

Conwy Music Service's contribution to the National Assembly for Wales' Inquiry into Funding for and Access to Music Education

Children and young people's access to local authority music services

- Financial insecurity and budget cuts at county, school and family level have negatively impacted access to music tuition in Conwy schools. This impact is worsening and the service is close to the tipping point which will lead to closure. Increasing inequality of access to music education.
- Tuition must be cost neutral to the authority and schools are charged £42.00 per hour. All but one primary school charge parents and most pass on the 'real' cost. Anecdotally, a growing number of pupils quit because they 'can't afford it' and we don't know how many never start in the first place due to charges. Many schools demand an annual up-front payment which appears to be making the situation worse.
- Music centres and specialist ensembles do still exist supported by a small core budget and parents paying membership fees. Introducing fees 3 years ago slashed numbers, several groups are likely to cease for 17/18. Access is already reduced and will reduce further.
- The service's core budget, severely cut for 9 years, will disappear in 18/19. All county group activity will cease. Pupils will not be able to fulfil their potential, or reach regional ensembles. Only pupils/families who can afford private provision will be able to progress.

The current position with the national and regional ensembles

- Conwy's contribution to regional provision will be cut for 18/19
- Regional provision will inevitably be diminished.
- The pathways to excellence for more able and talented pupils will be severely restricted.

Progress made in implementing the recommendations of the Welsh Government's reviews into music services and the national arts ensembles

- No progress – no support from councillors or director to ensure service is maintained. County music activities not seen as education service's responsibility.

The impact of funding decisions on the delivery of local authority music services

- Urgent action / funding needed to preserve children and young people's entitlement to music education.
- Service keen to explore options for regional provision with CAGAC colleagues
- Desperate need for ensemble / county group funding to maintain pyramid
- Service poised to be excellent contributor to a whole range of WG policies, strategies & statements, ACW's Arts & Creative Learning Plan and Donaldson's Education Review – but will disappear partially in 18/19 or completely in 19/20 in the absence of significant urgent action.