

Dusty, unused musical instruments needed for new homes

Today (2 Nov) Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams is calling for people in Wales to dust off their old, unused instruments for a new Welsh Government pilot, Instruments for Kids.

Instruments for Kids will gather up all instruments found hidden in attics, garages and the backs of cupboards across Wales and distribute them through local authorities to children and schools where there is a need for music provision.

The pilot was launched at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama on 2 Nov with a special performance by members of the temporarily named Not New Novello Orchestra, led by David Mahoney using instruments already donated by Assembly Members.

The pilot follows a campaign earlier this year by Welsh Government and National Assembly for Wales where more than 50 instruments were donated by Assembly Members and staff.

People across Wales are being encouraged to donate their once loved, but no longer played instruments across Wales from 20 – 24 November – Music Instrument Amnesty Week.

Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams said:

“Whether we stuck at it or just gave it a go, most of us have memories of learning to play a musical instrument as a child.

“We believe that every child should have the opportunity to learn an instrument. That is why, together, we are making a commitment to finding new and innovative ways of making sure children across Wales get access to music. Instrument for Kids is part of this.

“We hope that Wales’ love of music will inspire people to dig out and dust off their old instruments in November for us to give them a new lease of life and pass on to children to enjoy for many more years to come.”

WLGA Leader, Councillor Debbie Wilcox (Newport) said:

“As a former teacher, I know first-hand how music can not only enrich children’s learning experiences, but provide pleasure and enjoyment to people throughout their lives. Many of us will have had the chance to learn to play musical instruments from an early age, and what better way to pass those skills on that dig out our

unused instruments to help the next generation of musical maestros and have-a-go newbies!.”

David Mahoney, Founder of The Novello Orchestra and member of Only Men Aloud, is just one of several Welsh musicians supporting the campaign:

“Music is such a big part of Welsh culture and every child in Wales should be given the opportunity to pick up an instrument and give it a go. The benefits of music making are endless and this scheme will provide a perfect opportunity to introduce musical performance to those who may not otherwise have been exposed to it.”

For more information on Instruments for Kids and to find out where you can donate your old instruments from 20 – 24 November, visit: [Education Wales on Facebook](#) (external link)

[New powers not so fly for offenders](#)

Last week, the National Assembly for Wales approved the [Unauthorised Deposit of Waste \(Fixed Penalties\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) (external link). It followed a public consultation, earlier this year, which revealed overwhelming support in favour of the new powers.

Local Authorities are now able to set a [fixed penalty amount](#) between £150 and £400, with a default of £200 where no amount is specified. A reduction for early payment can be made available and Local Authorities can retain the receipts to help contribute to the costs of dealing with fly-tipping. The Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) can be applied on both publicly and privately owned land.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths said:

“Fly-tipping blights our communities and it damages our environment.

“These powers will provide Local Authorities with an additional enforcement tool for small-scale fly-tipping offences where a prosecution is considered disproportionate.

“I am sure Local Authorities and communities will welcome these new powers. However, I feel it is important Local Authorities accompany these new powers with the appropriate level of public engagement, awareness raising and wider education programmes. I

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[INCOPRO to create 80 new jobs in counterfeit trade enforcement](#)

INCOPRO is expanding into offices at Britannia House in Caerphilly, supported

by a £500,000 investment from the Welsh Government.

The company specialises in brand protection by tracking and removing counterfeit products from the internet. Its clients range from luxury goods companies to consumer product businesses and include the BBC and world-renowned fashion house Ted Baker.

With 2.5% of world trade counterfeited and predictions suggesting the global economic value of counterfeiting could reach \$2.3 trillion by 2022, there is a critical need to deliver innovative solutions to prevent piracy, brand infringement, copyright and intellectual property (IP) theft.

INCOPRO combines the latest technology with multi-lingual staff enabling them to investigate suspect websites, track fraud and detect counterfeiters.

The company was founded in 2012 by CEO and IP protection lawyer, Simon Baggs, and Chief Technical Officer and Systems Architect Bret Boivin, both passionate about IP and united in their belief that technology has a huge role to play in helping IP businesses to succeed online.

Talisman, the company's carefully developed counterfeit detection technology, was launched in 2015 to unprecedented acclaim. The company has now outgrown its offices in London and needs approximately 80 new staff, mainly analysts and developers, based in Caerphilly.

INCOPRO has also announced collaboration with WR Investigations, a company based in Wales that supports investigation into the offline networks that perpetrate counterfeiting in the UK and globally.

Announcing INCOPRO's expansion plans at a Wales Centre for Public Policy 'The Future of Work in Wales' report launch at Cardiff University later today, First Minister Carwyn Jones will say:

"As we conduct more of our everyday lives online, it is vital we have the systems to protect us from a new wave of criminals. The services companies like INCOPRO provide are invaluable, both to the World economy and to the interests of the individual.

"I am delighted we could support their expansion, and welcome them to Wales, where I am confident they will enjoy a successful future."

CEO Simon Baggs said:

"We are committed to making the Internet a better place for businesses to prosper. A key element in achieving this is to cut out the sale of unlawful products and content. We are delighted to have secured Welsh Government support to further our mission and to deliver jobs and innovation in Wales."

New evidence reveals strong case for devolution of flight tax

The amount of tax paid on flights (APD) for Welsh customers is currently set by the UK Government, while Scotland and Northern Ireland are able to cut the cost of longer haul flights by reducing APD.

The Welsh Government has long called for the devolution of APD, supported by the findings of the Holtham and Silk Commissions. However, the UK Government has resisted calls, saying any reduction in APD in Wales would negatively impact on Bristol Airport.

The peer reviewed independent evidence published today reveals that despite well publicised commentary suggesting that such a move would cause Bristol Airport serious detriment, the impact would in fact be negligible.

More importantly, devolving and then reducing APD in Wales would directly result in a significant positive benefit for the economies of both south Wales and the south west of England and would result in more choice for passengers throughout both regions. These joint benefits for the south west of the UK offer the Westminster Government an important opportunity to begin to rebalance the UK economy.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

“This new evidence dispels many myths and presents an economic case for giving Wales control over Air Passenger Duty which is overwhelmingly compelling. As we prepare for a future outside the EU, it is essential we are able to take action to promote Wales to the world and support growth in our aviation sector and wider economy.

“Once devolved, the Welsh Government would reduce or even scrap the tax paid on flights – not only benefitting passengers, but providing a huge confidence boost for Cardiff Airport and Wales’ aviation industry, while also complementing Bristol Airport and providing a more competitive service. Devolving APD would also improve connectivity across Wales, boost investment and help business.

“I look forward to working with the UK Government to make this a reality. Continuing to blankly refuse to devolve APD in the face of such strong evidence would show a discriminatory disdain for Wales, constrain our ability to promote Wales oversea and undermine our economic interests.”