

# Gwasanaeth Cerdd Sir Gâr Carmarthenshire Music Service

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Cyngor Sir Gâr  
Carmarthenshire  
County Council



Carmarthenshire Music Service provides peripatetic music support to over 85 schools across the county of Carmarthenshire. Currently over 3,500 learners receive tuition on a weekly basis via a range of instrumental and vocal opportunities as well as curriculum support at Key Stage 2.

The service currently employs 30 members of staff which is a mixture of full-time and part-time employees (22.2 FTE).

Music Service staff provide tuition to schools for a minimum of 36 weeks in each academic year. Outside of directed time, where staff support weekly ensemble rehearsals, staff are teaching to capacity within schools and settings.

The Music Service works closely with head teachers and school-based staff to deliver a music programme that is engaging for all learners. This will help our young people realise the four purposes of Curriculum for Wales, enabling them to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethically, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead a fulfilling life as valued members of society.

## **The Importance of Music**

Music education is important for a variety of reasons, as it offers numerous benefits to individuals and society as a whole. Here are some key reasons why music education is vital to learners in our county:

1. **Cognitive Development:** Learning music involves various cognitive processes such as memory, attention, and problem-solving. It has been linked to improved academic performance, particularly in subjects like mathematics and language.
2. **Emotional and Social Skills:** Music provides a unique platform for self-expression and emotional exploration. Through music education, individuals learn to express themselves creatively, understand and convey emotions, and collaborate with others in group settings, fostering social skills and teamwork.
3. **Discipline and Time Management:** Learning an instrument or participating in a music ensemble requires discipline and regular practice. This helps students develop good habits of time management, perseverance, and a strong work ethic.
4. **Enhanced Motor Skills:** Playing musical instruments involves the use of fine and gross motor skills. This can contribute to the development of coordination and dexterity, benefiting both physical and cognitive aspects of a person's development.
5. **Cultural Appreciation:** Music education exposes individuals to a variety of musical styles and traditions, promoting an understanding and appreciation of different cultures and histories. This can contribute to a more culturally aware and open-minded society. The unique culture of Wales includes our rich heritage of singing which is nurtured from a young age in our county.

6. **Confidence Building:** Achieving proficiency in music can boost a person's self-esteem and confidence. Performing in front of others, whether in a small group or a larger audience, helps individuals overcome stage fright and develop confidence in their abilities.
7. **Creativity and Critical Thinking:** Music encourages creativity and originality. It stimulates the imagination and helps individuals think outside the box. Additionally, the process of learning and creating music involves critical thinking skills, as musicians make decisions about interpretation, expression, and technique.
8. **Stress Reduction and Well-being:** Music has therapeutic qualities and can be a source of stress relief. Engaging with music through playing instruments or singing can have positive effects on mental health and overall well-being.
9. **Lifelong Enjoyment:** Music education lays the foundation for a lifelong enjoyment and appreciation of music. Whether individuals become professional musicians or simply continue to engage with music as a hobby, the skills and appreciation developed during music education can last a lifetime.
10. **Community Building:** Music brings people together. Group performances, ensembles, and choirs create a sense of community and shared accomplishment. This fosters social connections and a sense of belonging.

## **National Plan for Music Education**

The National Plan for Music Education sits alongside the new Curriculum for Wales. Music is the only subject within the Expressive Arts Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) that has been provided with its own national strategy for learners in Wales. The National Plan for Music Education is statutory.

The National Music Service does not have any operational involvement in the 'day to day' management of Carmarthenshire Music Service. All elements of the new national plan are being delivered by Carmarthenshire Music Service as well as any associated support and training.

Carmarthenshire County Council has supported the successes of the Music Service over many years which is why we have such a sector leading provision for our pupils. Many other authorities in Wales are now in the process of developing strategies to respond to the requirements of the plan with one authority required to re-start a county Music Service after an absence of over 20 years.

The National Plan for Music Education requires Music Services in Wales to provide extended support for music-making under three key headings:

- Music In Schools – This includes programmes of study within four areas: *First Experiences, Live Music Experiences, Music Tuition* and *Music Pathways*.
- Schools, Settings and Wider Communities – This element focuses on the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales including equity, diversity and inclusion as well as music for lifelong learning, health and well-being.

- Music Outside of Schools – This includes making music with others, focusing on music activities and ensembles as well as performance and creative industries training.

Carmarthenshire Music Service has a significant amount of responsibility in realising the aims of the national plan for Music Education in addition to providing weekly instrument tuition, vocal tuition and ensemble opportunities for the learners in Carmarthenshire. The WLGA has committed to providing a grant for one more year to assist with this provision, however, it significantly underestimates the cost of provision in rural authorities such as Carmarthenshire.

The National Music Service for Wales is required to monitor and report on the delivery of the plan, including developing an evaluation strategy identifying baseline data and key outcomes to measure the impact of this work programme. A survey is carried out with each authority at key intervals in conjunction with Data Cymru to gather data on the progress of the plan.

## **New Curriculum for Wales**

The arts subjects have new prominence in the Welsh curriculum and form one of the six AoLEs for learners: Expressive Arts – Music, Drama, Dance, Art and Digital Media.

A significant amount of the training and support for schools in relation to new aspects of the curriculum is being provided by the Music Service. Staff from the Music Service have significant curriculum experience and expertise on the majority of the five key areas within the Expressive Arts AoLE – a large amount of this support is not currently available directly from Partneriaeth. The Music Service can continue to grow its support for schools and provide a first class programme for upskilling non music specialists.

Other consortia in Wales have made significant progress in certain areas particularly in regard to the Digital Competence Framework (DCF). Carmarthenshire Music Service is leading on a number of exciting new groundbreaking initiatives which are being emulated by neighbouring authorities. This is a testament to the skill-set within the current team, however, this is predicted to increase over the coming years.



## **School Support – Service Level Agreement Offer**

Schools are offered range of support via an annual Service Level Agreement (SLA) for a wide range of disciplines:

Upper Strings – Violin and Viola

Lower Strings – Cello and Double Bass

Brass – Trumpet, Cornet, Tenor Horn, French Horn, Baritone, Euphonium, Trombone and Tuba.

Woodwind – Flute (including curved-head flutes for Key Stage 2 pupils), Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Soprano Saxophone, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone and Baritone Saxophone.

Guitar – Acoustic Guitar, Electric Guitar and Bass Guitar.

Percussion – Drum Kit and Tuned Percussion.

Harp – Welsh Harp.

Keyboard – Piano and Keyboard.

Recorder – Whole class support (including PPA cover), group tuition and individual lessons.

Curriculum Support – Tuition is offered to support the statutory requirement at Key Stage 2. The service has also provided tuition and INSET support for Edexcel Music Technology (AS and A Level).

Vocal – Whole class support (including PPA cover), group tuition and individual lessons.

Piano Accompaniment – Support for school assemblies and external examinations is offered.

Music Technology – This current offer provides teaching and training for all aspects of *Charanga*, *Soundtrap* and all other digital packages that are available.

In addition to the weekly instrumental and vocal lessons the service provides a variety of ensemble performing opportunities for learners. These programmes allow learners to progress and to develop their ensemble skills across the Key Stages:

### **Junior Ensembles – Primary School Pupils – Years 3-6**

- These activities are for primary school pupils only
- 10 ensembles are currently provided for learners

- All rehearsals take place on a termly basis at venues across the county
- All ensembles perform at the annual Junior Proms which take place at the Ffwrnes Theatre, Llanelli at the end of the summer term

#### Intermediate Ensembles – Secondary School Pupils – Years 7-9

- These activities are structured for Key Stage 3 pupils
- 4 ensembles are currently offered to learners
- The majority of rehearsals take place on a weekly basis at Q.E. High School, Carmarthen
- All ensembles perform at the annual Intermediate Music Festival which is held at Q.E. High School

#### Carmarthenshire Senior Ensembles – Secondary Pupils – Years 10-13

- These activities are structured for Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 pupils
- 6 ensembles are currently offered to learners
- Rehearsals take place on a termly / half-termly basis at Neuadd Y Gwendraeth and Q.E. High School
- All ensembles perform at the annual Intermediate Music Festival which is held at Neuadd Y Gwendraeth, Drefach



## **GCSE and A Level Provision**

Music Service staff are integral to the delivery of GCSE, AS and A Level programmes of study in our secondary schools. In the vast majority of cases, Music service staff have the responsibility to prepare learners for the entire performance elements, which can include solo and ensemble performances:

- WJEC Music GCSE – The performance element (Unit 1) accounts for 30% of the overall final mark.
- WJEC Music AS / A Level – The performance element can account for up to 34% of the overall final mark (depending on the pathway chosen by the pupil).

Secondary school staff do not have the skill-set to be able to deliver the vast range of provision required to support these elements of the courses. Carmarthenshire Music staff consistently support learners to achieve some of the highest marks across the country.

## **Learner voice**

Carmarthenshire Music Service has a pupil voice programme titled 'Llais Cerdd' where pupils are given the opportunity to shape the programmes of study for ensemble performances. Pupils have been eager to be involved and have felt empowered with the process. We have already started to implement changes to support learners such as adapting the calendar of events to support access. We are in the process of expanding our 'Llais Cerdd' initiative.

## **Instrument / Equipment Loan**

Instruments are provided to pupils free of charge and each 'loan' is reviewed on an individual basis each year. Pupils have access to any instrument within the range of tuition that is offered including adapted / plastic instruments for Additional Learning Needs pupils.

Schools are also able to borrow a wide range of equipment and musical instruments depending on the individual need e.g. Public Address systems, Keyboards, Synthesisers, Amplifiers, Choral Staging etc.

## **Corporate Support**

The Music Service supports corporate colleagues and departments in a variety of ways across a wide range of events each year:

- Performances at events as required e.g. Royal engagements, civic ceremonies, corporate launches etc.

- Equipment loan e.g. Public Address (PA) systems, radio microphones, broadcast, radio communication devices, equipment, support for Theatrau Sir Gar events and productions etc.
- Demonstrations
- Technical support and training

These elements of support are provided free of charge and can often take a significant amount of planning and time for Music Service staff. These elements of support also save money for corporate departments e.g. a small PA hire can cost between £250 and £500 for a short term three day event.

### **Community Support**

The service currently supports a number of instrumental, vocal and theatrical groups in the community including Carmarthen Symphonic Wind Band, Llanelli Wind Band, Llandeilo Wind Band, Nantgaredig Community Band, Crwbin Brass Band, Carmarthen Youth Opera, Carmarthen Amateur Operatic Society and BOW Productions. Support for these organisations is varied and ranges from repertoire and instrument loan to performance support with concerts and productions.

This involvement in community music develops music for lifelong learning contributing to national health and well-being objectives. This allows all that engage with it to build skills for life.

Future plans for community support include an exciting new opportunity to work with the Adult and Community Learning (ACL) team. Learners will be offered a range of group tuition including ukulele lessons and woodwind lessons. We hope to grow and expand this pilot over the coming years.

The Music Service is also investigating the potential of working with leisure department and specifically the county library system. This pilot hopes to make instruments and tutor books available via the same process of hiring books etc. This process is currently being trailed in Scotland and the Music Service hopes to provide the first pilot of this nature in Wales.

### **Key Events**

#### **2023**

- Sellout Intermediate and Senior Proms festivals during March / April. With ensemble numbers returning to pre-COVID levels.
- Carmarthenshire Music Service leads on key aspects of the Eisteddfod Sir Gar 2023 (January 2023 – May 2023).
- Junior Proms activities resume with three concerts for over 1,600 primary school pupils (June 2023).
- Symphony Hall, Birmingham (July 2023) – Music for Youth Regional Finals – Carmarthenshire Youth Wind Band.



- During the course of the 2023 Christmas period it is expected that Music Service staff will support over 100 school and community concerts, show and performances.

## 2022

- Post-COVID recovery of 'face to face' ensembles commences (September 2023). Performance opportunities begin with Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 ensembles - Primary School opportunities follow shortly after.
- ABC of Opera project launched in Carmarthen and Llanelli for pupils from Years 5-8. The project feature a live band of Secondary school pupils from across the county (October 2022).
- 'Face to face' concert performances resume for all county ensembles in December 2022.

## 2020 - 2021

- Instrumental and vocal tuition commences for all schools in Carmarthenshire via synchronous means following a successful trial in April 2020. Carmarthenshire leads the way in this new format of tuition with new technology.
- 'Synchronous ensemble activities' launch in April 2020 for Music Service Staff and pupils. Carmarthenshire Music Service is the first entity in Wales to produce work of this nature and receives media coverage.
- Carmarthenshire Music Service becomes one of the first in Wales to resume 'face to face' tuition across all schools.

## 2019

- Sellout Intermediate and Senior Proms festivals during March / April.
- Symphony Hall, Birmingham (July 2019) – Music for Youth Regional Finals – Carmarthenshire Youth Orchestra.
- Royal Performance for HRH The Duchess of Cornwall (July 2019) – Carmarthenshire Youth Jazz Orchestra.



## 2018

- Symphony Hall, Birmingham (July 2018) – Music for Youth Regional Finals – Côr Merched Sir Gâr, County Wind Band and Carmarthenshire Youth Jazz Orchestra
- Llangollen International Eisteddfod (July 2018) – Côr Merched Sir Gâr
- From 12th September to 14th September 2018 the Music Service staff performed a 'Peripatetic Music Tour' to Key Stage 2 pupils across the county. A total of six concerts were held and over 2,000 Carmarthenshire pupils were in attendance.

