



Delyth Jewell MS
Committee Chair
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

10 July 2024

Dear Delyth

Thank you for your letter of 28 June to the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice, regarding the closure of Junior Conservatoire at Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD). I am responding as this matter falls within my Ministerial portfolio.

The RWCMD wrote to me in advance of the launch of a staff consultation in response to the financial challenges faced by the college. This consultation involved proposals to stop some of its present work with young people of school ages, specifically the Young Acting and Young Music weekend courses.

I know this proposal will have caused apprehension for all those involved. However, as an autonomous body, the RWCMD is responsible for its own academic affairs, including delivery of their courses, and decisions on financial management. It would not be appropriate for the Welsh Government to intervene in such matters.

These courses are subsidised by the RWCMD and are not funded directly from HEFCW (Medr from 1 August) or the Welsh Government. The RWCMD notes that the subsidy in 2023/24 for the direct costs of teaching and administering these courses is in excess of £200,000. This is in addition to the fees paid by the majority of participants. There are also indirect costs associated with supporting these weekend activities including safeguarding, safety and security, technical operations support and fundraising for scholarships and bursaries which are excluded from this total.

RWCMD has stated that it remains fully committed to providing opportunities in music and theatre for young people, and to creating pathways into professional training. It proposes to continue to deliver a number of areas of project work, including a series of weekend immersive workshops in music, the National Open Youth Orchestra residency, and holiday courses in production arts.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

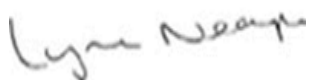
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

As part of its role in supporting music education, the College is considering how to align activity with the Welsh Government's [National Plan for Music Education](#), and in particular providing learners with opportunities to progress in playing an instrument or singing. This is focused on developing and nurturing young people's talents and ambitions, regardless of where they are from, what their needs are, or their background – that is to say, the broadest possible range of learners, and not only the more talented.

In May, Lesley Griffiths MS, Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice, launched a consultation on the draft priorities for culture in Wales 2024-2030. The draft priorities fully acknowledge the financial challenges faced by the sector but also look to the future by setting the direction and articulating how we can harness the talent, creativity and collaboration we have within our sector.

Welsh Government Officials have met with the RWCMD to discuss its proposals and I met with Helena Gaunt, the Principal of the RWCMD earlier this week.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynne Neagle".

Lynne Neagle AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education