

PE1694/L

West Lothian Council submission of 23 October 2018

The Committee requests the following information from each local authority:

- ***The drop-out rate of children having instrumental music tuition in the past two years***

It is not possible to accurately measure drop-out rates as the number of young people receiving instrumental tuition varies from month to month during the academic year. During the academic year 2016/17, numbers varied from 1875 at September 2016 to 2,194 at December 2016. The equivalent figures for academic year 2017/18 are shown in the table below.

	September	December
Academic Year 2016/17	1,875	2,194
Academic Year 2017/18	1,885	2,178

- ***The projected drop-out rate for this year if charges for instrumental music tuition continue to increase as they have done in recent years.***

The Education Executive will consider a report in December 2018 once the number of continuing students and the new intake of students are confirmed. Charges for the service were introduced for the academic year 2018/19. An extract of the Education Executive minute from the meeting of 29 May 2018 which approved the introduction of charging for the Instrumental Music Service is attached.

- ***Is there a particular reason that instrumental music tuition is not being regarded by education departments as a core subject?***

Curricular Music lessons form a core part of the Curriculum for Excellence, delivered by Teachers in a classroom setting. The Instrumental Music Service provides instrumental music lessons to primary and secondary pupils who have expressed an interest in learning a musical instrument and who may or may not choose to progress to an SQA qualification. The instrumental music service also provides an opportunity to play in bands and ensembles.

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EXTRACT: MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 29 MAY 2018.

6. TRANSFORMING YOUR COUNCIL - INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC SERVICE

The Education Executive considered a report by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) inviting members of consider the outcome of the family survey and pupil engagement undertaken in line with the decision of the Education Executive of 17 April 2018.

Decision

To unanimously agree a position as undernoted:

The Education Executive accepts the decision taken on 13 February 2018 to introduce a revised model of instrumental music provision maintaining a substantial level of tuition while achieving a saving of £493,000.

The response to the survey undertaken following the Education Executive meeting on 24 April 2018 shows a clear majority in favour of introducing charges for instrumental music tuition. While the total number of responses in favour of charging represents less than 20% of the total number of families eligible to take part the Executive will be guided by the majority view.

The Education Executive is aware that the introduction of charging may have adverse effects on the instrumental music service in the longer term, reducing the number of participants and impacting on the quality of the service. For this reason the Education Executive instructs officers to put in place a number of safeguards designed to ensure, as far as possible, that children and young people are not forced to abandon or decline instrumental music tuition because their families are unable to afford it.

The Education Executive therefore instructs officers:-

1. To implement a charge of £354 for all pupils receiving instrumental music tuition in session 2018/19 to be paid in advance with flexibility allowed in the method of payment. This level of charge is necessary to recover the full cost of providing the service and includes an allowance for the introduction of concessions, a drop in uptake and non-payment. An interim review of the level of charging will take place in December 2018 with a report coming forward to the Education Executive for consideration.

2. To implement a scheme of concessions with:-

a) free tuition provided to pupils in receipt of free school meals, looked after children and pupils whose SQA performance module is in the same instrument in which they receive tuition .

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b) a 50% reduction in the cost of tuition of the second and each of the subsequent siblings who receive tuition.

3. To inform all users and potential users of the service of these charges as soon as reasonably practicable.

The Education Executive further instructs officers to consider schemes in other Scottish local authorities, and elsewhere, that allow families not in receipt of free school meals but who would nevertheless struggle to afford the full cost of instrumental tuition to receive tuition at a discounted rate.

The Education Executive instructs the Chief Executive to write to the First Minister of Scotland, the Depute First Minister of Scotland, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution and the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs with details of the decisions taken by the Education Executive on charging for instrumental music. The Chief Executive should make clear that these decisions are a direct consequence of the failure of the Scottish Government to fully fund local authorities in Scotland and should call upon the Scottish Government to increase funding to all local authorities to allow all children in Scotland to have access to free instrumental music tuition as part of their education.