



To:

Bethan Sayed AM

Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport

Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education

National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

I am writing in response to the recent report 'Hitting the Right Note' published by the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee of the National Assembly for Wales. I would like to offer some comments on the report from my perspective as an interested party, the Director of the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales.

Firstly let me outline that I am very pleased that the report has been published and that the Committee has taken the time and effort to look into this topic. I believe this issue to be an important one for the future of the Welsh education sector, the National Assembly for Wales, Welsh Government and the young people of Wales. I believe the report is important because the continuing and recent rapid decline of music education provision in Wales is a serious problem which needs to be addressed immediately.

I would suggest that a debate within the Assembly and with the wider public into the idea of a National Plan for Music in Wales could be beneficial. This debate could look at the options for long term sustainable funding models that address the challenges currently faced by music services across Wales. As part of this debate and so as to address the immediate problems that exist and as a demonstration of the importance the Welsh Government takes this issue, the £2 million currently being held in the Welsh Assembly budget could be released with appropriate and pinpoint terms of reference so that a capable and knowledgeable organisation (most likely CAGAC) can develop an action plan to be implemented immediately to stem the tide of rapidly disappearing music service provision and so that young people of Wales are not further disadvantaged.

A clear vision and strategy that integrates music service provision and pupil progression pathways, ensuring that tuition is focussed on potential rather than payment ability, could be put in place,

agreed by all the appropriate bodies and delivery agencies and then overseen, and its delivery ensured, by the Welsh Government on an ongoing basis.

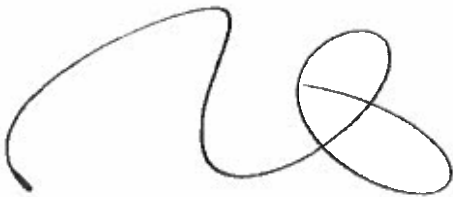
The decline in music service provision, hitherto organised by local authorities, compounded by the inability to both ring-fence money for music education and mandate educational bodies to teach music has allowed a generation of Wales' young people to be under-invested in. I would strongly suggest that it would be prudent to address this state of affairs to avoid a ripple effect on the future of the quality of Wales' music and professional music organisations for a number of generations to come.

With the support of Nick Capaldi, Chief Executive of the Arts Council of Wales, I have called together a group of colleagues from across the sector in Wales to discuss the report and to consider how we, as professional music leaders in Wales might respond to what it outlines. This group is not the establishment of a permanent advisory group that recommendation 8 of the report makes. However, I would particularly endorse this recommendation as I believe that the sector itself knows best how to deliver and how to structure a music education provision that can be the envy of the world and can ensure that Wales remains a leader in young people's music education. Empowering and appropriately resourcing the sector to deliver the vision and strategy that I believe is required is, in my opinion, the solution that this report is seeking. Hand in hand with that empowerment I would suggest that schools, ESTYN, and other educational bodies could work with the sector to share responsibility for the future of our young people and maintain the highest quality music provision that Wales can supply.

Assembly Members are very welcome, as observers, to this meeting which is being held at the home of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Hoddinott Hall on Monday 17th September at 2pm. If you like to attend, please do let me know ahead of time.

I am grateful for the time you have taken to read and to digest this letter. If you have any questions about what I have written here, please don't hesitate to ask.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, fluid, cursive 'M' followed by a smaller, more intricate cursive flourish.

MICHAEL GARVEY
Director, BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales
August 2018