

Gillian Mitchell

National Youth Arts Wales

Wales Millennium Centre

11 February 2020

Dear Gillian,

The Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee is looking into music services for young people. I have asked Kirsty Williams AM, the Minister for Education, for an update on the funding for music services which was announced in December 2018.

As part of this funding National Youth Arts Wales was provided with £100,000 to continue their music services, including youth ensembles. I would be grateful if you could let me know the total amount of money awarded to your organisation since December and how it has been spent.

In order to inform the work of the Committee please can you provide this information by 9 March?

Yours sincerely,



Bethan Sayed

Chair of the Committee



6 March 2020

Bethan Sayed AM
Chair
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Dear Bethan,

I write in response to your recent letter and am happy to share more about the work of the new National Youth Arts Wales (NYAW) and how this has been supported by our funding stakeholders including Welsh Government.

As you are aware, until the new NYAW was set up in late 2017, Wales' national youth ensembles were in receipt of funding from all 22 Unitary Local Authorities via the WLGA. Since then, NYAW has received no LA funding at all, leaving the six national youth ensembles at risk and in addition, our outreach work across Wales severely underfunded. Our outreach work is a critical and core activity of the new NYAW and is designed to enhance access to the ensembles and increase diversity. This work allows us to engage directly with schools, the wider youth arts sector and a range of cultural and educational partners in a way that wasn't possible previously.

Our outreach work is also used to help deliver unique, high level training for gifted and talented young people as well as develop pathways into the creative industries in Wales. One example of this is Music Futures, a pilot project being used as a way of creating a new national youth ensemble for rock and pop/contemporary music as this doesn't currently exist in Wales.

In order to safeguard the new NYAW and all its activities, the Board and myself were pleased that the Education Minister awarded a grant of £100,000 in March 2019 for the financial year 2018/19 and a further award of £190,000 in January 2020 in respect of the 2019/20 financial year. It is our understanding that this funding was additional to the money ring fenced for music services. While we are very grateful for the support, this does leave NYAW with significantly reduced funding in comparison to the levels previously received until 2016/17 from the local authorities in Wales. I have attached as an appendix our request to the WLGA for support in the 2019/20 financial year which outlines this position in more detail.

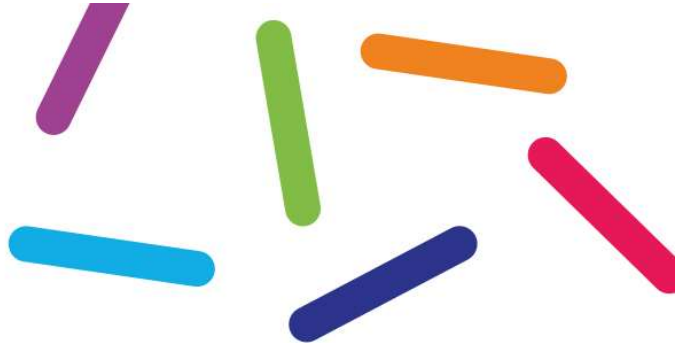


Please also find attached two appendices that provide more detail about the kind of outreach and access work the funding intervention from Welsh Government supported: Côr Skills and Music Futures. Both are good examples of the new direction of the new NYAW, alongside our development of the six national ensembles. With the right levels of funding in place, NYAW can continue to support significant numbers of gifted and talented young people in Wales in the future both within formal education settings and outside of these. We are very grateful to the Minister for her support.

Yours sincerely,

Gillian Mitchell
CEO
National Youth Arts Wales

Encs: Appendix 1: NYAW Music Futures report
 Appendix 2: NYAW Cor Skills report
 Appendix 3: NYAW paper to WLGA



Music Futures

Our Plans for 2020

Music Futures is National Youth Arts Wales's new project for young pop and rock musicians, giving them the mentoring, training and support they need to consider a future career as part of the thriving Welsh popular music industry. We are currently delivering an enhanced phase one in 2020.

National Youth Arts Wales works with gifted and talented young people aged 16 – 22 across Wales, in the fields of music, theatre and dance. We work with young people regardless of their background, and our programmes and projects are designed to be as inclusive as possible.

The National Assembly for Wales's report, *Hitting the Right Note*, highlighted a lack of provision for aspiring young pop and rock musicians in Wales. This project is designed to help address this gap in provision, providing a stepping-stone between community and schools provision, and the commercial creative sector in Wales.

Building on our successful first pilot in 2019, National Youth Arts Wales is expanding and develop Music Futures throughout 2020 – particularly focusing on expanding provision for artists wanting to perform in the Welsh language, and encouraging more female musicians to consider a career within the creative industries. For the first time, we will be producing a "gig tour" at the end of the project, giving public performance opportunities for participants to showcase their new music.

What participants and teachers said about the Music Futures 2019 pilot

"If I hadn't had the complements yesterday – I wouldn't have the confidence to get up and perform"

"Best thing I've ever done"

"It's going really well, it's really nice to be with similar people because in school it's just orchestra so it's nice to just do this stuff"

"Making me rethink my career choice"

"Really enjoyable - fantastic to do music which is relevant to me"

"Thoroughly enjoyed working with other musicians on my kind of music!"

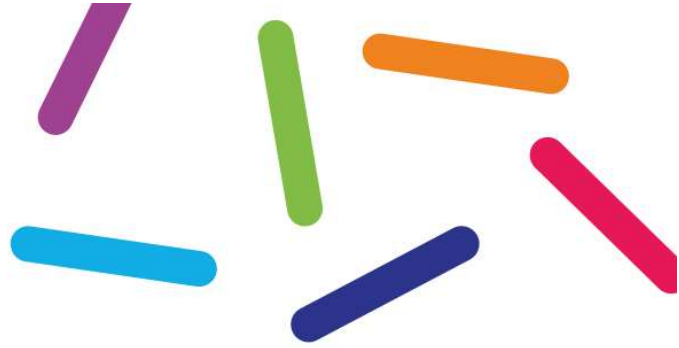
"The students have been absolutely BUZZING about last week. So proud to play their songs to their classes and I know planning to meet up with the Lewis students to compose more!"

Rose Power, Radyr Comprehensive

"It has been an absolutely life-changing experience for my pupils to be involved in this ground-breaking initiative. They have learned so much about the Music Industry from guest speakers as well as creating some outstanding original material with the mentors. I would hope that this scheme can be developed further to allow more young people the opportunity to work in the Music Industry. We need to create this stepping-stone approach between schools and national level in Wales in order for this to happen."

Bethan Jenkins, Lewis School Pengam

"The Music Futures project is a fantastic opportunity for young musicians to engage in creating exciting and relevant music and to be challenged to stretch themselves artistically. The presence of an industry professional to guide the students was superb and fired much creativity! When can we be involved again?!" Nick Rhydderch, Stanwell High School



Music Futures in 2020

Working with between 4 and 8 secondary schools in different areas of Wales, Music Futures 2020 will provide a bilingual programme of activity to develop the individual skills of talented young music creators aged 16 – 18. The focus will be on working with young people who are already creating some original work in the rock/pop genre or who are interested in having more opportunities in live performance in a commercial setting. Participants will be those who have either been identified by their school as gifted and talented in this area or who self-identify as individuals genuinely committed to exploring a career in the creative industries in Wales and specifically in this genre of music.

As part of the continued development of Music Futures, the next phase will be delivered bilingually with both digital and live outcomes in the form of a gig tour. As part of this, NYAW is focused on developing stronger relationships with venue and festival partners including Clwb Ifor Bach, Ty Pawb and National Eisteddfod.

Through the project, we will engage directly with and support the development of a broader range of young Welsh music creators, ensuring that the project is not limited to traditional instrumentalists for example but also involves those creating original work digitally. Emerging songwriters and those wishing to further develop live performance experience as well as their knowledge of the commercial music sector will also be targeted as part of this project.

Our Priorities for Music Futures 2020

- We will focus on increasing access for aspiring female pop musicians, and for musicians wishing to perform in the Welsh language
- The programme will remain free of charge for participants, reducing barriers for young people from lower-income backgrounds
- We will work with Welsh promoters to develop a “gig tour”, providing performance opportunities for the young participants and a public showcase for their music
- We will develop a pan-Wales offer, working with schools, young people and venues from across Wales

Features of the Music Futures programme

- Targeted programme to promote better diversity and inclusivity in music creation with a particular focus on gender and language parity
- Intensive residential opportunity so that young music creators aren't confined to a school learning environment
- Encourage talented music creators to take more risks, to experiment and challenge each other as peers
- Songwriting bootcamps with a focus on supporting emerging music creators to work bi-lingually or through Welsh medium
- Bespoke external mentoring programme from established professional artists
- Empowering young people through peer led rehearsals and creative collaborations
- Champion and nurture the desire to be a performer/songwriter/music industry professional in Wales as a realistic goal
- Digital and live outcomes
- Formal link to training opportunities in the creative industries in Wales through tailored industry mentoring opportunities and through NYAW partnerships with other relevant initiatives.



Côr Skills

Project Report, January 2020

In 2018-19 National Youth Arts Wales delivered a new choral development project called *Côr Skills*. This innovative pilot project offered high-quality choral workshops in targeted areas of Wales to more than 200 young people.

The need for the project came from observations whilst auditioning for the 2018 National Youth Choir of Wales – the first opportunity for the newly created National Youth Arts Wales to deliver the Choir’s programme of activity. We found that the Choir’s profile was much lower than expected, that inconsistent local music provision affected progression routes to the national ensemble, and that there seemed to be an aspirational barrier with some young singers thinking they were not good enough.



“I thought the workshop was fantastic and the team great! I particularly liked the way that it started with rhythm games and organically shifted from one game to another before all of a sudden, they were singing. It was a brilliant way of ensuring there were no inhibitions from the off.”

Christine Evans, Head of Music at Welshpool High School

Côr Skills was designed as a targeted intervention, with the core aim to provide high-quality training opportunities for all talented young people. As part of our access and development strategy, the project was targeted at areas with a lack of existing choral provision, or where areas were currently under-represented within the membership of National Youth Choir of Wales.

As a key strategic priority for National Youth Arts Wales, this was funded through a combination of NYAW core funding, plus grant funding awarded by Garfield Weston Foundation. NYAW intends to expand the project in future, funding it through a mixture of core funding and restricted grants.

Headline Outcomes

- **216 singers aged 14-20** benefitted from one of seven intensive training workshops in Phase One, free of charge to the participant
- Between 2018 and 2020, applications to National Youth Choir of Wales **have nearly doubled** as a direct result of the *Côr Skills* training.
- In the seven local authorities *Côr Skills* worked in, the number of applications has **increased five times faster** than in the rest of Wales.
- **More than 100 singers** attended three further full-day workshops in one of four venues in Phase Two, free of charge to the participant
- For some singers, we recommended attendance at Phase Two workshops as a condition of membership following audition – therefore provided additional opportunities and improving the overall standard of National Youth Choir of Wales.



Delivery and Partnerships

Côr Skills was the first step towards addressing these issues and was delivered in two phases: open choral workshops in targeted areas in Wales, followed by intensive training days, building on the open workshops and tailoring the training to developing participants skills in general musicianship and vocal technique.



In Phase One, Tim Rhys-Evans and the artistic team delivered 2-hour open workshops in seven venues across Wales. We worked with various partners, adapting delivery according to their needs.

We identified target areas based on the lack of existing choral provision, and whether they were currently under-represented within National Youth Choir of Wales. After building relationships with local Heads of Music, we then went on to deliver the project in five schools: **Ysgol Emrys ap Iwan** (Conwy), **Ysgol Maes Garmon** (Flintshire), **Fitzalan High School** (Cardiff), **Lewis School Pengam** (Caerphilly) and **Welshpool High School** (Powys). We also partnered with two key choirs in North Wales, **Wrexham Youth Choir** and **Côr Ieuenctid Mon** (Anglesey Youth Choir), where applications for National Youth Choir of Wales were low despite their own excellent record. These seven primary partners liaised with other local schools to extend the reach further.

Within each workshop, Tim and the team gave a practical introduction to vocal technique, effective breathing and the anatomy of singing. Each workshop ended with the participants learning and singing a piece of music with Tim introducing various layers with different sections of the group to build towards a complete piece of four-part harmony. The workshops were delivered in an accessible way, with none of the singers required to have any background in score reading, just a willingness to learn and participate positively.

Over the course of the workshops, we worked with **216** young singers and as well as giving them a fantastic singing experience, we were able to give them information about National Youth Arts Wales, the National Youth Choir of Wales and what being a member of the choir involves.

In **Phase Two** we delivered three full-day workshops in 4 centres across Wales: **Ysgol Emrys ap Iwan** in North West Wales, **Ysgol Maes Garmon** in North East Wales, **Lewis School Pengam** in the south Wales valleys and **Fitzalan High School** in Cardiff. Participants were invited to the intensive second phase having attended the open workshops and who were considered by their schools as singers who should be auditioning for National Youth Choir of Wales. We also invited singers identified through auditions who would benefit from additional training and development. In total we reached more than 100 young people in this phase.

The programme included training in general musicianship (including notation, key signatures, rhythms and the sol fa system) and vocal technique, including breath control and the physiology of the voice. The workshops were largely practical with exercises and “games” designed to reinforce learning and using the skills developed to learn pieces of music and practice sight-singing.

Reaching communities previously under-represented in National Youth Choir of Wales

A key focus of NYAW’s work is to ensure that opportunities for gifted and talented young artists are available to all talented young people, regardless of their background. By working with Welshpool High School, Powys in the first stage of the programme and Lewis School Pengam and Fitzalan High School in both phases, we managed to offer an opportunity that many young singers in those areas can’t or don’t access otherwise. In Wales, unlike in the case of England’s Music Hubs, music service provision is inconsistent – the National Assembly for



Wales's report into music education, *Hitting the Right Note*, said that “Local authorities provide very different opportunities in relation to both the music education available to school pupils and to those working within the music education sector.”

Due to the geography of Powys and the lack of a music service, young singers in that area are reliant on schools being able to offer singing opportunities. However, access is not consistent across schools and there is little promotion of further opportunities. Welshpool High School is in an area where access to public services is limited, according to the Welsh Index for Multiple Deprivation.

Lewis School is in a deprived area of the South Wales Valleys, where nearly 22% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, higher than the national average of 17%. 36.1% of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales. Whilst the school has a strong tradition of providing fantastic training to young people interested in popular music, they don't currently offer choral singing opportunities at the school. In addition, as in many local authorities across Wales, the local authority no longer runs a youth choir.



Ysgol Emrys ap Iwan, Conwy is in one of the most deprived parts of North Wales, with income, employment and health all ranking within the top 20% most deprived parts of Wales.

Fitzalan High School is in a deprived area of Cardiff with 60% of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales, and 32.7% of the school population eligible for Free School Meals, meaning families with limited income may not have access to tuition or local music services. 70% of pupils come from a minority ethnic background and speak English as a second language, with over 60 different languages spoken at Fitzalan.

Throughout the open workshops and the second phase training days, the aim was not only to develop the participants' singing and musical awareness but to increase their awareness of NYCW and to break down perceived barriers at the same time.

Increasing application numbers and improving the standard of National Youth Choir of Wales

Whilst developing the *Côr Skills* programme and identifying suitable partners, there was a lot of contact between the National Youth Arts Wales team and schools, choirs and music services across Wales. We did this not just to recruit participants for the project, but also to listen to their first-hand experience which would help us to identify potential barriers to NYCW for gifted and talented young musicians, of all backgrounds, who don't currently feel in a position to audition for this kind of unique, high-level training. This did lead to a much-improved number of applications to the NYCW for 2019 (91 as opposed to 63 in 2018) and singers offered places with the Choir (76 as opposed to 56 in 2018). For 2020's audition round, we received 126 applications.

Our ability to make attending Phase Two training days a condition for some 2019 members, and to suggest attendance for others, meant that we were able to invest specifically in members of the choir who needed some additional support, whether in terms of their general musicianship or their vocal technique. This meant that the National Youth Choir of Wales residency was extremely successful, as the members started the residency on much more of an equal footing, and those members who attended *Côr Skills* understanding fully the expectations of a residency and feeling much more confident in their own ability to perform at that level.



Our next steps

There is no doubt that there is a need for this programme. We saw National Youth Choir of Wales membership grow, and the standard of the Choir improve. We had more applicants from more areas of Wales, and as we conclude the audition process for the 2020 choir we have received another increase in applicants to last year, with a significant number of singers who took part in the *Côr Skills* programme applying.

In 2020 we will be further expanding the project, reaching more young people and schools across Wales. We will focus on the following target groups:

- **Schools and young people based in areas of multiple deprivation (according to WIMD)**
- **Young people based in rural areas, with limited access to other opportunities**
- **Areas with good existing provision, but under-represented within National Youth Choir of Wales**

Photos of National Youth Choir of Wales by Kirsten McTernan

Paper for Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) in respect of LA funding support for the new National Youth Arts Wales (NYAW) and the national youth ensembles

Background

In October 2017, following a period of transition and development, responsibility for the development and delivery of professional development for youth arts in Wales through its national youth ensembles, transferred from the WJEC and Ty Cerdd to one single body. A newly rejuvenated National Youth Arts Wales (NYAW) emerged with sole responsibility for this area of work in Wales with a new vision as follows:

Leading the way in providing exceptional opportunities in the arts for the most talented young people in Wales

This paper seeks to inform the resolution around the issues of local authority funding to the new National Youth Arts Wales from 2019 onwards.

Local authority funding prior to NYAW prior to 2018

According to records, it is the understanding of the NYAW Board and CEO that until the transition in 2018, an annual Service Level Agreement was in place between the local authorities in Wales and the WJEC. The SLA was in respect of two main elements of delivery: Educational Resources and Professional Development of Youth Arts. In the financial year 2015/16, this SLA appears to represent £1.1million from the local authorities to the WJEC with £388,000 of that figure specifically for youth arts.

The delivery agreement for youth arts under this SLA included the following:

- Auditions for National Youth Orchestra of Wales, National Youth Theatre of Wales and National Youth Dance Wales;
- Managing the annual cycle of National Youth Orchestra of Wales and National Youth Theatre of Wales;
- Delivery of intensive residential tuition, rehearsals and a series of performances on tour for National Youth Orchestra of Wales and National Youth Theatre of Wales;
- Liaison with Arts Council Wales and other partners in Wales and the rest of the UK in relation to the delivery of National Youth Dance Wales;
- Provision of a point of contact for local authorities, teachers and students who require information on arts education and training for orchestra, theatre and dance;

The local authority contribution towards the National Youth Orchestra and Youth Theatre of Wales was based on the average number of individuals from a local authority gaining a place on the Orchestra and Theatre in the three years preceding the agreement.

Current situation

During the transition period leading up to the creation of a single lead body being responsible for all of Wales' national youth ensembles, negotiations around local authority

funding in respect of the professional development of youth arts through the national ensembles, were inconclusive.

The new National Youth Arts Wales has completed one full financial year in 2018/19. It currently receives revenue funding from Arts Council Wales and is responsible for generating additional earned income through ticket sales, fees and sponsorship as well as applying for project funding from UK based trusts and foundations. In the 2018/19 financial year, NYAW received a one-off grant of £100,000 in March 2019 from Welsh Government via the WLGA as the negotiation over local authority funding had not been resolved.

It was recognised by all parties that the one-off grant did not reflect the levels of public funding needed to maintain provision for the professional development of youth arts in Wales via the six national youth ensembles. It was suggested that for 2019/20 onwards, the WLGA be used to help deliver a collective agreement in respect of local authority funding for Wales' national youth ensembles and related activities.

Request for local authority support in 2019/20 and beyond

It is important to note that the SLA in place with the WJEC in respect of funding for the Professional Development of Youth Arts related to the National Youth Orchestra and Theatre of Wales only. The financial arrangement also extended to the delivery of National Youth Dance Wales on a smaller scale than orchestra and theatre ensembles. The WJEC is no longer involved in any delivery in respect of youth arts of this kind.

Since its inception as new organisation in November 2017, the new NYAW is responsible for the delivery of six national youth ensembles. In addition, it delivers a year-round programme of outreach work designed to raise the standards and skills of young people wishing to apply to the national youth ensembles in Wales.

NYAW also delivers a number of specific projects which aim to increase access to professional development programmes for young people from a more diverse range of backgrounds than has been the case prior to 2018. In 2018/19, every local authority area in Wales was represented in our engagement with young people aged 11 – 22 through auditions, ensembles, performances and outreach.

Given the increased responsibilities of the new NYAW and its successful delivery of this work in 2018/19, it is the position of NYAW that future funding support from local authorities represents greater value than ever before.

In the 2019/20 financial year, NYAW has projected local authority income at a minimum of £200,000 and is seeking a collective agreement for the next 3 – 5 years, via the WLGA, to support delivery of professional development programmes across Wales for young people aged 16 – 22 through the following:

- National Youth Orchestra of Wales
- National Youth Choir of Wales
- National Youth Theatre of Wales
- National Youth Brass Band of Wales
- National Youth Dance Wales
- National Youth Wind Orchestra of Wales

In addition, we will deliver a number of project-based activities which widen access to professional development activities for young people aged 11 – 18.

In the period March 2018 – September 2019 alone we delivered the following:

- 11 national level residential courses, in total 15 weeks of intensive and rewarding training for young people aged 16 – 22;
- 100 audition sessions across 26 audition centres throughout Wales;
- 605 young people formed our brass band, choir, orchestra, dance and theatre ensembles;
- We worked with 1639 young people across our activities;
- 8,500 audience members attended our performances across Wales;
- We awarded £80,000 in bursary funding to young people across Wales to ensure that affordability didn't get in the way of diversity and inclusion targets.

We believe that with local authority funding support, NYAW will deliver value for money and a substantial return on investment in respect of the provision of professional development training for youth arts across Wales.