

## **PE1694/U**

North Lanarkshire Council submission of 31 October 2018

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

There has been no drop-out in the past two years, due to our charging policy.

The reason for this being as follows;

Music charges in NLC were introduced in 2011 and at that time, approximately 30% stopped taking music instruction. The majority of these young people we believe came from families who were low paid but not in receipt of benefits.

However, over a relatively short period of time after the introduction of charges, these vacancies were taken up by a new cohort of pupils. It would be logical to assume that these new pupils came from higher income families.

As a council, we are sensitive to the fact that there are a number of families in North Lanarkshire on low incomes and, therefore we have tried to maintain our charges for music instruction to a reasonable level to try and avoid any further drop-out.

Please note that there has been no increase in the amount that parents/carers are expected to contribute since charges were introduced in 2011. In recognition of this we have also put in place a number exemptions that take into account that for certain families charges would be an untenable imposition. For those families who are not eligible for exemptions we have also tried to make payment as affordable as possible by allowing parents/carers to pay the annual £150 charge in 4 instalments of £37.50.

The following exemptions from payment currently apply:

- Parents are not charged if their child is in receipt of free school meals
- Parents are not charged if their child is in receipt of footwear and clothing grants
- Parents are not charged if their children attend an ASN school or mainstream Language and Communication Support Centre
- Parents are not charged if their child is in the Senior Phase and studying for an SQA national examination in Music

The charges that are in place allow NLC to maintain the high level of service which we believe is what parents/carers would prefer. Music Instruction is still subsidised by the Council to a significant 85% of the total cost of running the service.

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

There are no plans in this current financial year to increase charges for tuition. However, from previous experience, it would be reasonable to expect that any increase in the charges could result in further drop-out.

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

NLC is operating under the Scottish Government guidelines that presently exist for Instrumental Tuition in schools.

We value the contribution our Instrumental Music service makes to improving the life chances of all our children and young people, including their literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. We also recognise that in order to give our young people elements of personalisation and choice, that for certain instruments, our instructors are required to deliver the practical element of the SQA national examination in Music.

However, as constraints in local government expenditure increase, they limit the ability to divert funds to non-statutory aspects of the education service