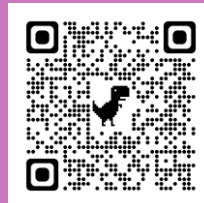


**“Your  
voice  
matters”**

# **Inspiring Music – proposed reprovision of music centres across Central Bedfordshire**

**3 March 2025 – 30 March 2025**

Consultation Results



**Find out more at  
[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations)**

## Purpose of consultation

Inspiring Music is Central Bedfordshire Council's dedicated music education service. For around 40 years it has been offering music lessons in schools and in music centres across Central Bedfordshire, ensuring that every young person has access to music education and can explore and develop their musical talents. Due to funding pressures and a decline in membership, the Council is reviewing Inspiring Music's provision at its three music centres. The consultation asked people's views on the proposal and for any user experiences and asked for suggestions for the music service and the music provision in Central Bedfordshire in the future.

## The consultation process

The consultation ran from 3 March 2025 to 30 March 2025. Local residents were encouraged to comment on the proposal by completing a short online survey. Paper response forms were also available on request. The consultation ran for a period of 4 weeks.

Activities included:

- Press release, on 3 March was picked up by Leighton Buzzard Observer and Bedford Today
- CBC E-bulletin
  - E-mail 1 – sent 3 March to 28,376 with a 49.75% open rate
  - E-mail 2 – sent 12 March to 21,663 with a 44.1% open rate
  - E-mail 3 – sent 27 March to 9,504 (only the people who hadn't opened the previous two emails), with a 7.2% open rate
- CBC Social media
  - Facebook – 5 posts with 27,337 views with 45 engagements
  - Twitter/X - 4 posts with 1,284 views with 20 engagements
  - Instagram - 4 posts with 1,159 views 6 engagements
- Inspiring Music E-mail
  - Monthly Beat E-mail – sent 24 March to 10,256
- Inspiring Music Social media
  - Facebook – 2 posts with 6 engagements
  - Twitter/X – 2 posts with 26 views

\*engagement is the number of interactions your content received from users - likes, comments, shares, saves, etc.

## Feedback on the proposals

In total, 300 responses were received for this consultation.

How they accessed the questionnaire:

- 155 (52%) respondents accessed the questionnaire through a pc/laptop
- 130 (43%) respondents accessed the questionnaire through the mobile version
- 15 (5%) respondents accessed the questionnaire through the tablet version

We received responses from a representative of Biggleswade Town Council and a Flitwick ward councillor within the consultation.

To make sense of the feedback received, we have employed two types of analysis. We have looked at the headline quantitative measures, followed by coding of the free text comments to help understand the sentiment behind respondents' agreement or disagreement with the proposal. The codes we generated identified frequently mentioned comments and concerns. The findings of the consultation are set out in the next section of this report.

When summarizing, these consultation findings in other reports please ensure that the findings of this report are quoted accurately, and that a link to this report is provided.

Please note, all quotes are shown as received, so may contain spelling mistakes, and percentages shown in the charts may not total 100% due to rounding.

## Summary

The respondents to the consultation were mostly supportive of the proposals. Particularly for the proposed weekday satellite music centres where 67% (198) agreed with the proposed provision, 20% (60) were not supportive and 13% (40) neither agreed nor disagreed.

With regard to the proposal for Ampthill to being the main hub for the Saturday provision, 49% (145) were supportive of this, with 39% (114) were not supportive of this proposal and 13% (37) neither agreed nor disagreed.

From the free comment responses throughout the consultation, the themes that the most respondents mentioned, were around the need for there to be more awareness of the Inspiring Music centres and their offering. Many respondents said that there should be wider promotion of the centres. There are also suggestions with regard to the proposal of Ampthill being the main hub, that it is too far for some to travel to and could mean that they are unable to continue their lessons. The lack of transport links to get to Ampthill was also mentioned. Many respondents said that the music centres must stay open, and that an investment in them is an investment in their children's future. Another theme that came through was the need to engage more with schools, both in the offering and to help promote awareness of the service.

There were many supportive comments from respondents saying that they understand the need to revise the offering due to lack of uptake, and that the proposal is actually opening up to a wider audience across Central Bedfordshire.

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There was a feeling that the lessons were inexpensive, and the service could look to charge more for them. Some respondents also wondered if it might be an idea to look into the possibility of using cheaper venues.

Many respondents said that children may already have commitments to other activities/sports clubs for both Saturday and during the week, so these may prevent attendance. There was also a feeling that during the week children may not be able to go a school-based music lesson if it was at a school that was different to the one they attend. Working parents may not be able to assist their child with transport to another venue during the week.

There were comments regarding children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) requirements and that Leighton Linlade was currently the only centre with any SEND provision, that any move to Ampthill would prevent their attendance due to location, distance and/or cost. Also that the Leighton Linlade Inspiring Music centre is currently supported by the form of a grant from Leighton Linlade Town Council (LLTC) and that this may be lost if the main hub is in Ampthill, as the funding from LLTC would be in place to serve its own residents. There was also a comment to say that the offer for SEND should be widened and better promoted and advertised.

When respondents were asked if they access the music centre(s), 33% (65) said they did as a Parent/Carer, 53% (9) as a Child/young person, 14% (18) as an Adult. 22% (44) of the Parent/Carers said they may access the music centre in the future, with 18% (3) Child/young persons and 17% (21) Adults. Not all respondents answered these questions. . For the access questions 200 Parent/Carers answered, 17 Child/young persons and 125 Adults.

The respondents currently attend the Inspiring Music lessons at Biggleswade-Stratton School 46% (33), Ampthill – Redborne School 31% (22), and Leighton Linlade – Vandyke Upper School 24% (17)

28% (55) of Parent/carers said that they used to access the music centre and 18% (35) said they had never accessed. 18% (3) of Child/young person said that they had never accessed and 12% (2) used to access. 44% (55) of Adults said that they had never accessed and 25% (31) said they used to. When respondents who said they do not use or no longer use the music centres, were asked if there were any barriers to prevent their use 28% (38) said yes. The main perceived barriers were due to lack of awareness (8 comments), the travel and distance required (8 comments), the time it needed (4 comments) and the cost (4 comments). There were also other familiar themes such as the days clashing with other commitments (3 comments) and lack of tutors (2 comments).

Females (66% (188) were more likely to respond than males (32% (91) to the consultation. Males were under-represented compared to the Central Bedfordshire population (51% female and 49% male).

People aged 45-54 years old were the largest group to respond (30% (87), this group represents 16% of the overall population in Central Bedfordshire (16+only). 35-44 with 24% (69) were also overrepresented versus 18% in Central Bedfordshire (16+only). 25-34 saw an under representation versus the overall population of Central Bedfordshire, with 3% (10) respondents against a 16% for the county. The 18-24 age group were also underrepresented with 1% (4) versus 8% for Central Bedfordshire. There were 5 responses from under 16 year olds, with this age group making up 20% of the population for Central Bedfordshire.

The remaining age groups percentages were representative against the overall population of Central Bedfordshire.

An over-representation of females and those aged 35-54 is a similar pattern to other consultation that we see about services for children and young people.

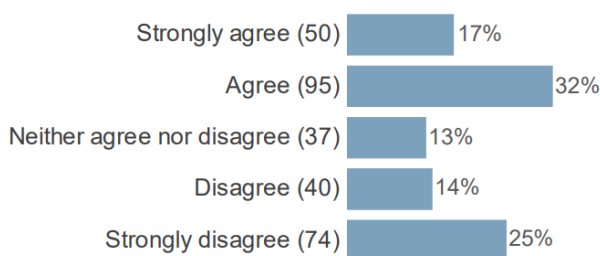
The most responses to the consultation were from Affluent households 66% (75) and Middle households 30% (34) compared to each having a 43% overall in Central Bedfordshire, respectively. The percentage of responses from Deprived households was 4% (5) which is less than the Central Bedfordshire average (14%).

The respondents who indicated that they had a disability in the consultation was 16% (16) this suggests that people with a disability were more likely to respond to this consultation compared to the Central Bedfordshire population average of 15%.

## Full consultation results

### Q1. Proposal for Saturday Music Centre Provision

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed plan to reorganise our current out-of-school Saturday music centre provision, making the main hub on Saturday morning in Ampthill?



The above graph shows that of the 296 respondents that answered this question, when asked how far they agreed or disagreed with the proposed plan to reorganise our current out-of-school Saturday music centre provision and making the main hub on Saturday morning in Ampthill. 49% (145) were supportive, 32% (95) agreed and 17% (50) strongly agreed.

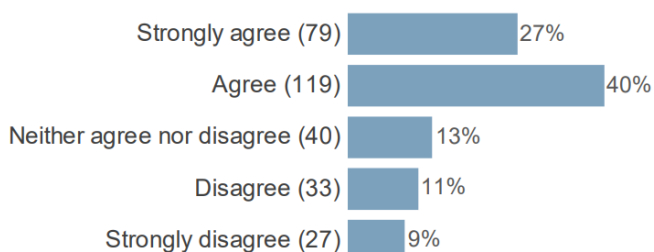
39% (114) were not supportive of the proposed plan, with 25% (74) strongly disagree and 14% (40) disagree.

13% (37) neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Q2. Proposal for Weekday satellite Music Centre provision

Weekday satellite centres would be strategically located across Central Bedfordshire to ensure accessibility and convenience for participants. Possible after-school satellite locations in larger towns like Biggleswade, Dunstable and Leighton Linlade.

How far do you agree or disagree with this?



The above graph shows that of the 298 respondents that answered this question, when asked how far they agreed or disagreed with the proposed plan to have Weekday satellite centres strategically located across Central Bedfordshire, 67% (198) were supportive, 40% (119) agreed and 27% (79) strongly agreed.

20% (60) were not supportive of the proposed plan, with 11% (33) disagree and 9% (27) strongly disagree.

13% (40) neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Q3. Are there any other option(s) that you think the Council should consider when thinking about the reprovision of the music centres?

Of the 300 respondents to the consultation, **215** chose to comment on this question. The main themes have been listed below.

Theme	No. of comments
More awareness needed more promotion/advertising/open days and events	35
No transport links/too far to drive to Ampthill	25
Keep Leighton Buzzard centre/supported by council grant	23
More engagement with schools	18
Charge more	17

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Theme	No. of comments
Supportive comment of the proposal	17
Keep as is/do not reduce service	15
Look to alternate cheaper Saturday venues	13
Hybrid/online groups	12
Saturdays children have other commitments, sports clubs etc	9
Any central hub to be accessible and needs good transport links	8
More funding needed	8
Keep at Stratton School	8
Keep music in schools	7
More lessons for all levels of ability	7
Children already attend after school commitments/children tired after school day	6
Council has other priorities	5
Work with BLMK	5
More information required to comment	5
After school programmes where children need to go to a different school are difficult for working parents	5
Consider more self employed teachers	4
Change the hours	4
Close service	3
Reach out to adult learners	3
Should be after school lessons	3

Theme	No. of comments
Access/parking at Redborne difficult/competing with other events	3
Seems to be a lack of music staff to teach lessons	2
Consider larger group sessions	2
SEND at Leighton Buzzard	2
Saturday centres should be located in centre of CB	2
Provide courses during school holidays	2
Other	14

Some examples of comments received, please note that examples of themes are only provided for those of 4 or more comments.

### **More awareness needed more promotion/advertising/open days and events**

*Maybe promote the existing arrangement so that people are aware of the service. I have 2 children which I pay for private music tuition. I was unaware of this service and would certainly use it or offer it as an option to my children. Promotion/marketing of the service could increase the revenue allowing for the current service offering to remain unchanged.*

*The centre should be advertised more. I myself have introduced three parents to the centre as they have not heard of Inspiring Music and now they have signed up and attend regularly.*

*Will need good advertising, especially in schools & music departments of middle and upper schools. Also open days and taster sessions well in advance of any change in provision.*

*The music centre would greatly benefit from increased exposure to the general public and a stronger presence on social media. By attracting more adult members interested in learning a new musical skill, the centre could build a more stable and long-term membership base.*

*More advertising*

### **No transport links/too far to drive to Ampthill**

*I am not sure driving to Ampthill for a Saturday school is really practicable. It's quite a long way! There really isn't any public transport between LB and Ampthill.*

*The Saturday option of a central Music centre in Ampthill will seriously disadvantage others who have to travel much further than before. It's likely to discourage many from taking part.*

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*By only having them in Ampthill there will be a substantial number who are not able to get there for lessons.*

*Travelling 40 mins there and back from Potton on a Saturday is not feasible. Ampthill is too far away.*

*I am based 15 mins from Biggleswade and Ampthill is an hour away - too far*

### **Keep Leighton Buzzard centre/supported by council grant**

*Keep Leighton Buzzard as it is the centre that is losing the least, and most likely to become profitable*

*Please make Leighton Linslade centre as the Hub, it is supported by the Council grant so operation costs will be well compensated.*

*The cost of Ampthill is greater than Leighton. The number of students attending (and the likely additional catchment) is almost certainly higher in Leighton. The transport to and from Ampthill is non-existent from Leighton. I would therefore suggest that Leighton is a far more suitable area to site the main hub.*

*The grant that Leighton Linslade get surely makes that a good centre to keep open?*

### **More engagement with schools**

*Leaflets in book bags as I did not know this was available*

*A more hand-in-glove approach with local schools music departments and teachers to help provide and bolster tuition inside and outside of school and generate interest in the centers.*

*Have parents/carers been given enough information about what the music service offers? It seems that many parents don't really find out about the service. Better publicity in lower schools is needed.*

*For the small numbers involved wouldn't it be better to be thinking of how to increase interest in schools, like an after school music club or music being incorporated into the curriculum.*

### **Charge more**

*Charge more. The lessons are so cheap, anything else either private or in school, we would be paying twice the fee you charge us*

*Increasing the fee for the Saturday music school. Compared to comparable offerings from the private section it is extremely cheap.*

*Raise the fees. They are ridiculously cheap for 40 minute sessions.*

*Increase fees more sessions running in parallel, to provide more diversity*

### **Supportive comment of the proposal**

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*It looks like the current way of doing things isn't feasible, this seems a good solution.*

*I think it's a wonderful idea, my daughter absolutely loved the on line music lessons over lockdown but logistically it's very difficult to get to the few music centres. Having more available would be a bonus for many more users!*

*Redbourne is central and the obvious choice*

*I think the most sensible options have already been considered and proposed.*

### **Keep as is/do not reduce service**

*Do not reduce the service*

*Simply pay the money. What is £40,000 compared to , for example, Councillors travelling expenses? It is relatively little compared with other expenditure. If we want a civilised society we need more musicians.*

*Each music centre provides its own unique service to their local community which would be very difficult to replicate if the music centres were to merge. Ideally the three centres should remain but much more effort needs to be put in place to advertise them to their local communities and young musicians in local schools.*

### **Look to alternate cheaper Saturday venues**

*Rotating the central hub and reviewing best attendance. Ampthill is more affluent than other areas and in terms of access, needs the easier access less so although it's most central, its need isn't as great in terms of accessibility.*

*Finding somewhere cheaper to run the centres from, perhaps charging a little more*

*I don't think Ampthill should be the main base. I think the same should be across all the areas of Bedfordshire. When Dunstable closed the numbers didn't improve in other areas. I think you should offer lessons on a Saturday morning at all the areas but no clubs.*

### **Hybrid/online groups**

*Include an online option*

*Internet based participation was very successful so why not offer this as a pump primer for live sessions.*

*If online sessions were so popular during Covid, have you considered online sessions as part of the new offering?*

### **Saturdays children have other commitments, sports clubs etc**

*Many children can't attend Saturday morning due to football, sat afternoon or weekday evening would work much better*

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*Why is Saturday morning the chosen time? Children have other commitments on Saturdays. Wouldn't Saturday afternoons be better? Children shouldn't have to choose between music and sport.*

*I think that offering more after school is a better solution. Often weekends are difficult because it conflicts with other activities, especially sports training.*

### **Any central hub to be accessible and needs good transport links**

*It would be better if the locations were central to towns so public transport was available but also parking. There should be multiple time slots, especially if they are no longer on Saturdays.*

*Need to consider access, e.g public transport provision for those that don't have parents to drive them to the centres, otherwise same people attending*

*It needs to be accessible for those children who do not have parental backup to transport them*

### **More funding needed**

*look at costs both income and expenditure and explore grants, local business sponsorship and potentially central government support*

*I assume the council has considered obvious charities, e.g. Connolly Foundation. We have a very proactive Lord Lieutenant who worked tirelessly to promote Digital equipment for disadvantaged children during COVID. Is there scope for someone to spearhead a funding campaign.*

*Maybe ask Marshall's the amplifiers for funding/sponsorship? Or maybe work with Bedford School, Bedford Modern School or similar schools to see if a joint sponsorship/partnership can be organised.*

### **Keep at Stratton School**

*The only option the Council should consider is keeping Inspiring Music at the Stratton..*

*Amptill may be central but it is unlikely that students will travel there from the two other sites. Biggleswade centre should be maintained*

*Keep Biggleswade music school. It is great. I love going.*

### **Keep music in schools**

*School provision during term time in Schools*

*Maybe they could make schools centres? But open to other children not just those attending the school*

*Put funding directly back into schools for teaching music. Unless you provide the teaching in the schools it's pointless having the music centres. Pay the music teaching staff the proper rates. I learnt an instrument when I was at school and still playing 35 years later. Too much emphasis on sport plus not all kids are academic.*

### **More lessons for all levels of ability**

*Ensuring you have teachers who are devoted to developing young peoples music skills and keeping them interested and engaged. We are thinking of leaving due to our child not progressing and becoming uninterested due to the same lessons (same skills being taught) been given for about a year now.*

*There needs to be enough that is challenging for older students to keep students involved. This allows the younger students to have something to look up to and to see as a model. When students surpass the current grade level pieces that are done at the music centres they move to different orchestras etc. because there isn't anything that they are particularly gaining from their engagement in the music centre.*

### **Children already attend after school commitments/children tired after school day**

*I don't think after school would work for a lot of parents/children as they will have other commitments and clubs. This is certainly the case for my family, weekday afterschool clubs and also evening clubs i.e. swimming, scouts and brownies. The weekend Saturday music school works well for our family.*

*Accessibility is important. There are many weekday afterschool activities that young people already do, adults may well be working - also quality tutors may not be available on weekdays.*

### **Council has other priorities**

*I agree that this service should be pared back as there are more important priorities in the county*

### **Work with BLMK**

*A combined service with Luton, central beds and Bedford Borough would benefit from a greater pool of potential students as well as shared funding and a wider pool of available staff.*

### **More information required to comment**

*Is there a plan to have an after school service in Ampthill also?*

### **After school programmes where children need to go to a different school are difficult for working parents**

*After school might also prove more of a problem for for getting children to centres when parents are working and cannot leave their job to do this.*

### **Consider more self employed teachers**

*Using self employed tutors, working with schools and music departments to provide concerts and extra curricular music, home visits from music tutors for families who cannot travel easily.*

### **Change the hours**

*Maybe continuing Saturday morning in Leighton Buzzard, but shorter time, just 2 sessions rather than 4.*

**The responses below 4 comments, focused around the following themes**

- close service (3)
- reach out to adult learners (3)
- should be after school lessons (3)
- access/parking at Redborne difficult/competing with other events (3)
- seems to be a lack of music staff to teach lessons (2)
- consider larger group sessions (2)

**SEND at Leighton Buzzard (2)**

*Leighton-Linslade is currently the only centre with any SEND provision, and that is dependent on the Leighton-Linslade Town Council grant. Many of the people who attend these SEND sessions already travel in to attend, so the idea of moving this out to Ampthill may exclude the existing members who benefit from the provisions. It also seems highly unlikely that Leighton-Linslade Town Council would agree to continue providing this funding to serve the community of a different Town Council, so the reality is that this funding would be stripped away, worsening the budget deficit*

*Making SEND provision and advertising them*

- Saturday centres should be located in centre of CB (2)
- provide courses during school holidays (2)

then individual comments for: exploring other areas to make cuts (1), a respondent wanting a music hub near Marston Moretaine (1), possibility of lunch time tuition (1), wanting to use some of the money that comes in from new developments (1), a central hub for storing instruments (1), loss of social aspect of any closure (1), accommodating those already using the two centres in the one hub (1).

**Q4. Do you have any comments or suggestions for the provision of music centres in Central Bedfordshire, going forward?**

Of the 300 respondents to the consultation, **201** chose to comment on this question. The main themes have been listed below. A number of these themes were seen for the earlier question also.

Theme	No. of comments
Must stay open, invest in children's music future	40

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Theme	No. of comments
More awareness needed more promotion/advertising/open days and events	30
Supportive comment regarding the proposal	26
Engage with schools	19
No transport links/too far to drive to Ampthill	19
Needs to be in Leighton Buzzard	11
Charge more	9
Seems to be a lack of music staff to teach lessons	8
More variety of instruments/ lessons/music	7
Look at other cheaper/smaller venues instead	7
Comments regarding SEND	6
Children already attend after school commitments/children tired after school day	5
Keep at Stratton School	5
Non-essential service/spend money elsewhere	5
More information required to comment	4
Reach out to adult learners/refresher lessons	4
Look to alternate Saturday venues	4
After school programmes where children need to go to a different school are difficult for working parents	4
Lessons too expensive	3
Expand school music provision	3

Theme	No. of comments
More online lessons	3
Make more local	3
Saturdays children have sports clubs etc	3
Groups for all ages and abilities	3
More priorities elsewhere for CT money	2
Access/parking at Redborne difficult/competing with other events	2
Shorten lesson times	2
Other	20

Some examples of comments received, please note that examples of themes are only provided for those of 4 or more comments.

### **Must stay open, invest in children’s music future**

*These centres are essential for children and young adults to pursue their interest and talent in music.*

*Music centres are a vital way for young people to get involved with music from a young age, often going above and beyond what is offered in their schools (especially for the younger year groups). They already do a fantastic job and should be supported to keep doing this and to grow.*

*Whilst I do appreciate the funding challenges involved in running these centres, I have firsthand knowledge of the immense amount of benefits they give to their members. I also know that once these centres are closed, they are highly unlikely to be reopened in the future. I would strongly urge the decision makers to keep the centres open and consider the cost as an investment in our country's musical future.*

*I think it will be very sad if the service is reduced along the lines being consulted upon - encouraging young people to engage in music and learn instruments is so important for their development. I would encourage you to explore all avenues to keep the service as broad and open as you possibly can*

*These must stay open*

### **More awareness needed more promotion/advertising/open days and events**

*The services need to be better communicated and advertised. As a parent of a school aged child I wasn't aware of this provision.*

*Would be good to have more details on the centres and what they provide, age groups as we didn't know where or what they are until received this consultation email. Maybe some leaflet dropping informing people with children would help promote them.*

*They should make greater use of digital platforms because, as we have already seen, a large percentage of attention today is driven by social media. Each young participant could create an introductory video of themselves to build excitement and preparation for the competition. Worried about the lack of interest in classical music? Organize a contest where participants adapt a classical piece—the most innovative and best-performed version wins. The competition could even be pitched as an idea to TV programs, such as Blue Peter, for greater exposure.*

*Try to develop and foster better performance opportunities which can the showcase the performance talent. Showing parents and students what is possible. Start with early year's program and have things not available in schools.*

*I only found out about it on the off chance from school of an open day. If parents knew the plethora of instruments and the value for money, more would be interested. I think also people don't know adults can attend too and this is a real missed source of revenue*

### **Supportive comment regarding the proposal**

*The funding of the service is relatively modest it seems to me, but there are cuts all round and so I assume this service can't be exempt.*

*I always felt the omission of Dunstable in the existing provision was a weakness so this proposal addresses that.*

*I would strongly advocate for the continuation of music centre provision. I believe that the after-school option may increase uptake and popularity of the music centre offerings.*

*It makes sense to remodel provision so that it works for students, families and the Inspiring Music Team.*

*It's a great idea! Opening it up to more people by making the offering more widespread across the county is a wonderful idea.*

### **Engage with schools**

*Reach out to schools and let them know that the Saturday morning music schools are available.*

*Advertise through schools - it's free & doesn't require anything more than a leaflet design - all schools now have an online messaging system. Do assemblies in large schools close to the centres to gain traction*

*it can feel a little intimidating from the available information to know if the music centres are "for you", I don't know if more engagement with schools and other community groups might break down those barriers and increase attendance at music centres.*

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*Seeing as the leaflets don't appear to be making it into the schools, perhaps distributing them to schools via email would be a potential alternative? This would enable Inspiring Music to ask the schools to distribute the leaflets to all parents via email, and also reduce costs hugely, only needing to print a small number for each centre to distribute themselves, and potentially increasing awareness of the centres more efficiently.*

### **No transport links/too far to drive to Ampthill**

*I haven't got time to drive to Ampthill so if it moves, we will stop lessons completely as we can't fit it in the week*

*We use Inspiring music due to the location and weekend offering. If it only offered weekends in Ampthill we would have to travel 30 minutes each way and therefore would not be looking to continue*

*If it isn't local, many children won't be able to access the service. Local public transport is rubbish!*

*I understand the need for this but will not use the music centre in Ampthill as it is too far away from our home.*

### **Needs to be in Leighton Buzzard**

*I do think there should be one in Leighton Linlade due to the large number of schools in the area.*

*Close the Ampthill Centre and Keep the Leighton one and possibly the Biggleswade one too. Make up some of the difference by asking Biggleswade council to match the funding that Leighton Gives its centre or risk losing the centre in Biggleswade. More fund raising concerts could also be held like the one in All Saints church (Leighton Buzzard) on Saturday (8/3/25) which raised over a thousand pounds for the music service at Pulford Lower School.*

*Leighton Linlade is the school which performs best, wouldn't it make sense to put energy into the most successful centre?*

### **Charge more**

*Why not charge more? Leaflets can be online. School hire should be made cheaper if all the same council services, all for the education of children!*

*I'm sure many parents would pay some more towards the service. Now, more than ever, this type of facility is required. We can't lose this access to music. It's so important.*

*Ask parents to pay a bit more*

### **Seems to be a lack of music staff to teach lessons**

*There was oversubscribed keyboard classes in Leighton Linlade which were cancelled, the steel pan class is also full and it seems to be lack of staff as opposed to lack of students.*

*There should be the possibility for volunteer musicians (suitably DBS-checked) to provide additional sessions, to expand the range of musical genres available. Currently there are only two tutors at*

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*the Leighton-Linslade Centre, so members can only choose from two options for each of the four sessions.*

*This is often compounded by struggling to find the right staff for the roles - often the staff available are either approaching the end of the working lives (and reluctant to change their methods/unable to relate to young people) or young and enthusiastic out of further education but with no mentoring from tutors close to their age.*

### **More variety of instruments/ lessons/music**

*Do not forget the provision of Brass tutoring covering instruments such as cornets, Flugel Horn, Tenor Horn, Baritone Horn, Euphonium, Eb and Bb Bass, or tuned percussion*

*Genres of music learnt should be more modern*

*A good range of music styles including rock, jazz, classical and folk etc, giving children the chance to try out different instruments before settling on one to learn.*

### **Look at other cheaper/smaller venues instead**

*I think we should be looking for alternative halls to host Saturday mornings and cant help thinking that after school clubs , if held at the Stratton School will not be effective.*

*Posibly use other venues that are free or at less cost?*

### **Comments regarding SEND**

*More should be done to advertise these especially in SEND community and how these centres can accommodate children with additional needs.*

*As a SENDCo in schools, I see the positive impact that music provision and access to music groups and therapy can have on children with SEND. Time after time, music has proved to be a way in which they can thrive and feel successful as well as the mental wellbeing opportunity that it provides. I would love to see more music provision available for these children and young people.*

### **Children already attend after school commitments/children tired after school day**

*I think that the local weekday centres is a good idea, although there's probably already a lot of extra-curricular activity happening on weekday evenings and there may be clashes with other youth groups, such as sports clubs and bodies such as Scouts.*

### **Keep at Stratton School**

*Not all parents/children will have access to get to Ampthill. A majority of the parents walk to Stratton School and it would be a shame for them to lose out.*

### **Non-essential service/spend money elsewhere**

*Ideal opportunity to save tax payers money on a non-essential service.*

### **More information required to comment**

*I do wonder whether the 170 odd students canvassed were already members of the music school or were they general student population. My experience is that those already interested in seriously developing their talents are interested in more than just one genre.*

### **Reach out to adult learners/refresher lessons**

*There seems to be little attention given to provision for adults and I think this is perhaps a untapped potencial for the service. Adults often feel uncomfortable in class of children. Ukulele groups for instance have become very popular of late and adult only groups have not been tried to my knowledge*

### **Look to alternate Saturday venues**

*Yes, rather than making Ampthill the hub, why not have the hub at each of the current locations on a rolling basis. This approach is equitable to all children/parents across our region. This approach must have either the transport option suggested previously, or a parents rota for travel*

### **After school programmes where children need to go to a different school are difficult for working parents**

*The rushing to clubs after school is challenging, especially on Bedfordshire roads (we are not MK!) and also for parents who work, a problem to coordinate. later classes may be useful for older children*

### **The responses below 4 comments, focused around the following themes**

- lessons too expensive (3)
- expand school music provision (3)
- more online lessons (3)
- make more local (3)
- Saturdays children have sports clubs etc (3)
- groups for all ages and abilities (3)
- more priorities elsewhere for CT money (2)
- access/parking at Redborne difficult/competing with other events (2)
- shorten lesson times (2)

then individual comments for: BLMK (1), partnering with other groups (1), reducing services (1), Central Bedfordshire not offering as much as Luton Music Service (1), advertise for volunteers (1), promotion for those non digital residents (1), SEND comment (1), hub that rotates different tuition (1), should be weekends to accommodate working parents (1), provide courses during school holidays (1), increase of Saturday time to fit more lessons in (1), consider monthly direct debit payment system (1), only run on weekday evenings (1).

### **Q5. Further comments on any area of the proposal**

Of the 300 respondents to the consultation, **149** chose to comment on this question. The main themes have been listed below. A number of these themes were seen for the earlier questions also.

Inspiring Music- Music Centre consultation report 2025

Theme	No. of comments
Must stay open, invest in children's music future	21
Understand the need to change / supportive of the proposal	20
More awareness needed more promotion/advertising/open days and events	13
No transport links/too far to drive to Ampthill	10
After school programmes where children need to go to a different school difficult for working parents	6
Needs to be in Leighton Buzzard	5
Comments regarding SEND	4
Explore additional funding sources	4
Keep at Stratton School	4
More information required to comment	4
Children already attend after school commitments/children tired after school	4
Hub should be Leighton Buzzard	4
Engage with schools	4
Don't agree with Ampthill being hub	2
Reach out to adult learners/refresher lessons	2
Charge more	2
Expand school music	2
More online	2
Make more local	2
Saturdays children have sports clubs etc	2

Theme	No. of comments
Alternate Hub/Saturday venues	2
Get younger tutors/graduates to take the lessons	2
Think proposal is already agreed	2
Other	17

Some examples of comments received, please note that examples of themes are only provided for those of 4 or more comments.

### **Must stay open, invest in children’s music future**

*It is an important part of music education and the benefits should not be underestimated. As a child from a non musical background I took part in a scheme at school. As an adult I now play several instruments and also teach music. Without this scheme this would not have been possible. It is important to make music accessible to all.*

*would be a real shame to close the centres and make it impossible for some families to access the joy of music sessions excluding families who would like to learn instruments but cannot afford usual lessons. Music lessons will become only for the wealthy and is very uninclusive.*

*It would be a massive loss to the local community that has already had its music provision cut in schools. I believe the music centres are vital for some families as it encourages social engagement for their children.*

*The provision of music hubs for local children is essential otherwise everything will be AI produced in future years.*

*It would be such a shame to lose the music centres. Particularly in their 40th year! They have played such an important part in so many peoples lives - myself included. I went as a child, and experienced creating music together with other people in an environment that valued experience and participation, rather than aptitude. Fostering music as a joy! This is incredibly rare, and has profound impact. Please do not get rid of the music centres.*

### **Understand the need to change / supportive of the proposal**

*I think more after school provision is a great option - weekends have a lot of draws on family time, and so having an option during the week can be really helpful.*

*I think that offering people the choice of either attending a Saturday morning centre in Ampthill or a local centre in the weekday makes music tuition more accessible to those who have busy schedules.*

*I think it is a shame that the programme is making a loss, as the arts are so important to children's development, but understand that proposed changes. I think one central place on a Saturday*

*makes the most sense and would still enable everyone to get their children there, similar to how it has been.*

*Amphill is a great location with the many rooms and options - my son has been attending the music school there for the last three years and he loves it. It has given him access to experiences and challenges that differ greatly from school. Children from different ages, and areas and a great sense of community.*

### **More awareness needed more promotion/advertising/open days and events**

*Clear, concise communication is the key!*

*I use inspiring music for daughter's school piano lessons & never have I been contacted about the music centres or this consultation so knew nothing about them.*

*I think the proposal should be extended and advertised more widely. I would also be interested to know what people currently attend and whether this is their only extra curriculum group.*

*I understand the financial situation and the idea of concentrating on a single Saturday morning Centre whilst starting up mid-week after-school sessions. However, I feel that a concentrated effort should be made during the next month, and over the Easter holiday to encourage more people to sign-up for the summer term - and hopefully regain numbers and additional finances.*

### **No transport links/too far to drive to Amphill**

*This change will mean those students not based in Amphill will likely drop out, further deteriorating overall service. Is Chicksands not a better location if centralised as easier to access from the larger population centres?*

*The movement away from the three areas will prevent children from other areas from attending. It has implications for parents, who have to transport children when there is limited public transport availability.*

*If the centre was based in Amphill, it would be too far to travel and we would stop the lessons. We use the biggleswade site. Is there another local school available to use with cheaper rental fees?*

### **After school programmes where children need to go to a different school difficult for working parents**

*After school classes are unpopular amongst parents and students.*

*Weekday hubs may sound good and sound like it will make things easier for residents and parents, but that is ignoring the fact that for many people accessing the service, they will need to relocate from their school to the venue - which in LB or Dunstable could be right across town! This doesn't, and won't, work for many people. Please seriously reconsider this proposal and take into account what you're actually proposing - long travel distances with instruments, for many young people who may not have a lift.*

*Parents had to undertake taking out child to a session in the evening time. Some now will not be able to access this facility.*

### **Needs to be in Leighton Buzzard**

*The Council's proposed changes to the music centres and services and will mean that lots of children and families will lose out on music provision. Leighton Buzzard is a town of over 40,000 people and its not practical to travel there for music provision.*

### **Comments regarding SEND**

*Please ensure that SEN and EYFS groups are available across the county. not just at the central centre.*

*We attend the SEND session in Leighton Linslade. There are few opportunities locally and travelling to Ampthill is not really an option for for us so my child would no longer attend the sessions. After school sessions also would not work for us. However I do agree that the attendance is low now at the centre and that perhaps it is not a good use of resources*

*Most councils have had to stop their music services due to costs. In other areas, schools commission services with charities helping families who are SEND or on benefits to partake. This is the model that I would recommend.*

*Each centre currently provides a life line to the children and adults in the area for people who want to learn music. As a parent of a child with autism and ADHD, it is amazing to see him develop and grow through the inspiring music programme and I am sure my experience is not unique. After attending a concert on Saturday, there were many proud parents watching their children play instruments that they would not normally have access to. It helped children to be themselves and to be part of group, to make friends with other children of different ages from the love of playing the same instrument. You can also see the passion from the teachers at the centre, which filter down to the children. My son has chosen to take up 5 instruments as he loves music.*

### **Explore additional funding sources**

*For the future development of the young adults of Bedfordshire I urge CBC to look at all possible alternatives rather than taking the easy and understandable option of reducing what many feel is a key service.*

### **Keep at Stratton School**

*Please do not stop the Saturday morning sessions in Biggleswade! A lot of kids do sports on a Saturday morning, and for those who don't it's by far the best activity we've found. The staff are amazing and there is a clear trajectory towards continuing with intruments, joining orchestras, etc.*

### **More information required to comment**

*There is not really enough information to form an opinion on any of it, it doesn't say what would be taking place either in the Saturday Music Centre o the after school events.*

### **Children already attend after school commitments**

*After school provision is a good idea but liaison with existing school provision, particularly with reference to sports activities will be essential to avoid the music/sport divide which is evident with*

*current Saturday provision. Obviously, an immediate post school start would not be possible unless there is provision in each and every school which there obviously won't be.*

### **Hub should be Leighton Buzzard**

*If ultimately the decision is to close 2 of the existing centres, it would seem more sensible, given the grant from Leighton-Linslade Town Council, and also that the hire costs of Vandyke Upper School as a centre are £959.02 cheaper than those of the Redborne Upper and Stratton Schools, for Leighton-Linslade Music Centre to be the county centre.*

### **Engage with schools**

*Ask schools to add a publicity poster to their newsletters that includes guidance about which group the children might enjoy per age - Encourage people to come and try out any time (making this clear in the publicity) rather than open days (I expect people can come and try any time anyhow but perhaps don't know this*

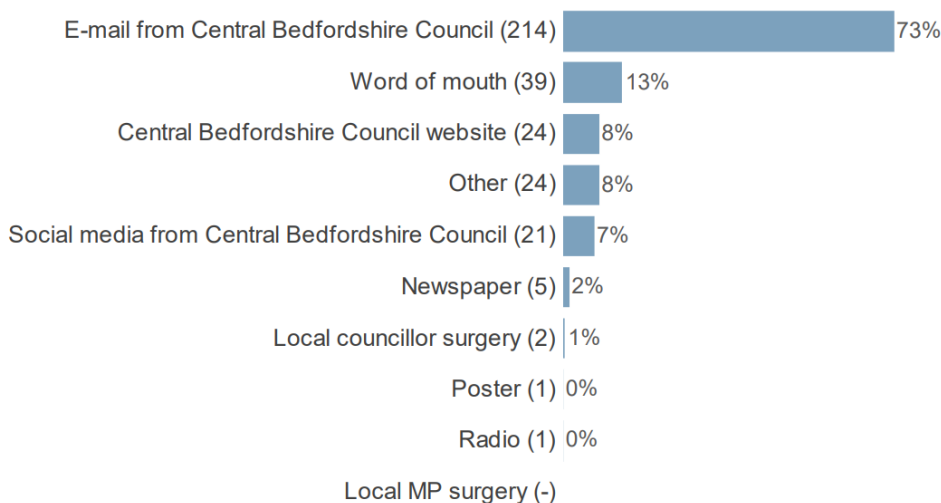
### **The responses below 4 comments, focused around the following themes**

- don't agree with Ampthill being hub (2)
- reach out to adult learners/refresher lessons (2)
- charge more (2)
- expand school music (2)
- more online (2)
- make more local (2)
- Saturdays children have sports clubs etc (2)
- alternate Hub/Saturday venues (2)
- get younger tutors/graduates to take the lessons (2)
- think proposal is already agreed (2)

then individual comments for: BLMK (1), other current priorities (1), close them (1), look into charging a one off nominal fee (1), charge more (1), hubs for every town (1), too expensive (1), keep as Saturdays (1), need for more variety of instruments/ lessons/music (1), seems to be a lack of music staff to teach lessons (1), groups for all ages and abilities (1), Ampthill traffic congestion (1), Houghton Regis needing a hub (1), trial keeping both for a year (1), combine music provision with other arts (1), the four sessions are very diverse (1).

## Demographics

Q6. How did you hear about this consultation?



E-mail from Central Bedfordshire Council 73% (214), Word of mouth 13% (39), Central Bedfordshire Council website 8% (24), Other 8% (24), Social media from Central Bedfordshire Council 7% (21), Newspaper 2% (5), Local councillor surgery 1% (2), Poster (1), Radio (1)

If other, please tell us:

Email from Inspiring Music (5), Councillor Facebook page (4), School (4), Child receives lessons (3), Posts by others on Social Media (3), At concert (3), Music centre (2), Report at Childrens Services Committee (1), Know a music teacher (1), Told by parents (1)

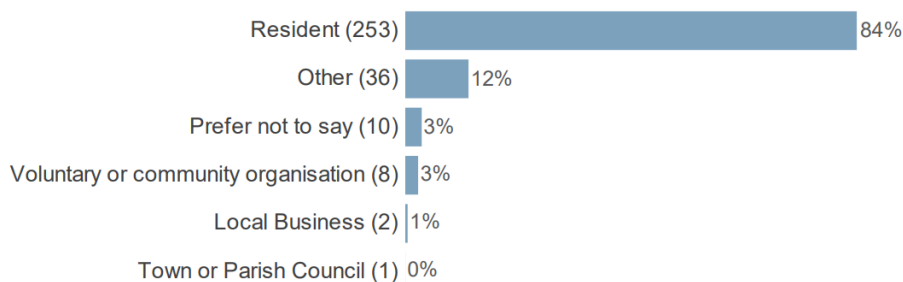
Q7. If social media, please tell us which one:



The above graph shows that the social media respondents heard about the consultation through was Facebook 100% (21)

Q8. Which of the below are you responding as? (please select all that apply)

## Inspiring Music- Music Centre consultation report 2025



The above graph shows that respondents to the consultation were Resident 84% (253), Other 12% (36), Prefer not to say 3% (10), Voluntary or community organisation 3% (8), Local Business 1% (2), Town or Parish Council (1)

If other, please specify:

Music teacher (4), Resident (3), pupil, attends IM (2), IM Music tutor (2), IM staff (2), Ex teacher (2), Parent (2), Teacher (2), Volunteer at music school (1), Flitwick Ward Councillor (1), Councillor (1), Parent of a pupil who attends lessons (1), Music department in Central Bedfordshire (1), Former member and employee of the institutions (1), Former resident (1), CBC staff (1)

If Town or Parish Council, please specify: Biggleswade Town Council

If voluntary or community organisation, please specify:

School

Founder and Chair of Clifton Boys Group (average age 75) that has been running for 7 years.

Patient member of RCS Network and Patient Network of The Joint Registry (NJR).

Good neighbour Scheme – Slip End

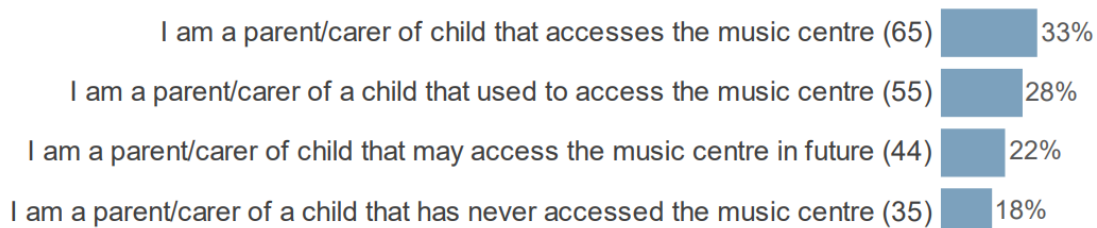
Friends of Bedfordshire Youth Music

Osagyefo Theatre Company – Providing African drumming in schools and communities

Bedfordshire Orchestral Society

Q9. Which of the following best describes you?

### Parent/Carer

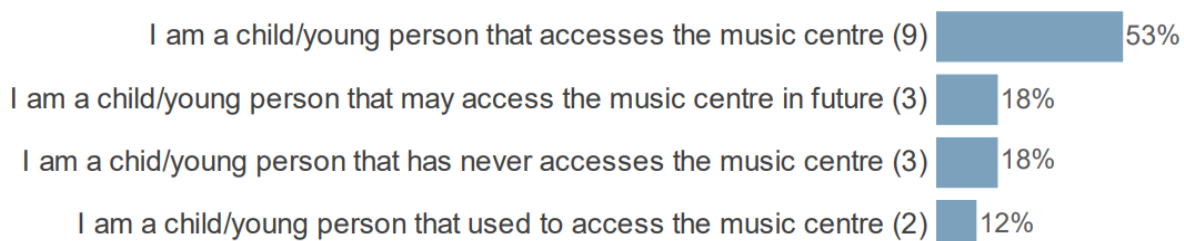


## Inspiring Music- Music Centre consultation report 2025

The above graph shows the respondents to the consultation who said that they were a Parent/Carer of a child that....

- Accesses the music centre 33% (65)
- Used to access the music centre 28% (55)
- May access the music centre in the future 22% (44)
- Has never accessed the music centre 18% (35)

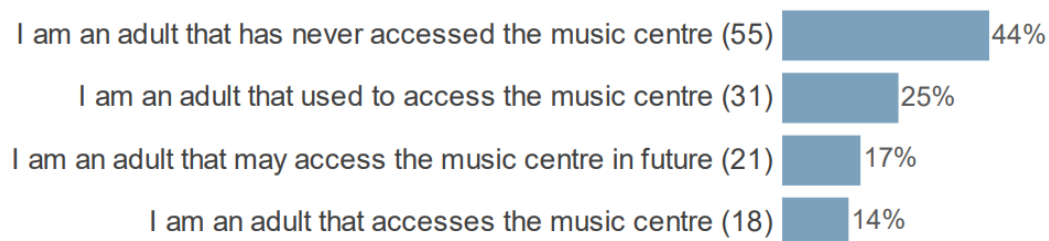
### Child/Young person



The above graph shows the respondents to the consultation who said that they were a Child/Young person that....

- Accesses the music centre 53% (9)
- May access the music centre in the future 18% (3)
- Has never accessed the music centre 18% (3)
- Used to access the music centre 12% (2)

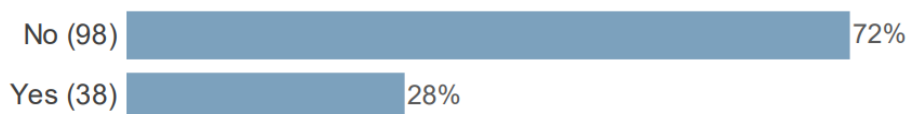
### Adult



The above graph shows the respondents to the consultation who said that they were an Adult that....

- Has never accessed the music centre 44% (55)
- Used to access the music centre 25% (31)
- May access the music centre in the future 17% (21)
- Accesses the music centre 14% (18)

Q10. If not/no longer a user of the music centre, were/are there any barriers that have prevented you from using the music centre?



The above graph shows that of the 136 respondents answered this question, 72% (98) said that there weren't any barriers that prevented their use of the music centres. 28% (38) said that yes there were barriers to their use.

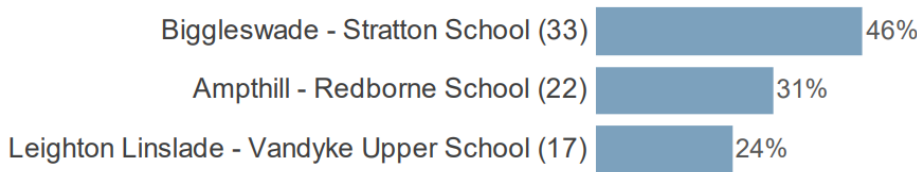
Q11. If so, what were/are these barriers?

**Barriers:**

Theme	No. of comments
Awareness – unaware the sessions were on	8
Travel/distance	8
Time	4
Cost	4
Group not relevant to my level required	3
Day clashed with other commitments (sports etc)	3
Tutors not available	2
Didn't know that adults could attend	2
Lack of sessions	2

Then individual comments for: Commitment (1), No availability (1), Not able to run group as volunteer (1), Children now grown up (1), Ongoing cuts made the provision untenable/Music Centre couldn't offer what was needed due to funding (1), Professional conflict of time – workload of teachers working on preparation and marking

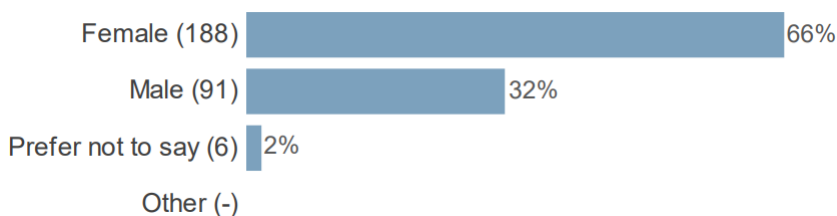
Q12. Which Saturday music centre do you currently use?



The above graph shows the respondents to the consultation have used the following Inspiring Music music centres

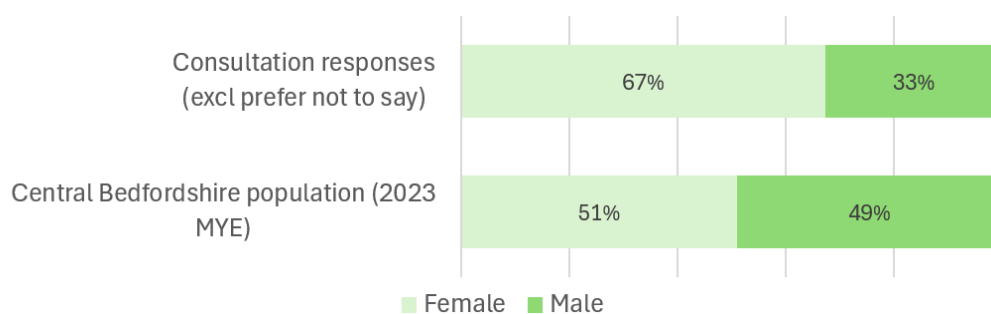
- Biggleswade – Stratton School 46% (33)
- Ampthill – Redborne School 31% (22)
- Leighton Linlade - Vandyke Upper School 24% (17)

Q13. Are you: (please select one)



The above graph shows that 285 respondents answered this question, they were Female 66% (188), Male 32% (91) 2% (6) Preferred not to say. No respondents said Other. Males were under-represented compared to the Central Bedfordshire population (51% female and 49% male).

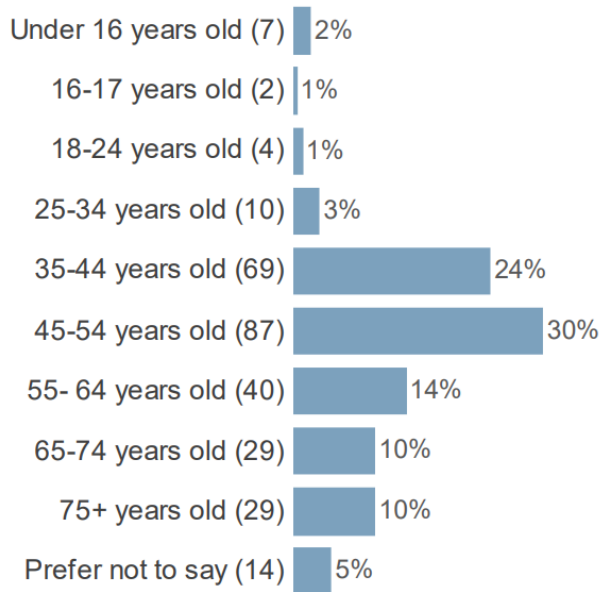
**Figures with Prefer not to say removed**



In total 279 respondents chose to answer this question. Of these, 67% said they were female and 33% male, compared with 51% and 49%, respectively, for the overall population. This means that females were more likely to respond to this consultation. 6 respondents chose not to answer this question.

Q14. What is your age? (please select one)

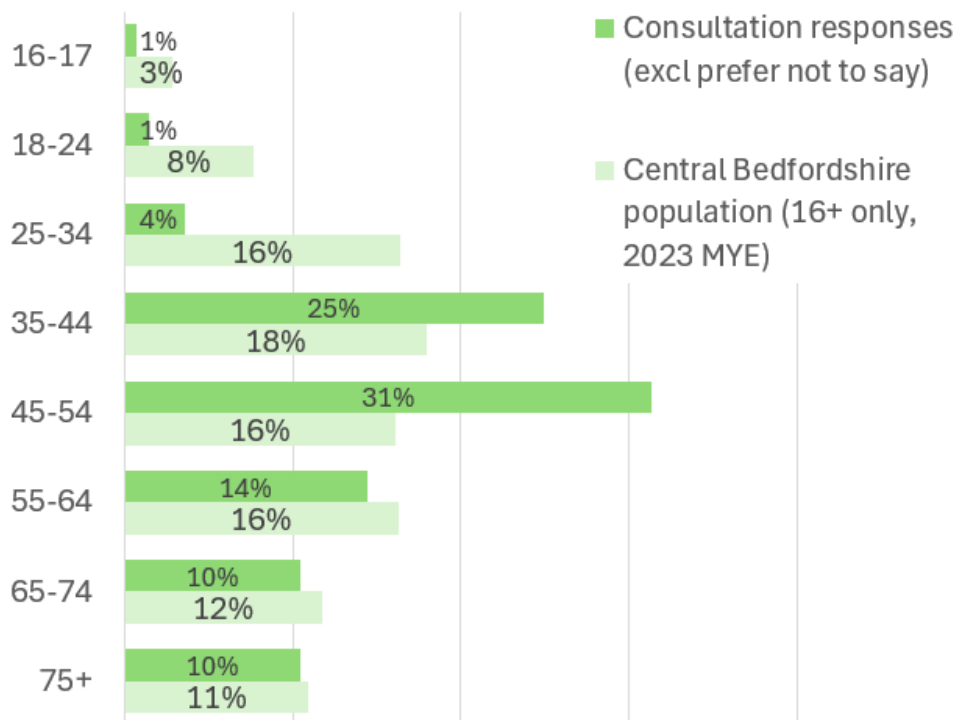
Inspiring Music- Music Centre consultation report 2025



The above graph shows, of the 291 who answered this question, the age of the respondents was Age 45-54 30% (87), 35-44 24% (69), 55-64 14% (40), 65-74 10% (29), 75+ 10% (29). 25-34 3% (10), Under 16 2% (7), 18-24 1% (4), 16-17 1% (2).

if under 16, what is your age 9,11,12,14,15

**Figures with Prefer not to say removed**



## Inspiring Music- Music Centre consultation report 2025

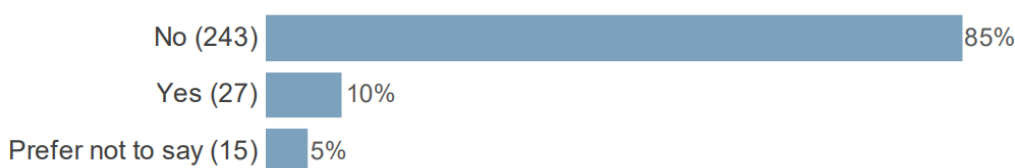
In total 277 respondents chose to answer this question. The biggest number of respondents were those aged 45-54. This group accounted for 31% of respondents, compared to 16% of all Central Bedfordshire residents (aged 16+).

People aged 45-54 years old were the largest group to respond (30% (87), this group represents 16% of the overall population in Central Bedfordshire (16+only). 35-44 with 24% (69) were also over represented versus 18% in Central Bedfordshire (16+only). 25-34 saw an under representation versus the overall population of Central Bedfordshire, with 3% (10) respondents against a 16% for the county. The 18-24 age group were also under represented with 1% (4) versus 8% for Central Bedfordshire. There were 5 responses from under 16 year olds, with this age group making up 20% of the population for Central Bedfordshire.

The remaining age groups percentages were representative against the overall population of Central Bedfordshire.

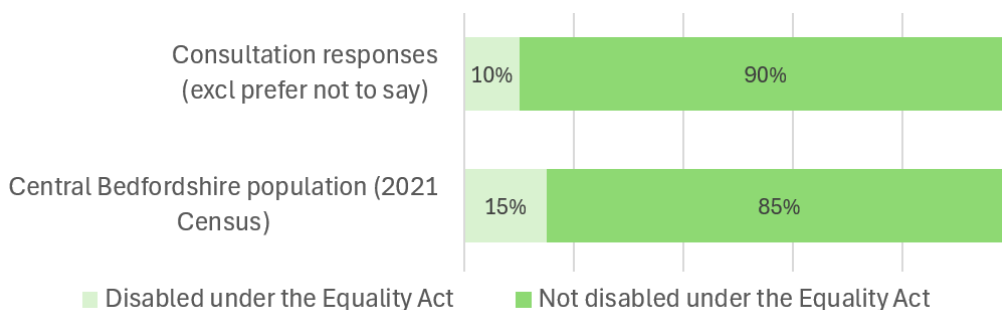
An over-representation of females and those aged 35-54 is a similar pattern to other consultation that we see about services for children and young people.

Q15. Do you consider yourself disabled? (please select one) Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.



The above graph shows that of the 285 who answered this question, the respondents who indicated that they had a disability in the consultation was 10% (27), with 85% (243) saying No. This is a low response from those who said that they had a disability versus the average of 15% versus the population of Central Bedfordshire.

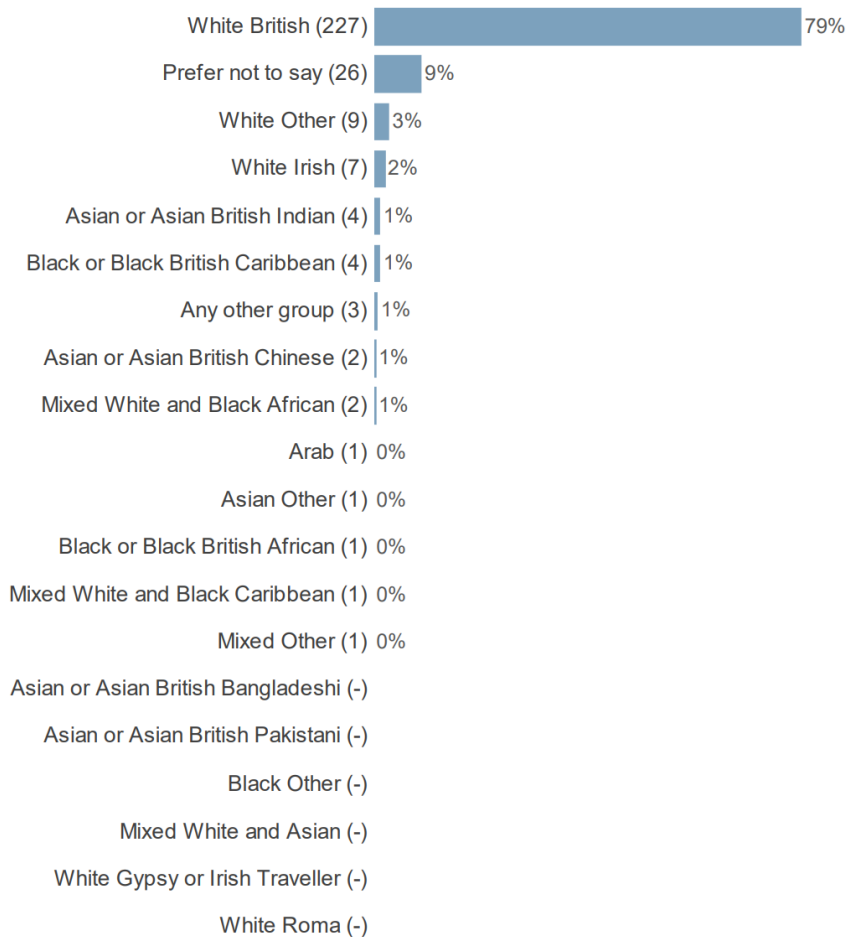
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In total 270 respondents chose to answer this question. Of these, 10% said they were disabled under the equality act, compared with 15% of the overall population, suggesting that people with

a disability were less likely to respond to this consultation. 15 respondents chose not to answer this question.

Q16. To which of these groups do you consider you belong? (please select one)

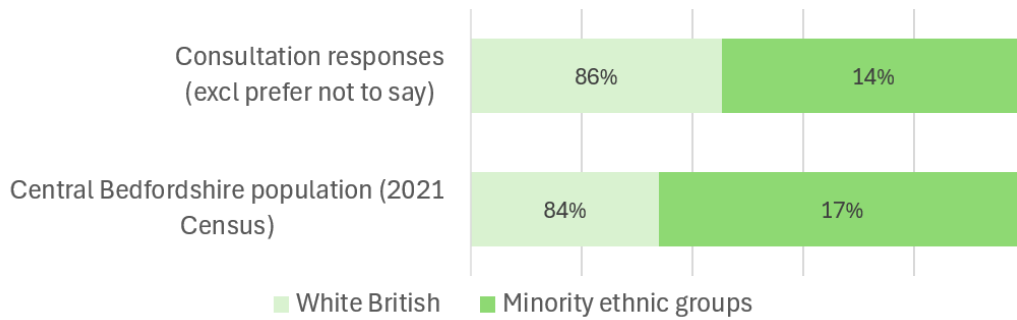


The above graph shows the groups that of the 289 respondents who answered this question, considered that they belonged to, with White British 79% (227), White Other 3% (9), White Irish 2% (7), Asian or Asian British Indian 1% (4), Black or Black British Caribbean 1% (4), Any other group 1% (3), Asian or Asian British Chinese 1% (2), Mixed White and Black African 1% (2), Arab (1), Asian Other (1), Black or Black African (1), Mixed White and Black Caribbean (1), Mixed Other (1)

Other: White South African (1), English (1), Latin America (1), Romanian (1), Greek (1), Mixed (1), Mixed White British and white (1), Irish (1), European (1), Polish (1)

**Figures with Prefer not to say removed**

## Inspiring Music- Music Centre consultation report 2025



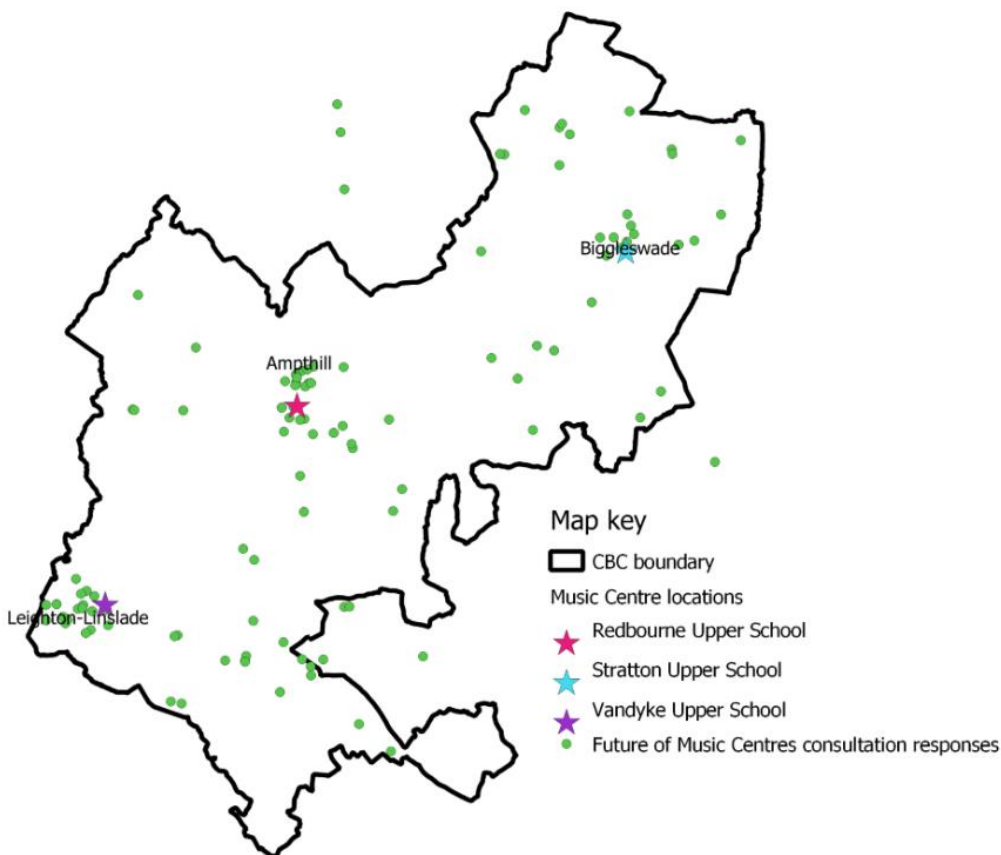
In total 263 respondents chose to answer this question. Of these, 14% said they were from a minority ethnic group, compared with 17% of the overall population, suggesting that people from ethnic minority groups were similar to respond to this consultation. 26 respondents chose not to answer this question.

## Postcode and Mosaic analysis

### Area information

Responses were received from all across Central Bedfordshire with clusters of responses around Ampthill, Biggleswade and Leighton-Linslade.

**Inspiring Music Consultation on Future of Music Centres**



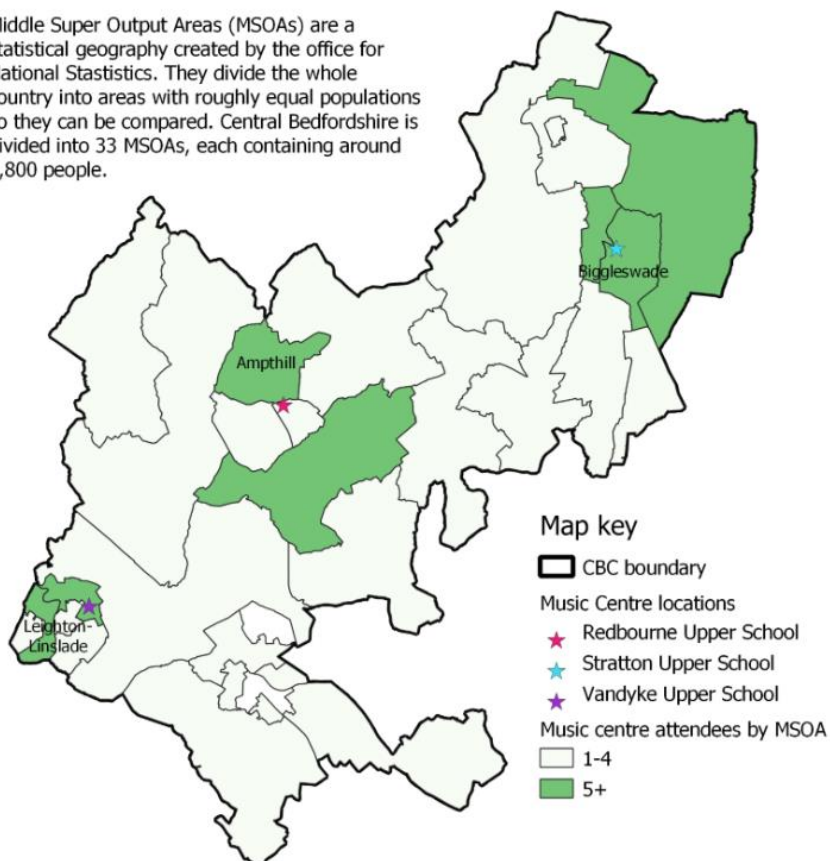
## Inspiring Music- Music Centre consultation report 2025

Responses were more likely to come from affluent households, and less likely to come from middle and deprived households. One in six respondents did not provide a valid postcode within Central Bedfordshire, so were not included in this analysis.

Experian Mosaic Band	Number of responses	% of responses (all)	% of responses (matched)	% of all CBC households
Affluent	75	25%	66%	43%
Middle	34	11%	30%	43%
Deprived	5	2%	4%	14%
Total matched	114	38	100%	

### Inspiring Music Consultation on Future of Music Centres

Middle Super Output Areas (MSOAs) are a statistical geography created by the office for National Statistics. They divide the whole country into areas with roughly equal populations so they can be compared. Central Bedfordshire is divided into 33 MSOAs, each containing around 7,800 people.



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# **Central Bedfordshire in contact**

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