



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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**The Welsh Government response to the report of the  
task and finish group on music services in Wales  
November 2015**



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## Preface

In January 2015 I established a task and finish group, under the chairmanship of Karl Napieralla OBE, to consider the provision of music services in Wales. The purpose of the group was to develop proposals aimed at ensuring that local authorities can continue to deliver high quality services to learners across Wales. In particular, I asked the group to examine:

- alternative methods of service delivery;
- options for charging policies, with a view to achieving greater parity across Wales, more equitable provision and access for eFSM learners;
- options for musical instrument supply, refresh, purchase, rental arrangements; and
- the potential for greater partnership working.

In Wales, through the sustained commitment of our local authorities, we have structures for provision of instrumental and vocal tuition for young people that have been the envy of other countries. During these financially challenging times, and precisely because these times are challenging for our learners and their families, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, we must ensure that access to high-quality provision is maintained through new ways of working and greater collaboration.

It is inconceivable that a nation renowned for its musical heritage should neglect its musicians of the future. Musicians who will perform on the national and international stage, many for whom the opportunity to learn an instrument in school has been their first experience of making music, are being nurtured by our music services right now. Others who have the opportunity to learn but choose not to pursue music at a high level will benefit from new skills, developing application and perseverance, gaining confidence and a sense of wellbeing – the benefits of the expressive arts that Professor Graham Donaldson has identified in *Successful Futures*.

I commend the chair and all the members of the group for their hard work, their innovative thinking, and their commitment to reach a set of recommendations which I believe will help us steer a course for better collaborative working across the sector.

The publication of these recommendations is very timely in terms of the development of a new curriculum for Wales which will aim to extend and promote learners' experiences. I will ensure that the schools in our Pioneer Schools Network are aware of the report of the music services task and finish group. As the new curriculum takes shape, we will work with local authorities to consider the role of their music services in providing professional development and support for teachers to deliver high quality music education in the classroom as part of the Expressive Arts area of learning and experience.

The report's vision for the role of music services in the music education of our 3 to 19 year-olds is one to which we must sign up nationally and implement locally. To this end I will be calling on local authorities, the Welsh Local Government Association and other stakeholders to provide me with updates

on the implementation of the recommendations, and a progress report will be published on the Welsh Government's website in autumn 2016.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Huw Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent dot over the 'i'.

**Huw Lewis AM**  
**Minister for Education and Skills**

**November 2015**

## The report's recommendations and Welsh Government responses

**Recommendation 1:** Local authorities should provide the WLGA (Welsh Local Government Association) with details of their current models of service provision by October 2015.

**Welsh Government response:** We welcome this recommendation and, working with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), we will encourage all local authorities who have not already done so to share with the WLGA their current models of service provision. This is the important first step towards enabling better collaboration between authorities.

**Recommendation 2:** By September 2015, the Welsh Government, working with WLGA and key stakeholders, should commission a 'case-study'-type guidance document on existing and potential models of delivery, for consideration by local government. This should be completed by the end of the financial year and made available to local authorities to assist their future planning.

**Welsh Government response:** We have agreed with the WLGA that they will be taking this forward and we understand that work is already under way to develop guidance on existing and potential models of service delivery. This guidance will assist local authorities in their decisions on future arrangements for music services to schools, enabling authorities to choose the best solution for local needs. We will promote this guidance on Welsh Government websites.

**Recommendation 3:** Local authorities should consider the range of provision models, and the WLGA should provide Welsh Government with each LA's preferred music services delivery model by October 2016.

**Welsh Government response:** We are encouraged by the commitment of the WLGA in taking forward this and other recommendations with the local authorities. Welsh Government officials will be working with the WLGA during 2015-16 towards gaining commitment from all local authorities regarding their preferred models for the future delivery of music services. The aim of this exercise must be to ensure that, whatever the vehicle of delivery, our children and young people are able to receive high-quality instrumental and vocal

tuition in line with the vision set out in the task and finish group's report. Local authorities will also need to be mindful of any support that music services currently provide for music in the curriculum, and the implications of the emerging curriculum which will be developed by the Pioneer Schools Network.

**Recommendation 4: Schools and governing bodies, working with their local authorities,** should adopt clear, fair and consistent charging policies for music tuition which should be prominent in schools' published policy documents by September 2016. For pupils facing poverty, schools and local authorities should optimise the use of grants and their own budgetary resources to minimise disadvantage.

**Welsh Government response:** We agree that schools and local authorities should be clear in their communication of charging policies for music tuition, and should provide parents and guardians with easy access to policies, pricing and other information about services. Implementation of this recommendation is a matter for schools, governing bodies and local authorities. Through our established relationships with local government, and through our communications to local authorities and schools, we will actively encourage schools to publish this information.

We recognise that due to a number of factors including geography, local needs and priorities, and socio-economic circumstances, achieving a pan-Wales charging structure is not feasible. Nevertheless we will be looking for greater consistency within and across local authorities. We will encourage authorities to work collaboratively to deliver a more consistent music services 'offer' and to ensure that charges passed on to parents are a fair reflection of actual costs.

Availability of subsidised music tuition for learners facing disadvantage should be a priority for all local authorities.

**Recommendation 5:** In their consideration of new models of provision, **local authorities** should seek to achieve greater consistency within their locality in terms of the running costs of service provision, with the consequent impact of achieving greater consistency in charges. This should be a priority for local authorities within the next two years and should include a review of the terms and conditions of Music Services staff with a view to ensuring fair, sustainable and transparent conditions of employment.

**Welsh Government response:** We ask that authorities examine the costs and models of provision in their locality and also work with other authorities to

examine running costs of music services. The goal should be that authorities adopt structures and terms that are more consistent within and across regions, and that running costs achieve value for money. This should result in greater consistency in the consequent charges to parents.

Implementation of this action is a matter for local authorities, working closely with their schools and supported by the WLGA.

**Recommendation 6: WLGA, in collaboration with other stakeholders,** should commission a national database of musical instruments (by category, grade and condition) within the next twelve months, in order to identify gaps and with a view to schools and local authorities collaborating on redistribution of existing instruments for mutual benefit.

**Welsh Government response:** We agree that it would be beneficial for local authorities to work together and with the WLGA to identify gaps in musical instrument distribution and to aid each other to redistribute surplus or in-demand instruments between schools and local authorities where feasible.

We welcome information sharing between the different local authorities, whether through the ADEW (Association for Directors of Education in Wales) sub-group for music services, or through existing local authority networks for sharing information. We will encourage collaboration through dedicated online music education networks on the new Welsh Government creative learning portal.

**Recommendation 7: Within the next six months, the Arts Council of Wales, working with other stakeholders,** should explore how a 'Take it Away' individual instrument purchase scheme can complement current musical instrument purchasing and loan plans.

**Welsh Government response:** We welcome consideration of a 'Take it Away' instrument purchase scheme by the Arts Council of Wales. While some local authorities already have assisted purchase schemes, a national scheme could reduce the administrative burden for local authorities. Further work is needed to consider how a national loan scheme might offer alternative and cost-effective ways to purchase instruments, for example through offering interest-free loans. We will work with the Arts Council of Wales and other stakeholders to examine options for individual and collective purchase of instruments.



**Recommendation 8:** The Welsh Government should work with key stakeholders during the next six months to look at the use of the National Procurement Service for the collective buying of core instruments.

**Welsh Government response:** We agree and we will examine whether there are benefits to framework contracts for purchasing instruments on a national or regional basis. We will work with the WLGA to compare costs with purchase at local authority and school level, taking into consideration other factors such as after-sales care, maintenance and guarantees, and whether large-scale framework contracts would be preferable to existing local or regional purchasing arrangements.

**Recommendation 9:** Local authority music services should work together over the next two years to develop collective share/repair/maintenance schemes with the aim of forming a consistent offer across Wales, and should also work together and with other stakeholders to hold a national instrument amnesty day.

**Welsh Government response:** We welcome this recommendation, although the implementation of this action is a matter for local authorities.

In a climate of budgetary constraints, a collective share/repair/maintenance scheme could assist local authorities in ensuring consistency in the quality of the instrument stock across Wales. New and innovative methods to deliver an improved service are essential to ensure that all young people with an interest or talent in music are able to access good quality instruments regardless of their background or where they live.

Some local authority music services are already holding instrument amnesty events where members of the public are invited to donate instruments. Individual local authorities will be best placed to judge the success of these events and the quality of the instruments donated.

If authorities who encourage the donation of instruments at a local level wish to collaborate across regions, we would seek to give the event a higher profile nationally.

**Recommendation 10:** ADEW should review the constitution of the heads of music services group (CAGAC) within the next six months, with revised terms of reference to reflect emerging strategic priorities.

**Welsh Government response:** We welcome this recommendation and understand that a new ADEW sub-group is being formed. We look forward to working with this group to take forward the recommendations of this report.

**Recommendation 11:** The Welsh Government should engage with the Music Partnership Forum Wales within the next six months and explore the potential for greater partnership working.

**Welsh Government response:** We agree and will be meeting with the Music Partnership Forum Wales to explore opportunities for greater collaboration at national and regional levels.

**Recommendation 12:** Starting immediately, local authorities should work with schools and governing bodies over the next two years towards adopting the terms of reference for music services set out in this report. These terms of reference should be widely publicised.

**Welsh Government response:** We welcome this recommendation. The terms of reference for music services in Wales set out in the report provide a clear statement of how we expect local authority music services to support schools. They set our expectations for consistent, high quality, affordable instrumental and vocal tuition in all our schools, opportunities for all our children and young people to learn and progress, and support for school music departments and non-specialist practitioners to deliver the curriculum.

We will publicise these terms of reference on Welsh Government websites. Working with our partners, ADEW and the WLGA, we will encourage all local authorities to sign up to these terms of reference, implement them in respect of their own music services, and work with schools and their governing bodies to ensure that they are widely adopted. Acceptance of these terms of reference by local authorities should lead to greater standardisation of the music services 'offer' to schools.

**Recommendation 13:** The **Arts Council of Wales** and the **Welsh Government** should investigate the possibility and parameters for the establishment of a National Endowment for Music to develop the opportunities for young people to realise their possibilities through music skills and talents. The research should look at the model for such an endowment and its resourcing, including the potential for a voluntary ticket levy, and Ministers should receive a report on initial feasibility within six months.

**Welsh Government response:** We agree. We have been working with the Arts Council of Wales and a feasibility study on establishing a National Endowment for Music to benefit the young people of Wales has been commissioned. The study will consider the various ways that a National Endowment could be capitalised and funded, including the possibility of a voluntary ticket levy. Arts Council of Wales will receive a report on the findings of the feasibility study later this autumn. We will then consider the next steps.

**Recommendation 14:** The **Welsh Government** should consider the inclusion of a focus on the quality and range of cultural provision and experiences offered to learners when next reviewing and further developing the categorization process under the National Model.

**Welsh Government response:** The national schools categorisation model was developed by consortia, local authorities and Welsh Government. The current categorization process was reviewed in summer 2015 and is not due for further formal review until the end of the current 3-year period. Therefore we are not currently open to inclusion of the quality and range of cultural provision as part of the categorization of schools.

Nevertheless, the arts and cultural provision feature prominently in our education policies and programmes. Starting in 2015, the Welsh Government, in partnership with the Arts Council of Wales, has put in place a 5-year plan for *Creative Learning through the Arts*. The plan aims to broaden and improve the cultural provision in schools, both in terms of developing creativity across the curriculum and providing increased opportunities for participation in arts and cultural experiences. We will also be working with the Pioneer Schools Network to develop the Expressive Arts as one of six Areas of Learning and Experience in the new curriculum.

**Recommendation 15: Local authorities**, starting immediately where appropriate, should engage in formal collaboration and co-construction of service models, with a view to ensuring that they achieve high quality and value for money. A memorandum of understanding should be used between two or more authorities to reflect current service/delivery models, working practices and partnership arrangements; such memoranda should also be shared with other local authorities as exemplars of good practice and collaboration.

**Welsh Government response:** We welcome this recommendation which is for local authorities to take forward, according to their preferences in terms of partners and the service models that best suit local and regional needs. In all instances, the aim should be that music services are maintained and improved, and that better value for money is achieved through collaboration, resulting in a high quality service available to schools.

The principles of collaboration and co-construction are set out in the draft memorandum of understanding in the task and finish group's report. Through our partners, ADEW and the WLGA, we will encourage local authorities to adopt this memorandum when collaborating on shared services.