

The logo for 'making music' is located in the top left corner. It consists of the words 'making' and 'music' stacked vertically in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The text is set against a red background that is a rounded rectangle with the bottom-right corner cut off.

# **Coronavirus: what does it mean for your group?**

## **Member survey**

**October 2020**

**SUPPORTING AND CHAMPIONING  
LEISURE-TIME MUSIC**

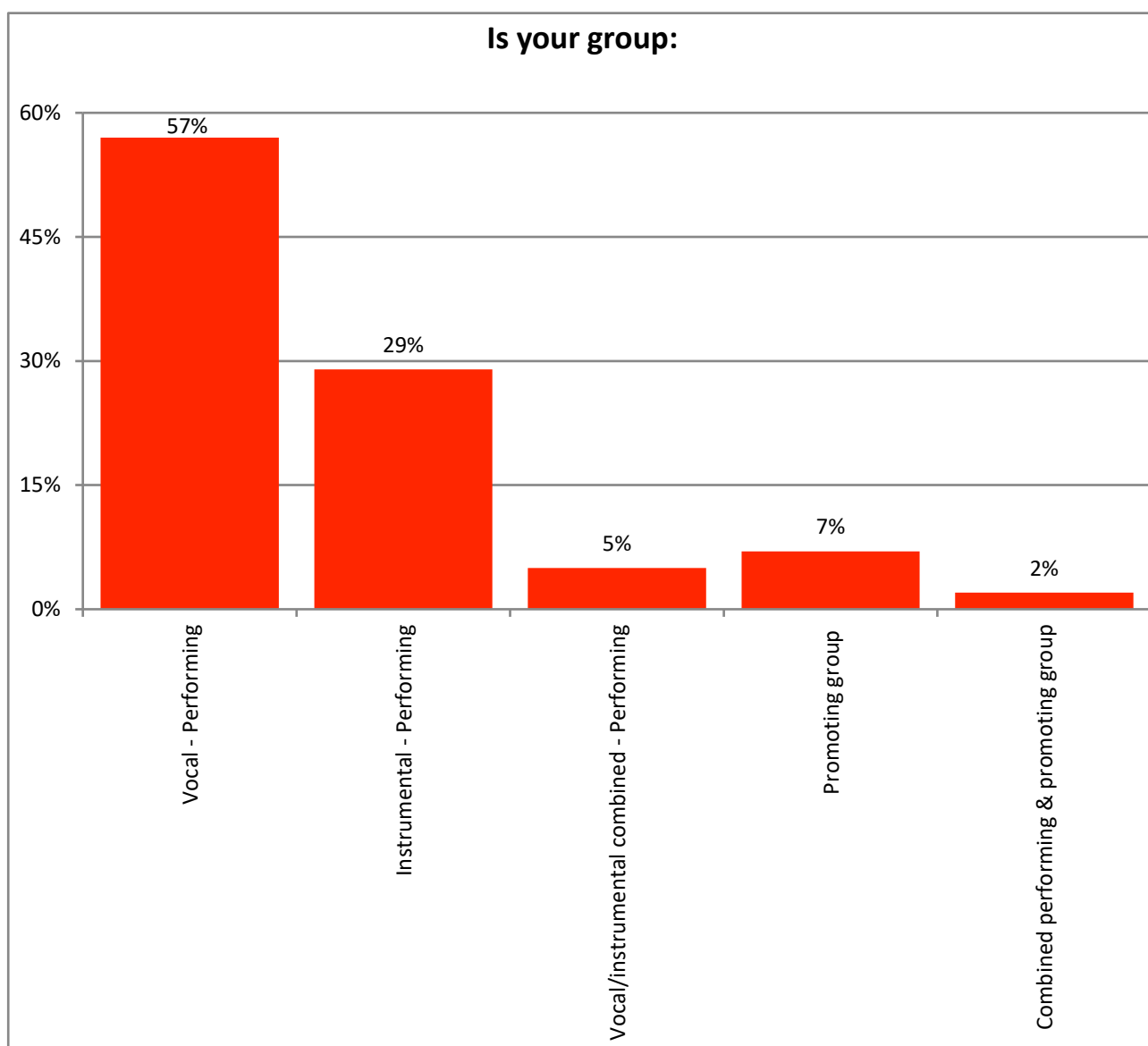
## Introduction

In September 2020, Making Music asked our members what the impact of Covid-19 had been on their groups to date. Over 1,000 groups got in touch to tell us about how they and their members have been affected. Here are the findings from the survey.

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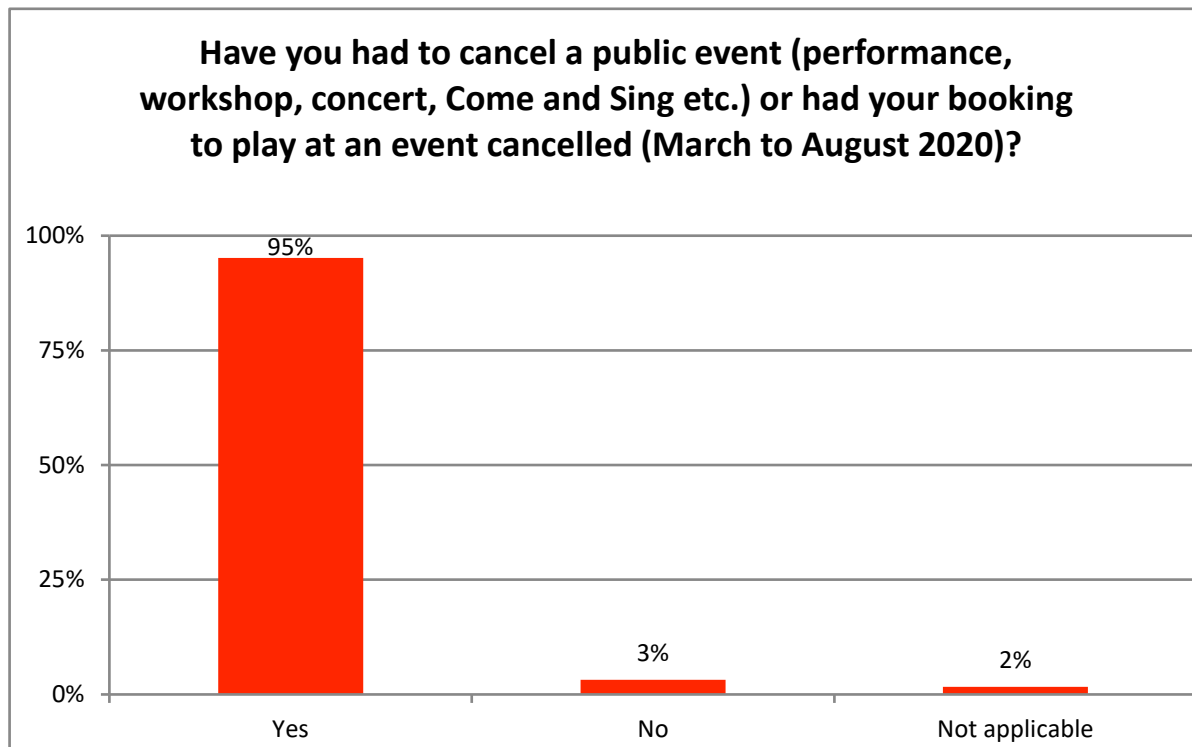
### 1. Responses

Total responses: **1,056**



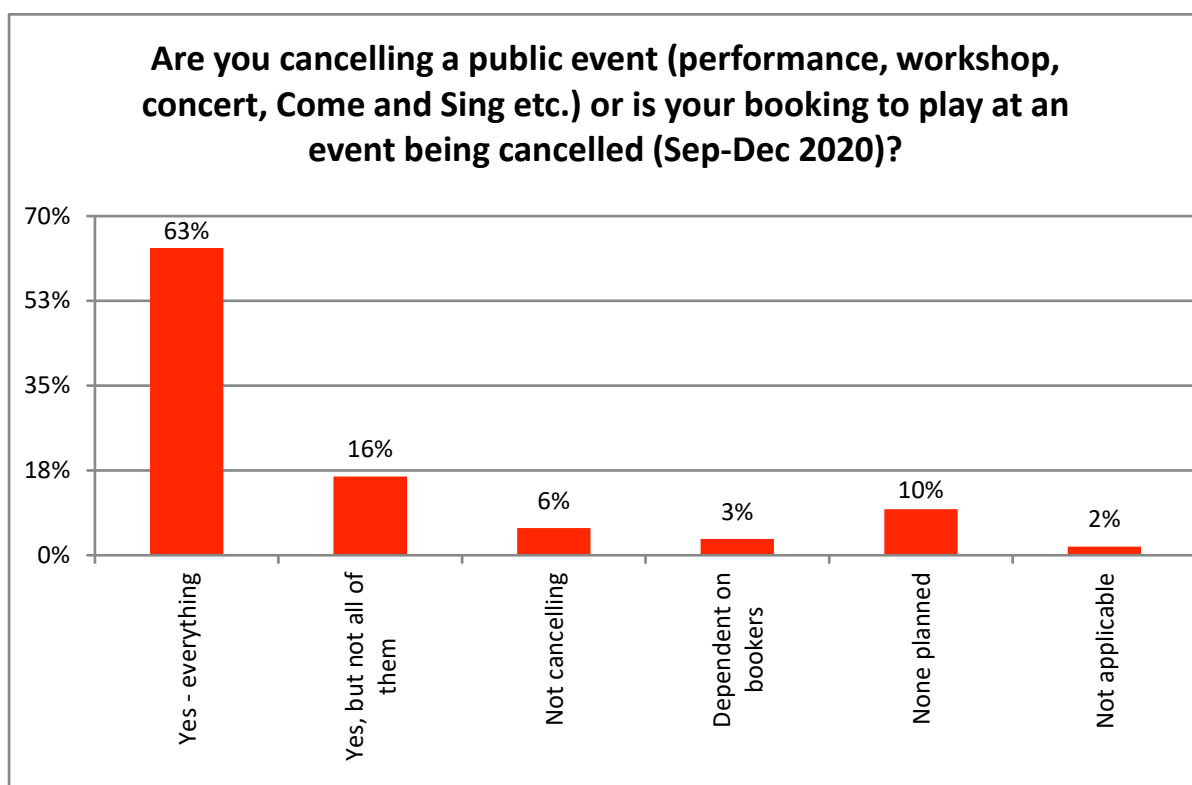
## 2. Cancelled public events

March to August:



**95%** of groups have had to cancel a public event (a performance, workshop, Come and Sing event etc) between March and August 2020.

The estimated **total cost** to groups of these cancelled events (March to August) is **£1,073,361**. This works out at an **average cost** of **£1,424** per group, or **£2,413** for those experiencing a loss. **41%** reported no loss and **75%** reported losing £1k or less.



## September to December

**63%** of groups are cancelling **all their public events** from September to December. A further **16%** are cancelling **some events** in this period, and **10%** had **not planned any events** for this period.

Only **6%** of groups said they were **not planning to cancel** existing plans for September to December.

The estimated **total cost** to groups of these cancelled events is **£755,565** (Average £1025 per group).

The estimated **total cost** to groups of all cancelled events from March to December 2020 is **£1,828,926**, an average of **£1,215** per group.

### 3. Planned public events for September to December 2020

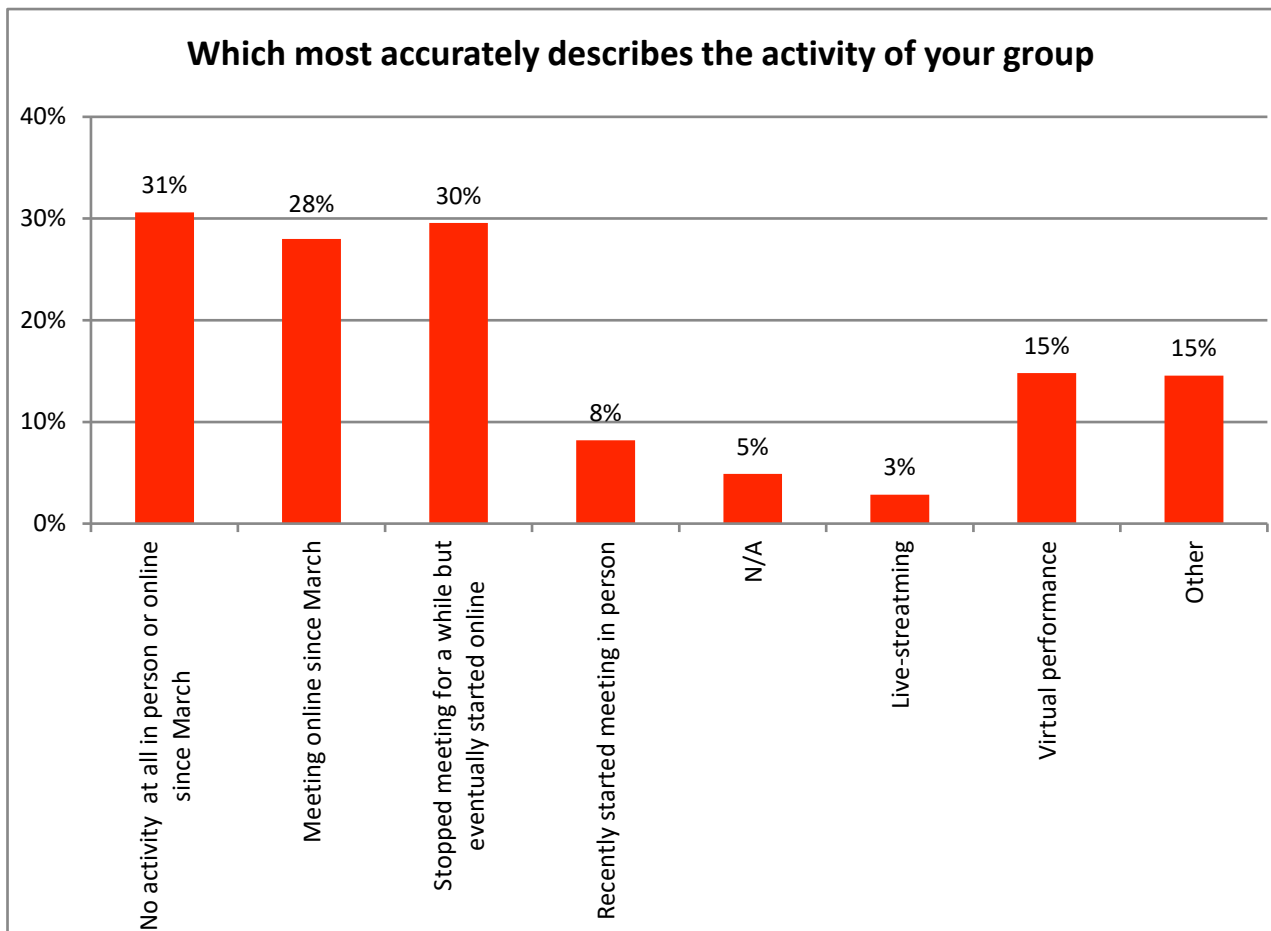


Only **10%** of groups are **definitely planning public events** between September and December 2020.

**19% are considering** holding events, or pencilling them in, and **6%** said that if they were invited to sing or play at an event, they probably would, although perhaps not with the whole group.

**64%** of groups are **not planning any events** for this entire period.

## 4. Activity since March 2020



**31%** of groups have **not met at all in person or online** to make music or for social activity since March.

**28%** stopped meeting in person in March but **immediately started meeting online**, for either social connection or musical activity.

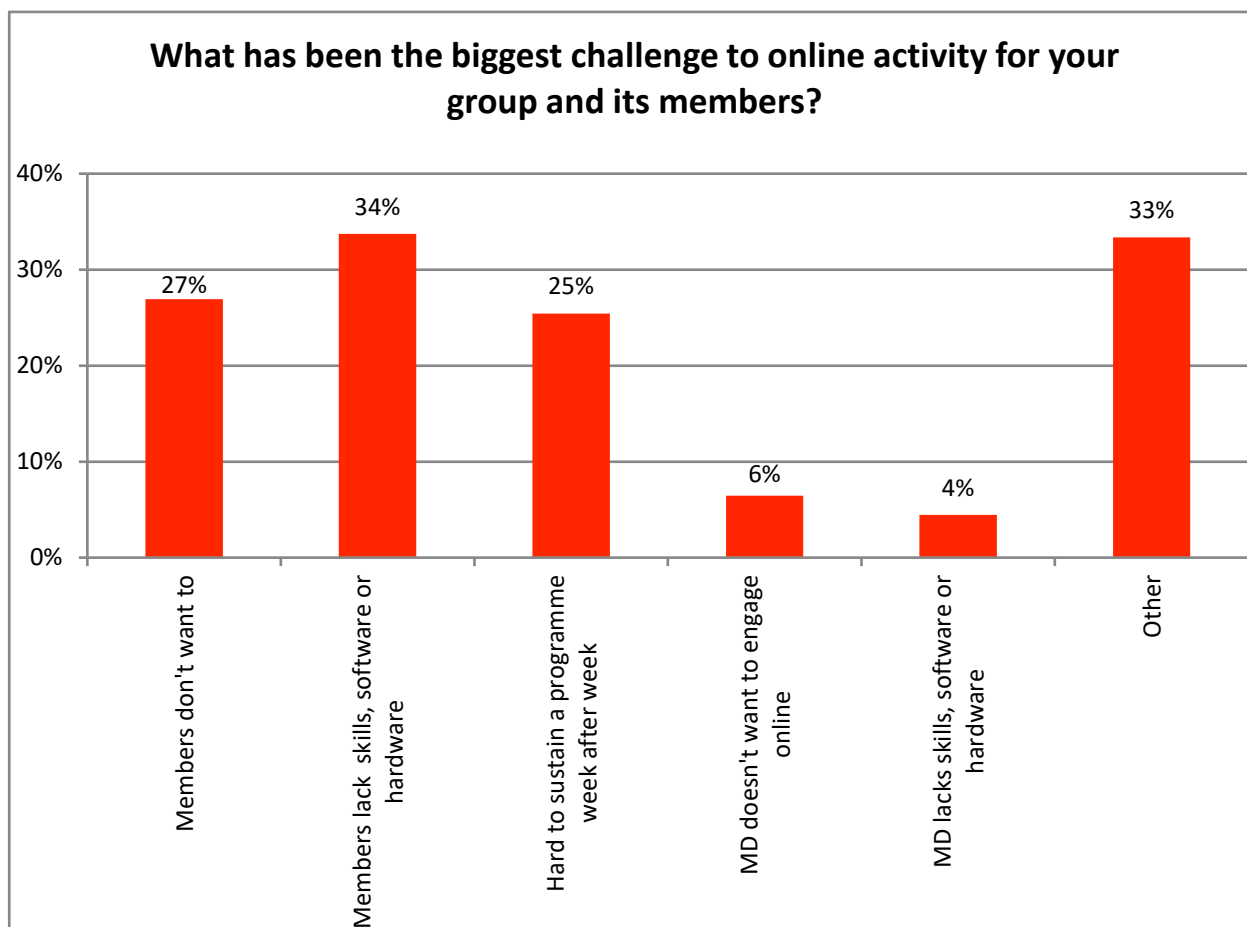
**30%** **didn't immediately start meeting online**, but once they realised coronavirus would be a problem for a longer period of time, began to look into meeting online for musical/social purposes.

This means **overall 58% of groups are now meeting online**.

**15%** of groups have produced a **virtual performance** during lockdown. **3%** have **livestreamed performances**.

Only **8%** of groups have started recently **meeting again in person**, with safety measures in place – but note this survey closed on 28 September and we know of many groups in the process of planning in-person rehearsals due to commence in October or later.

## 5. Barriers to online activity



The biggest barrier to online activity has been that **members don't have the skills, software or hardware they need to engage online**. 34% of groups reported this.

A further 27% said that their **members did not want to engage online**.

25% have engaged online but find it **hard to sustain a programme of activity week after week**.

Reassuringly, only 6% said that their MD didn't want to engage online, and only 4% said that their MD didn't have the skills or software/hardware to engage online.

## 6. The emotional impact of coronavirus on music groups

### 762 free typed responses

- Missing: 262 mentions
- (Social) interaction: 253 mentions
- Loss/lost: 75 mentions
- Frustration: 60 mentions
- Difficult: 41 mentions
- Sad/sadness: 40 mentions
- Friendship: 39 mentions
- Depressing: 30 mentions
- Mental health: 29 mentions
- Lonely/loneliness: 19 mentions
- Desperate: 15 mentions
- Motivation: 10 mentions

“We are individually and collectively depressed”

“Many members are desperately seeking the social interaction that comes with our group as well as the benefits of singing”

“The activity that brought us together has had to be suspended. People have found it a difficult time, the word "grim" has been used by many. The collective music making was a major part of people's emotional lives and its absence is a big loss. Music was a non-verbal form of communication and although some have participated in online social activities, these in no way compensate for the loss of the shared experience. The desire to make music is what we have in common, and it is not like an "interest" which we can go on sharing online by talking about it.”

“Frustration at not being able to meet & sing. Miss doing something worthwhile and creative together as a group. We normally perform to raise money for charities which is not happening, so an element of sadness that we can no longer help in this way.”

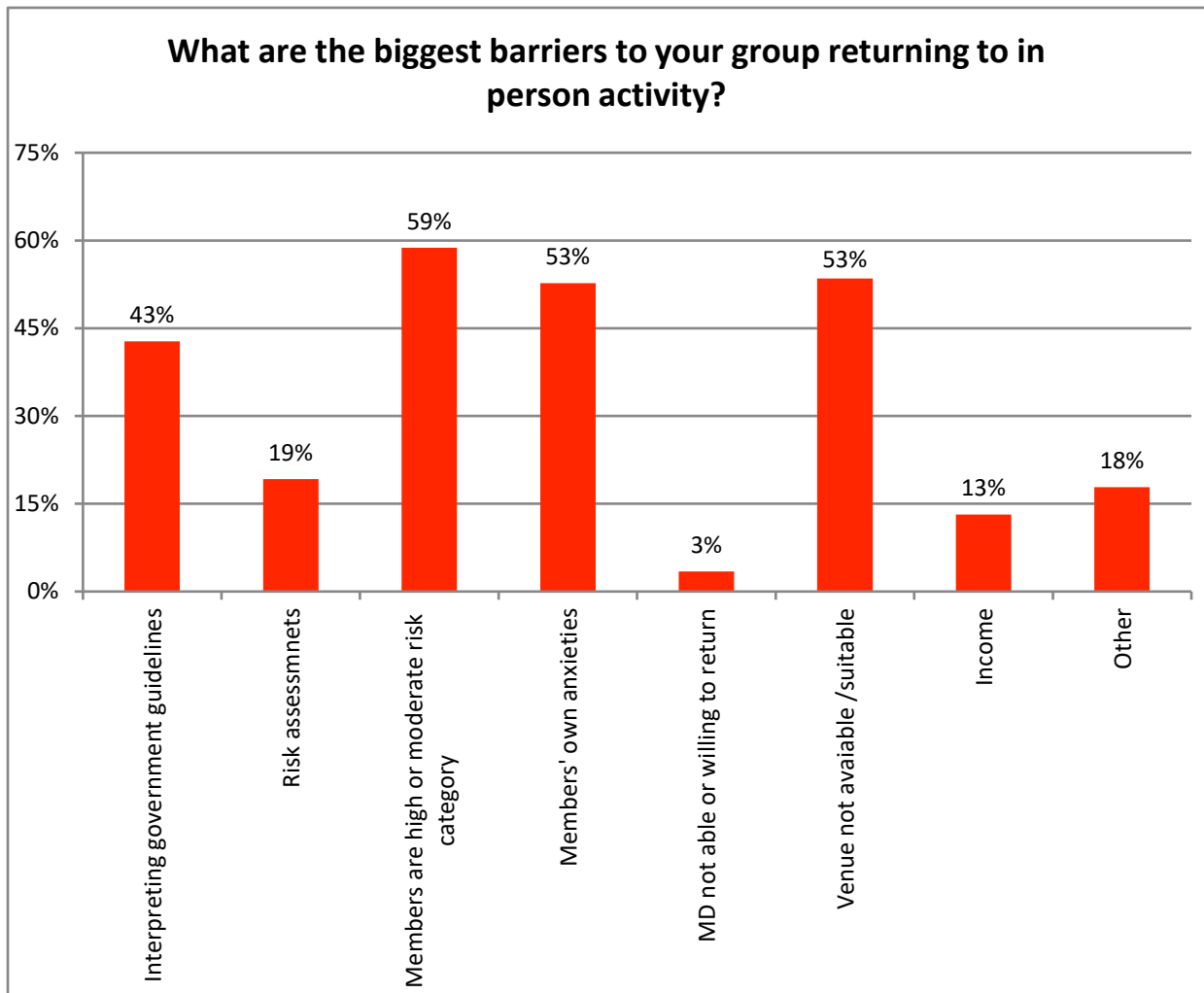
### **But some positivity in there too:**

“Because we have made two virtual recordings and raised money for charity, and had online meetings and quiz nights, the majority of the choir have been fine.”

“Tremendous resilience and positivity March to July. We had a great summer break and can only hope we get members logging in for this term...make or break time”

## 7. Barriers to returning in person

The top barrier to returning to in person activity is that **many group members are in high or moderate risk categories**, as defined by the NHS. **59%** of groups report this.



**53%** of groups say their **members have anxieties about returning** to in person activities, whether or not they are in an increased risk category.

**53%** report that their **venues are either not Covid-19 secure**, or are not suitable, or not open at all.

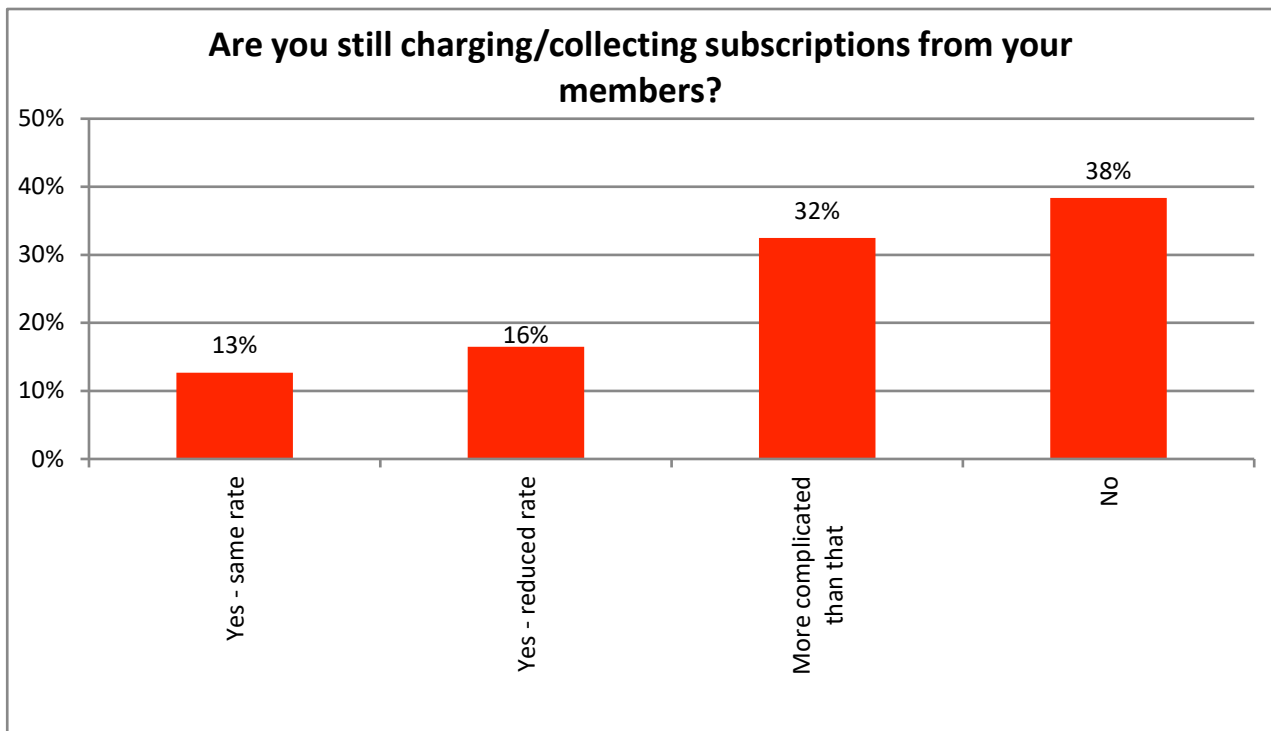
**43%** of groups say that **interpreting government guidelines** as to whether they can get back to in person activities is a barrier.

Only **19%** said that the **ability to risk assess and create safe procedures** was a barrier.

And, only **3%** said that **their MD** was not able or willing to return.



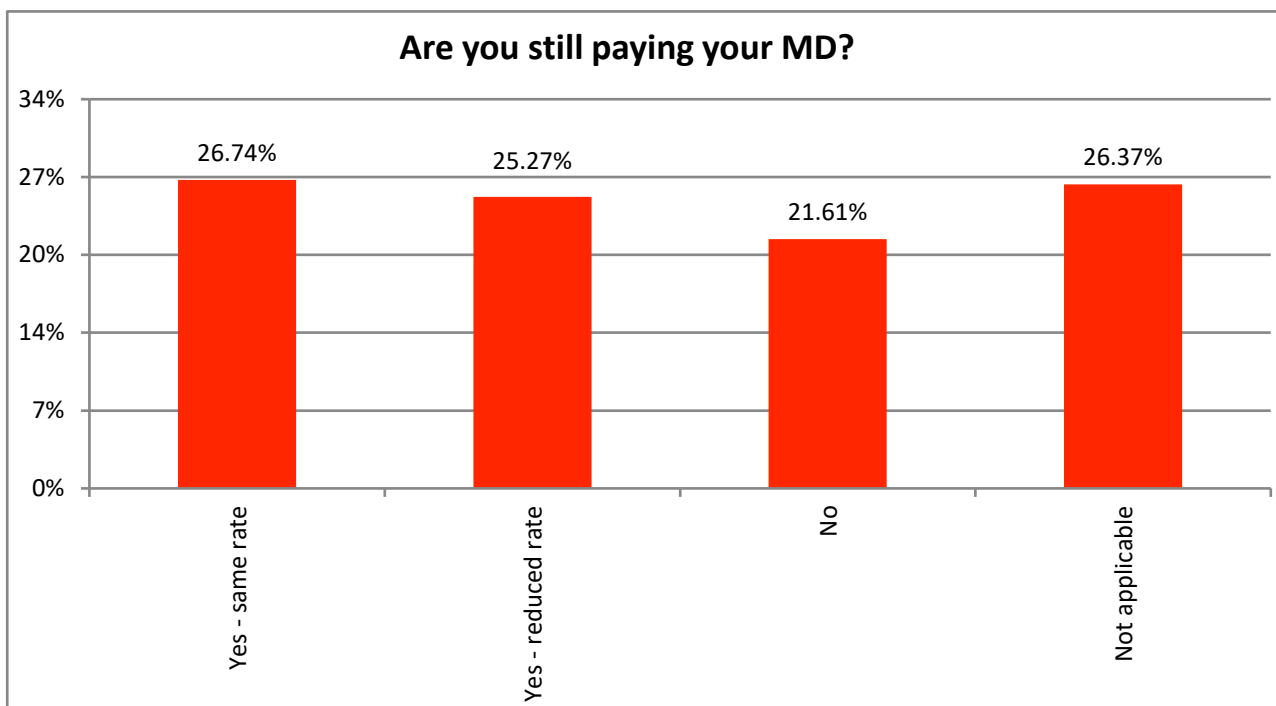
## 8. Subscriptions and MD payments



**38%** of groups are no longer charging their members subscriptions.

**13%** are continuing to charge as normal, and **16%** are charging a reduced rate.

**32%** described things as 'a little more complicated than that' and then gave a free text description of what they were doing. Of these, a lot of groups said that they were either asking for donations from members, rather than subs per se, or that they hadn't yet made a decision about subs for the coming year/season. Some are waiting until they know when they will be re-starting, and some gave members a free term but are going start charging shortly



**27%** of groups are continuing to pay their MDs the same rate as before lockdown, and a further **25%** are paying a reduced rate.

**22%** are no longer paying their MDs.

**26%** said this question was 'not applicable' – their MD may be an unpaid volunteer, or they don't have an MD.

Of the groups who are no longer charging members subs, **41% have been offering online activity** (17% since March, and 24% not initially, but have eventually started running online activities). **7%** have started offering some **in-person activity**, and **8%** put on a **virtual performance**.

Of the groups that are not charging subs, AND continuing to offer activities (either online or in person, or have put on a virtual performance), 20% describe their financial position as either concerning (ok for now but not sure for how long) and 3% describe their situation as of immediate concern.

***Making Music comment: if you are delivering activity online which costs you money (MD fees, Zoom subscription, ongoing group costs such as insurance), then it seems fair to continue collecting membership subscriptions, even if the rates are adapted or reduced or only applicable to those who attend online activity.***

*There is also no harm in asking your members – whether or not they participate in online activities:*

- *for a donation to support the group or*
- *for donations instead of membership subscriptions or*
- *to choose whether they want to carry on paying, and at what rate, or donate, or not pay anything*

*Don't assume either way!*

Of the groups who are no longer charging members subs, 31% are still paying their MDs (13% paying the same as before, and 18% paying a reduced rate).

Of the groups still paying their MDs either the full or a partial amount, 22% are not charging subs, and 20% are not meeting at all and have not met since March.

Of the groups still paying their MDs the FULL amount, 13% of these have offered no online activity since March, and 19% are not charging subs.

***Making Music comment: there are two aspects to this;***

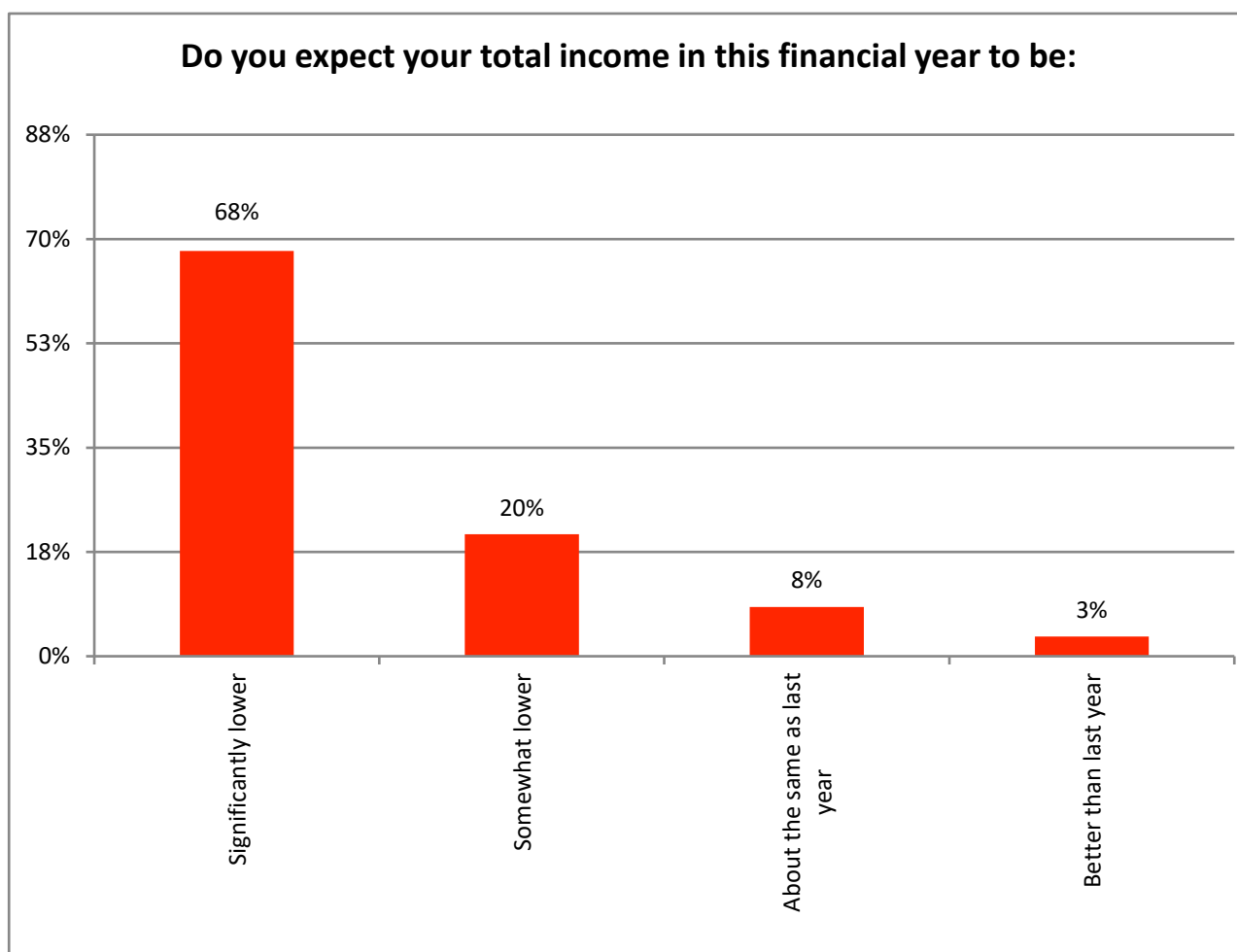
- *if your MD is not delivering activity, then no fee should be due to them – check the contract you have with them*
- *if they are delivering activity, then of course they should be paid (re-negotiate that fee if they are doing more/less than 'usual'; if their fee is normally covered by subscriptions from your participants, then you need to carry on collecting subscriptions to cover that fee*

*We understand that many groups at the start of this crisis thought that they would be looking at one term's worth of 'variation' in their activity, and therefore it would be best to carry on as normal paying their MD, whether or not they were delivering activity.*

*And/or: many of you were dismayed that your MD would fall between all the stools in terms of government support, and therefore might be looking at a significant loss of income, as has been the case for many professional musicians. These are people you have built up a relationship with and whose professional and artistic expertise you value, so clearly you are wanting to carry on supporting them.*

*However, 86% of you are charities and your duty is to act in the best interests of the charity. If continuing to pay your MD but not charging subscriptions to your members jeopardises the sustainability and viability of your charity, then you are not acting in its best interest.*

## 9. Financial impact and implications for group



**68%** of groups said they expect their **total income** for this financial year to be **significantly lower than last year** (more than 25% lower). A further 20% expect their income to be lower, but not as much as 25% lower.

8% of groups think their income will be about the same as last year, and 3%, slightly better.

In terms of the impact on the group's financial health, 76% say they feel like their group is stable for the next 12 months.

However, 22% describe their situation as concerning, they're ok for now but not for much longer, and 2% are financially unstable and of immediate serious concern.

## 10. How best can Making Music continue to provide support

We asked our members how we can continue to support them during this challenging period. The most popular areas of request for support included:

- Continued support with **interpreting government guidelines**. A lot of people saying that our interpretations and regular updates of government guidelines have been invaluable.
- Continuing to **create specific guidance and resources** to support groups to navigate the current situation. Useful resources so far have included resources on getting back to rehearsing as a group, organising online rehearsals and events, **guidance on how to live-stream rehearsals or concerts**, and our risk assessment template.
- Support with **venues**, including finding new ones or lobbying for existing venues to re-open.
- More support for **encouraging audiences to come back**, for putting on safe performances, for generating revenue from online audiences.
- Continued **lobbying** on behalf of groups - for additional clarity from government, to get activities moving again, for loss of income grants.
- Support with **retaining members or recruiting new ones** in an online context.
- Guidance on **insurance** (eg on how our insurance does or doesn't provide Covid cover, providing cancellation insurance that covers pandemics, reduced insurance costs)

## Two big thank yous

One big thank you to all our members who completed the survey. We promise to put it to good use in continuing to support leisure-time music groups as best we can, in line with the needs that have been articulated.

The second big thank you for the many many kind words in the survey about the work our team has done in the last six months. It is really appreciated when you do express your thanks in this way – the team has enthusiastically thrown themselves at many new challenges, including working from home in a variety of circumstances, and have worked really really hard. We are therefore pleased if that work has helped your group in the way we were hoping it would.