

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) FAME19
Ymateb gan Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru (ymateb gyda cefnogaeth ADEW a CAGAC) - Grŵp Cyngori Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol / Evidence from Welsh Local Government Association (response with the support of ADEW and CAGAC) - Advisory Group Additional Information

Ring-fenced funding

The WLGA is generally opposed to ring-fenced funding and advocates that all local authority funding is channelled through the RSG. The flexibility that this provides enables authorities to gain the most value from the money it spends. It is recognised that in some instances, specific grants have a legitimate function, for example in supporting new initiatives but once the policy aim has been achieved, the grant should then go into the RSG. In this instance, if the service were to be made statutory, it would need to be fully funded. The resource and service implications would need to be considered fully, including a cost benefit analysis, and clarity would be needed on the purpose and expectations of the duties on LAs and we would need to calculate what those responsibilities would cost. Furthermore, the amount of funding currently provided to local authorities through the Revenue Support Grant for music service delivery is not easily identifiable and therefore could not be separated easily. The WLGA view would be that any change to the non-statutory provision status would need to be fully funded by new investment.

Database of musical instruments

The WLGA has welcomed the additional funding for musical instruments and the Association's former Education Spokesperson, Councillor Ali Thomas wrote to all local authorities encouraging them to prioritise work around purchasing new instruments and exploring the development of databases and sharing information. The WLGA understands from discussions with local authorities that a formal national database is achievable but would entail considerable set-up costs, and significant ongoing resourcing to maintain. It is estimated that a very basic regional database system would cost around £32k to set up in the first year with on-going annual costs of around £12k, excluding staff costs. Since the announcement of the additional funding, a number of other authorities are now

using the Gwent package (Swansea and Cardiff for instance) with others looking at it currently. Caution is urged however to ensure that any benefits of such a database are not outweighed by the costs. It is thought that the additional funding provided, if prioritised towards the purchase of new musical instruments, would provide a longer legacy benefit. Local authorities, through the ADEW-endorsed CAGAC group of Music Services officers, have confirmed that there are established communication channels between authorities which enable music services to ask for assistance in accessing musical instruments from another local authority area, on a reciprocal loan basis should the need arise. It is considered therefore that the aims of the recommendation to establish a national database can be achieved through a more modest investment. The WLGA and CAGAC are more than happy however to share the initial findings of their work and consider this matter further.

Support for co-operatives

The WLGA has not considered co-operatives within this context and has not formally consulted with local authorities on this matter therefore is unable to give a definitive view. The WLGA has worked with local authorities and other partners for many years in considering alternative models of service delivery across a wide range of service areas. Considerable success has been achieved in this respect particularly in the realm of leisure services. The Association would agree in this instance that there is a risk in forcing the co-operative approach – where they have been established they may be successful, but each form of strategic commissioning needs to suit local need and priority, and be built from the ground up with buy-in at all levels and with all stakeholders. The WLGA would welcome however any incentivisation of change where it can be shown to provide a stable and future-proofed footing for local authority music service delivery and is open to engage in further discussions.