



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-637  
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/00876/15  
William Powell AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee

[committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk)

20 May 2015

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 11 May regarding the petition from The Friends of Bridgend Youth Music about the Future of Youth Music in Wales.

I fully recognise the contribution that music makes to the well-being of young people in Wales. Music is a statutory requirement in all maintained schools from the Foundation Phase to the end of Key Stage 3, the point at which young people make their choices for GCSE.

The provision of music services, including providing individual tuition, is a matter for the local authorities to fund from the revenue support grant provided by the Welsh Government. All decisions on funding to support music services rest with local authorities and they determine what level of support they wish to give, based on their understanding of local needs and priorities.

In January this year I set up a task and finish group to consider the provision of music services in schools across Wales and to develop proposals for ensuring that, despite the difficult financial climate, local authorities can continue to deliver high quality services to learners across Wales. The group met on six occasions to consider a number of issues, including:


- 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.

The group consisted of representatives from local authorities, Association for Directors of Education in Wales, the regional education consortia, Arts Council of Wales and Estyn.

I have now received the group's final report and recommendations which will be published on the Welsh Government website very shortly. There are recommendations for the Welsh Government and other stakeholders which will require further consideration once the report is in the public domain. It would therefore be premature for me to comment on the petition referred to in your letter before the publication of the task and finish group report.

I am committed to improving opportunities for the arts in our schools. In March 2015, along with the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, I launched *Creative Learning through the Arts - An Action Plan for Wales*. The 5-year plan sets out our vision and action to improve attainment through creativity; increase and improve arts experiences for schools; and support teachers and arts practitioners in developing their skills. Through the Lead Creative Schools Scheme, the first strand of the plan to be implemented by the Arts Council of Wales, schools will have an opportunity to work with creative practitioners to improve outcomes for their learners. This will see practitioners – for example, artists, musicians, film makers – working closely with teachers to develop, design and implement new approaches in teaching and learning. The Arts and Education programme, to be developed later this year, will enable schools to draw on the knowledge and practice of artists and arts/cultural organisations to enhance and complement the teaching of the arts in schools and provide arts and cultural experiences for learners, both within and outside the curriculum.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bolt Regards" on the top line and "Huw" on the bottom line.

**Huw Lewis AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills