



SUPPORTING
CONNECTING
INFLUENCING

Dear Secretary of State

18th June 2026

Music Hub Revenue Grant Funding

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Music Hub Network across England and the children and young people they aim to serve.

Yesterday (17th June 2026) Arts Council England (ACE) confirmed to Music Hubs that your department has allocated £76m of revenue grant funding for the 2026/27 academic year. Whilst this confirmation of funding is welcome, the fact that the amount remains at a standstill for another year (the seventh in a row) and that only one year of funding has been confirmed is of urgent concern.

You may be aware that I presented to the APPG for Music Education earlier this month and highlighted the many challenges the Music Hubs face. Despite being resilient and resourceful, ongoing one-year funding settlements which are not linked to inflation mean they are unable to achieve the aspirations this government, the hubs themselves and more importantly children and young people have for musical learning in and beyond the school day.

Standstill funding means that cuts will have to be made. These cuts will be to provision, opportunities and jobs. At a time when the government recognises the importance of arts education and aims to narrow the attainment gap, increasing engagement and entitlement for all pupils, the reality is that this further real-term cut will reduce access, not increase it!

Music Mark recognises that additional investment is being announced linked to music education such as the provision of a National Centre for Arts and Music Education from September 2026 and enrichment entitlement funding for schools. We also, of course, welcome the news that funding has been found to support the employer Teachers' Pension Scheme and National Insurance Contributions for Music Hub partnership organisations. However, none of this will be enough to stop the ongoing need for music providers to make cuts.

The Bank of England says that inflation has averaged 3.84% annually since 2019. If the Music Hub grant had risen in line with this, it would now be over £100m. The £24m reduction in spending power makes it impossible for music education providers – whose wider curriculum and enrichment opportunities in and out of school complement the National Curriculum – even to maintain the opportunities now available to children and young people.

Responding to our recent survey, members told us that they have no choice but to increase fees and charges above inflation, despite knowing that this will strain affordability and reduce participation. While some Music Hub leads have increased income from fundraising, 79% say that it is taking more time and resource and this income funds projects that neither help reduce the cost to parents of ongoing tuition nor provide stability for organisations.



SUPPORTING
CONNECTING
INFLUENCING

Alongside the challenge of doing the same for less, the ability of the music hub partnerships to develop a long-term strategic plan has been hampered for over ten years by one-year funding settlements. The sector has adapted, but each year more music hub leaders report being challenged by their governance board or local authority councillors about the ongoing financial viability of their work. This nervousness by leaders also adds to the likelihood of cuts to provision and staffing.

There is genuine anger, hurt and real concern throughout our membership. This single-year, stand-still settlement is at odds with the messaging from ministers and civil servants about Government's ambitions for opportunity and equity. Thousands of music education leaders and teachers across England will be disheartened by another successive real terms cut in funding when they are already trying to do more for significantly less. It also potentially undermines the objectives for the National Centre for Arts and Music Education, since the Music Hub network is expected to support its work over the next three years. Since you took office, the messaging from DfE has been centred on providing multi-year funding agreements to enable more effective strategic planning, providing a break from the previous short-term approach. This news is raising questions of whether the government is completely unaware of, or willing to address the challenges faced by our sector. Reform to the curriculum and enrichment framework has been welcomed as a new start for ensuring equity of access to musical learning for all pupils, but in reality, without the organisations and workforce to deliver them, they will ultimately be unrealised in music.

On behalf of our Membership, and crucially the pupils they are ready to support, I ask you whether you will accept that the funding you have agreed to allocate will not meet the aspirations both you and the nation's children and young people have? We have regularly written to request additional funding be found, even commissioning independent research from Demos to demonstrate the shortfall that exists. However, as I said at the APPG recently, at this point the efficiencies have already been made. What will you and your department do to mitigate for the imminent reduction in opportunities because of this standstill funding and can you prioritise confirming funding beyond August 2027 so that the Music Hub network can plan more strategically?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Bridget Whyte
CEO, Music Mark
bridget.whyte@musicmark.org.uk