

The National Plan for Music Education sets out the ambition for Hub Lead Organisations “to become more strategic, building a wider range of strong partnerships with schools, academy trusts, local authorities and others, so that children and young people receive high quality support in every local area and to ensure there are no local ‘cold spots’ where access to provision is limited. It is therefore our [government’s] expectation that, through the competitive process, we will see a reduced number of Hub Lead Organisations establishing partners across wider geographical areas.”

On 22 November 2022, the Department for Education shared the below statement on their thinking on the future of Music Hubs on the Arts Council website. An updated version of this statement can be found [here](#).

“Music Hubs are partnerships co-ordinated by a Hub Lead Organisation (HLO) and made up of schools and academy trusts, local authorities, music and wider arts and education organisations and charities, community or youth organisations, and more. When launched in 2012, there were 123 Music Hubs covering the 152 upper-tier local authority (LA) areas in England. Following various transfers and restructures over the last ten years, there are today 118 Music Hubs: 98 covering single LA areas and 20 covering multi-LA areas.

In June 2022, the National Plan for Music Education – The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education – set out the intention to commence an investment process for HLOs. HLOs are responsible for the funding and governance of a Music Hub, creating a strategic vision for an area through a Local Plan for Music Education, ensuring that the Music Hub meets local needs through an evidence-based approach, and for continually refining the delivery of the partnership year on year. The investment process is an opportunity for interested organisations to apply for the role of an HLO.

As we open HLOs up to competition through the Music Hub Investment Programme, it is our intention that all Hubs will cover multiple local authority areas, so that children and young people across England benefit from broader, stronger and more effective Music Hub partnerships that continue to ensure successful delivery at a local level.

As set out in the Plan, we want HLOs to become more strategic, building a broader range of strong partnerships with schools, academy trusts, local authorities and others, so that children and young people receive higher quality support in every local area. This is crucial in ensuring there are no local ‘cold spots’ where access to provision is limited. It is therefore our intention that, through the competitive process, we will see a reduced number of HLOs establishing partnerships with a

greater number of delivery partners to ensure that local need is identified and provided for accordingly.

Formal partnerships and devolved administrative arrangements that work across Local Authority areas have increased significantly since the formation of Music Hubs, through initiatives such as Local Enterprise Partnerships and Combined Authorities.

The landscape of the school's system has also undergone rapid changes with the creation of Teaching School Hubs and the growth of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs). The recently-published Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child white paper sets out the Department for Education's ambition that "all children will benefit from being taught in a family of schools"

The strongest Trusts constantly achieve the greatest outcomes for their children and offer support to the most challenging areas. This movement to working across larger geographies enables collaboration across boundaries, encourages collective decision making, empowers partners to be more ambitious and utilises resources in different ways. It is therefore important that the next evolution of Music Hubs is structured to meet children and young people's needs within and beyond local authority boundaries.

The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education acknowledged that good progress has been made in music education over the last ten years. Music Hubs have supported more children and young people, been more inclusive, diversified the musical offer and worked with more schools. However, provision remains patchy across the country. Having Hubs covering larger areas will support a consistent high quality approach to music education for all children regardless of where they live or go to school by offering:

- broader, stronger and more effective partnerships, including with academy trusts.
- improved and more equitable access to a diverse range of musical activities, opportunities, teachers, instruments and equipment.
- greater consistency of provision and ability to scale up effective programmes and ways of working for children and young people and schools.
- greater access to more advanced ensembles and a wider range of progression opportunities.

- greater access to the cultural capital centred around urban centres; improving connections and reducing isolation for rural communities.
- more strategic leadership and governance, plus a wider range of employment opportunities and progression routes for the music education workforce.
- access to greater resources, capacity and capability to use government funding to leverage further investment.
- an increased profile with wider musical stakeholders and a stronger connection with the music industry.

The above advantages are reflected in many of the five strategic functions for future Music Hubs set out in the plan:

1. Partnership. Taking a leading role in building a sustainable, local infrastructure for high-quality music education and music-making, in partnership with schools, early years and other education providers, community music organisations, and other regional and national youth music organisations and industry.
2. Schools. Supporting all state-funded schools in their area through ongoing relationships to help them deliver high-quality music education, including a quality curriculum support offer, specialist tuition, instruments and ensembles; and a broad range of progression routes and musical experiences for all pupils.
3. Progression and musical development. Supporting children and young people to develop and progress with music, including into national or specialist opportunities, higher education and employment, so that the chance to be involved in high-quality music-making is shared more widely in our society. Support children and young people to access the wider world of music, including live performance and community music.
4. Inclusion. Driving broad access to music education, so every child has the opportunity to participate irrespective of their circumstances, background, where they live or their SEND.
5. Sustainability. Ensuring the strategic, financial, and operational sustainability of the Music Hub by: (i) supporting a dynamic and well-trained

workforce, (ii) leveraging DfE funding to develop wider investment into young people's music from a range of sources and revenue streams; (iii) being accountable and transparent by publishing plans, needs analysis and impact data; and (iv) considering and acting on the Hub's environmental responsibilities."