

WRITTEN EVIDENCE TO THE CULTURE, WELSH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Introduction

1. I welcome the opportunity to update the committee on how, across my portfolio, the government is supporting the delivery of music education. This includes the provision of opportunities for young people to participate in musical activities and the funding support I have made available to enhance access to these opportunities.
2. Music Education in Wales is envisioned as a 'pyramid', which gives a learner a clear route of progression, taking part in:
 1. Music in the National Curriculum and Music Making in Schools;
 2. Individual Music Tuition; and
 3. County and National Ensembles
3. It is essential that we ensure, at each step in this 'pyramid', there are opportunities for young people to perform, to have their talents recognised and nurtured and to support those who may need financial assistance to access instruments, tuition or performance ensembles. This final point is especially important to me; music is an integral part of our shared cultures and identities and all young people should be able to participate, no matter their background. Music Education cannot be allowed to become the preserve of the few; it must remain open to everyone.
4. Taking each step in the 'pyramid' in turn, I will provide the committee with an update on the opportunities and support for music activities that are available at each level. I also outline the funding that is being made available for additional opportunities for musical activities for young people.

Music in the National Curriculum for Wales and Music Making in Schools

5. Children's experiences of music in learning starts from the very beginning of our education system. Music is captured under the Creative Development Area of Learning within the Foundation Phase Framework. They are able to engage in creative, imaginative and expressive activities in art, craft, design, music, dance and movement; exploring a wide range of stimuli to develop their ability to communicate and express their creative ideas, and reflect on their work.
6. The study of music is a statutory part of the National Curriculum for all learners in Wales at key stage 2 (7-11 years) and key stage 3 (11-14 years).

The programme of study for Music includes a wide range of activities that develop a learner's skills in performance, composition and appraisal; in song, with instruments and as individuals and part of a group. It is expected that learners will gain experience of a wide range of instruments such as, percussion, recorders and electronic keyboards.

7. There is scope within the programme of study to deliver these activities through a range of musical genres; such as the European 'classical' tradition, folk and popular music, the music of Wales and other musical traditions and cultures. Teachers are free to explore the full breadth of music, choosing the genres and traditions they think will best inspire and engage their learners.
8. Music is available for learners to take as a qualification as part of their options when they move into key stage 4 (14-16 years). Careers Wales Online data shows that 98% of schools in Wales give their learners the opportunity to take GCSE music. A revised specification for GCSE music was released by WJEC for first teaching in September 2016.
9. In 2016, 2,484 learners sat GCSE music in Wales; of these 82% achieved an A*-C. The percentage of learners awarded an A*-C grade over all subjects is 72%; meaning that our young people are performing extremely well in GCSE music.
10. The new curriculum for Wales, which is currently under development, includes an Expressive Arts Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE). This puts the arts, including music, at the heart of our new education system; giving them equal status to other areas of learning such as mathematics and science and technology.

Funding and Support for Music in the Curriculum and Music Making in Schools

11. There are many ways in which the Welsh Government supports schools to deliver quality music education activities within the curriculum.
12. The majority of schools funding in Wales is financed through the local government settlement in the form of Revenue Support Grant. This unhypothecated funding is the largest single component of local government financing and education continues to account for around 33% of all local authority budgeted expenditure.

13. The Pupil Development Grant (PDG) is a powerful tool for schools to support learners from disadvantaged backgrounds to access the arts and cultural experiences they may not otherwise be able to participate in.
14. In February 2015 the Welsh Government issued guidance to schools on using the PDG in support of arts and cultural activities. This guidance made it clear that schools could use the PDG, on a case by case basis, to help individual learners from low income families to pursue particular art forms, such as musical instrument tuition; as long as it supported academic attainment more generally.
15. The Welsh Government has produced a training pack on using arts and cultural activity to tackle the impact of poverty on attainment. This has been published on Learning Wales and highlights how the PDG can be used to support cultural enrichment. It also provides structure and support to professionals to increase their confidence when designing arts, culture and heritage interventions. The total PDG has increased to more than £90million in 2017-18.
16. In partnership with the Arts Council of Wales, we are delivering the Creative Learning Through the Arts Plan 2015-2020 (CLTA), a £20 million (£10 million in Welsh Government funding which is being matched by Arts Council of Wales), 5 year programme supporting schools in utilising creativity and the arts to raise attainment and aspirations. This plan takes forwards the recommendations set out by Professor Dai Smith in his review of Arts in Education (2013), which dealt with a wide variety of artforms which included music.

Individual Music Tuition for Young People

17. I am committed to ensuring that all young people who want to progress to individual music tuition, have the chance to do so. Access to these opportunities not only develop learners musically, but contribute to the acquisition of wider skills and benefits, such as discipline, perseverance and general wellbeing.
18. My predecessor convened a Music Services Task and Finish Group to explore how Welsh Government, along with local authorities, schools and the Arts Council of Wales, can better protect and support the work of Wales' music services. This was a very valuable report and I am committed to working with these organisations to implement its recommendations.

Funding and Support for Individual Music Tuition for Young People

19. Since taking up the post of Cabinet Secretary for Education last year I have put in place a number of measures to meet the concerns put forward in the Music Services Task and Finish Group.
20. In their report the Music Services Task and Finish Group identified that local authority stocks of instruments were in decline and that this was having a negative impact on the ability of learners to access tuition opportunities. That is why in March this year I made available £220,000, (£10,000 for each local authority in Wales), for local authorities to purchase musical instruments, increasing their stocks and so ensuring that those most in need of an instrument will have access to one.
21. In addition to this funding, the WLGA has committed to establishing a national sharing mechanism so that local authorities can make best use of these new instruments and their existing stock. This work will contribute towards the task and finish group recommendation for a national database of instruments.
22. I have also started planning, in partnership with the WLGA, a national musical instrument amnesty later this year. The amnesty will appeal to the public to donate good quality instruments that can be redistributed to young people through the local authority music services. These discussions are very much in their early stages, however I hope, that committee members will support this innovation once we are ready to make more information known publicly
23. In February this year I announced that we will be establishing a music endowment for Wales for support additional musical activities for young people, which was a recommendation of the Music Services Task and Finish Group. Further details on the endowment and its progress are included later in this paper.
24. A one year on progress report, detailing the work that has been taken forward on the recommendations of the Music Services Task and Finish Group, was published on the 6th April. This report is about the ongoing work being done to support the music services in Wales.

Funding and Support for County and National Musical Ensembles

25. Although policy concerning elite musical ensembles does not fall under my portfolio, I am aware of the essential part they play in supporting our young people to access elite performance opportunities and providing a career pathway to becoming a professional musician.

26. As the national performance ensembles have moved under their new umbrella organisation, National Youth Arts Wales, I am aware there is much concern about whether local authorities will continue to contribute to the ensembles and what effect this will have on the provision of activity if they choose not to.
27. I believe that all young people who show the level of musical talent needed to gain a place on one of the national performance ensembles should be able to participate. The ensembles must remain open to all and not just to those who can afford it. I have therefore provided £280,000 to the WLGA to reimburse local authorities for their contribution to the national performance ensembles for 2016/17. This funding has been given with the understanding that local authorities will continue to provide a contribution to National Youth Arts Wales for the provision of the ensembles in 2017/18.

Support and Funding for Additional Music Activities for Young People

28. In February this year I made a statement in the Senedd announcing the establishment of the Music Endowment for Wales. This is intended to be a mid to long term source of funding for music and is the first of its kind in Wales.
29. The endowment, which is supported by a joint contribution of £1 million from my budget and that of the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, will aim to provide enhanced musical activities for young people.
30. The Arts Council of Wales has now begun the process of setting up the endowment, including the establishment of an independent charitable board, which will be able to accept donations, manage the fund and make decisions over potential beneficiaries and eligible funding.
31. The Music Endowment for Wales will be built up by charitable donations from a variety of approaches and stakeholders. Over the coming months we will be looking to work with a wide range of individuals and organisations from Wales and beyond to ensure that the fund can start making grant awards as soon as possible. It is hoped the fund will be able to start awarding grants from 2020