596	1705	1648	904	1553	1798	1929
Edinburgh, City of	5089	5084	5089	5071	3245	4116	4893	5007
Eilean Siar	540	868	496	400	210	912	990	1016
Falkirk	2057	1854	1925	1852	892	1180	1562	1811
Fife	4434	3365	3645	3232	2431	3134	3443	3382
Glasgow City	4919	5448	5876	6300	5225	6567	7043	7068
Highland	3100	2900	3600	3700	2530	4050	4137	4200
Inverclyde	958	1298	1297	1326	1104	1412	1470	1488
Midlothian	1302	1321	994	924	633	1088	1188	1099
Moray	815	800	594	643	536	815	698	676
North Ayrshire	1555	1432	1304	1184	750	1137	1249	1251
North Lanarkshire	3409	2941	2646	2437	1048	1809	1575	3875
Orkney Islands	646	663	695	646	668	731	676	655
Perth & Kinross	1762	1716	1564	1359	804	1933	1966	2017
Renfrewshire	1532	1949	1981	1945	1369	1865	1948	1857
Scottish Borders	906	907	878	848	686	892	868	933
Shetland Islands	721	722	779	712	646	877	721	719
South Ayrshire	1266	1197	1133	1125	899	1287	1432	1404
South Lanarkshire	2990	2900	2850	2850	2850	2815	3142	3474
Stirling	950	940	1030	989	648	1000	1161	1143
West Dunbartonshire	1034	1102	813	897	844	994	1006	1102
West Lothian	2194	2178	1197	1131	1068	1572	1654	1370
Scotland	61615	60326	57496	56198	41594	56138	61715	65985

This year, local authorities were also asked to provide pupil numbers per instrument, the third year this question has been included. All local authorities were able to provide this information for 2023/24. String instruments were the most commonly played, accounting for over a quarter of all pupils (26%). This was followed by woodwind (16%), brass (15%), and guitar (14%). At a local authority level, strings were the most commonly taught instrument in twenty areas. In Argyll and Bute Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, traditional instruments such as bagpipes and chanter were the most commonly played, not including Gaelic Singing in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Brass instruments were most commonly taught in Midlothian Council, West Lothian Council, and East Ayrshire Council. Guitar was the most common in a number of areas including Dumfries and Galloway and North Lanarkshire. This year, while strings was still the most commonly taught instrument, this fell by around three percentage points, with small increases in the proportion playing brass, percussion, and guitar. Full details of the number of pupils by instrument within each local authority are included within the dashboard.



Selection and Coverage

Waiting Lists and Oversubscription

Only three local authorities could offer places in instrumental music lessons for all pupils who were interested. This compares with five areas in 2022/23. Local authorities noted that demand was extremely high, in many cases higher than it has ever been. As a result, the remaining twenty-nine local authorities operate waiting lists as the number of interested pupils exceeded their capacity to offer lessons. In one of the three local authorities that could offer lessons to all, it was noted that this would not be sustainable beyond 2023/24. Most local authorities raised concerns about capacity due to staffing issues, with a limited number of instructors, particularly for certain instruments, as well as issues with accommodation for lessons. Several responses said that the additional resource provided by the Scottish Government to remove fees has not been sufficient to meet growing demand or even to maintain capacity, with local authorities continuing to need to make savings.

The sections below show that there was only a small increase in instructor full time equivalent (FTE), despite a very large rise in pupil numbers. With rapidly rising demand, and a gradual increase in instructor capacity it is likely that there will be a continued and potentially growing inability to meet levels of demand in future.

Some local authorities were able to provide the number of pupils on their waiting lists. This level of unmet demand varied. Some local authorities said that only a small number of interested pupils were placed on a waiting list. In other areas, the level of demand was vastly larger than supply. The Highland Council had around 500 pupils on their waiting list and Angus Council said this was 258 pupils. In Renfrewshire Council around one third of those who were interested could be provided with lessons.

Even within the three areas that were able to offer places to all, some individual tutors or instruments may have had waiting lists, however this only affected a very small number of pupils.

All local authorities aim to accommodate and provide lessons to as many pupils as possible, however there are limits to capacity based on instructor numbers and available teaching spaces. In certain areas large distances to travel also reduce instructor teaching capacity.

Selection Procedures

Half of local authorities have in place some form of selection procedure for

assigning places within instrumental music services. The form and use of selection procedures varies depending on the local authority, but often includes an aural test or exercise, some simple music games, and consultation with class teachers. Some local authorities also offer a trial period for a few weeks to allow pupils to try an instrument. Often the professional judgement of instructors will be a key deciding factor in selection. In several local authorities selection procedures may only apply for certain instruments where demand is higher than available spaces, and those who are placed on waiting lists may be asked to consider a different instrument.

Coverage

In half of local authorities, instrumental tuition is first offered to pupils when they reach Primary 4, although in some areas lessons begin as early as Primary 1, and ten local authorities do not offer lessons until Primary 5. In most local authorities, only certain instruments are offered in primary school and tuition in other instruments is generally not offered until later stages in the pupil's school career. String instruments are most commonly offered at the earliest age, whilst tuition in percussion instruments is generally offered later.

Twenty-six local authorities allow pupils to apply for instrumental music tuition in more than one instrument, however nineteen of these only allow lessons in a second instrument in special circumstances. Permitting circumstances often include pupils who need tuition in a second instrument as part of their SQA Music course, or pupils who plan to continue further education in music. In most cases, however, tuition in a second instrument tends to only take place where resources permit, and not at the expense of another pupil receiving tuition in their first instrument. Six local authorities did not offer tuition in a second instrument.

The length of instrumental music lessons also varies amongst local authorities. On average, most pupils receive a minimum of twenty-four minutes tuition per instrument per week, but lessons range from a minimum of fifteen minutes to a maximum of one hour. Generally, lessons last half of a school period for secondary school pupils, which can vary between schools. Longer lessons are most common in larger group lessons or for secondary pupils who are more likely to be sitting exams.

Almost all local authorities allow individual lessons, and lessons are sometimes taught in small groups. Some councils noted that group lessons were encouraged to maximise capacity and were more prevalent due to the financial pressures on the service. Often individual lessons or smaller groups were targeted to secondary school pupils while larger group lessons were provided to younger age groups. On average, the maximum group size amongst local authorities in

2023/24 was eleven pupils. Pupils on average receive as a minimum thirty-four weeks of lessons per year, but the service guaranteed minimum varies across local authorities. Many local authorities offer more lessons than their service minimum, depending on resources, and may offer a greater number of weeks tuition for more advanced learners. Further details of these policies can be found in the dashboard.

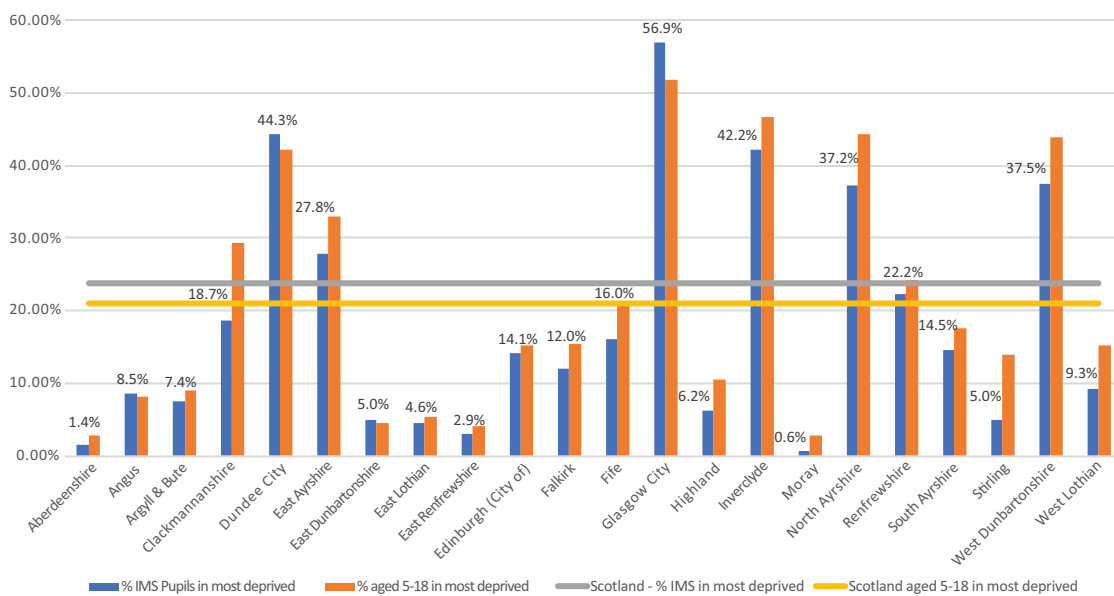


Scottish Index of Deprivation and Inclusivity

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

Local authorities provided information on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) ranking for the data zones in which IMS pupils were resident. This provides a picture of how well represented pupils from the most deprived areas are within instrumental music services. Not all local authorities were able to provide this data, with twenty-two councils able to provide a percentage. Across all twenty-two of these areas, 23% of IMS pupils were resident in the 20% most deprived areas, compared with 21% of their population aged five to eighteen. This was heavily influenced by Glasgow City Council where 57% of IMS pupils were from these areas compared to 52% of those in the five to eighteen age group. Dundee City Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, and Angus Council also had overrepresentation amongst pupils from their most deprived communities, however in most local authorities (18) IMS pupils from the most deprived areas were underrepresented. The breakdown by local authority, including comparison with all school aged young people, is available in Figure 3.

Figure 3 - Proportion of IMS pupils resident in the most deprived SIMD quintile compared with all 5-18 year olds in most deprived quintile, 2023/24¹



¹ Please note that Scotland percentages are estimated based on data provided by local authorities.

Local authorities actively strive to ensure all pupils, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have access to music education. To promote diversity and inclusion, many approaches have been implemented including:

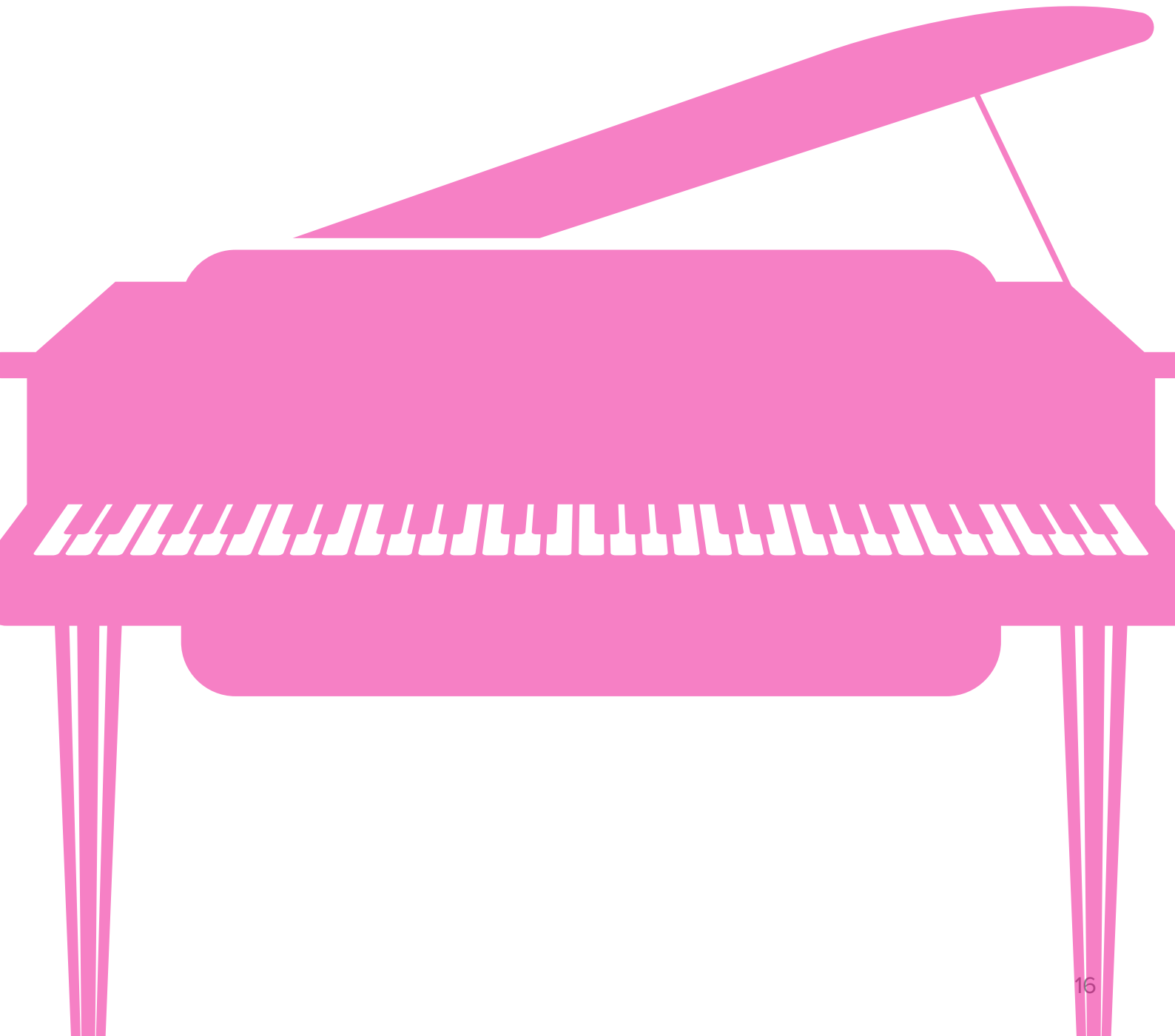
- Consultation with school staff to actively involve them in decision-making around service provision.
- Targeted use of YMI funding to support specific areas with higher needs.
- Promoting opportunities to participate in bands and ensembles for all students.
- Using data on recruitment and participation rates across local authority areas to identify areas with lower uptake.
- Targeted recruitment focused on reaching underrepresented groups and areas.
- Service promotion including demonstrations and whole-class activities to showcase the value of music education.

Some specific examples of actions to promote participation for all pupils were:

- Aberdeenshire Council plan to deliver targeted projects delivering large group tuition in partnership with the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland and the Benedetti Foundation.
- Angus Council are in the second year of running a 'Rock Guitar Project' in two secondary schools, funded through the Pupil Equity Fund. The project's focus is on improving attendance and social confidence, with the Rock Guitar Project Instructor working to target pupils with low attendance or non-attendance.
- Argyll and Bute Council make use of YMI projects to augment IMS instruction especially in remote, island, and rural areas that can experience poverty differently from urban areas.
- Dundee City Council identified that "traditional" instrumental provision often does not work as well in areas of high deprivation or population density, due to limited space at home, which can mean less opportunity to practice. In response large scale in-school activity was targeted at these areas to generate more opportunity for practice using in-school facilities.
- East Lothian Council varies the location of IMS Ensemble projects across the authority to ensure ownership of these groups from local communities and to break down cultural barriers to participation. When appropriate, IMS activities take place outwith schools and in the community to promote wider awareness of the work of the service and the wide range of opportunities available.
- South Lanarkshire Council IMS specifically targets learners from deprived areas through investing in bespoke projects that offer children the opportunity to take part in instrumental learning. Throughout 2023/24 several schools who previously did not engage with instrumental music

lessons took advantage of the provision of guitar, percussion, woodwind, brass, and strings projects that provided a pathway for inclusion on an instrumental music timetable.

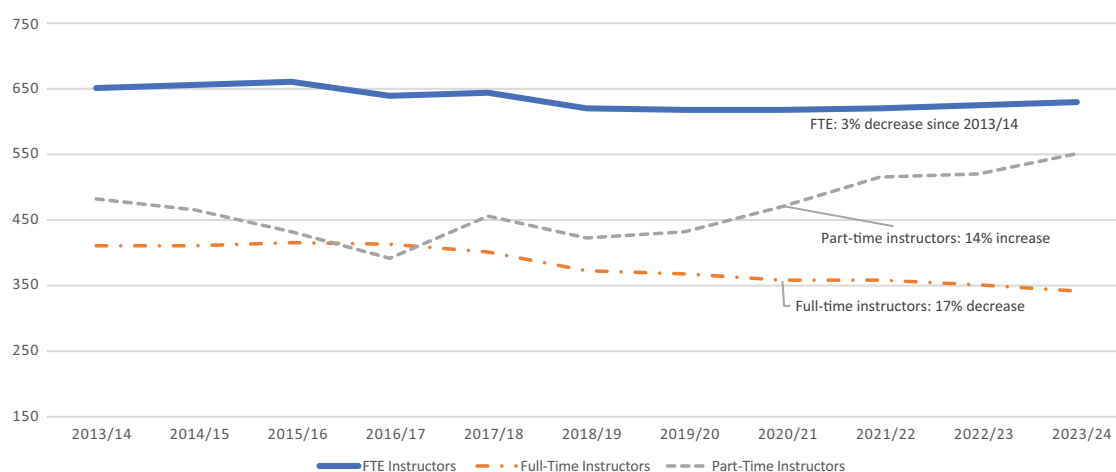
- Stirling Council also actively target schools in areas of deprivation. The service works with senior staff in those locations to put in place initiatives to engage young people and encourage participation. This includes running full-class sessions or bussing P6 and P7 pupils to regional senior ensembles to allow a new experience and encourage participation.



Instructor Numbers

The results of this year's survey reveal the continuing pressure on local authority teaching capacity. This trend has been ongoing for several years, despite the very large increase in pupil numbers in the last few years. As reported previously, full time equivalent (FTE) numbers saw a large decrease in 2018/19 and continued to slowly decline until 2020/21 when FTE numbers reached their lowest recorded figure. Since then, FTE numbers have grown modestly, rising by around 2%, but remain lower than in 2017/18. In the last year the number of instructors rose by less than 1%, while pupil numbers rose by 7%. Since 2013/14 instructor FTEs have fallen by 3%. These trends are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 - Instructor numbers and FTE, 2013/14 to 2022/23



The number of instructors employed full-time has been declining since the beginning of the survey, which has been accompanied by an increase in instructors working part-time. Despite the small increase in FTEs over the past few years, this trend has continued, and full-time instructor numbers are at their lowest on record, while part-time numbers have continued to rise. This trend may have been driven in part by shifting work and service delivery patterns, some of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. The full breakdown is displayed in Table 2.

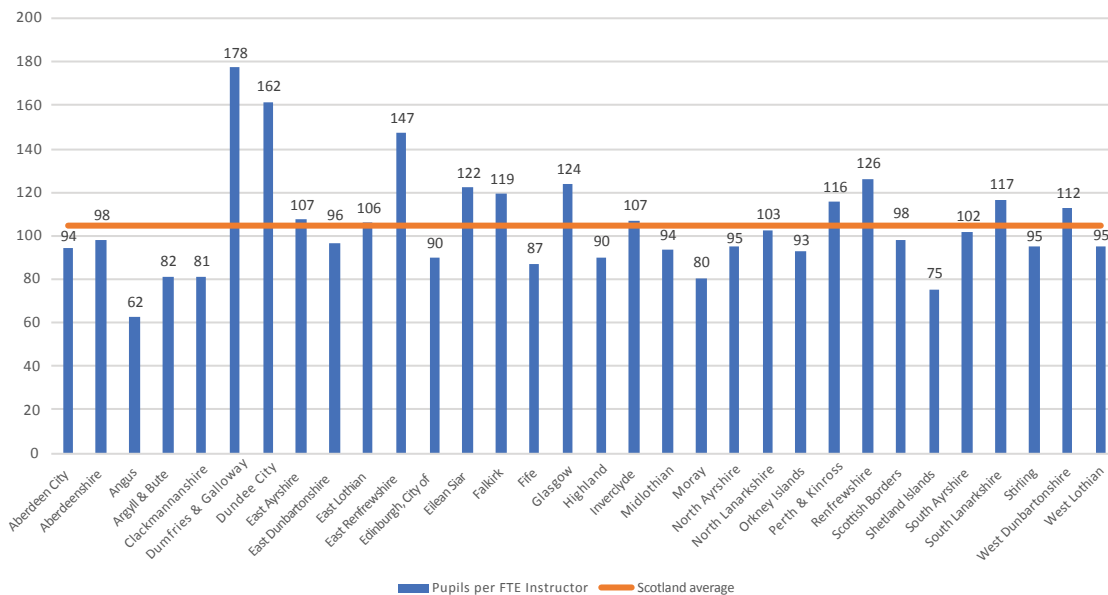
Table 2 - Total Instructor Numbers 2013/14 - 2022/23²

	2013/ 14	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23	2023/ 24
FTE	651.9	657.2	660.3	640.6	644.1	620.0	617.8	617.5	620.1	625.4	630.2
Full-time numbers	412	411	415	413	401	373	368	357	358	352	342
Part-time numbers	483	465	433	392	457.4	422.1	432.6	471.4	516	520.9	552

² Please note – not all local authorities could provide this data in 2020/21 or 2022/23, and missing values have been filled forward from 2019/20 and 2021/22 respectively.

The ratio of pupils per instructor also varies at a local authority level. While the Scotland average sits at just under 105 pupils per instructor, this ranges from 62 to 178. These figures are displayed in Figure 5. Each year, instructors are providing a greater number of pupils with tuition. Compared to 2022/23, where the average number of pupils per instructor was 99, this year has seen a 6% increase in pupils per instructor and an almost 16% increase since 2021/22. This reflects the growing number of pupils in the service, while instructor numbers have increased far more slowly. It may also reflect the roll-out of all-class provision in many local authorities.

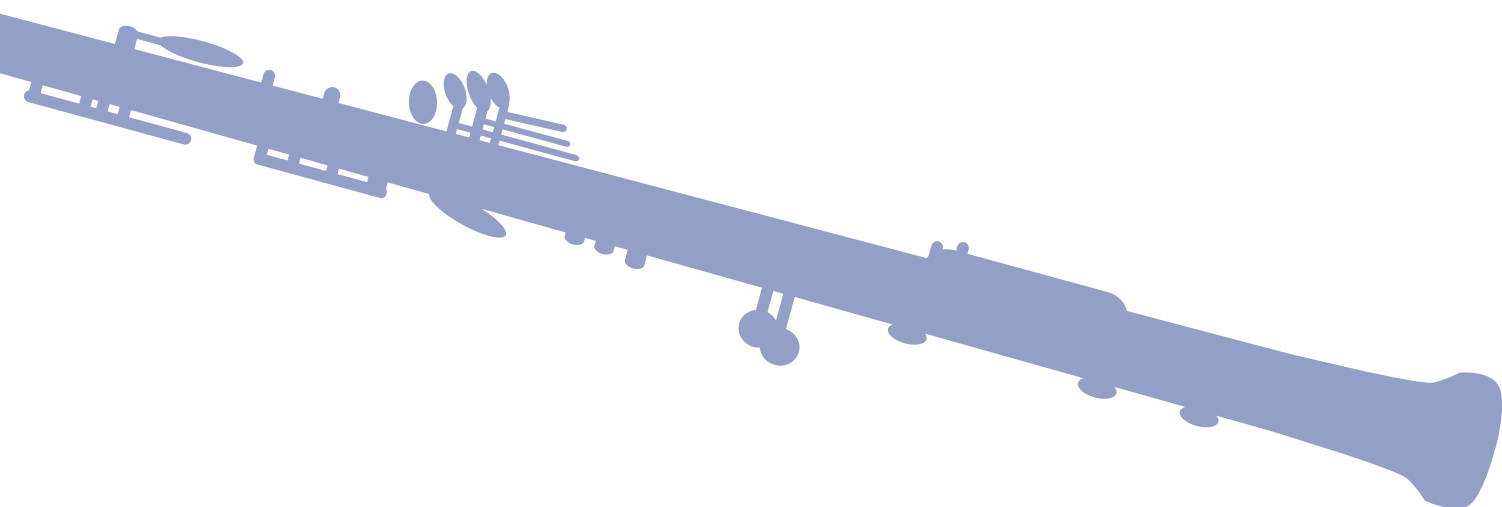
Figure 5 - IMS pupils per FTE instructor



Local authority instrumental music services provide a wide range of instrumental instruction including tuition in strings, woodwind, brass, guitar, percussion, and traditional instruments, such as bagpipes. Tuition in strings has been the discipline with the largest number of full time equivalent (FTE) instructors in all years of the survey. This number has declined by around 9% since 2014/15, somewhat faster than the decline in total instructor FTEs (3%). Other FTEs including woodwind, brass, and piano have also declined over time, while traditional instruments have seen an increase. This can be seen in Table 3 which displays the number of FTE instructors hired in each discipline across Scotland between 2014/15 and 2023/24. A breakdown of FTE instructors within each local authority is available in the dashboard.

Table 3 - Instructor FTE by discipline, 2014/15 - 2023/24³

	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23	2023/ 24
Strings	175.3	174	168.2	166.5	162.0	159.6	156.4	152.4	212.47	159.266
Woodwind	123.3	123.5	119.6	122.2	114.6	112.6	107.6	112.0	112.677	111.41
Brass	125.2	123.1	119.8	118.1	111.8	111.5	104.7	106.3	108.616	109.516
Percussion/Drum Kit	62.2	64.4	64.7	64.9	64.6	65.2	57.6	63.6	63.26	65.26
Guitar	60.6	61.1	58.9	58.9	59.6	58.6	56.5	63.8	65.46	68.31
Traditional Instruments (exc. Piping & Highland Drumming)		9.3	7.5	6.51	7.07	8.07	7.7	2.2	8.4	3.26
Bagpipes/ Chanter		33.1	34.8	37.1	38	37.3	38.2	37.9	37	39.4
Highland Drumming		4.6	5.1	4.7	8.6	8.6	9.5	11.3	11	14.6
Traditional Instruments (inc. Piping & Highland Drumming)	46.5	47.0	47.4	48.3	53.7	54.0	55.4	51.4	56.4	57.26
Voice	19.3	21.5	27.4	20.4	21.3	21.9	24.3	20.9	26.25	22.8
Piano/Keyboard	41.8	43.7	41.3	42.6	35.9	34.2	34.7	36.8	32.07	29.84
Other:	2.4	7.3	6.0	6.6	8.86	8.4	6.8	11.9	6.4	12.8



³ Please note – not all local authorities could provide this data in 2020/21 or 2022/23, and missing values have been filled forward from 2019/20 and 2021/22 respectively.

Additional and Extra-Curricular Activities

Local authorities offer pupils additional instrumental music activities outwith regular tuition. These activities include groups, bands and ensembles which offer pupils the opportunity to play their instruments in a group setting, often with the opportunity to participate in concerts. In some cases, these additional activities come with an additional charge, but are often provided for free and are run through subsidy from the local authority, with IMS staff often volunteering or working overtime to run these activities.

Since the pandemic, the number of pupils participating in these additional activities has grown. In 2021/22, just over 10,329 pupils participated in these activities, rising to 15848 in 2022/23. This year the figures rose by a further 16% to 18378.

The cost of participating in additional activities varied by local authority. Although the Scottish Government has put in place funding to remove fees for lessons, charges for additional activities are at the discretion of the local authority. As in the previous year, six local authorities charged for some of these activities, although this was often only for residential placements where there were travel and accommodation costs, or for specific lesson types, such as choir. In many cases this was subsidised by the local authority, sometimes using Scottish Government provided funding. As an example of the fees charged, Aberdeenshire Council charged £6 per session per pupil and East Dunbartonshire Council charged a £50 registration fee. Examples of charges for residential places were Angus Council where the cost was £160 and Glasgow City Council where £280, or a discounted fee of £90, was paid to cover accommodation and travel.

In a small number of cases private donations help to fund additional activities, often for specific events. Some examples include:

- Clackmannanshire Council received £500 from the Co-op for purchase of music stands and £600 for percussion instruments.
- Dumfries and Galloway Council received around £2000 from a private individual for Come and Play Days.
- Dundee City Council received grants towards a tour of Würzburg including from the Northwood Trust, William Sword Trust, and others.
- Glasgow City Council received funding from the Turing Scheme for a tour of Valencia.

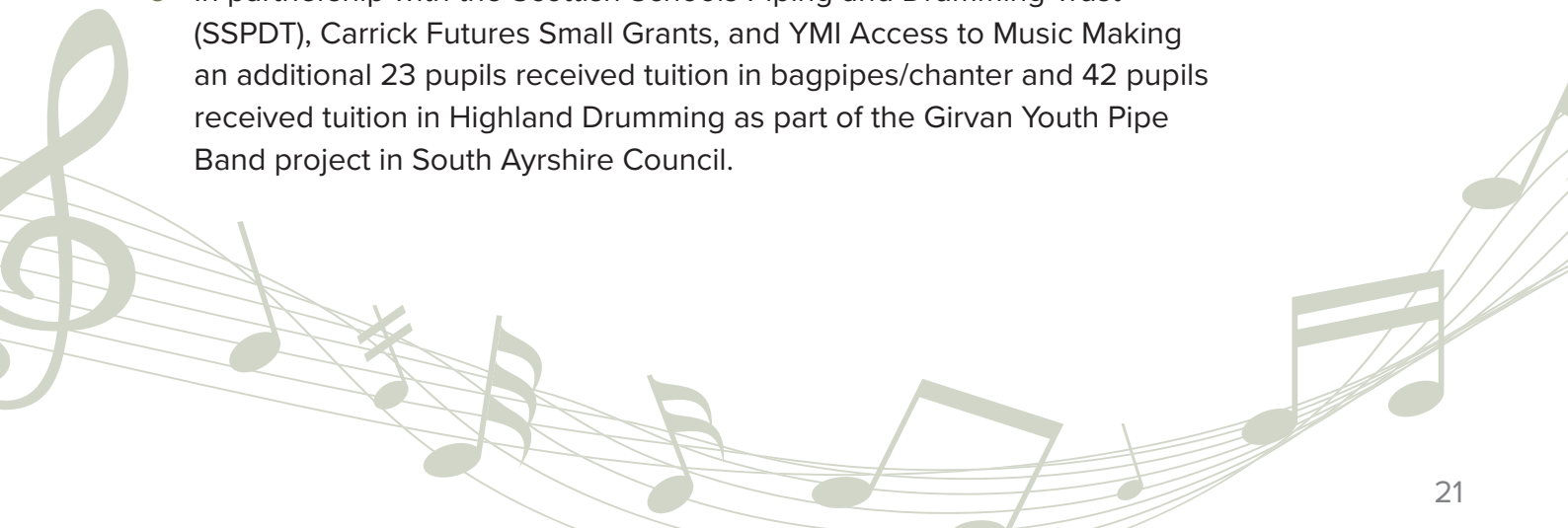
Costs and Income

The cost of running instrumental music services in 2023/24 was £35.6 million. This does not include data for all local authorities, as only twenty-seven could provide this. This running cost was the highest on record in any year of this survey, which reflects increased participation as well as inflationary costs, including salaries, equipment, and maintenance costs. Compared to 2022/23 for the twenty-seven local authorities able to provide data in both years, costs rose by 9% (£3 million). When accounting for inflation the rise was 2.9% in real terms. This was the second year of significant cost increases, with a 10.6% cash terms increase, and 3.8% real terms increase recorded in 2022/23.

On an individual local authority basis, twenty-four of the twenty-seven local authorities reported an increase in costs, with an average change of 8%. Some local authorities saw cuts to the available funding, with West Lothian Council recording a 9% cut.

A handful of local authorities reported some small sponsorships to help cover costs or provide additional places including:

- Aberdeenshire Council were loaned bagpipes from the Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums Trust (SSPDT).
- The Argyllshire Gathering Trust donate £50,000 each year to support piping tuition in Argyll and Bute Council.
- East Ayrshire Council was awarded £10,000 SSPDT as a final instalment of pre-Covid grant monies.
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar was awarded a one-off payment of £10,000 by the MacAuley Trust, which was used to fund 0.4 FTE drumming tuition.
- £25,000 per year for three years has been received by Inverclyde Council from Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums Trust and The Beatrice Foundation to develop pipes and drums.
- North Ayrshire Council received £1500 from the Rhona Reid Charitable Trust.
- In partnership with the Scottish Schools Piping and Drumming Trust (SSPDT), Carrick Futures Small Grants, and YMI Access to Music Making an additional 23 pupils received tuition in bagpipes/chanter and 42 pupils received tuition in Highland Drumming as part of the Girvan Youth Pipe Band project in South Ayrshire Council.



Future Plans

As the impact of the removal of fees continues to make itself clear, 2023/24 and future years promise to be times of continuing change for instrumental music services in Scotland. Local authorities were asked to give their future plans, including how they are planning to develop their service. There were a number of different areas covered, all of which can be found in the dashboard. Some examples and common themes were:

Increasing coverage and access and growing participation figures was identified as a priority by several local authorities. In many cases this was particularly focused towards areas of greater deprivation or with lower uptake. In East Dunbartonshire, for example, the service aims to expand provision to Primary 2 and 3.

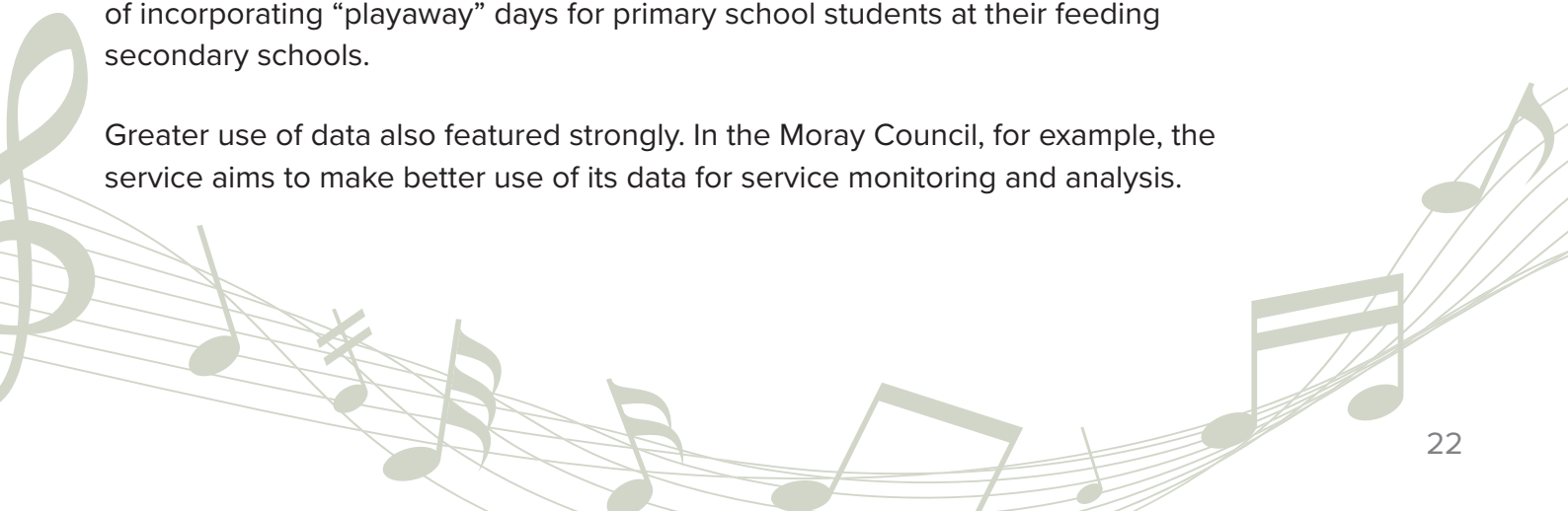
Linked to this, was promoting and expanding opportunities to participate in school orchestras and bands, and to allow young musicians to experience different musical styles. Stirling Council emphasised the positive impact participation in these groups can have on young people's health and wellbeing.

Expanding use of online delivery was also mentioned as a means to improve accessibility in some local areas, although this would always include a mix with in-person tuition. For some larger local authorities such as Aberdeenshire Council where in-person tuition can involve long travelling distances, this could help to allow greater access and capacity.

Some local authorities noted their intention to build on and expand partnership working within their communities and with national groups, institutions, and services. City of Edinburgh Council, Dundee City Council, and East Lothian Council all noted their work with, for example, the Benedetti Foundation, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and Charanga Scotland.

Pupil retention, particular for the transition from primary to secondary school was a goal for several areas. East Lothian Council, for example, provided an example of incorporating "playaway" days for primary school students at their feeding secondary schools.

Greater use of data also featured strongly. In the Moray Council, for example, the service aims to make better use of its data for service monitoring and analysis.



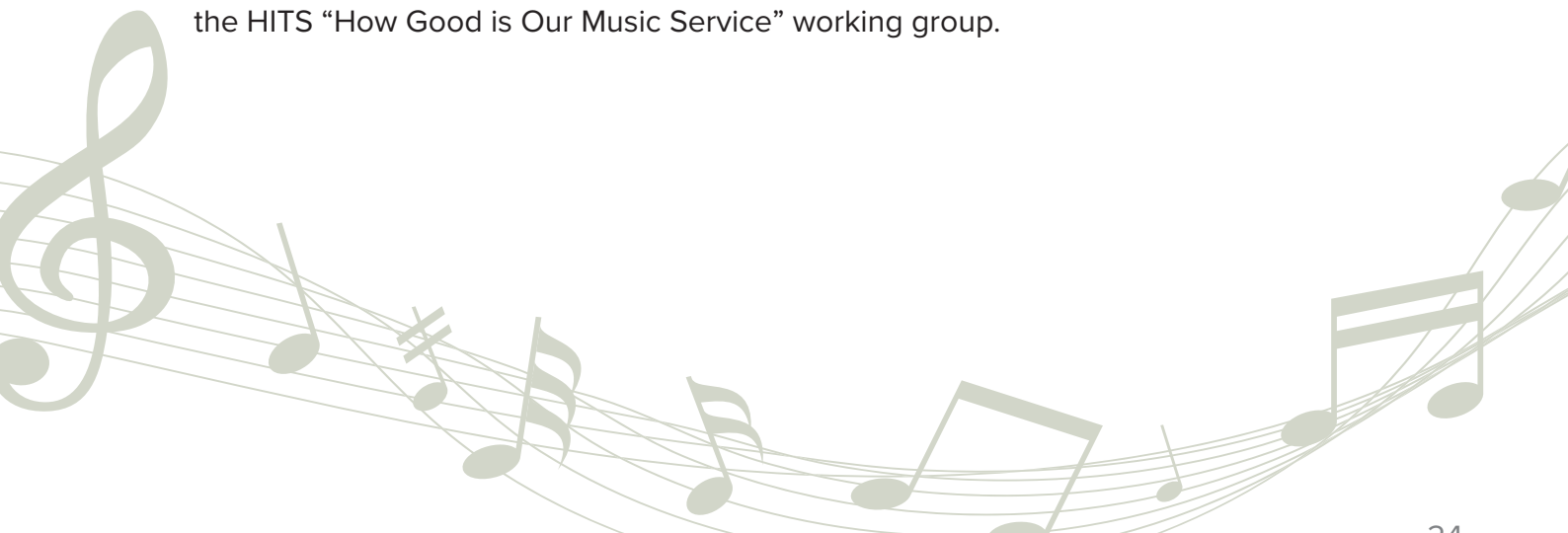
Many councils reported that future plans will be heavily influenced by available finances. The Highland Council noted that the challenges of delivering services over a huge geographic area, alongside increasing costs and fixed funding, make further development difficult. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar also noted similar concerns, noting that current funding levels were not sustainable. Finally Midlothian Council highlighted proposed cuts to the service, which would mean that developing the service would be challenging.



Reviewing Services

There are a variety of procedures and policies for reviewing, engaging, and sharing information across instrumental music services in Scotland. Examples of these procedures are available in the dashboard. There are ongoing reviews in how services operate and are delivered going forward, including in response to the removal of fees. These seek to ensure that services operate effectively and provide an inclusive service for all. Some examples of reviewing policies and activities include:

- Several local authorities, including Aberdeenshire Council, Angus Council, the Moray Council, and City of Edinburgh Council, noted that they meet with Heads of Services and other colleagues from across their local authorities, including from education, sport and culture, and community development, to ensure that services are aligned and that access is as wide as possible.
- A number of local authority areas noted they carry out regular feedback exercises with staff, schools, and pupils and parents. This often took the form of a survey.
- Monitoring of recruitment and uptake data was mentioned by South Ayrshire Council, North Lanarkshire Council, and Stirling Council. This included ensuring that there is equal access and uptake of the service for children from more deprived areas. Argyll and Bute Council noted that further work was ongoing to ensure easier access to and use of relevant data. East Ayrshire Council are also undertaking a mapping exercise to ensure that all pupils have access to music making in schools.
- Many local authorities also hold regular ongoing or annual service reviews or quality assurance exercises. This included regular lesson observations by the Head of Instrumental Music, Professional Review and Development sessions, self-improvement planning and other evaluation. Reporting is also often provided to relevant council committees.
- Some local authorities noted work ongoing at a national level, particularly the HITS “How Good is Our Music Service” working group.

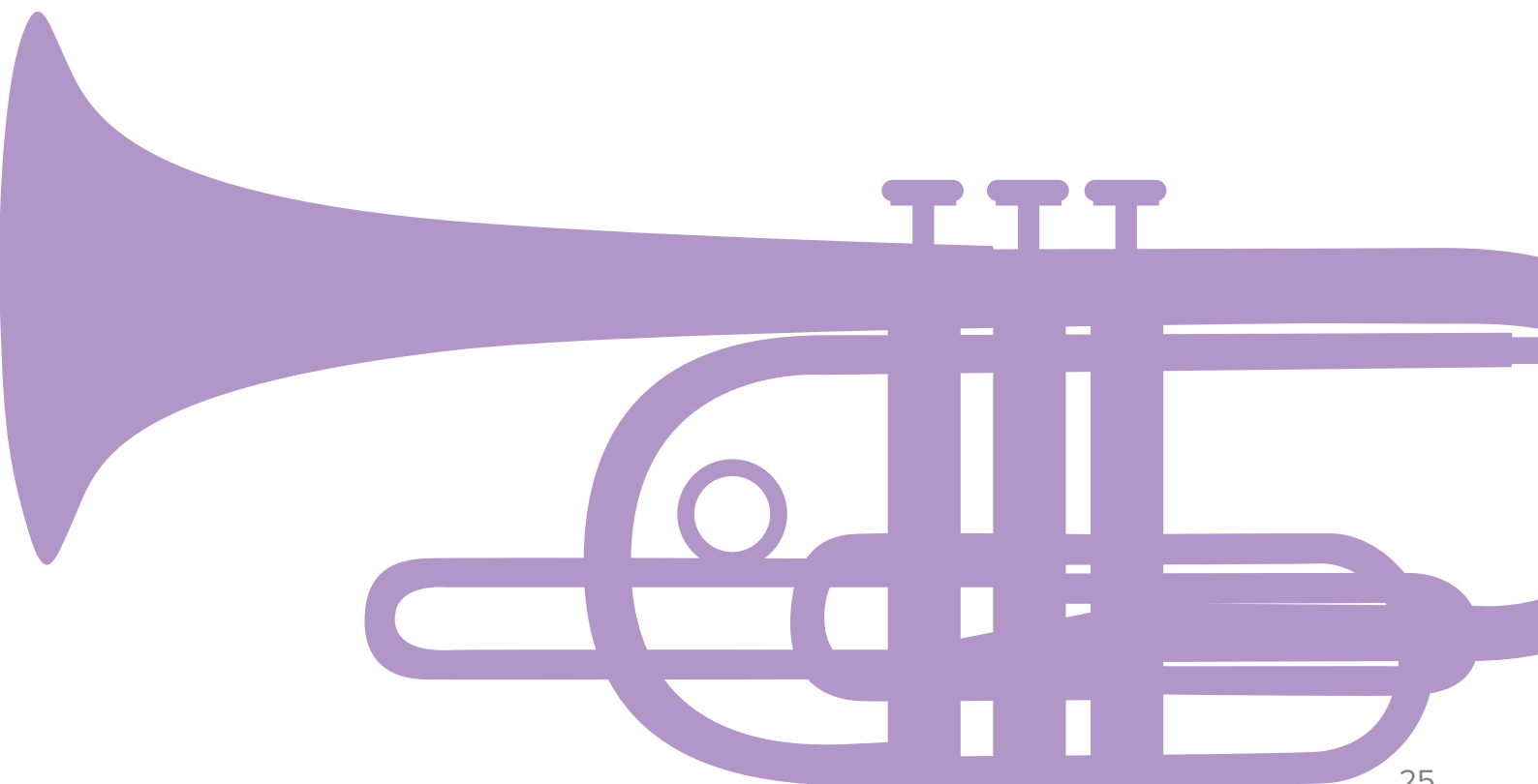


Summary

The key takeaway from this year's survey is the record number and proportion of pupils participating in the service. Since the pandemic, pupil numbers have rebounded rapidly to stand at 65,985. This demonstrates the ongoing popularity and appeal of these services, and likely reflects the impact of the removal of fees in 2021. Services have also continued to promote the service in more deprived and less accessible areas, and SIMD data suggests a slight overrepresentation amongst pupils from the most deprived areas, at least nationally. While there is more to be done, this demonstrates the excellent job that services have done in making their services as inclusive as possible.

Despite this, there are some areas for concern. Only three local authorities could provide tuition to all interested pupils, suggesting some levels of unmet need within the system. Although this reflects the service's popularity, it also points to lack of capacity. FTE numbers for instructors grew again this year, but at a substantially slower rate than pupil numbers rose and remain below 2013/14 levels. Many services are operating at or even over capacity as a result, yet are unable to provide to all. Costs are also rising quickly, with some local authorities noting that available resources are not increasing at a comparable rate, calling into question the sustainability of current levels of service provision.

Future surveys will continue to track these services and how they change and respond to changing funding models and new demand. Future Instrumental Music Surveys will provide an important source of information against which to assess the success of services.



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