

TITLE	: MUSIC SERVICE – RESPONSE TO INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 1556/01 – AUGUST 2001
TO/ON	: AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE
FROM	: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
STATUS	: FOR PUBLICATION

1.0 TYPE OF DECISION

1.1 What type of decision is to be taken:-

EXECUTIVE DECISION		COUNCIL DECISION	
Key		Non Key	

1.2 If a key decision, has it been included in the Forward Plan

Inclusion in Forward Plan	No	Date of Plan	
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2.0 SUMMARY

Following concerns expressed by the Internal Audit Sub-Committee, various options have been considered to verify entitlement to free music lessons.

3.0 OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED OPTIONS (with reasons)

The proposed procedure is attached for the consideration of the Audit Sub-Committee.

Following approval it is proposed that the scheme will be effective from the start of academic year 2003/2004.

4.0 THIS REPORT HAS THE FOLLOWING IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Aims	Achieving Social Inclusion. Improving the quality and availability of Council Services.		
Policy Framework	No direct implications.		
Statement by Monitoring Officer	The Monitoring Officer has considered the contents of the report and has no comments.		
Statement by Director of Finance and E-Government	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The proposed action will address internal Audit's concerns.		
Human Resource IT/ Land and Property Implications	The Director of Personnel has no comments regarding the content of the report as there are no personnel implications.		
Wards/Area Boards affected	All		
Scrutiny Panel's Interest	Learning Communities Scrutiny Panel		
Consultations	Music Service. Acting Head of Financial Services, Education and Culture Department. Student Support Section. Report was issued in draft form to appropriate Directors and/or Chief Officers.		
Call-in			
Briefings	Executive Members/Chair	Yes	Chief Executive

5.0 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1 The Internal Audit Report in August 2001, highlighted that the procedure for checking eligibility to free school music lessons and the payment of Music Service invoices by the LEA was unsatisfactory.
- 5.2 Procedures have therefore been reviewed and the proposed procedures are attached for consideration and approval of the Audit Sub Committee.

6.0 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 Following an internal audit in August 2001, it was recommended that the procedure for verifying entitlement to free music lessons, and the payment of the Music Service invoices by the LEA should be reviewed.
- 6.2 Options highlighted by the Internal Audit Report were considered, and the Director of Education and Culture was involved with consultations with the Music Service and the Student Support Section, Financial Services.

7.0 ISSUES

- 7.1 Eligibility for free music lessons should be checked and recorded.
- 7.2 Music Centre invoices should not be authorised by the LEA unless entitlement to free tuition has been checked.
- 7.3 The eligibility criteria for free music lessons has been reviewed in line with the recent changes in tax legislation.
- 7.4 As the revised eligibility criteria for free music lessons is the same as the eligibility criteria for free school meals, the LEA may therefore confirm eligibility to free music lessons (providing the parent has already applied for free school meals) to eliminate duplication.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The eligibility criteria for free music lessons has been reviewed as follows:-
- Income Support.
 - Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based).
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
 - Child Tax Credit with an annual income which does not exceed £13,230 and not entitled to Working Tax Credit.

The criteria for free music lessons is now the same as the criteria for free school meals with effect from 1st September 2003.

- 8.2 Existing pupils eligible by the previous eligibility criteria will be protected.
- 8.3 The LEA may therefore confirm eligibility to free music lessons (providing the parent has already applied for free school meals) to eliminate duplication.

The procedure for new applicants and termly reviews is attached.

- 8.4 The Music Service will only check eligibility for:-
- existing pupils eligible by the previous eligibility criteria;
- AND
- for eligible pupils who choose not to apply for free school meals.

The Music Service will retain copies of proof of eligibility for these pupils.

Background documents:

- Internal Audit Report 1556/01

For further information on the details of this report, please contact:

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Music Service-Audit Report