

EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 28 th November 2024
Report Subject	Theatr Clwyd and School Music Service
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update and overview of Theatr Clwyd's work with young people following all activities moving to an independent charitable trust status in 2021.

Theatr Clwyd Trust and Theatr Clwyd Music Trust are now well established and despite the challenges of Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, cost of living crisis, and operating against the backdrop of a major capital project, both are making steady progress in achieving their ambitious business plan priorities.

Theatr Clwyd Trust is the third biggest client of the Arts Council of Wales (ACW) and delivers work across creative disciplines and cross generationally. As well as artistic delivery they also use partnership work to identify and co-create socially focused programmes – long standing partnerships include Social Services, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), and Police and Communities Trust (PACT).

Theatr Clwyd Music Trust is one of the key delivery mechanisms for the National Plan for Music Education which was established by Welsh Government in 2022. This ensures children and young people in Flintshire benefit from this important national initiative regardless of their financial circumstances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members note the developments of the Theatr Clwyd Trust and Theatr Clwyd Music Trust since their creation in 2021.
2	That members are assured that the Theatr Clwyd Trust and Music Trust are positively and actively delivering towards work with young people in Flintshire in both formalised educational settings and in other areas of delivery and continuing to develop on the National Music Service Plan.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THEATR CLWYD TRUST AND MUSIC TRUST
1.01	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Theatr Clwyd became an independent charitable trust and trading group in 2021. The aim was to offer a more flexible operating model and take operating risk away from Flintshire County Council.</p>
1.02	Theatr Clwyd Music Trust (TCMT) was set up specifically to deliver music education for young people, and with an aim to develop a new and sustainable business model.
1.03	Across the two trusts there are currently 153 core employees (this will rise closer to 240 over the next 12 months), with close to 50 having a focus on education, youth and communities work – all of whom use artistic practice as a tool for social change and learning.
1.04	<p>Following significant consultation with schools, musicians, parents and Flintshire County Council in 2019/20, a set of principles and a new financial model was agreed for music in the county. The new model was not introduced until September 2022 due to the impact of COVID-19. Updates were then reported at the Education, Youth & Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 2nd February 2023.</p> <p>It was previously reported that over the next five years, Theatr Clwyd’s Music Trust aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve the quality and options of the Music Service • Continue to reduce costs for schools • Continue to reduce costs for parents • Increase choice for schools and parents • Ensure all families are charged the same across the county • Work towards a cost neutral model for schools • Reduce administrative burden on schools
1.05	<p><u>New Leadership for Theatr Clwyd Music</u></p> <p>Following Aled Marshman stepping down as Director of TCMT in July 2023, Cath Sewell was appointed as the new Director and took up post in January</p>

2024. Cath has a background leading learning programmes at venues and other UK Music Services.

During this first year, Cath has focussed on establishing stability and ensuring operational processes are fit of purpose after a period of significant change. A major part of this has been engaging the Music team, building a renewed sense of shared vision and purpose and also engaging with schools.

1.06 Review of schools offer and income model

Following feedback from schools regarding the first two academic years of delivery and the contribution paid for each pupil having an instrumental or vocal lesson in school, a new model was proposed and, after consultation with teachers and the Primary and Secondary Heads' Federations, this was adopted from September 2024.

The new model removes the school contribution per lesson (an unpredictable cost for schools, even more so as a byproduct of Theatr Clwyd taking on all administration as requested). For clarity, although schools are now not contributing to lessons, we still offer young people lessons as in all previous models. This is the first time schools in Flintshire have not had to contribute.

Reducing school contributions to 0% has been offset by a small increase in lesson cost to parents (around 11%) and we are piloting a new subscription offer for schools. This subscription offer asks schools to pay a yearly fee in return for workshops, live performances, training and curriculum support. This allows schools to manage their budgets, whilst also ensuring Theatr Clwyd can continue to develop the new and sustainable operating model for music education. Alongside the subscription, we are also promoting the wider buy in of weekly whole class and ensembles. Details of the subscription are included in Appendix 1 (5.01).

The take up of the subscription has been lower than predicted - we have 14 schools currently signed up but this does allow us to focus on a high quality offer for fewer schools in this pilot year. Schools have also signed up to the First Experiences Follow On offer (which extends the initial free First Experiences delivery to a full academic year) and also ensembles and groups (figures below).

Subscription plus First Experiences Follow On	7
Southdown Primary School	
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	
Westwood Primary School	
Ysgol Bro Carmel	
Ysgol Croes Atti, Flint	
Ysgol Glanrafon, Yr Wyddgrug // Mold	
Ysgol Pen Coch	

	Subscription	7	
	Argoed High School		
	Flint High School		
	Hawarden High School		
	Broughton Primary School		
	Sealand C.P. School		
	Ysgol Croes Atti, Shotton		
	Ysgol Glan Aber, Bagillt		
	First Experiences Follow On	4	
	Rhos Helyg		
	St John the Baptist		
	Ysgol Bryn Garth		
	Ysgol Maes y Felin		
	Other Sessions or Groups	5	
	Southdown Primary School		
	St John the Baptist CiW School		
	St Mary's Catholic Primary School		
	Ysgol Glanrafon, Yr Wyddgrug // Mold		
	Argoed High School		
1.07	<p><u>Overview of Pupil Numbers</u></p> <p>Numbers of young people having lessons have continued to increase with 1121 having individual or group lessons in school. We have simplified the group lesson option from September 2024 (groups of 2 pupils are 20 minute lessons and groups of 3 are 30 minutes). The breakdown of learners per schools are included in Appendix 2 (5.02).</p> <p>We also have 233 students on the waiting list, demonstrating a continuing demand for lessons. We will continue to develop our team of Music Associates to meet this demand, which has become increasingly important for the financial model having reduced school contributions in full.</p>		

Most schools continue to fund lessons for both eFSM learners and GCSE and A-level music students. In 2024/25 we have 95 eFSM pupils having lessons funded by school, and schools are currently paying for lessons for 130 GCSE and A-level students.

1.08

First Experiences

This has been a major area of development over the last 2 years. During 2023/2024 this programme was delivered in 61 schools and reached 1560 year 3 pupils. This year, Theatr Clwyd are delivering the programme in all 65 Primary schools and 2 special schools in the county and it will reach 1900 year 3 pupils.

We have also moved to a new delivery model with half the schools in the county having sessions during September to February; and half from February to July. Each school has 17 sessions in total plus a culmination concert. Significant time was spent evaluating the programme and delivering training for the First Experiences Team in Summer 2024 and there are 4 training and evaluation sessions this academic year.

The table below tracks the development of the programme:

Year	Number of learners (whole class and First Experiences)
2020/21	0
2021/22	105
2022/23	800
2023/24	1560
2024/25	1900

The First Experiences programme is made possible by funding from the Wales National Music Service. Theatr Clwyd implements this funding to ensure all First Experiences are free to schools and young people, and pupils receive a high quality, sustained opportunity to learn instrumental and singing skills. This is not delivered to the same depth or extent in all counties in Wales.

There has been an informal verbal notification that the National Music Service funding will be continued for 2025/26 and this should be confirmed in November. Funding for the next two years is expected to be announced in late Spring 2025. Amounts have not been confirmed but there will be a further "small" cut in addition to the 10% reduction received for the 2024/25 financial year.

Some quotes from teachers about the programme:

"We have a child who rarely joins in, shies away from any kind of performances and often appears not to be engaged. I did wonder whether he could be doing something else instead during the session time until he told me that he enjoys the sessions. His parent told me that he has been talking

	<p><i>about different note names and wondered what notes a band (they were watching on tv) were playing. I think this is evidence of the First Experiences sparking curiosity and creative thinking despite some challenges some of the children are experiencing.”</i></p> <p><i>‘Such opportunities are more important than ever. If we are to enrich pupil's lives with the arts as the new curriculum for Wales promotes, then having the experience of live music and theatre is so important. Budget cuts will mean many schools will not be able to provide such opportunities and for many pupils its only through school that they get the exposure to the arts.’</i></p>
1.09	<p><u>Progression and Ensemble Development</u></p> <p>TCMT Ensembles have continued to develop and numbers are continuing to increase. We have 9 ensembles which cover a range of instruments, voice and genres. From September 2024, Beginner Strings and Windband are offering a group learning opportunity for total beginners including providing an instrument.</p> <p>We have also built a partnership with Denbighshire and Wrexham Music Cooperatives to launch new Tri-County Ensembles. Over 120 young instrumentalists and singers from Flintshire, Denbighshire and Wrexham came together in March 2024 for the Tri-County Ensembles course which culminated in a concert at William Aston Hall (part of Theatr Clwyd’s operations). With an audience of over 350, there were performances by the three new Tri-County Ensembles: the String Orchestra, a Fusion Band (combination of wind band and jazz band) and Junior and Senior Choirs.</p> <p>Some comments from students and parents following the Tri County performance:</p> <p><i>‘I enjoyed most the atmosphere of everyone together and the band playing with all the instruments playing together with I think sounded amazing.’ Fusion Band member</i></p> <p><i>‘I enjoyed the whole choir singing together, I also enjoyed performing on the stage at William Aston Hall. It was good to meet people that share the same interest in music as me.’ Choir member</i></p> <p><i>‘We cannot thank you enough for giving our daughter the wonderful opportunity to take part She has never sung to anyone but her singing teacher, your team expertly supported her autism... The concert was exceptional, an utter joy to see the amazing talent supported by your team.’ Parent</i></p>

The table below provides a summary of numbers having lessons and taking part in ensembles.

Year	Number of learners (Small group and individual)	Number of Learners in Ensembles
2020/21	397	0
2021/22	975	65
2022/23	1160	81
2023/24	1073	101
2024/25	1121	113

1.10 Music with Pupils with ALN and Special Schools

Both Flintshire's Special Schools have been involved with the First Experiences in both 2023/24 and 2024/25. Sessions have been adapted to work with their pupils' specific needs and they were able to play a full part in the performance at William Aston Hall. Both schools have music specialist teacher based in school and they are working with Theatr Clwyd to develop further programmes of work in 2024/25 which will include an accessible music technology pilot. This is a focus area for Theatr Clwyd Music in the next 18 months.

1.11 Live Music Experiences and Workshops

Theatr Clwyd continue to offer schools the chance to experience live music and inspirational one-off workshops. The most significant of these recently was the First Experience Culmination Concert in April 2024, created in partnership with BBC NOW and which reached 1500 year 3s.

A number of ensembles have been toured performances in our schools, including BBC NOW and Sinfonia Cymru in 2023/24. Performances by TC Music Associates and youth ensembles are an important part of our offer to schools.

A residency was hosted with the Benedetti Foundation in June and July 2024. 90 string players from Flintshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire attended a String Day on 7th June and 20 Music Associates took part in training linked to this. There were then 6 workshops delivered in Flintshire schools in July.

1.12 National Plan and Regional Meetings

In January 2024 the Welsh Government cut £500K from the National Music Service funding which has led to a £15000 reduction (7.4%) in TC's National Music Service funding. Originally it was £203,250, it was reduced to £188,250 for 23/24 and remains at this level for 24/25.

	Cath regularly attends meetings with the North Wales Music Services as well as National Music Service events.
1.13	<p><u>Links with Creative Engagement work</u></p> <p>Alongside music delivery, Theatr Clwyd has a wide range of regular work with young people. The majority of the Creative Engagement work focuses on engagement outside of educational settings, including 300 people between the ages of 4 and 25 who attend weekly 'Adra' (Home) sessions. These include drama, writing, stage management, dance and musical theatre groups as well as TC's Fuse groups for learning disabled young people.</p>
1.14	<p><u>Social Services Partnership</u></p> <p>Theatr Clwyd has a long standing relationship with Social Services in Flintshire working with many of the most vulnerable young people in the county on a regular basis. These has led to 40% of the young people in the Adra programmes receiving bursaries (a significant move from a mostly middleclass paid for model in 2018) with the majority of these also on travel bursaries allowing them to attend sessions.</p> <p>Due to this work Theatr Clwyd have put in significant support workers for young people and supervision for the professional facilitators who often handle complicated disclosures. With strong partnership work this is passed onto social workers and Theatr Clwyd Company Members are regularly involved in case reviews alongside other professional services.</p> <p>In partnership with Craig Macleod, Chief Officer for Social Services, and his senior team, Theatr Clwyd are drafting a five year strategy for this important area of work.</p>
	<p><u>Youth Service and Youth Justice Services Partnership</u></p> <p>Theatr Clwyd continue to deliver work in partnership with Police and Communities Trust (PACT) on youth justice and crime based on specific need. This most recently, and worryingly most regularly, focuses on County Lines, and also consent for young women, especially online. These programmes are being remodelled to reduce the 'drop in' element of the work and match Theatr Clwyd's wider work which aims for long term and sustained relationships with young people.</p>
1.15	<p><u>Youth Board</u></p> <p>Theatr Clwyd are twelve months into having a Youth Board of members between 12-25 years old. This board is recognised formally as a subcommittee of the full Board of Trustees, and the Youth Board Chair (who is required to be over 18) has a position as full trustee, with the Vice Chair having observer status at full Board meetings.</p> <p>The Executive team attend all Youth Board meetings, and the Board are currently working up plans for a significant survey to distribute across the county for young people to offer their feedback on what Theatr Clwyd could be doing for them.</p>

1.16	<p><u>Other Work in Schools</u></p> <p>Theatr Clwyd recently worked in partnership with Ysgol Treffynnon to deliver a full 'Take Over Week'. This consisted of most lessons being taken over by Theatr Clwyd arts facilitators, delivering everything from history and maths to science and Geography through artistic delivery methods. At lunch and break time live music was played and available for students to take part in, and during the week 60 young people came together each afternoon to create a sharing. The change reported and seen in the young people was significant - happiness, calmness and friendships across year groups. This is a model both Theatr Clwyd and the school really believe works, and plans are in place to develop this further and deliver in other high schools as another way of supporting delivery of the new curriculum.</p>
1.17	<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>Theatr Clwyd takes seriously its responsibilities to keep people safe. All the team have safeguarding training regularly and all new members have training as part of their induction. Strong policies have been ratified by Theatr Clwyd's safeguarding group, alongside an independent third party review, and given the significant amount of safeguarding expertise the Theatr Clwyd team have through their partnership with Social Services, the safeguarding work continues to be robust and thorough.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	No additional resource implications to Flintshire County Council.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT							
3.01	<p>Service risks are recorded and monitored through the Theatr Clwyd Trust and Theatr Clwyd Music Trust's operational management processes and reported regularly to both Board of Trustees. Reporting also regularly takes place to Arts Council Wales, and via Flintshire's Scrutiny Committee's.</p> <p>The operations of Theatr Clwyd make a significant contribution to Wales' Well-being Goals as outlined in the table below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 1671 1380 2024"> <tr> <td data-bbox="328 1671 743 1742">Prosperous Wales</td> <td data-bbox="751 1671 1372 1742">Economic Impact through jobs, supply chains and tourism in the area.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="328 1753 743 1928">Resilient Wales</td> <td data-bbox="751 1753 1372 1928">Theatr Clwyd's Capital project will be the most eco friendly retro fitted theatre building in Europe. Their youth and community work focuses on climate anxiety in young people.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="328 1939 743 2024">Healthier Wales</td> <td data-bbox="751 1939 1372 2024">Arts and Music is well documented as having a strong and positive impact on people's health and well-being.</td> </tr> </table>		Prosperous Wales	Economic Impact through jobs, supply chains and tourism in the area.	Resilient Wales	Theatr Clwyd's Capital project will be the most eco friendly retro fitted theatre building in Europe. Their youth and community work focuses on climate anxiety in young people.	Healthier Wales	Arts and Music is well documented as having a strong and positive impact on people's health and well-being.
Prosperous Wales	Economic Impact through jobs, supply chains and tourism in the area.							
Resilient Wales	Theatr Clwyd's Capital project will be the most eco friendly retro fitted theatre building in Europe. Their youth and community work focuses on climate anxiety in young people.							
Healthier Wales	Arts and Music is well documented as having a strong and positive impact on people's health and well-being.							

	More equal Wales	Theatr Clwyd's work with social services reaches families who would not have access to provision otherwise. Arts and creative thinking is well documented to widen scope and thinking for social mobility and critical thinking.
	Cohesive Wales	Arts are seen as a way for people to connect, discuss, and understand other cultures and views. Theatr Clwyd's work with social services and other partners looks to tackle social challenges.
	Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language	A vibrant Wales is one of arts and culture, and Theatr Clwyd is recognized as world class in its field, delivering work in both English and Welsh. Welsh Language use is encouraged in young people – TC deliver dedicated Welsh Language groups for young people.
	Globally responsible Wales	Theatr Clwyd's work is internationally recognised, brings global themes to Flintshire, and offers opportunity for building international relations on behalf of Wales

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	<p>Ongoing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flintshire Communities • Secondary Schools • Families • Young People • Primary School Consultation; Headteachers Federation and smaller delegation from Headteachers Federation • Social Services • Company Voice

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Schools Subscription Package
5.02	Appendix 2 – Schools Learner Numbers
5.03	Appendix 3 – Theatr Clwyd Flintshire Impact Report for 2023/24

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	N/A

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Liam Evans-Ford, CEO of Theatr Clwyd Trust and Chair of Theatr Clwyd Music Trust Liam.evansford@theatrclwyd.com</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>National Plan for Music Education Wales: Welsh Government plan to support the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales whilst providing a strategic and sustainable approach to ensure a diverse and equitable music education is accessible for our children and young people from ages 3 to 16.</p> <p>First Experiences: programme of work from National Plan for Music Education Wales. Developed with the aim of simultaneously inspiring children and young people and providing professional learning support to classroom practitioners.</p> <p>Live Music Experiences: programme of work from National Plan for Music Education Wales. Experience is an integral part of learning in the Expressive Arts. The experiential aspect of music is important for our children and young people to explore rich, authentic experiences in the Arts, both in and outside schools and settings to learn and celebrate music.</p> <p>Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama: our National conservatoire; it provides specialist practical and performance – based training in music and drama, enabling students to enter and influence the world of music, theatre and related professions.</p> <p>Pupil Development Grant (PDG) – Funding from WG to schools on a per pupil basis to support the educational attainment of pupils entitled to Free School Meals where there is a greater risk of underachievement.</p>