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Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA P KW 2638 18

Mrs Bethan Sayed AM,  
Chair  
Culture, Welsh Language and Communication Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff.  
CF99 1NA

27 July 2018

Dear Bethan

## **HITTING THE RIGHT NOTE: INQUIRY INTO FUNDING FOR AND ACCESS TO MUSIC EDUCATION**

Following the recent publication of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communication Committee's inquiry into music education, I am pleased to enclose the Welsh Government's formal response to the report and recommendations.

This information is contained within Annex A of this letter.

While the scope of the inquiry focused on music education, the Report and its recommendations reach beyond my own portfolio responsibilities. The attached Welsh Government response therefore reflects the impact and implications on policy areas within Education, Culture Tourism and Sport, and across the whole of Government.

I would like to thank you and the Committee for this report. The Welsh Government shares your ambition for the provision of high-quality, universal access to music education for all learners in Wales. We also recognise the need to ensure that appropriate pathways exist for those learners who wish to develop and enhance their musical expertise and experiences and you rightly acknowledge in your report the steps that we have been taking in recent years to ensure this is achieved.

The recommendations, as they stand, are potentially significant, with far-reaching implications for the music education sector. As such, they will require time and appropriate resources to explore and fully consider. I fully recognise the current pressures facing music services and the need to take action as soon as possible. I say this not to delay their consideration and potential implementation, but I am sure you will understand that there are

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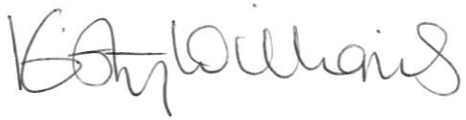
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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.

many issues that need to be explored and it would be remiss of us not to do this properly and thoroughly.

I will keep you informed of progress at regular intervals and hope you will find this approach acceptable.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

**Kirsty Williams AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education

## Annex A

### **Recommendation 1**

The Welsh Government should transfer responsibility for the delivery of music services to an arms-length, national body with a distinct regional delivery mechanism and footprint. The national body should be core funded by the Welsh Government and should be made responsible for ensuring that both pupils and staff working within the music education sector, regardless of their location or social background, are afforded equitable opportunities. The Welsh Government should ensure the responsible body is provided with any additional funding necessary in order to maintain equality of access on an all Wales level.

### **Response: Accept in Principle**

The Welsh Government shares the views of the Committee in wanting to ensure that access to music and a music education is available for all those learners who wish to participate, irrespective of location, social background or ability to pay. We are doing all we can to ensure that barriers to participation are removed, and we welcome this report and its recommendations.

The Welsh Government is not directly responsible for the provision of music services; this is the responsibility of local authorities, which receive funding through the Revenue Support Grant. We cannot readily or unilaterally transfer this function to another body without fully considering the impact and implications of doing so.

This recommendation is agreed in principle, subject to the outcome of a feasibility study to identify and assess options for delivery of music services, including the suitability of a single organisation to lead on this area; and availability of budget to implement feasibility findings. In the first instance, we propose undertaking an initial consultation exercise to seek the views of stakeholders and partners on this matter, but the final decision will be with local authorities.

The budget implications for local authorities and other stakeholders in relation to implementation of this recommendation would need to be considered in the light of the findings of the feasibility study.

We will report back to the Committee on progress with this feasibility exercise, within six months.

**Recommendation 2** The Cabinet Secretary for Education should take strategic ownership of music services by consulting stakeholders (and the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure) in order to prepare a Welsh Government National Action Plan for Music. In order to stay fit for purpose, the Action Plan should be reviewed at regular intervals and a report published annually.

### **Response: Reject**

I do not believe that I should take strategic responsibility of music services as this falls outside my portfolio.

The preparation of a Welsh Government National Plan for Music would require a significant and wide-reaching piece of work, which would cut across ongoing activity within other Ministerial portfolio areas. This would not, in itself, be an issue, although it would mean an inevitable and significant delay in tackling the current priority issues facing music education provision.

However, given the terms of reference and scope of the Inquiry, if this recommendation (and subsequent recommendations) refer to a National Plan for Music Education, rather than a National Plan for Music, I can confirm that I will extend the feasibility study to examine creation of a plan for music education. I also confirm that I will continue to work collaboratively with the Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport. Of course, I would also be keen to work with you as we take this forward, recognising the position as set out in the previous paragraph.

**Recommendation 3** We recommend that the Welsh Government encourages local authorities to review terms and conditions of music service staff to ensure that they are as consistent as possible as a matter of urgency.

**Response: Accept**

Local authorities will be encouraged to review terms and conditions of music staff, through the work of my officials leading on the Professional Learning offer.

**Recommendation 4** The Committee recommends that, subject to the points made above relating to progression up the Welsh Government's pyramid for music education, the Welsh Government ensures there is adequate funding, support and advice available for those seeking to set up viable, alternative models of music service delivery, provided that any model of support is compliant with the Welsh Government's ethical standpoint relating to the terms and conditions of staff.

**Response: Accept**

Welsh Government officials will contact colleagues in local authorities and the Welsh Local Government Association to further understand demand and proposals for alternative models of music service delivery. Options around the viability of alternative models for delivery will also be considered as part of the feasibility study.

**Recommendation 5** We recommend that the Welsh Government revises the National Plan for Creative Learning in order to encourage schools to utilise the expertise of music services across Wales.

**Response: Reject**

The Creative Learning through the Arts Programme is in the fourth year of its five-year lifespan. It would not be appropriate to change the programme at this late stage.

Music plays an integral part in the Creative Learning through the Arts scheme, with many experiences involving musical activity and using local music experts. However, it is one strand of a scheme that covers all art-forms and cannot be prioritised over another.

**Recommendation 6** We recommend that the Welsh Government, through a National Plan for Music:

- Seeks to identify and utilise all those within the world of music who are able and willing to support music learning for young people; and
- Establishes and implements a series of master classes in order to draw on the experience and good will of experts within the music sector.

**Response: Reject**

This recommendation is subject to the creation of a National Plan for Music, which is covered in recommendation 2. However, the creation of a plan for music education will be examined as part of the feasibility study and through discussions with the Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism.

**Recommendation 7** We recommend that the Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association jointly consider as a matter of urgency how implementation of the recommendations of the task and finish group report by local authorities in Wales can be accelerated, with a view to reporting to the Committee on progress made within six months of the publication of this report.

**Response: Accept**

An update report was published in April 2017. A full update on the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group will be published in December 2018.

**Recommendation 8** We recommend that, via a National Action Plan for Music, the Welsh Government establish a permanent advisory group to advise; inform and challenge them on all matters relating to music education.

**Response: Reject**

This recommendation would be dependent on the outcome of the feasibility study detailed in the response to Recommendation 1, and is linked to Recommendations 2, and 6.

If an arm's-length body is recommended by the feasibility study, we anticipate that this would fulfil the role of a permanent advisory group. However, should no arm's-length body be recommended, we would be content to reconsider the options around this recommendation.

**Recommendation 9** We recommend that the Welsh Government significantly increases the funding made available to local authorities for the purchasing of musical instruments and distributes it on a needs basis. This should be done as a matter of urgency and should be aimed at improving the situation in the short term, to cover the period before a national body is fully able to take responsibility for music services.

**Response: Accept**

This work is already underway. An amnesty has taken place and the musical instruments distributed.

Discussions with WLGA on how best to allocate the £1 million per annum I have made available for 2018-19 and 2019-20 for music provision are currently well advanced, and I shortly expect to make an announcement on precisely how this funding will be used.

This will include the proposal to make £10,000 available to each local authority this year to purchase musical instruments.

**Recommendation 10** We recommend that the Welsh Government remit Estyn to undertake a thematic review of local authority music services focusing on practical steps to ensure consistency of opportunity across Wales.

**Response: Accept**

The Estyn review has been recently published and this recommendation will need to fit in with both the review and Estyn's existing forward work programme. As a result, this recommendation cannot be implemented immediately. However we will work with Estyn to identify a suitable timescale.

**Recommendation 11** We recommend that the Welsh Government promotes the use of Pupil Development Grant funding for music education.

**Response: Accept**

The Pupil Development Grant already promotes music education, and many schools use the grant for this purpose. Use of the Pupil Development Grant is of course a matter for each individual school, based on their own specific priorities. The Welsh Government is considering revision of existing guidance that supports the Pupil Development Grant, and this could include case studies that demonstrate how the grant can be used to provide funding for music education.

**Recommendation 12** We recommend that the Welsh Government, via a National Action Plan for Music:

- Provides strategic direction to local authorities and schools on ways to integrate and encourage the teaching of less traditional forms of music; and
- Encourages the establishment of rock and pop ensembles and national, rock and pop-based, competitions.

**Response: Reject**

This recommendation is subject to the creation of a National Action Plan for Music, which is linked to recommendations 2, 6 and 8.

However, I recognise the importance of ensuring that learners have access to all musical genres so they can learn and be inspired by the music they are interested in.

I therefore intend to continue working with the Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport and the WLGA about the areas covered in this recommendation to support less traditional forms of music, including rock and pop ensembles.

**Recommendation 13** We recommend that NYAW puts mechanisms and sufficient funding in place in order to ensure every pupil, who wishes to progress toward excellence, has the resource to do so.

**Response: Accept in Principle**

This is a matter for National Youth Arts Wales to comment on in the first instance, and I understand that they will be responding direct to the Committee in due course.

National Youth Arts Wales (NYAW) is a new organisation, in its first full year of operation, and it is facing its own challenges in finding its place within the sector. NYAW (and its predecessors) have not traditionally been involved in ensuring universal access to music education. However, I understand that NYAW is keen to be involved in this area where it sees its expertise can play a significant role in helping talent development and opportunities to showcase this.

It is envisaged that the planned feasibility study may identify a role for NYAW, although at this stage it is far too early to try to anticipate precisely what that role may be.

In the meantime, the Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport's officials will raise this recommendation with NYAW and the Arts Council of Wales (which provide core funding to NYAW) to discuss the implications of this recommendation.

We will provide an update on this in due course.

**Recommendation 14** We recommend that the Welsh Government introduces ways of monitoring the composition of the national ensembles to ensure that they are as inclusive of all social groups as possible. Any imbalances in their composition should be addressed as a matter of urgency. The data should be reviewed regularly and the appropriate action taken.

**Response: Accept in Principle**

Again, this is primarily a matter for National Youth Arts Wales (NTAW) to comment on in respect of its role as manager of the National Ensembles, and this will undoubtedly be covered in its response to the Committee. I am advised that this is an area that NYAW is already conscious of and keen to address.

Identifying any imbalance within the ensembles is the easier of the two elements of this recommendation to tackle. The more difficult will be how to address any identified inequalities, which will no doubt require additional funding and resourcing.

As per recommendation 13 above, officials from the Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism will raise this recommendation with National Youth Arts Wales and the Arts Council of Wales to discuss the implications of this recommendation.

We will update you on our discussions in due course.

**Recommendation 15** We recommend that the Cabinet Secretary takes steps to ensure that there is greater clarity of purpose between the Endowment Fund and NYAW in the charitable funding they are seeking to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and to encourage collaboration between them.

**Response: Accept**

The two strands of work are complementary, and do not represent duplication. As it develops and its functions and identity become clearer, all work carried out on the Endowment Fund will continue to ensure that this position is clarified.

A funding strategy is being developed for *Anthem* – Music Fund Wales, which will ensure that there is no adverse impact on the funding strategy of National Youth Arts Wales or other arts organisations.

**Recommendation 16** We recommend that the Welsh Government monitors the funding available to the Endowment Fund and considers additional injections of capital if necessary.

**Response: Accept**

Welsh Government officials will work closely with the *Anthem* Board, and other key stakeholders, and I will consider further funding injections, subject to established goals being achieved.