Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Review of the Musical Instruments for Bands Scheme

Final Report

February 2006
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Introduction and terms of reference

History of band music in Northern Ireland

1.1 Northern Ireland has a long tradition for amateur music-making, most notably in terms of bands and choirs. The tradition of bands, an Anglo-Irish phenomenon which reflects shades of the culture of the North of England and the British military establishment, goes back for over three centuries. Although the majority of players involved in banding today may be perceived to come from planters’ roots, there is a significant interest in brass, flute, accordion and pipe bands across both main cultural traditions.

1.2 Ulster amateur bands have always lacked the patronage and sponsorship that English bands enjoyed, especially in the 19th and early 20th centuries. English bands often had the benefit of being sponsored by large industrial companies who provided instruments, band rooms and the funds to employ expert conductors. The celebrated Black Dyke Mills Band is a classic example of this type of patronage. In Northern Ireland, due to scale and the lack of a strong industrial base, this environment was missing. Bands tended to use flutes as these were relatively inexpensive and readily available. Patronage came sometimes from the hand of a local squire, but more often arose from local links with the Orange Order which provided accommodation and offered marching opportunities in the summer months and occasional church services at other times of the year. Membership of local bands, as in England, was traditionally viewed as a working class (mostly male) recreation in the same way that pigeons and greyhounds are still perceived. This is now an unfair generalisation. Local bands recruit male and female members from all walks of life and from all religious backgrounds.

1.3 After World War I large numbers of Ulstermen came home having experienced military service in the armed forces. This led to a raised awareness of the attractions of brass bands. A few flute bands replaced their instruments to become brass and silver bands between the wars and this process was accelerated in the growing economic recovery after 1945. Accordion bands were an alternative to flutes, although they trace their roots more through Irish and English folk traditions. The Scottish piping fraternity is a direct and obvious result of Northern Ireland’s affection for its Ulster Scots legacy. In recent years, due to the unprecedented success of Ulster pipers and their subsequent invitations to play all over the world, the local piping scene has become much more cosmopolitan in terms of piping styles. This is clearly demonstrated by the strength of the annual William Kennedy Piping Festival in Armagh which has impressive credentials in Irish, Scottish, Northumbrian and Breton piping.

1.4 The local band scene operates at three levels. At the highest, band members show a huge commitment to weekly rehearsals and a virile culture of regular competitions. Ulster brass players still regularly compete in British and European contests. These bands are highly integrated and have no contact with party politics, the Orange Order, or street parades. The local brass and silver bands are less successful in these national competitions than they were 30 years ago, partly explained by the growing professionalism of the top English bands. Northern Ireland’s Scottish pipe bands, however, are amongst the best in the world, regularly defeating the most professional outfits from Scotland, Canada and Australia.

1.5 The next level consists of more modest community bands who have less interest in competition work, but who have a strong sense of local identity. Since the early 1970s there has been a strong rise in melody flute bands, on both sides of the main political divide. Here the musical content is perhaps less important than the outer trappings of cultural identity. Nonetheless, large numbers of young men, in particular, are involved in massive band parades in various provincial towns during the spring and summer.
Most bands, at all levels, have a commitment to developing the musical skills of young members and many support beginners’ classes.

**Introduction to the Musical Instruments for Bands Scheme**

1.6 The Arts Council for Northern Ireland is the prime distributor of public funding for the arts. The Council became a statutory body on 1st September 1995 and its function includes developing appreciation of and access to the arts, encouraging the provision of arts facilities, advising government departments on matters relating to the arts and advocating the cause of the arts to government and other significant stakeholders. In addition one of the statutory functions of the Council under the Lottery Act 1993 is distributing Lottery proceeds to the arts in Northern Ireland. The principal objective is to fund applications for a broad range of capital and revenue projects in the arts which will make an important and lasting difference in the quality of the life of people in Northern Ireland.

1.7 It is highlighted in the Arts Council Music and Opera Funding Policy that the range of musical styles and forms the Council supports has broadened considerably in recent years through the advent of Lottery funding, benefiting the substantial voluntary sector, including amateur and community music groups and festivals of all kinds. Where formerly such work was supported through relevant ‘umbrella bodies’ or groups such as Northern Ireland Bands Association and Association of Irish Musical Societies, or through project grants directed towards the costs of working with professional musicians, the Council now assists individual groups directly with Lottery funds.

1.8 The Musical Instrument for Bands scheme has been designed to increase the quality of music making in the community by helping bands to replace worn out instruments and purchase new instruments. For the purpose of the scheme a ‘band’ may be:

- Accordion/ Orchestra/ Band (part or melody marching)
- Brass band
- Concert band
- Flute band (part melody or marching)
- Pipe band
- Wind band

1.9 In November 1996 the Lottery Department of the Arts Council instituted a moratorium on capital equipment awards to individual bands. Before the moratorium, during the previous two years, the Council had made 106 awards to bands (out of 112 applications) totalling over £1.4 million. This constituted almost 10% of all Lottery Department Funding since its inception and almost 40% of the number of awards. This obvious imbalance in funding for bands and other arts underpinned the Council’s decision to pause the scheme and reconsider its strategy and procedures with regard to supporting the equipment needs of bands.

1.10 In 2000 the scheme was reviewed for the purpose of establishing a policy for future ACNI National Lottery funding to the band sector based on the identified needs of the sector. The key findings of this review are summarised in Table 1.1 overleaf.
Table 1.1 Key findings from the review of ACNI Lottery Department Equipment Grant-aid to Bands

- Four types of bands dominate amateur bands in Northern Ireland: accordion bands, brass and concert bands, flute bands and pipe bands. Together they amount to 282, or nearly a third of all the amateur organisations.

- Amateur bands can involve up to 10,000 individuals and the sector is spread quite widely across the province, with a significant portion of the accordion, brass and pipe bands located west of Bann. Awards made before the moratorium was introduced were quite reasonably spread across the province, however there was some evidence of clustering of awards for bands of certain types in certain areas. This reflects the high level of networking in the band sector and the competitive nature of band culture.

- All types of bands included in the Amateur Arts database indicated participation in competitions organised by their umbrella organisations as the most important activity. Accordion bands and brass bands indicated giving performances in the community setting and participation in local festivals. In addition to these key activities, pipe and flute bands indicated parades.

- The review provided a very rough approximation of the replacement costs for the stock of instruments in the procession of bands in NI but it was recognised the definitive data on the exact number of active bands or performance quality in NI is unavailable and a more comprehensive survey would be necessary to produce estimates of the size, age and value of the stock of instruments.

- Only 55 bands out of 106 in receipt of grant-aid before the moratorium have returned ACNI self-assessment forms. Increased number of performances, increased number of recruits and more training opportunities and better performance for the community have been indicated as key benefits of awards for the wider community.

- Two key problems have been identified by some of the bands: remaining inferior or worn-out instruments in need of replacement and inadequate premises for rehearsal and meetings, in particular for bands using Orange Halls but having no affinity to the lodge.

- The review revealed a number of procedural difficulties, including difficulties that the applicants face in securing competitive and comparable quotes, and selecting and purchasing instruments within the timeframe of the grant. Main difficulties confronted by Lottery Officers and members of the Council were difficulty in assessing the quality of applications and the further difficulty of assessing the impact of funding on the bands themselves and the wider community.

- The review provided a number of conclusions and recommendations regarding the administration of the scheme. These included the following:
  (i) Changes in financial arrangements.
  (ii) Consideration of the long term needs of organisations applying for funding.
  (iii) Using existing competition adjudication systems and events in the assessment of applications and recording and independent assessment of performance when appropriate.
  (iv) Using fixed criteria for successful applicants in terms of provision of youth and access programmes, commitment to repertoire and delivery of at least 12 community performances a year (50% non parade).
  (v) Changes in grant administration including a system of vouchers redeemable by local suppliers and annual returns by the bands on their activity.

1.11 Following on from the review, The Arts Council launched a new scheme in 2002 and allocated a further £500,000 per year for four years. Since the inception of the new scheme 123 bands have been awarded a total of £1,999,846 through five separate rounds of funding.

Terms of reference

1.12 In November 2005 PricewaterhouseCoopers was commissioned by the Arts Council to undertake a Review of the first five rounds of the Musical Instruments for Bands scheme.
Scheme. The Review was undertaken after the Scheme had been suspended in Spring 2005.

1.13 The review included the following tasks:

• To examine the profile of bands in the first five rounds of funding (both successful and unsuccessful) across a range of characteristics:
  
  (i) Type of band, size and age profile of membership.
  (ii) Geographical location.
  (iii) Perceived religious affiliation.

• To quantify the amount of grant aid awarded to each band sector as well as indicating the number of repeat applications from each sector;

• To examine the impact of new instruments in terms of the bands artistic quality and standard of performance, repertoire, technique development and education;

• To consider the Council’s assessment criteria and scoring scheme and assess their ‘fitness for purpose’;

• To consider the wider policy environment within which the scheme operated and its effectiveness in addressing government policy and priorities regarding the Arts;

• To undertake consultation with the general public to obtain perceptions regarding the funding of The Musical Instrument for Bands Scheme; and

• To identify and explore the future needs of the band sector in Northern Ireland.

Methodology

1.14 An overview of each stage of the methodology used to undertake this Review is set out in Figure 1.1.
**Desk research**

1.15 The desk research involved a review of:

- The Review of the Musical Instruments for Bands Scheme carried out by the Arts Council in 2000;
- Application Guidance for the Musical Instruments for Bands Scheme;
- In addition we reviewed the background documents for 2002-05 Scheme provided by the Arts Council; and
- Government policy documents which refer to the development of arts in Northern Ireland.
Database analysis

1.16 This involved obtaining the data on applications in the last five rounds of funding since 2002. The following sources of information were derived from the database:

- Information on the amount of grant awarded;
- Information on geographic location of bands (places of meetings and rehearsals); and
- Contact information for the bands, including full postal address and phone numbers.

Key informant interviews

1.17 This involved 3 interviews with ACNI officers who are responsible for the implementation of the Scheme.

Survey of applicants

1.18 A survey of successful and unsuccessful applicants was undertaken. The population for the survey included 136 successful applicants and 131 unsuccessful applicants. We adopted a mixed mode approach to conducting the survey, including the telephone and postal elements.

1.19 A total of 50 successful and 51 unsuccessful applicants were interviewed or filled in the postal questionnaire. Overall this represents a 37% response rate for successful applicants and 39% response rate for unsuccessful applicants. The questionnaire which was designed in consultation with the Arts Council included questions associated with the application process, impact of new instruments, views on the Scheme and future needs of amateur bands in NI. The survey results have been included throughout the report.

Focus groups

1.20 We undertook 4 focus groups throughout the province including 2 groups of people interested in band music and 2 groups of those with no interest or connection with Bands. The following table illustrates the structure of the focus groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>SEC</th>
<th>Interested in band music</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>ABC1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Belfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>25+</td>
<td>C2DE</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Dungannon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>C2DE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Coleraine/ Ballymoney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>25+</td>
<td>ABC1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Derry/ Londonderry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case studies

1.21 Six awarded bands were selected for in depth case studies. The case study quality criteria were developed around the terms of reference and this was agreed in advance with the Steering Group. The quality criteria included basic tuning, sense of ensemble, attention to detail, professionalism of the band members, repertoire, musical balance, basic aspiration to optimise potential and overall general impression.
1.22 Each case study involved a meeting with the band conductor and band members during one of the rehearsal nights. The case studies were selected as per Table 1.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study</th>
<th>Lead partner(s)</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Community affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shankill Road Defenders</td>
<td>Flute band</td>
<td>Belfast</td>
<td>£4.3K</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flute Band</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lurgan Concert Band</td>
<td>Concert band</td>
<td>Lurgan</td>
<td>£10K</td>
<td>Mixed Mostly Protestant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Malachy's Pipe Band</td>
<td>Pipe band</td>
<td>Dungannon</td>
<td>£12K</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edendork</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Patrick’s Accordion</td>
<td>Accordion band</td>
<td>Newtonhamilton</td>
<td>£13.5</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Carrickfergus BB</td>
<td>Silver/brass band</td>
<td>Carrickfergus</td>
<td>£15K</td>
<td>Mixed Mostly Protestant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Band</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton Flute Band</td>
<td>Flute band</td>
<td>Derry/Londonderry</td>
<td>£32.4K</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Workshop**

1.23 A workshop with umbrella organisations was undertaken. Nine representatives of various umbrella organisations attended the workshop to discuss the future needs of the bands sector in Northern Ireland. These organisations included:

- NI School of Piping and Drumming
- Ulster Bands Association
- National Accordion Organisation of the UK
- NI Bands Association
- Flute Band league
- NI Bands Association – Accordion Band League

**Report structure**

1.24 The remainder of this report is structured around the terms of reference and is set out as follows:

- Section II – Profile of bands.
- Section III – Analysis of funding.
- Section IV – Impact of new instruments.
- Section V - Arts Council Assessment criteria.
- Section VI – Programme effectiveness in addressing government policies.
- Section VII – Public perceptions regarding the Scheme.
- Section VIII – Future needs of the bands sector in NI.
- Section IX - Conclusions and recommendations.
II Profile of bands

2.1 The Scheme under review was launched in 2002. The Arts Council allocated £500,000 per year for four years. Since the inception of the scheme 136 bands have been awarded a total of £1,999,646 through five separate rounds of funding.

Geographical location of applicants

2.2 The map of the places of rehearsal and meetings of applicants shows a widespread dispersal of the Scheme in terms of types of bands and the success of their applications. The maps showing the spread of successful applicants and unsuccessful applicants are provided in Figures 2.1 and 2.2.

Figure 2.1: Geographical spread of successful applicants
Socio-economic changes

2.3 It should be noted that there is a bigger concentration of applicants in the South and South West of Northern Ireland. With regard to the type of bands, pipe bands which applied to the Scheme are mostly located in the South West of NI with flute and accordion bands dominating the North, East and South East.

2.4 The bands were asked in the survey questionnaire to indicate where their membership was drawn from in terms of distance from the main place of meetings and rehearsal. Almost half of the bands stated that they drew their members from within 5 miles of the practice venue whilst almost the same number of bands indicated their members came from within 20 miles of the practice venue. Only twelve percent of the bands which responded to the survey stated that their members came from within 60 miles of the practice venue. The spread in the geography of membership is illustrated in Figure 2.3.
Type of band, size and age profile of membership

2.5 The analysis of the Arts Council database shows that pipe bands followed by flute bands constituted the majority of applicants for the Scheme. The profile of applicants by type is illustrated in Figure 2.4.

2.6 As regards the successful applicants, pipe bands received the biggest number of awards followed by flute and accordion bands as shown in Figure 2.5.
2.7 Among the main activities undertaken by the majority of the bands in the survey were participation in local festivals and events, parades, development of youth training programmes, participation in competitions and cross community work. This is illustrated in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6: Main activities of bands

Base 101

Size of bands

2.8 The results of the survey of applicants show that the majority of bands which responded to the questionnaire have 20 – 40 members as shown in Figure 2.7. Overall, the membership in 101 bands totals 3,242 and there are on average 32 members in a band.
Section II: Profile of bands

Figure 2.7: Size of bands

Base 101

2.9 Based on responses to the survey questionnaire a typical band comprises up to 10 members playing percussion/drums and more than 10 members playing musical instruments as shown in Figures 2.8 and 2.9.

Figure 2.8: Members playing percussion/drums

Figure 2.9: Members playing main instruments

Base 101

Age profile of membership

2.10 The bands which responded to the survey question about the age profile of membership indicated that the young people under 18 constituted the majority of band members followed by people in the age group 19 – 30 and 31 – 39. The age profile of membership is shown in Figure 2.10.
Perceived religious affiliation

2.11 In the survey the applicants were asked to indicate the community from which the membership of the band was drawn from. The majority of the respondents indicated the Protestant community as the main source of membership. More than a third of the bands indicated they had a cross-community membership. Only nine percent of the bands confirmed they mostly drew their members from the Catholic community. The community sources of membership among the surveyed bands are shown in Figure 2.11.
### III Analysis of funding

3.1 136 bands have been awarded a total of £1,999,646 through five rounds of funding. Fifty percent of applicants regardless of the number of times they applied to the Scheme, received a grant.

**Awards by type of band**

3.2 The number of applicants by type of band is reflected in Figure 3.1 below with pipe bands receiving the biggest number of awards followed by flute bands and accordion bands.

*Figure 3.1: Number of awards by type of band*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of band</th>
<th>Total number of bands awarded</th>
<th>Total amount of grant aid awarded</th>
<th>Average grant per band</th>
<th>Range of grant aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accordion</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>£613,109</td>
<td>£20K</td>
<td>£5K – 40K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipe</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>£561,579</td>
<td>£12K</td>
<td>£5K – 20K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brass</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>£476,217</td>
<td>£25K</td>
<td>£12K – 37K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>£309,589</td>
<td>£9K</td>
<td>£2K – 33K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>£39,152</td>
<td>£13K</td>
<td>£10K – 15K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>136</strong></td>
<td><strong>£1,999,646</strong></td>
<td><strong>£</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 It should be noted however that in terms of the total value of grants awarded, the accordion bands received most of the grant aid, followed by pipe and brass bands. The average size of grant has been £25,000 for brass bands and only £9,000 for flute bands as summarised in Table 3.1. This variation can be explained by the cost of musical instruments for different types of bands.

**Table 3.1 Grant aid awarded to each band sector and average grant per band**
Size of grant

3.4 The analysis of the Arts Council database shows that more than half of the awarded bands received a grant in the amount of £10,000 – 20,000. Thirty percent of successful applicants received a smaller grant of up to £10,000 and only eighteen percent of bands received a grant of more than £20,000 as demonstrated in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Range of grants received by successful applicants

3.5 The majority of successful applicants received the amount initially requested as shown in Figure 3.3. Only ten percent of the bands received grants of £100-1,000 less than requested and fifteen percent were given £1,000 – 5,000 less than they applied for. A small minority (4%) received significantly less than they expected.

Figure 3.3: Variation between grant awarded and requested

Analysis of repeated applications

3.6 Overall, 404 applications have been submitted to the Arts Council since the launch of the Scheme in 2002. 91 bands submitted repeated applications in different rounds of funding. The majority of repeated applications came from pipe bands and flute bands, followed by accordion and brass bands. The distribution of repeated applications by type of band is illustrated in Figure 3.4. It is interesting to note that 16 bands applied for funding more than twice.
Matched funding

3.7 In the survey of applicants the successful bands were asked to indicate sources of partnership funding they were able to secure in order to match the lottery grant from the Arts Council. The majority of successful bands which responded to the survey indicated they obtained partnership funding from fundraising activities and personal donations of band members. Only 17 bands indicated sponsorship and in-kind donations as sources of matched funding.¹

3.8 The unsuccessful applicants were also asked to confirm if they were able to find alternative sources of funding after their application had been rejected. The majority of the bands indicated they were unable to secure other sources of funding to meet their needs.

¹ It should be noted that some of the bands indicated a lottery grant as a source of matched funding and this should be qualified as a misunderstanding of the question as the bands could not have received two lottery grants.
needs while only seven bands agreed they found this funding elsewhere as shown in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6: Ability of unsuccessful applicants to obtain other funding

![Pie chart showing 14% of applicants said yes and 86% said no.]

Base 51
Section IV: Impact of new instruments

4.1 This analysis is informed by views and opinions of the applicants and findings from six case studies carried out across various types of bands.

Impact of new instruments on the band

4.2 More than half of the bands which received an award from the Arts Council strongly agreed that the new instruments helped them to enhance artistic experience and improve standard of performance. There has been less confidence shared by the respondents in relation to the contribution of the new musical instruments to greater success in competitions and extension of repertoire. The majority of the bands agreed that new instruments contributed to individual techniques development while more than half of the respondents confirmed new instruments allowed them to enhance recruitment of new band members. The views of the respondents on various impacts of new instruments are summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Impact of new instruments on the band

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Not answered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The new instruments enhanced artistic experience</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The new instruments helped to improve standard of performance</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The new instruments contributed to greater success in competitions</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The new instruments allowed us to extend our repertoire</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The new instruments contributed to individual technique development</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The new instruments allowed us to enhance our recruitment of new band members</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base 50

4.3 In addition, 19 respondents provided their views on other impacts the new instruments had on their bands. For example:

- 5 bands have been able to teach children and young people as the equipment became available;
- 4 bands noted they looked more professional with new instruments; and
- 4 bands agreed new instruments broadened their appeal.

Perceived benefits to a wider community

4.4 The survey also asked the bands about the benefits the acquisition of new instruments produced for a wider community. The majority of the bands either strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of funding they increased the number of performances and involvement of children and young people. However, the bands demonstrated less confidence in what concerned the increase in the number of higher quality recruits,
more cross-community and cross-border involvement and involvement of disabled or older persons. These perceptions are illustrated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Benefits of funding to a wider community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Not answered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a result of funding we increased the number of performances</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a result of funding we increased the involvement of children and young people through a youth or access programme</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The grant allowed to increase the number of higher quality recruits</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The grant created opportunities for greater cross-community involvement</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The grant created opportunities for greater cross-border involvement</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a result of funding the band involved more disabled and older persons</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base 50

4.5 27 of 50 successful applicants provided their views on other benefits of funding to their communities. For example:

- 12 bands agreed new instruments enhanced the band’s profile generally;
- 6 bands noted both the band and the community have more pride;
- 6 bands have been seen more in public; and
- 3 bands agreed new instruments gave more confidence to their members.

4.6 Some individual views of the respondents are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Views of the bands on other benefits of funding

‘We are able to participate in festivals and concerts for cancer research and other charities’.

‘Generally we have become more visible to the public and there is now a greater local sense of pride for the band within the community. The community now take pride in the band’.

‘We now have a wider following of fans and have had more people requesting shows’.

‘We do a lot more outdoor work as well as performing in old peoples’ homes’.

‘The funding has raised the standard of pipe bands throughout NI. Our band now travels further to concerts and functions etc.’

‘It has given us a vehicle for young people to be part of something and this improves discipline. More entertainment for the community’

Source: Survey of applicants
4.7 The survey also asked the successful applicants what would have happened to the bands if the funding had not been in place. More than two thirds of the respondents stated they would not have been able to purchase new instruments without the funding from the Scheme as shown in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1 Outcomes for the bands in the absence of funding**

![Pie chart showing outcomes](image)

- 66%: We would not have been able to purchase new instruments
- 32%: We would have purchased some of the new instruments by raising funds ourselves
- 2%: Not answered

**Base 50**

4.8 Increased participation of bands in competitions and concerts and improved overall success are important anticipated impacts of funding. More than two thirds (34 of 50) of the bands participated in competitions before receiving the funding. More than half of these bands indicated their participation in competitions increased as result of funding for new musical instruments as shown in Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2 Participation in competitions as result of funding**

![Pie chart showing participation](image)

- 53%: Participation in competitions increased
- 44%: Did not increase
- 3%: Not answered

**Base 34**

4.9 As regards the success of the bands which received funding from the Scheme in various competitions, half of the bands recognised their success increased significantly as result of purchasing new instruments as shown in Figure 4.3.
4.10 It has also emerged from the survey of successful applicants that the majority (82%) of the respondents participated in concerts before they received the Lottery funding. The majority of these respondents agreed their participation in concerts increased as result of funding as shown in Figure 4.4.

4.11 Nine bands which stated in the survey that they did not participate in any concerts prior to funding were also asked if they took part in any concerts afterwards. Four of these bands indicated they participated in concerts as result of funding, while two bands did not take part in any concerts and three bands did not answer this question.

4.12 Overall the majority of the bands agreed the Scheme made a positive contribution to developing an aspect of NI musical culture as shown in Figure 4.5.
Case studies

4.13 It emerged from the visits to the bands that all of the bands felt the Scheme was worthwhile and made a significant contribution to the good working of their ensembles. In every case it was felt that ACNI were right to focus on the purchase of instruments and not to get into other areas such as uniforms, hall rentals, conductors’ fees etc. All of the bands were able to develop their training programmes for young players as a result of having additional instruments. This was seen as a major asset. All of the bands felt that having to match the funding on a 66/33 share was fair. Some commented that the extra enterprise added greatly to the life of the group. All of the bands felt that they had been treated well by ACNI staff and that the application process was relatively straightforward. The over-riding benefits were perceived in terms of musical values, i.e. enhanced tone, better tuning and intonation, more satisfying instruments to play et cetera. It was felt that the amateur music sector had had little enough support in the past and that this scheme put much-needed resources at an appropriate place in terms of community music. All of the bands considered that similar schemes should be run again, if resources could be found at government level.
4.14 The following tables provide a summary of the key findings from the case studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band: SHANKILL ROAD DEFENDERS FLUTE BAND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rehearsal Venue: Linfield Supporters Club, Jumna Street, Belfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£4,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruments Purchased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 new wooden flutes and a completely new drum corps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This melody flute band has a very strong profile in the summer months in particular. There are annual marching events on 11th and 12th July on the Shankill Road and this band would have a strong presence at the Belfast demonstration of the Orange Order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The band recently participated in a local project based on the impact of World War II and the Blitz on the Shankill district. The members have played at community events in the Spectrum Centre in Tennent Street and the band plays at various Christmas events in the neighbourhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The members of the band are increasingly involved in competitions during the Spring and Summer, both regionally and in Scotland. The band members enjoy taking part in the numerous band parades which occur in the summer months across Northern Ireland. The band enjoyed a recent tour to Canada where they played to Orange Clubs and British Legion Associations in the Toronto area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The band organises a beginners’ class led by adult members on Monday evenings from 6.30 – 7.30pm. This attracts a small number of boys in their early teens. Drop-out rates are sometimes disappointing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is an all-male band; the average age is mid-30s. The perceived religious affiliation would be exclusively Protestant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of a greatly enhanced drum corps which this band sees as essential due to their large commitment to street marches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• On the first outing with the new instruments the band won the best melody flute band title at a competition in Dromore, Co Down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The drum corps has won several local competitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enhancement of basic flute tone entirely due to new instruments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Additional flutes facilitated new players to be enrolled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Would have liked a little more money; had asked for £5K.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Did not like the tender system required by ACNI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encountered a delay in procuring the Premier drums from Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• On balance, very positive about the Scheme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Band: HAMILTON FLUTE BAND

**Rehearsal Venue:** GLENDERMOTT PARISH CHURCH HALL, LONDONDERRY

**Award**  
£32,417

**Instruments Purchased**  
3 alto flutes; 4 G treble flutes; 2 contrabass flutes

**Community Engagement**  
This concert flute band is one of the most respected Grade One flute bands in Northern Ireland, competing annually in the World Championship Contest organised by the North of Ireland Bands’ Association. The members give a strong weekly commitment throughout the year. Community involvement would include the following: church services, British Legion events, visits to the Foyle Hospice, Scouts services, community concerts, Soroptomist events, carol services and Remembrance Day services.

**Education Programme**  
There is a weekly junior section (ages 9-15yrs) with 8 learners coached by 4 senior players from the band. There is also a drummers’ class. Junior members are entered for the relevant practical examinations of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. The band encourages its younger members to be actively involved in their individual school music groups. The band actively recruits young players through its high profile in the community, through its programme of concerts and with letters to schools.

**Profile**  
The band has strong family connections with several generations tracing association with the band over many years. The age range is from 8-70 years; the average age is around 40. The perceived religious affiliation would be largely Protestant.

**Perceived Benefits**  
- Now able to compete more equitably with the other flute bands in the championship grade.
- New flutes very satisfying to play.
- Enhanced technical aspects of playing.
- New flutes easier to play, with improved tone, intonation, tuning etc.
- Able to give existing flutes to younger players.
- Better musical balance within band.

**Observations**  
- Band had to find £8K through various fund-raising strategies.
- Found it difficult to be continually asking the same core supporters for financial help.
- Experienced late delivery of some instruments from an English supplier.
- The band simply could not have funded new instruments on top of their other recurrent expenses, e.g. conductor’s fees, hall rental, new uniforms, instrument repairs, purchase of music, travel costs etc.
- Very affirmative of the scheme.
Band: St MALACHY’S PIPE BAND, EDENDORK, DUNGANNON

Rehearsal Venue: St MALACHY’S PAROCHIAL HALL, EDENDORK, Co TYRONE

Award: £11,811

Instruments Purchased
Completely new sets of pipes and drums; 15 pipes, 5 snare drums, 1 tenor drum.

Community Engagement
This band has a strong profile in this rural community between Dungannon and Coalisland. Of interest, they have free access to a very large Parochial Hall which had been built by an enterprising Parish Priest in the late 1950s. The hall, a huge building given its rural setting, became a magnet for huge crowds and hosted such stars as Tom Jones and Engelbert Humperdinck. The pipe band are virtually the only group to use this unique building.

In the past year alone the band took part in a cross-community charity concert for the Tsunami Appeal (February), they played at a church service for the blessing of new band uniforms (March), they participated in the St Patrick’s Day Parade in Dungannon (March), they played at a football match in Edendork (May), they played at a men’s cancer awareness session in Dungannon District Council Buildings (June), were involved in a Fun Day at the local primary school (June), attended a further sports day in Brockagh (June), provided music at the Canal Walk in Coalisland (June), played at a Convention of the Irish National Foresters in Newry (July) and took part in a Vintage Club Working Rally in Dungannon (September).

Education Programme
A juveniles’ class meets regularly and these young players are trained in the use of chanters before graduating to full sets of pipes. The small number of juveniles involved are well integrated with the rest of the adult members of the band.

Profile
There are 25 adult members of the band, of whom 11 are women. The age range is from 15-50. The perceived religious affiliation would appear to be largely Roman Catholic.

This band, which has a long history in the local parish, had collapsed around the year 2000. A small number of local enthusiasts rekindled interest and submitted an application to ACNI for new instruments. The subsequent award of nearly £12K ensured that the band was successfully revived and is now thriving.

Perceived Benefits
• This community based band was rescued from total collapse.
• The basic tone quality has been transformed.
• The new instruments restored band morale.
• Young people found the new instruments a positive incentive to join.
• Individual members are enjoying the pleasure of playing good quality pipes and drums.

Observations
• The application process took a long time to complete.
• ACNI staff were professional and helpful at all stages in the process.
• Band members were happy with having to raise their share of the funding.
• The parish supported the fund-raising through church gate collections and a weekly lottery organised by band members.
• The fund-raising developed strong commitment and fellowship amongst the players.
• One of the fund-raising events was a very popular golf outing.
### Band: LURGAN CONCERT BAND

**Rehearsal Venue:** KINGSPARK PRIMARY SCHOOL, LURGAN  
**Award:** £10,000

**Instruments Purchased**
2 cornets, 2 trumpets, 4 clarinets, 1 E flat saxophone, 1 B flat saxophone, 2 flutes, 1 euphonium, 2 trombones, 2 E flat basses, drum kit. This represents virtually a complete new stock of instruments for a concert band (sometimes referred to as a Brass and Reed Band or – less frequently now – a Military Band).

**Community Engagement**
This well-established band has a policy of trying to respond to as many local requests as they can manage. Regular activities include visits to senior citizens’ parties, church services, Christmas events, St Patrick’s Day parades, et cetera. The band can produce a smaller Swing Band from within its ranks and this is both popular and versatile. The Swing Band has separate rehearsals on Tuesday evenings. One band member described Lurgan as a cultural desert, with no civic choir or brass band. The chief outlet for musical activities is through a number of good local schools which support orchestras and choirs.

**Education Programme**
A learners’ class is held each Friday evening from 7.30 – 8.30pm, immediately prior to the full and rehearsal. At present there are 2 flutes, 1 saxophone, 1 clarinet and 2 beginner adults in the learners’ group. The officers of the band are disappointed by the lack of young players, especially since so many new instruments are available. I shared my view that Friday evening rehearsals must surely not be attractive to teenagers. Fridays have traditionally been the preferred evenings for the older members of the band.

**Profile**
Age profile ranged from 12 – 77 years and there is a reasonable mix of men and women, although the men are in the majority. The perceived religious affiliation would seem to favour Protestants. I was struck by the broad social mix within this group.

**Perceived Benefits**
- Provided spare instruments for the learners.
- Improved the basic sound of the band.
- The new instruments were easier and more rewarding to play.

**Observations**
- There were no reservations about the form filling required by the scheme.
- A civil servant within the band dealt with the relevant application forms.
- ACNI staff were invariably helpful.
- Disappointed that the new instruments had not attracted additional players.
- The band used to have around 25 members; this has now dropped to 15 and there are sometimes difficulties in filling all the parts.
- The small numbers of young players is a concern to the band committee.
- The band needs to consider moving from a Friday night rehearsal to much earlier in the week, which is the pattern elsewhere in Northern Ireland.
Band: 3rd CARRICKFERGUS BOYS’ BRIGADE & OLD BOYS’ SILVER BAND

Rehearsal Venue: CHRIST CHURCH HALL, NORTH ROAD, CARRICKFERGUS

Award: £14,792

Instruments Purchased
3 trombones, 1 euphonium, 1 baritone, 4 tenor horns, 2 cornets, 1 drum kit, 1 xylophone, 1 tam-tam (gong).

Community Engagement
This is a highly respected band in this Country Antrim town, having grown from an early project driven by an exceptional and charismatic primary school principal in the 1950s. The band today has a strong link with the congregation of Christ Church on the outskirts of the town, from whom the band rents an exceptional hall for its rehearsals. The 3rd Carrick Band is regarded by many of the citizens of this ancient town as the Town Band and they get regular invitations to take part in civic events for the District Council, as well as playing for the Royal British Legion and at various church services et cetera. It is a tradition that the band members visit various old peoples’ homes on Christmas morning.

Education Programme
Uniquely of the bands visited as part of this scheme, the 3rd Carrick Band has a complete junior band of 23 players who rehearse on Saturday mornings. The new instruments enabled this band to release the existing stock of instruments to the younger players. Prior to this the novices had had to play on several very ancient instruments, a situation that was less than ideal. In recent years, and owing much to the band’s excellent conductor, the juniors have brought credit to themselves at the Brass Band League solo, duet and quartet contests, as well as competing with credit at the BBL Junior Band class. Music graduates from within the band tutor the younger players as they prepare for ABRSM practical grade examinations. One current member has played with the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra, the National Youth Brass Band and the European Youth Brass Band.

Profile
The age profile extends from 7 – late 50 year olds; the average age is somewhere in the 30s. There is a very good mix of men and women and the perceived religious affiliation is predominately Protestant. The rehearsal I visited was impressive for the quality of leadership shown by the conductor, his innate musical attributes and for the professionalism of the players in striving to achieve the high standard required by their director.

Perceived Benefits
• The scheme enabled the band to purchase high quality instruments; in the past they had managed with high grade second hand instruments sourced in England.
• Having instruments of a uniform quality (e.g. a completely new trombone section) made tuning and intonation much easier to achieve.
• The beginners now benefit from starting on much better instruments than had previously been the case.
• The new instruments are now contributing positively to improved results in competition work. (The band members joked that despite their name, they had been nick-named “4th Carrick” by other bands because of their poor showing in competitions.).

Observations
• The band encountered a few administrative problems at the earliest stages of the process, but these were ironed out after a useful meeting at ACNI.
• Over the period of the scheme the band correspondent found that he was encountering constantly changing staff at ACNI. This was a minor irritant, but was not seen as significant.
• The band members are whole-heartedly supportive of the scheme and considered it hugely worthwhile.
• The members thought that awarding only part of the funding was a good idea and this obliged band members to work hard to raise their share of the funding.
Band: ST PATRICK’S ACCORDION BAND

Rehearsal Venue: CORRAN BAND HALL, near KEADY / NEWTOWNHAMILTON, Co. ARMAGH

Award: £13,500

Instruments Purchased
This band purchased a full set of new instruments, 20 Dino Buffetti Italian accordions. This band began life as a flute band, changing to accordions in 1950. Many of the previous instruments had been in a very poor state of repair, so the new instruments have transformed this group.

Community Engagement
This band has a strong sense of community in this part of the country close to the south Armagh border. The band plays at regular parades organised by the Ancient Order of Hibernians, as well as providing music at church events, football matches and other local occasions in the parish.

Education Programme
I was immediately struck by the number of children and young people being expertly coached by a visiting tutor from Armagh. The little hall was bustling with activity when I arrived. I was also aware of a strong sense of family within the group. I was entertained to a lavish supper and it was obvious that the young players and their older counterparts have a real affection for the band and enjoy coming out to the weekly rehearsal. There is a beginners’ class each Monday evening from 8.00 – 9.00pm, the adults following immediately from 9.15 – 10.30pm. Each child has music set to practice each week and there is one-to-one tuition from a skilled local player who travels up from Armagh to provide instruction.

Profile
Ages range from 7 – 76 years. Of interest, the majority of the junior players are girls but the majority of the adult players are male. Given the strong links with the parish and the AOH, the perceived religious affiliation would appear to be exclusively Roman Catholic.

Perceived Benefits
- The band members are now enjoying a stock of good instruments in a perfect state of repair.
- The arrival of the new instruments created a new lease of life for the band, stimulating an excellent sense of morale and improved self-esteem.
- The new instruments have further inspired the members to carry out repairs to the hall which is owned by the band. They now have a superb venue, with a useful little kitchen, for their use.
- The young players were given the previous accordions to take home to practice.
- The new instruments are in tune with one another so the tone of the band is greatly improved.

Observations
- Initially the band correspondent did not relish filling in the application form, but this proved not to be an obstacle.
- ACNI were helpful when guidance was sought.
- The instruments were sourced in Scotland as the band was unable to get a comparable quotation in Northern Ireland.
- The band found raising their share of the funds to be a worthwhile exercise.
- There was excellent local support in terms of sponsorship.
- The band members were enthusiastic about the scheme and very grateful to have been successful in their application.
Impact of application being rejected

4.15 The purpose of this section is to explore what effect the rejection of the application had on the bands which did not succeed in applying for funding. The majority of the bands whose application was unsuccessful strongly agreed that their bands had limited opportunities to improve their standard of performance and found it difficult to recruit more band members. More than half of the respondents also agreed they were unable to increase the number of performances that they normally gave as result of their application being rejected. However, half of the bands stated they continued as before using their old instruments and their standard of performance remained the same. It should be noted that 51% of the bands recognised they continued using their old instruments but their standard of performance began to decline. These views of unsuccessful applicants are summarised in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Impact of application being rejected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Missing answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our opportunities to improve our standard of performance were limited</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We found it difficult to recruit more band members</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were unable to increase the number of performances that we normally give</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We continued on as before using our old instruments and our standard of performance remained the same</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We continued on as before using our old instruments and our standard of performance began to decline</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base 51

4.16 36 unsuccessful applicants provided their views on other impacts of their application being rejected on their bands. For example:

• 7 bands indicated they lost some members;
• 5 bands emphasised they lost enthusiasm; and
• 4 bands had to turn people away due to lack of instruments.

4.17 Some individual views of unsuccessful applicants are presented in Table 4.5.
Table 4.5 Views of bands on other impacts if their application being rejected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Young members began to get impatient waiting on suitable instruments and some are talking about leaving….Older members are disillusioned as the band needs new instruments and the band is small, rural, not well off financially’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘We were obliged to drop new trained prospective members as a consequence of an unsuccessful application’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘It’s the unsatisfactory appearance of the old instruments at events’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘We lost a bit of drive and enthusiasm; the band had to work harder to compensate for the poor quality of the instruments’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘There was the financial burden of maintaining the high standard for successful competing bands. I have had to invest our own finances to raise the musical standard and performance’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey of applicants
Section V: The Arts Council Assessment Criteria

V The Arts Council Assessment Criteria

5.1 Following on from the review of the Scheme in 2001, several proposals were made for changes in the approach to the assessment of applications. These proposals included the following:

- ACNI, in conjunction with applicable umbrella groups, should use as much as possible existing competition adjudication systems and events in the assessment of applications;
- For bands for which assessment through existing competition structures is not appropriate, ACNI shall arrange for the recording and independent assessment of performance by the band;
- In addition to a demonstrated level of attainment in competition or independent assessment, successful applicants should demonstrate:
  (i) a youth or access programme;
  (ii) a commitment to repertoire and technique development; and
  (iii) a record of at least 12 performances per year in the local community, at least 50% of which should be non-parade events.

5.2 Based on the series of consultation with umbrella organisations, bands and the results of the 2001 Review the Arts Council developed a set of criteria for the assessment of applications which are summarised in Table 5.1. These assessment criteria are also reflected in the structure of the application form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public benefit and demand</td>
<td>• Maximum access to people form all sections of the society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Involvement of children and young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Addressing needs of communities in areas of deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Commitment to equal opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality &amp; Development of Arts Activity</td>
<td>• Quality of music performed and standard of performance achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstration of need for instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Anticipated impact of new instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Commitment to repertoire and technique development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Viability and Quality of Management</td>
<td>• Sound financial and managerial footing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Comprehensive plan for managing the purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership funding</td>
<td>• Minimum partnership funding 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrated efforts in raising as much partnership funding as possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Views of applicants

5.3 Both successful and unsuccessful applicants were asked in the survey if they think the selection criteria and the assessment process were fair. The majority of the respondents agreed the selection criteria and the assessment process were fair as
shown in Figure 5.1. It should be noted that in answering this question half of the unsuccessful applicants provided a negative response while only several successful applicants disagreed with the fairness of the assessment and selection process.

Figure 5.1: Are the selection criteria and the assessment criteria fair?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Missing</th>
<th>Base 101</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Those applicants who disagreed with the fairness of the selection and assessment process were asked if these processes could be improved. Less than half of the respondents recognised these processes and criteria could be improved as illustrated in Figure 5.2. However it should be taken into account that the majority of these respondents were unsuccessful with their application and their response could have been significantly biased.

Figure 5.2: Can the selection process and the assessment criteria be improved?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Missing</th>
<th>Base 29</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5 Some of the common suggestions on how the selection process and the assessment criteria could be improved are presented in Table 5.2.
Table 5.2: Views of bands on possible improvements in the selection and assessment process

- ‘More transparency in the decision making process, otherwise the applicants don’t know what happens during the assessment process’
- ‘The band should be met. People dealing with the selection should see what the band is doing. Every application should be treated as a genuine case’

Source: Survey of applicants

5.6 When asked about the quality of the application process the majority of the bands agreed this process could be improved as illustrated in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: Could the application process be improved?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base 101

5.7 In particular 19 bands suggested a more straightforward documentation should be used and 7 bands would like to receive more information and advice on filling in the forms. It should be noted again that more than eighty percent of those respondents who expressed some criticism of the application process have been unsuccessful with their application.

Views of general public

5.8 During the focus groups the participants were asked about their views on the assessment criteria the Arts Council should apply for the selection of bands for Lottery funding. Some of the suggested criteria are presented in Table 5.3 in no particular order. It is important to note that the current assessment criteria used by the Arts Council had not been discussed with the focus groups at this point.
Table 5.3: Selection criteria suggested by focus groups

- Level of community involvement
- Level of band activity throughout the year and not just around events such as the Twelfth of July
- Level of involvement in charity work
- Number of band members
- Current number of instruments
- Length of time in existence
- Previous grants received
- Educational programmes – teaching young people to play different instruments
- Recruitment of young members
- Demonstrate long-term commitment
- Improving quality of music produced (not a major factor)
- Amount of money fundraised

5.9 The participants of the focus groups were also asked to rank a number of suggested criteria in order of importance. The results varied across the four groups, however it would appear that proof of need is viewed as most important with two of the groups agreeing that this should be ranked first. Involvement in the community and self-reliance were chosen by the other two groups as the key assessment criteria. Table 5.4 summarises the ranking.

Table 5.4 Ranking three most important criteria by focus groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Coleraine / Ballymoney</th>
<th>Dungannon</th>
<th>Belfast</th>
<th>Derry/ Londonderry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proof of need – number in band and current status of instruments</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement within the community (making music more accessible)</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of different activities conducted throughout the year</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-community involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth involvement – schools, educational awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reliance – ability to raise funds and the overall management of the band</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.10 Some individual views of the participants of the focus groups are presented in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Views of focus groups participants on the selection criteria for bands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>View</th>
<th>Location/Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;If there are instances where children have talent and have an outlet through bands this should be encouraged&quot;</td>
<td>Derry/Londonderry respondent, interested in band music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I don’t know how you would manage it but you don’t want to be giving out grants to a new band that then quickly breaks up and the money disappears&quot;</td>
<td>Dungannon respondent, not interested in band music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The bands have to play and bring their music to peoples attention, especially young people, how else are they going to recruit the next generation of musicians&quot;</td>
<td>Derry/Londonderry respondent, interested in band music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Depending on how much the band contributes to the local community throughout the year and not just the Twelfth of July parades, like at the Lord Major’s Parade and Remembrance Sunday or cross-community parades &quot;</td>
<td>Coleraine/Ballymoney respondent, interested in band music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Focus groups
VI Public perceptions regarding the Scheme

6.1 Obtaining public opinion on the distribution of funding is essential to the strategic planning and budgeting. The Arts Council Lottery Funding Strategy 2002-2006 was underpinned to a great extent by a public consultation process.

6.2 In order to assess public perception of the distribution of Lottery Funding we undertook a series of 4 focus groups throughout the province between 10th – 17th November. The following table illustrates the profile of the group respondents. We considered it essential to consult with people who both had and hadn’t an interest in bands and that genre of music.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>SEC</th>
<th>Interested in band music</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>ABC1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Belfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>25+</td>
<td>C2DE</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Dungannon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>C2DE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Coleraine/ Ballymoney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>25+</td>
<td>ABC1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Derry/ Londonderry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 Respondents were taken through a topic guide which asked respondents about their knowledge, experience and opinions of band music. After outlining what the musical instruments for bands scheme entailed, the discussion then progressed to discussing the scheme itself and the allocation of funding through the scheme.

Awareness

6.4 All respondents from each of the groups were aware of different types of amateur bands. Awareness of flute, accordion and pipe bands was greater than brass and silver bands. This possibly reflects the fact that flute, accordion and pipe bands are more prolific than brass and silver bands across the province.

“The only time I would see a brass band now is on TV
Londonderry respondent, interested in band music

6.5 Some respondents considered flutes to be the most accessible instrument for people to learn to play when compared to other instruments. A number of respondents, particularly those in the groups with an interest in band music, played an instrument themselves and the flute was one of the more commonly played instruments.

6.6 Awareness of bands was largely generated through family and friend’s involvement in bands, or the individual respondents themselves being involved in a band.

“Almost a tradition, if members of your family are involved then this usually encourages the younger people within the family to join as well”
Dungannon respondent, not interested in band music

6.7 The respondents who played an instrument themselves had greater experience of band music, some having played in a band themselves. In addition both groups, those who played an instrument and those who did not, had experienced band music through parades and other performances, such as special services, competitions and other recitals.
Attitudes towards amateur bands

6.8 Broadly speaking respondents were positive about amateur bands and the different types of music played. There was an appreciation of the musicianship and the dedication required to be able to learn how to play an instrument and perform with other musicians.

“I love the timing, the skills and bringing all the instruments together.”
Londonderry respondent, interested in band music

6.9 When considering the good aspects of the music played by amateur bands, many respondents simply stated that it was enjoyable to listen to. Accordion and pipe music was perceived to be more traditional than flute music.

“Up holds tradition for some people in Northern Ireland”
Coleraine / Ballymoney respondent, interested in band music

6.10 Respondents regarded the quality of music played by the various types of bands to be of variable quality, this was seen to be influenced in part by the quality of instruments that bands had at their disposal.

6.11 One respondent pointed out that in some cases the role of a band is not only musical, they can bring people together and help to give young people something positive to do.

“If young people are engaged in a creative activity at the very least it gives them something to do, at best it keeps them off the street drinking, smoking or worse”
Londonderry respondent, interested in band music

6.12 Many respondents indicated that bands helped to get young people involved in music and encouraged them to learn to play an instrument. It was also indicated that if children learned to play an instrument at school, involvement in a band helped to create continuity and encourage them to continue playing after leaving school, where in the absence of the band they may not continue to play.

6.13 Some respondents indicated that there was a strong cultural heritage element linked with bands music and that it was a means of bringing the arts to the public.

“There is a strong cultural heritage within the community and this music is a good vehicle for this”
Derry/ Londonderry respondent, interested in band music

6.14 A number of respondents indicated that amateur bands played a role in maintaining the cultural heritage of the province, in addition to this some respondents indicated that cultural tourism has developed around amateur bands.

6.15 This largely involved people travelling to the province to watch or participate in the various band competitions that take place. The most commonly referred to competition was the annual pipe band competition held in Portrush.

“A lot of people do go around the UK to all the different pipe band competitions. It does attract a lot of people to an area”
Dungannon respondent, not interested in band music
6.16 In addition to adding to the cultural heritage of the province, to a limited extent in some groups there was the notion that under certain circumstances bands could have a cross-community dimension. In the future in the absence of sectarianism band music could potentially become a cross-community interest.

"Needs to become less political and more about playing of the music"

Dungannon respondent, not interested in band music

“I’ve seen bands playing at the Lord Mayor’s Show, this was a good way to get more exposure to cross-community audiences”

Londonderry respondent, interested in band music

6.17 Regardless of whether bands help to create bridges between communities, many respondents indicated that bands performed a social role within a community. They help create a degree of social cohesion where people come together to either play in the band or support it.

“I’ve been in a band for 11 years, it is part of my life and they feel like an extended family.”

Derry/Londonderry respondent, interested in bands

6.18 In the view of a number of respondent’s bands need to promote their music more, the main way they envisaged bands doing this was performing more and bringing music to a wider audience.

“Bringing music into schools, letting people hear it live you have a greater appreciation for it.”

Derry/Londonderry respondent, interested in bands

6.19 There was also the view expressed by respondents in all groups that band music, parades in particular, has negative connotations amongst some elements of the public. It was indicated that for some there are associations with the parade season and the unrest that can occur at this time of year.

“In Northern Ireland, many people still associated bands with the parades”

Belfast respondent, not interested in band music

6.20 Respondents indicated that there is an element within bands who parade during the marching season who espouse negative values. For this group of bands it is less about the music and more about sectarianism. In this respect there is the perception that bands, or at least certain bands that can cause a cultural divide between communities.

“There is still an image of men wearing dark glasses and blowing whistles. It gives a bad impression of all bands.”

Derry/Londonderry respondent, interested in bands

6.21 A projective technique used during the focus groups, was to use images to see if there were any visual association with band music. Respondents were shown a number of images, they were then asked to think about each different type of band music in turn and indicate if they associated anything about the image with that type of music. Some of the association where due to the colours and shapes in the images and somewhere because of the theme or subject of the image.
6.22 The following image generated associations with pipe band music and the tradition scene looking out of part of what was assumed to be a castle.

"I associated pipe music with a castle – I suppose the Scottish connection"

Belfast respondent, not interested in band music

"I can visualise a lone piper playing here"

Londonderry respondent, interested in band music

6.23 The following image was commonly associated with silver bands and concert bands, this was due to the shape (which was seen to be similar to bell of a trumpet or trombone) and the sense of movement in the image.

"The excitement of a big selection of instruments coming together and the overall performance"

Belfast respondent, not interested in band music

"The whirlpool resembles the shape of the end of a trumpet or trombone."

Londonderry/Derry respondent, interested in band music
Perceptions of the Musical Instruments for Bands Scheme

6.24 Almost all respondents agreed that amateur bands should receive grants for the purchase of new instruments. In receiving this money it helps to attract new members to bands and sustain them.

“Yes, bands with basic instruments will not attract people to join without funding for new instruments”
Dungannon respondent, not interested in band music

6.25 In the groups respondents were asked about what criteria should be in place to decide which bands should receive funding. Respondents were invited to offer suggestions as to what the elements should be taken into consideration. Details on how respondents prioritised the various criteria are included at the end of the previous chapter.

6.26 Various issues came to the fore, it was seen as essential that bands should show a commitment to performing both within their community and beyond. Linked to this was a commitment to both improve and bring their music to a broader audience.

“This is important as it is a way to attract new members to bands. Commitment to play and bring their music to new audiences, particularly young people”
Londonderry/Derry respondent, interested in band music

6.27 Some respondents also pointed out that bands should also be able to raise funding for themselves and be self reliant to a certain degree. Other saw a bands ability to raise funds as a restriction to the amount of funding they should receive.

6.28 There was a degree of divergence in opinion between groups and within groups regarding whether restrictions should be placed on which bands receive funding. Within one group respondents did not consider it appropriate that any restrictions should be placed on which types of bands should receive funding. However, others stated that bands with paramilitary links should not receive funding. It was recognised that making a link between a band and a paramilitary organisation would be difficult and it was not considered appropriate that the Arts Council would have to police this.

“Bands that are known to be linked to paramilitaries on either side should not receive funding”
Dungannon respondent, not interested in band music

6.29 There was also a feeling amongst some respondents that some bands convene to practice and play only around the marching season. Some suggested that these bands should not receive funding, others suggested that more of an effort should be made to perform outside the marching season, therefore bringing band music potentially to a wider audience.

“Bands that only go out to be seen at the Twelve of July parade should not receive funding”
Coleraine / Ballymoney respondent, interested in band music

6.30 There was a strong feeling throughout the groups that if bands receive grant funding it is essential that they are accountable for how they spend it. Respondents suggested that they should be transparency in how the bands spend the grant funding they receive.
6.31 Respondents also suggested various alternatives to simply providing bands with grant funding in order to buy new instruments. Suggestions were made to provide loan instruments rather than funding, there was also a suggestion that the ACNI could enter into an agreement with suppliers in order to buy the instruments more cheaply.

6.32 In addition to providing evidence to indicate that the money has been spent on the appropriate musical instrument, respondents also indicated that bands had a responsibility to take care of the instruments that they were given.

6.33 Group respondents were asked to comment on what might happen to amateur bands in the absence of grant funding. There was a mixed response to this question, some respondents suggested that some smaller bands would cease to exist. Other suggested that bands existed prior to receiving this funding and would continue to do so in the absence of funding.

6.34 There was a suggestion by some respondents that the quality of the music may suffer if bands did not have the extra funding to replace old instruments.
VII Programme effectiveness in addressing government policies

7.1 The purpose of this section is to set out our assessment of the effectiveness of the Scheme in the context of the wider government policies. The following sections summarise key government policies in the arts provision and provide an assessment of the Scheme’s effectiveness in addressing these policies.

Programme for Government 2002

7.2 The Programme for Government published in September 2002 has set out the Executive’s priorities in support of its vision of a “peaceful, cohesive, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society, firmly founded on the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and the protection and vindication of the human rights of all”, based on “partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and South and between these islands”.

7.3 These priorities are as follows:

- Growing as a Community;
- Working for a Healthier People;
- Investing in Education and Skills;
- Securing a Competitive Economy; and
- Developing North/South, East/West and International Relations.

7.4 Within the priority of Growing as a Community, the sub Priority Cultural Diversity is ‘respecting, supporting and celebrating cultural and linguistic diversity and maximising the benefits of culture, arts and leisure activities’. This sub priority would also contribute to tourism, urban regeneration and economic revitalisation priorities.

Unlocking Creativity – September 2002

7.5 The Unlocking Creativity Initiative was approved by the NI Executive and is endorsed by the current Programme for Government (PfG). This outlines a range of proposed strategic aims and priorities as well as early actions designed “to secure a competitive economy”. The PfG signals a positive commitment to the role of the arts in achieving its purpose through “promoting creativity, entrepreneurship, innovation and competitiveness”. Within this the PfG intends, through its Unlocking Creativity initiative, to take steps to facilitate the development of the creative industries sector, enabling it to grow and contribute to promoting innovation and sustaining the knowledge economy.

7.6 The mission of the strategy is “to develop the capacities of all our people for creativity and innovation”. The implementation is underpinned by the following strategic aims:

- to ensure full and coordinated provision for creative and cultural development in the curricula of formal and informal and lifelong learning;
- to facilitate access to training and employment opportunities, and promote business development through creative and cultural development;
- to validate the concept that creativity is central to all aspects of work, learning and leisure in Northern Ireland.
Section VII: Programme effectiveness in addressing government policies

Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL)

7.7 In the Corporate Strategy 2004-2007 the Department set out its vision as follows:

“A confident, creative, informed and prosperous community”

7.8 DCAL Corporate Strategy highlights that some aspects of Belfast as a Cultural Capital already exist and are accessible for people to enjoy, some aspects are not yet fully developed or are in need of attention, and some are currently latent, such as people’s talents that are not yet fully realised. Investment in the Cultural Capital should ensure that there is the right infrastructure in place to support the people who develop local cultural products and services, ensuring that local culture is accessible to people today, and sustained for people in the future.

7.9 In developing Northern Ireland’s Cultural Capital, DCAL made a commitment to promote the connections between people and places, between participation and enjoyment, and, in doing so underpin social inclusion, social capital and positive economic development of the region.

7.10 In developing key measures for success DCAL set, among other things, a target of maintaining or exceeding the level of participation across culture, arts and leisure activities against the 2002 baseline of 90%.

Effectiveness of the Scheme in addressing government policies

7.11 Based on the discussions with the Arts Council and conclusions on the impact of the Scheme this assessment can be summarised as presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Effectiveness of the Scheme in addressing government policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government policies and arts provision</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme for Government</td>
<td>The Scheme contributed to the development of the cultural diversity in NI through funding of traditional amateur bands on both sides of the community and also those with cross-community membership. By providing amateur bands with funding for new instruments the Scheme maximised the benefits of arts and leisure activities by facilitating the attraction of new members and making it possible for the bands to enhance their artistic experience and activities within their communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlocking creativity</td>
<td>The Scheme has contributed to the development of capacities of people in NI for creativity and innovation through the creation of opportunities for amateur bands to enhance artistic experience, develop their artistic qualities and attract young people to participation in arts/traditional music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Culture, Arts &amp; Leisure (DCAL) Corporate Strategy 2004-07</td>
<td>The Scheme provided support to people who develop local cultural products and services. By funding the musical instruments for amateur bands the Scheme opened up opportunities for the bands to attract new members and young people thus ensuring that local culture is more accessible to people today, and sustained for people in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VIII Future needs of bands in Northern Ireland

8.1 The future needs of bands in Northern Ireland were discussed with the bands sector during the 2001 Review of the Scheme carried out by the Arts Council. Two key problems were identified by the bands: inferior or worn-out instruments in need of replacement and inadequate premises for rehearsal and meetings, in particular for bands using Orange Halls but having no affinity to the lodge.

8.2 During the present review bands have been asked to identify the main areas of concern for the future of bands in NI and suggest recommendations for any future funding schemes for bands if any are envisaged by the Arts Council.

8.3 Key umbrella organisations, including the Flute Bands League, Ulster Bands Association, National Accordion Organisation of the UK and Accordion Band League have been invited to discuss the needs of the bands sector and identify main concerns for the future of amateur band music in NI. The following sections present some of the key findings from the survey of applicants and discussion with umbrella organisations.

Key findings form the survey of applicants

8.4 74 respondents to the survey provided their views on main areas of concern that might affect the future viability of their bands. Some general views included the following:

- 36 bands highlighted that funding would remain the biggest challenge in the future due to the costs of running a band including uniforms, transport etc;
- 13 bands indicated the attraction and retention of young people was key to the viability of bands in NI;
- 9 bands emphasised the need for new musical instruments as one of the key areas of concern.

8.5 Some individual views of the respondents are presented in Table 8.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8.1: Main areas of concern for the future of bands in NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;At times it is extremely difficult to get young people interested…. The commitment of the younger members in the years ahead…. It is difficult to attract and retain younger people…. We struggle to bring young people into the band&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Finding competent trainers…money is needed for qualified tuition&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Condition of equipment and instruments…The band might have to stop if instruments are not replaced&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A drop in membership, failure to replace losses from a youth section, or if any reason our practice hall was taken away&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;We need to keep new members coming in and attract experienced musicians to maintain standards in members&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Recruitment of new experienced players, training of new less experienced players, future funding of new equipment and maintaining a rehearsal venue&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey of applicants
The respondents were also asked in the survey to identify the most important factors to the success of their bands. The majority of the bands agreed that having good quality instruments was the most important factor followed by having an inspiring conductor/leader and an effective committee as shown in Figure 8.1.

**Figure 8.1: Most important factors for the continued success of the bands**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having an inspiring conductor/leader</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having good quality instruments</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an effective committee</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an appropriate rehearsal venue</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.7 In terms of motivation of bands to apply for any future funding scheme if it becomes available, almost all the bands which responded to the survey confirmed they would apply for funding again as demonstrated in Figure 8.2.

**Figure 8.2: Would you apply for similar funding for the purchase of musical instruments if it became available?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.8 Only eight respondents indicated they would not apply for similar funding and gave various reasons including the complex application process, discouragement as result of their application being turned down and good condition and quality of instruments so far.

8.9 In terms of the development of any future schemes the bands have also provided their recommendations and views on what aspects of such schemes can be improved. For example, the majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that there was a need for the revision of the existing scheme. In particular, the respondents emphasised the need for independent assessment of the benefits of funding to the band and wider community. It should be noted that equal numbers of respondents (35%) agreed or
disagreed with the statement that the requirement for 25% of partnership funding was unrealistic. This is presented in Figure 8.3.

**Figure 8.3: The revision of the Scheme**

- The existing selection criteria are reliable and fair
- There is a need for independent assessment of the benefits to the band and wider community
- The requirement for 25% of partnership funding was unrealistic
- There is a need for the revision of the Scheme

Base 101

8.10 40 bands provided their views on how any future scheme for the support of bands in NI could be improved if it became available. For example:

- 12 bands held the view that more eligible costs should be included in the grant, such as uniforms, transport etc;
- 4 bands agreed that any future scheme should offer funding for tuition;
- 3 bands highlighted the need for more information about funding opportunities; and
- 3 bands suggested lowering the requirement for partnership funding.

8.11 Some individual views of the respondents are presented in Table 8.2.
Section VIII: Future needs of bands in Northern Ireland

Table 8.2 Views of bands on future funding schemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key findings form the workshop with umbrella organisations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.12 It should be noted that the majority of the representatives of umbrella organisations who attended the workshop are members of the amateur bands and have experience with the Scheme; some applied to the Scheme and received funding, others had their application turned down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.13 Overall the participants of the workshop agreed that the biggest issue for the amateur bands in NI was the recruitment and retention of young people. For example, this problem has been mentioned as one of the reasons for the demise of flute bands over the past 20 years. It has been recognised by the participants of the workshop that low interest in band music among young people may be partly result of the stigma attached to band music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.14 In this context the umbrella organisations highlighted the need for better promotion of band music in NI. In addition it has been emphasised that the bands’ existing youth policies should be sustainable and this was often directly linked to the quality of the available musical instruments. Another way to ensure greater attractiveness of band music to young people is through good quality conductors and tutors. Maintaining the existing band halls has been also mentioned as one of the main concerns for the future of bands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.15 In terms of the funding scheme for musical instruments, the participants of the workshop mostly agreed that although fund raising was a very challenging task for the amateur bands the requirement for partnership funding should remain in tact to ensure stronger motivation for the applicants to undertake various activities in the community. It should be noted that some umbrella organisations agreed that marching bands should be given a good chance to apply for funding as they are often the first step in progression towards wider repertoire. The NI Piping and Drumming School expressed their support to similar schemes in the future as they observe strong involvement and interest of their students who are often willing to join the bands after studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.16 It has been suggested by some umbrella organisations that any future scheme, if it became available, should involve better assessment of different types of bands. For example, bands with good community purpose but average quality of performance and bands with good quality performance but limited community work should be assessed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
using a different set of criteria. Some workshop participants suggested developing benchmarks for assessment.

8.17 Some umbrella organisations highlighted that the application process should be simplified however bands should be required to make a very good cause for funding. This view has emerged from the difficulties some of the bands confronted when filling in the forms.
IX Conclusions and recommendations

Key findings of the Review

9.1 Based on the quantitative and qualitative evidence examined by the research team the Musical Instruments for Bands Scheme has been effective in the support of band music in Northern Ireland. A number of factors underpin the overall success of the scheme.

Profile of bands in the first five rounds of funding

9.2 The scheme has been widely dispersed across Northern Ireland. This dispersal reflects good access of the various types of bands to funding and awareness of the scheme in different parts of Northern Ireland.

9.3 A significant proportion of bands which applied to the scheme had a cross-community membership. The survey of applicants revealed that more than a third of the respondents had a cross-community membership. However, the majority of respondents indicated the Protestant community as the main source of membership, although this may reflect the overall nature of the sector.

Amount of grant aid awarded to each band sector

9.4 136 bands have been awarded a total of £1,999,646 through five rounds of funding. 50% percent of applicants regardless of the number of times they applied to the scheme received a grant. Table 9.1 provides a summary of funding by type of band and the range of grant aid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of band</th>
<th>Total number of bands awarded</th>
<th>Total amount of grant aid awarded</th>
<th>Average grant per band</th>
<th>Range of grant aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accordion</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>£613,109</td>
<td>£20K</td>
<td>£5K – 40K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipe</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>£561,579</td>
<td>£12K</td>
<td>£5K – 20K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brass</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>£476,217</td>
<td>£25K</td>
<td>£12K – 37K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>£309,589</td>
<td>£9K</td>
<td>£2K – 33K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>£39,152</td>
<td>£13K</td>
<td>£10K – 15K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>£1,999,646</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impact of new instruments

9.5 New instruments had positive impacts on the bands and wider community. The survey of successful applicants demonstrated that new musical instruments helped the bands to:

- enhance their artistic experience;
- improve standard of performance; and
Section IX: Conclusions and recommendations

- recruit new band members.

9.6 These findings have been largely supported by the evidence from the case studies. The majority of the bands agreed they would not have been able to purchase new instruments without the funding from the scheme.

9.7 As regards the benefits of new instruments to a wider community, it emerged from the survey that the main impacts were:

- ability of the bands to increase the number of performances;
- ability of the bands to involve more children and young people.

ACNI assessment criteria and scoring scheme

9.8 The requirement for matched funding encouraged the bands to undertake more fundraising activities. It emerged from the survey of applicants and our discussions with umbrella organisations that, although being a challenging target, the 25% matched funding requirement motivated the bands to develop their community work and fundraising activities. The majority of the bands which responded to the survey indicated fundraising activities as the main source of partnership funding.

9.9 The selection process and the assessment criteria of the Arts Council were fair. It emerged from the survey of applicants that the selection process and assessment criteria were viewed by the bands as broadly fair. However, some improvements to the process were suggested by both successful and unsuccessful applicants, umbrella organisations and the general public.

Perceptions of the general public regarding the scheme

9.10 Overall the public is positive about the scheme and support provided by the Arts Council to traditional music bands in Northern Ireland. Based on our findings from the focus groups it is obvious that the general public agree that amateur bands should receive grants for the purchase of new instruments. However, it was agreed by the participants of the focus groups that the community work of the bands and accountability for public funding should be key in the design of any future scheme.

Future needs of the band sector in Northern Ireland.

9.11 It emerged from our discussions with umbrella organisations and the survey of bands that there are several key areas of concern for the future of amateur bands in Northern Ireland, including:

- recruitment and retention of young people;
- good quality conductors and tutors; and
- better promotion of band music in Northern Ireland

9.12 There was general agreement amongst those in the sector that the funding scheme for the purchase of new musical instruments should be continued in the future. In particular, bands highlighted the importance of new musical instruments for retention and involvement of young people and overall viability of the bands.
Conclusions

9.13 Overall this has been a very successful scheme providing a wide range of benefits to the bands sector. The current scheme has benefited 136 bands, with an estimated membership totalling around 4,000 individuals, with grants valuing £2million spread across Northern Ireland and encompassing all the main types of band. It is greatly appreciated by the sector and it is generally supported by the wider public as being a good and acceptable use of public funds.

9.14 The scheme fits well with the objectives of the Arts Council as well as broader government policy, in that it is engaging with community arts and voluntary arts, two target sectors of the Arts Council, to increase opportunities for creative participation and to expand the creative contexts within which artists work. It also fits with Lottery funding objectives to increase access of all sectors to funding and to support community participation in the arts. It has demonstrated the interest of government and the Arts Council in a sector which is an important aspect of Northern Ireland’s musical culture and which is an essential element of many local communities in Northern Ireland.

9.15 The main benefits of the scheme have been as follows:

- It has led to improvements in artistic standards through enhanced tone, better tuning, improved musical balance and intonation;
- It has improved the standards of performance in competition which is an important feature of some of the band sectors;
- For many bands it has helped to attract new members, including younger members, by making more instruments available, with the older instruments being used for training young and new members; and
- It has provided an impetus for the general development and a new lease of life and improved morale for a number of bands, through the general impact of the new instruments and the need to raise matching funding through fundraising.

9.16 There were few complaints about the administration of the scheme, apart from some inevitable frustration with application processes. The issue of supply of specialist instruments and the need for quotations was raised by a number of bands. The selection criteria were also broadly acceptable, although some would like to see a means of ensuring that grants are awarded to bands both at the lower and higher end of performance standards.

9.17 The sector faces a wide range of needs for future development – the continuing need to attract and retain younger members, the need for better tuition and good leaders and conductors, the ongoing pressure on facilities improvement and financing operational costs and improving the public perception of the sector as a key element of Northern Ireland’s artistic culture.

Recommendations

9.18 We understand that in the future there are constraints on the availability of Lottery funding. There is strong support in the bands sector for continuation of the New Instruments Scheme in some form if this is possible. If a new scheme is introduced we would make the following recommendations in respect of the implementation:
More differentiation could be introduced into the assessment process. It emerged from our discussions with umbrella organisations and the general public that the selection process could be improved if different applicants were organised in categories for assessment. For example, bands with a good quality of performance but limited community activities could be assessed differently from the bands with average quality of performance but an outstanding record of community work. The advantages of this approach are also recognised by the Arts Council.

Funding arrangements and monitoring procedures require continuing attention to ensure accountability. We did not undertake any work in the form of an audit of the scheme but we understand that tight controls are in place to ensure proper accountability and we were not made aware of any problems with the scheme. However the sector is aware of the potential for abuse of the scheme and would be supportive of continuing monitoring.

If the scheme is not continued we would suggest that consideration might be given to the following recommendations:

Consider funding for tuition and training. The majority of the bands surveyed for the review and the umbrella organisations indicated that other needs of the bands, such as availability of quality tuition and leadership need to be addressed in the future. Therefore it was proposed that any future funding scheme could provide some form of assistance with the costs of professional tuition. This might be sector-led and organised by the associations rather than by application and could support master classes and workshops, particularly for younger players.

Improve awareness of other funding available. It emerged from our discussions with the bands and umbrella organisations that many bands were not aware of other arts funding schemes for which bands or individual members might be eligible. Consideration might be given to working with the representative associations to increase awareness of other funding support that is available.