

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
Ariannu Addysg Cerddoriaeth a Munediad ati / Funding for and Access to Music Education
CWLC(5) FAME20
Ymateb gan David Barnard, Musicians Union Grŵp Cyngori Gwybodaeth
Ychwanegol / Evidence from David Barnard, Musicians Union Advisory Group
Additional Information

Ring-fenced funding

We are disappointed that the recommendation for ring-fenced funding from the Welsh Government has been withdrawn. However, we welcome the proposal that music services, providing co-ordinated access to instrumental tuition and ensembles (including curriculum support), should be a statutory service funded by the local authority. Consequently, music services, and curriculum music in general (primary and secondary), should be inspected by ESTYN. This raises and maintains the profile of music, and ensures that music is taken seriously by schools and local government. This may also have a beneficial impact in areas where there is no instrumental music service, e.g. Powys, and where funding from local authorities has all but dried up, e.g. Cardiff County and the Vale of Glamorgan.

Clearly, in promoting this recommendation, the Committee will need to define what statutory provision actually means, apropos funding (perhaps based on a per pupil formula), access, tuition, employment, resources and sustainability. A standardised formula, to calculate the level of funding to be ring-fenced by local authorities, will help to harmonise provision across Wales. It may also enable some services to reduce the cost of tuition, thereby increasing access to children from low income families (one service in Wales is charging £57 per hour).

One area of concern relates to the prioritisation of funding by local authorities. Unless the funding set out in this proposal is EXTRA to current LA budgets, there is a danger that other essential, but non-statutory, services will be cut. A buoyant, creative and happy community thrives on the interplay between music, dance, drama, art, media, and more.

Database for musical instruments

We are concerned by the committee's decision to drop the development of an instrumental database. We believe that there is enormous potential for waste if resources are not managed properly. A central database will ensure that resources are used to maximum benefit and will reduce the potential for duplication. The

development of a database does not have to be expensive. Knowledge and expertise is available to create this program at limited cost.

Support for Co-operatives

We uphold our position that all instrumental teachers should receive the same benefits of employment as enjoyed by colleagues in the classroom, and elsewhere in public service. However, if this is not possible (having exhausted all options), we believe that co-operatives provide a sustainable model going forward. The Musicians' Union has supported the formation of several co-operatives in recent years including Denbighshire Music Co-operative, which, now in its second year, is experiencing great success in terms of growth and recruitment. Our support will continue through professional development and advice. Other organisations providing assistance include Co-operatives UK, Cult Cymru and Welsh Co-operative Centre.

The direct funding of co-operatives will help to reduce administration costs and operational overheads, which in turn, helps to maintain a reasonable cost for tuition.

The concerns mentioned below are covered in the attached document 'Altogether Now - a guide to forming music teacher co-operatives'. This document is being updated, but should give you an insight into the pros and cons of the co-operative model. Should you require any further details or a personal presentation, please don't hesitate to contact us.

We believe that the point made regarding co-operatives and their inability to be strategic is unfounded. The example given, whereby teachers are reluctant to visit schools in rural areas, is also pertinent to traditional 'employed' services. The crux of the matter is whether funds are available (either centrally or from the school) to pay for the extra costs of travel and travel time. Ring-fenced funding, which includes an allowance for rural schools, should resolve this issue.