

P-05-1066 Allow choristers and youth choirs to sing in Wales and young musicians to play in groups, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 23.11.20

Dear Committee,

Thank you for considering the my petition at the next meeting. Since the petition was initiate the Welsh Government has introduced a change in the rules regarding the use of music in worship, which allows a choir (or some of them) to sing. This has brought much joy to the choristers I know and whilst it is a huge step forward the limit of 15 still causes a problem for some choirs. In my both of my daughters cathedral choir there are more than 15 girls which means that even though the space is available for them to practice together the number limitation prevents them.

Following a detailed risk assessment the MD of one choir has decided that to accommodate the requirements whilst allowing space for the congregation only 8 choristers will be able to sing with the support of 7 in the back row. Although the choristers have accepted the need for a rota approach to supporting services it would be nice if they could practice together as the space allows for them to do so safely.

However although this is fantastic for choristers, there are still many youth choirs that are unable to meet. Many music teachers, music directors and others who support youth music and the arts, find the current guidance confusing and sometime contradictory, it would be really useful if some clear guidance could be provided to allow these activities to take place providing they are done so following a full risk assessment.

It is also a shame that the Welsh Government refuse to look at the scientific evidence that allowed choirs in England to return at a much earlier time. Youth music has been shown to have so many benefits, be that for wellbeing, academic development or general development, it is a real shame that during the pandemic it has not been given the same consideration as youth sport. Whilst I have no evidence to support my next statement, I feel confident that music impacts more peoples life than sport does. Some clear guidance to allow youngsters to take part in singing and collective music, in schools and the wider community would be greatly received by many.

Kind Regards