

Understanding how income affects likelihood to learn an instrument

Report prepared for Isabelle Gutierrez at the Musicians Union

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Summary



1. Uptake of lessons are heavily linked to household income

- Families with lower income, earning under £28k, are half as likely to have a child learning an instrument as families with high income, earning £48k or more

2. Cost is the primary factor for this discrepancy

- Cost of both lessons and instruments are cited as barriers to learning, with the cost of lessons the number one reason for not learning an instrument among low and mid income families
- Cost also impacts *how* people are learning, with many from low and mid income families teaching themselves – missing out on the benefits of a private tutor

3. Encouragement at home also a factor

- Children in higher income families are almost twice as likely to learn because their parents want them to

2CV thoughts...

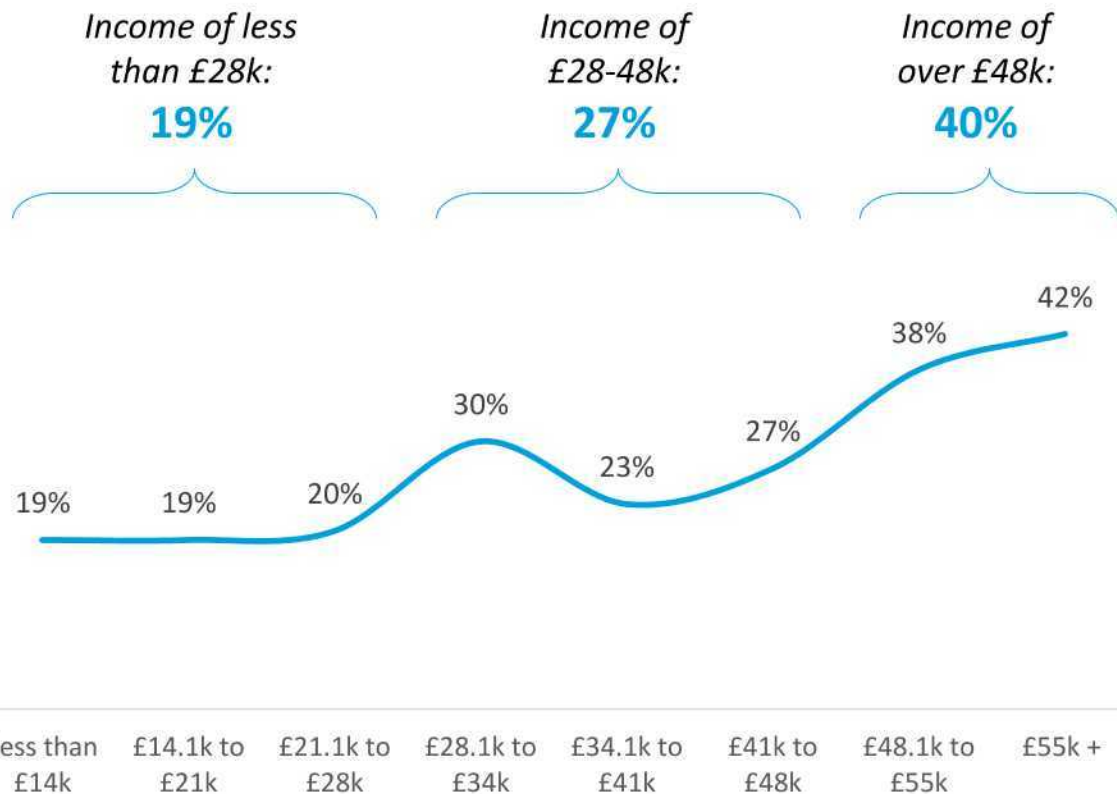
There's clearly a role for financial assistance to play a part in enabling children from lower income families to learn an instrument, particularly with increasing the availability of free and subsidised private tuition.

However, it seems that there's also a challenge around impetus and culture of musical learning among low and mid income families. Active encouragement from parents is far higher among higher income families. This suggests, that as well as addressing cost issues, there is a need to generate more interest among low and mid income families through greater encouragement at school, or wider education aimed at parents of the benefits of learning an instrument?

Children from lower income families are half as likely as their better off peers to learn an instrument



% of parents who have one or more children learning an instrument



Does your child play a musical instrument?

■ No, and not interested in learning
 ■ No, but open to learning
 ■ Yes



Lower uptake of lessons is not driven by lower interest, with variation in interest far lower than variation in learning

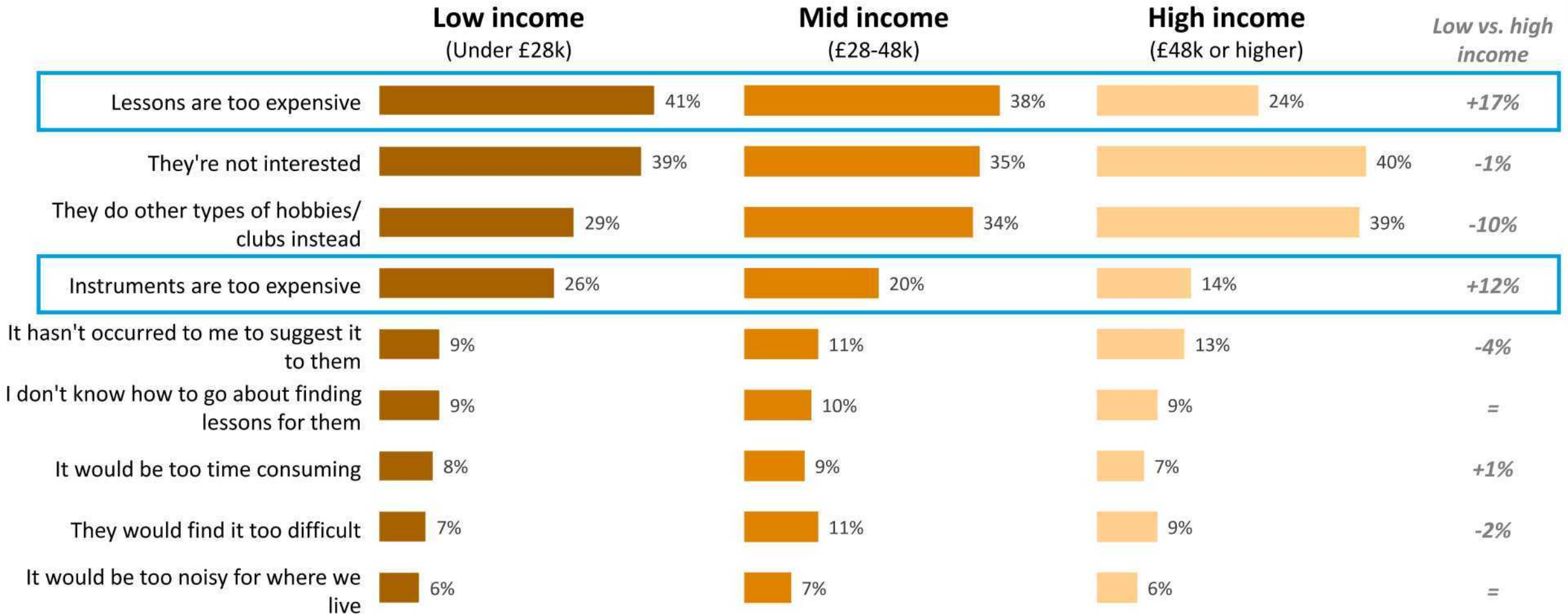
Q.2 Does your child play a musical instrument?

Base: All respondents with child aged 5-16 years, TOTAL (1206), Up to £28k (108), 28k-£48k (108), More than £48k (83)



Cost is a far greater barrier to lower income children, particularly for lessons, which is the #1 reason for not learning for low & mid income families

Barriers to learning an instrument



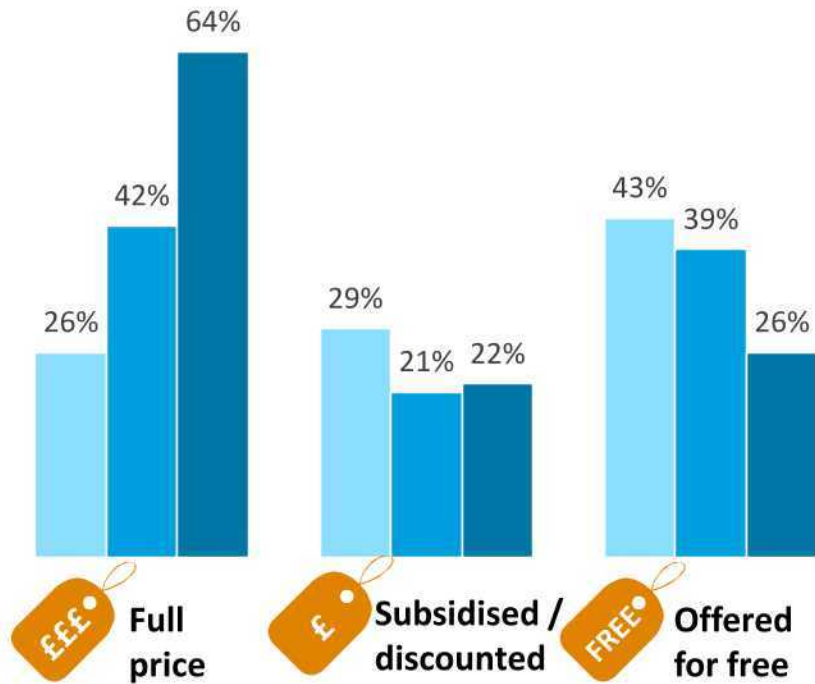
Q.8 Below are some things other people have said about why their child doesn't learn an instrument. Which of these apply to you?

Base: all respondents – low income (473), mid income (350), high income (150)

Cost remains a factor even for those learning, with many relying on subsidised/free lessons, or teaching themselves

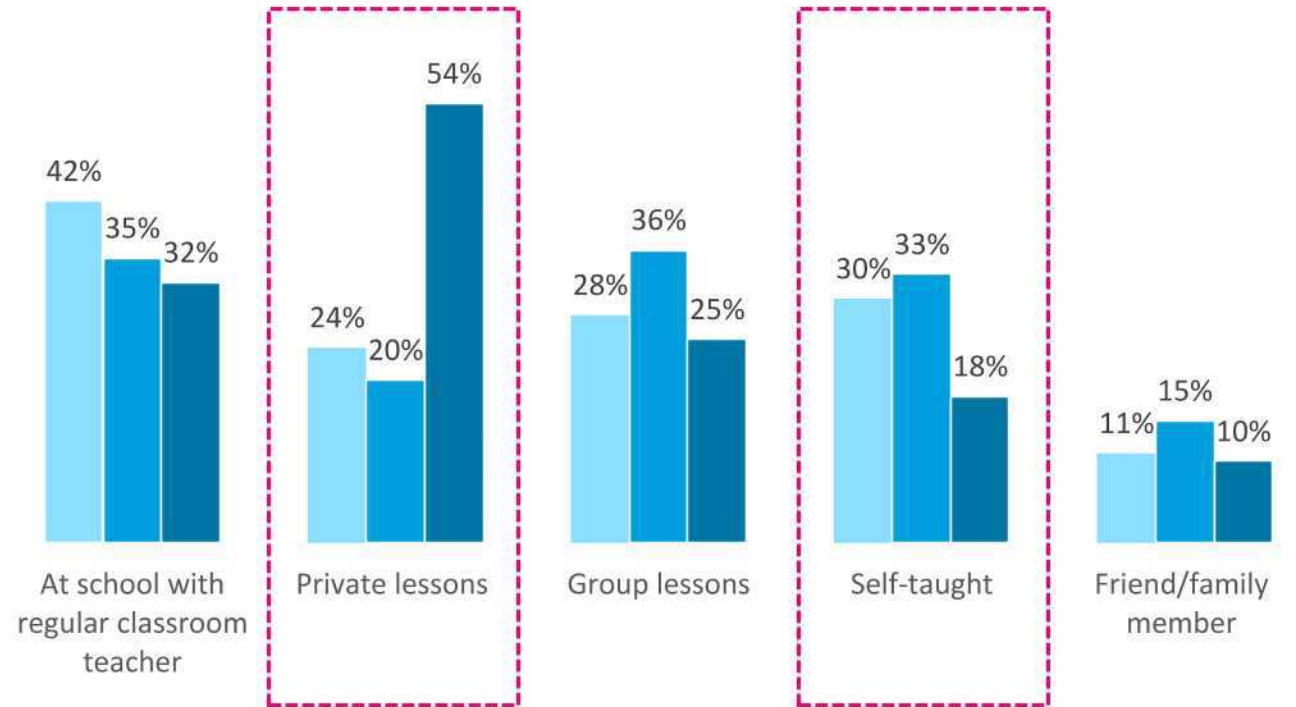
Cost of their child(ren)'s lessons

■ Low income (<£28k) ■ Mid income (£28-48k) ■ High income (£48k+)



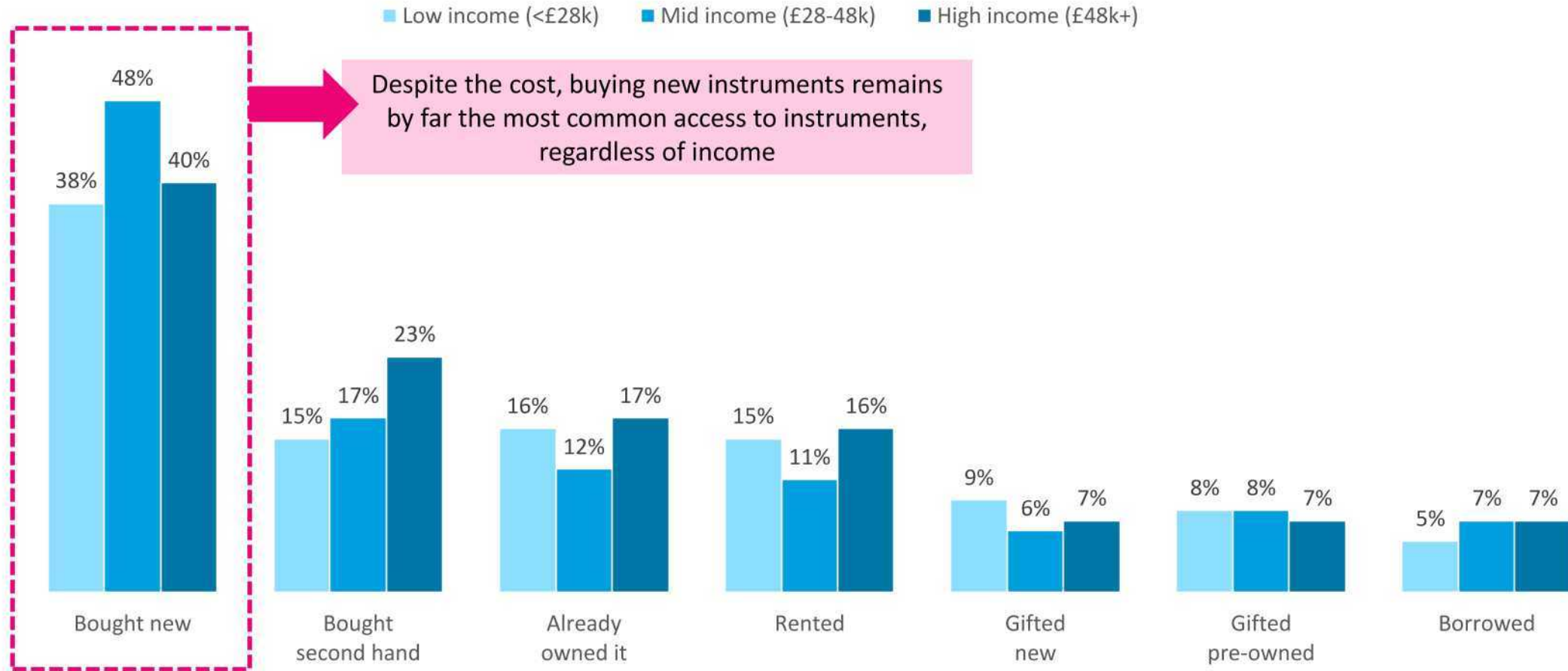
Nature of their child(ren)'s lessons

■ Low income (<£28k) ■ Mid income (£28-48k) ■ High income (£48k+)



There's also room to improve access to pre-owned instruments to help reduce financial impact for those on low incomes

Source of their child's instrument



Q.5 And are these lessons ...? Q.6 And which best describes where the instrument came from?

Base: those with at least on child learning an instrument – low income (108), mid income (108), high income (83)

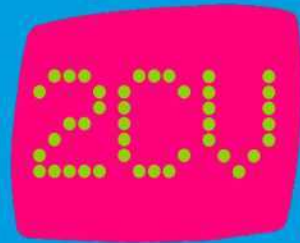


Lower income families are less likely to benefit from active encouragement by their parents, limiting the numbers who are likely to take up lessons

Reasons for learning an instrument



Is there room for schools to provide greater encouragement for low income families who are less likely to be prompted to learn by their parents?



Thank you

Nicola.Catchpole@2cv.com

Alex.Karoni@2cv.com

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