

MIDI

Music In Devon Initiative

Supporting and connecting musicians and local businesses



MIDI is a non-profit-making organisation which has been founded by a group of local musicians and music industry professionals. We aim to develop emerging talent, increase opportunities for musicians and audiences, and generate business for the music industry in Devon.

Market Research – Identifying The Need

In March 2010 the Bristol Music Foundation (BMF) launched, 'Unlocking Potential' a strategy that focuses on music development in the South West of England.

It followed a period of work during which time the BMF established partnerships in the UK and overseas to provide opportunities for musicians and music businesses in the South West. As part of this initiative, a survey was carried out of 160 music businesses in the South West – 'Music to Market'. The survey asked questions about activity in the region, trading inside and outside the region, turnover and training.

All respondents agreed that new business and making new contacts was important to them. The overwhelming majority agreed that a music development agency in the South West could provide a range of valuable services, including networking opportunities, events, skills development and training, resources, and online promotional and retail facilities. 90% of respondents said that they would like to see a regional music website facility. The survey also revealed that over 70% of all respondents receive no public sector funding of any kind, and 80% do not believe that government agencies and funders have helped develop the music industry in the region.

Problems and unmet needs faced by independent musicians in Devon

Another survey MIDI staff carried out with 62 bands in Devon showed us that the most common problems currently faced by local independent musicians are:

1. Musicians struggle to cut through the noise and develop a following – competition for attention is very fierce;
2. There is a shortage of venues (particularly in smaller towns) for original, independent live music;
3. Many independent musicians don't know how to maximise earning potential from their music (especially in an age when more and more people expect "free" music);
4. Many independent musicians don't know how to go about building a team around them;
5. Many independent musicians experience overwhelm and feel they don't have enough time to work on the business and promotion side of things themselves, as they are so busy writing, rehearsing, performing and recording;
6. Many independent musicians have trouble staying motivated and positive about their progress;
7. Many independent musicians are frustrated that they seem unable to progress due to a lack of funding for equipment; rehearsal space; studio recording; marketing and promotion; and travel.
8. Many independent musicians feel that they need to move away from Devon in order to succeed, because of a lack of joined-up infrastructure and genuine networking opportunities in the county.

MIDI aims to address these needs through all the work we undertake. Many of the problems mentioned above are common to independent musicians all over the western world, but there are also a number of difficulties that arise specifically because of Devon's geographical location. Our aim at MIDI is to be a network of support for musicians in order to overcome the issues of disconnect from each other and from the same opportunities present in larger cities that have a strong connection through their physical capacity and space to do so.