

PE1694/V

Inverclyde Council submission of 31 October 2018

The Instrumental music service has been a key part of our young people's learning here in Inverclyde for over 20 years.

Our offer to young people begins at P4 when they are offered to learn a string instrument (mainly violin) through to an extended offer in P6/7 to consider Woodwind, Brass or Vocal. This provision made available to all primary schools is free, there are costs involved for any child. Over recent years the Council has maintained the budget to a level that ensures this provision continues and on a free basis.

Where young people wish to continue their learning of 'musical instruments' in secondary school (S1 onwards) there is a wider choice of specialisms available which include Guitar, Pipes and Percussion there may now be a charge involved. As a council we have successfully managed to keep our charges fairly static over the last 3 years with no reduction in the service being offered to our young people. Charges are means tested, so not all pay and by S4 when SQA Music exams are involved the service is again provided free

In addition to the music instruction service the local authority also fund and deliver 'out of school hours' tuition via our 'Music Centre'. This involves after school lessons and a Saturday morning session covering Training Band, Concert Band, Junior Strings and Choirs. Whilst there is a charge for this it does not cover the cost to deliver. The maximum charged for this support is £10 per academic year.

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

Dropout rates for those leaving primary and starting in secondary are high, particularly when looking at primary schools from areas of higher deprivation, however, on talking to music instructors it is not clear if this is solely down to there being charges introduced or just linked to secondary school being different and offering more extra-curricular activities.

When pupils start lessons in secondary school the dropout rate is low. Instructors are 'discouraged' from asking pupils why they are dropping out particularly if it is felt it could be for financial reasons.

There is no evidence that the drop-out rates are linked to the charging for tuition but the young person losing interest or no longer wishing to dedicate the time to it. However, when we look at the dropout rates in terms of school demographics it may suggest that charges being introduced in secondary do impact on numbers even when concessions are offered.

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

In Inverclyde there is no evidence that drop-out rates are linked to an increase in charges for the service. Over the past 4 years the charge has remained fairly static rising from £111 in 2015 to a current charge of £117 for 2018/19.

Music Instruction Charge	
2015/16	£111
2016/17	£114
2017/18	£117
2018/19	£117
2019/20	£120 tbc

In relation to the council budget for the past 2 years there has been no reduction, in fact there has been a slight increase (see figs below)

2017/18 Budget	
Instrumental Services	596,220
Musical Activities	85,280
Total Music	681,500

2018/19 Budget	
Instrumental Services	605,210
Musical Activities	82,460
Total Music	687,670

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

Whilst local authorities and schools enjoy greater flexibility in terms of curriculum design via Curriculum for Excellence, it remains that music tuition is as a discretionary service which supports the delivery of our core curriculum area - music. Tuition is not part of the current Scottish Curriculum but supported by the local authority to enhance the music provision and support young people who have a flair for music.