

Music Hub Partnership Models webinar – Arts Council England Q&As

The answers to many of the questions asked during the [webinar](#) can be found in Arts Council England's [Music Hub Investment Programme FAQs](#), which are regularly updated.

This Q&A addresses common themes from the questions asked during the webinar, and also responds to questions that were not answered live in as much detail as we can at this time.

Some questions were asked during the webinar which we are not able to answer at this stage. We will share further details as soon as possible, including information about the Programme's timeline, which we expect to announce in November at the earliest.

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What is the funding period for the new Hub Investment Programme?

As part of the National Plan for Music Education (NPME), the Department for Education announced a continued investment of £79 million per year into the Music Hub programme, including a grant of over £76 million per year directly to Hubs. This level of funding has been confirmed up to April 2025.

Why are new Hub Lead Organisations being appointed via an investment process?

The Arts Council managed the first, and only, investment process for Music Education Hubs in 2011-12. An open, competitive investment process for the new Music Hub Programme will ensure that public money is invested in a way that most benefits children, young people and their communities.

How many Hub Lead Organisations will there be in the new Music Hub Investment Programme?

Neither Arts Council England nor the Department for Education has a number in mind. Feedback from the sector as part of the Arts Council's conversation and consultation phase will inform the structure of new Hub Lead Organisations.

How might fewer Hub Lead Organisations benefit children, young people and their communities?

Hub Lead Organisations working across a wider geographical area will enhance opportunities for young people by connecting them across a wider area, making a broader range of opportunities available and offering more high profile, ambitious platforms and projects.

The open, competitive investment process will also lead to new organisations and new partnerships, stimulating educational projects that engage even more children, young people and communities with a richer, more diverse range of high-quality musical experiences.

What is the plan to achieve a reduced number of Music Hubs and Hub Lead Organisations and establish partnerships across wider geographical areas? Will the size of a Hub be determined by funding levels, geographical size, or will Hubs be mapped onto Teaching School Hub areas?

How a reduced number of strategic Hub Lead Organisations will be achieved is yet to be determined. We will consult with the sector during the conversation and consultation phase to determine the most appropriate mechanisms for achieving a reduced number of strategic Hub Lead Organisations covering larger areas.

We want to understand and talk through any concerns on how to realise the ambitions within the NPME and explore what the geographic options and partnership model arrangements could look like. This will be one of the topics discussed during the conversation and consultation phase. Feedback from these conversations will inform the development of the final Music Hub Investment Programme.

While the number of Hub Lead Organisations leading Music Hubs across England is likely to reduce, the success of the Hub partnerships will lie in their ability to respond to their local contexts and the needs of the young people, families, teachers, and other providers they serve. Each Hub will need to determine the governance model that will work across the areas it serves and how best to organise delivery across each of the Hub Strategic Functions. It is likely that there will be an advisory or oversight function in each Local Authority area to include local stakeholders.

Is there a sense of the savings achieved through the Hubs that have already merged - maybe as a % of budget? Also, has there been any measurement of improved outcomes as a result of merged hubs?

Andrea Spain's 'Multi-Area Music Hubs in England' research describes the benefits reported by multi-area Hubs, including financial advantages. You can [read the research on Arts Council England's website](#).

Should current Hubs be amending their risk registers to consider the risks of the new Programme's restructure of Hubs? What factors should be considered within that?

We encourage all organisations to contact our dedicated Music Hub Investment Programme inbox at musichubs@artscouncil.org.uk if they have any concerns. Arts Council England Relationship Managers are also available to support current Hub Lead Organisations.

Will fewer Hub Lead Organisations lead to job losses, and if so how is Arts Council England supporting current Hub Lead Organisations while they await further information?

We want to understand and talk through any concerns on how to realise the ambitions within the NPME. We will consult with the sector during the conversation and consultation phase, and feedback from these conversations will inform the development of the final Music Hub Investment Programme.

As both the fundholder for the current programme and the administrator for the Music Hub investment programme, the Arts Council is responsible for ensuring that all the necessary implications of these potential changes, for both current and prospective Hub Lead Organisations, are considered.

One such area is whether the legislation known as "TUPE" (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) is likely to apply. We have therefore contacted all current Hub Lead Organisations to request further information about the staff currently employed (or assigned) to support the delivery of Hub activity funded and/or sustained by the current DfE grant. All communication and guidance will clearly outline the reasons we are requesting this information and how it will be used.

How will Arts Council England Relationship Managers be involved with the new Hub Programme?

Arts Council England Relationship Managers will support current and prospective Hubs throughout this Investment Process and the new Hub Programme.

The application process

When will the application timeline be announced?

Arts Council England has been working closely with the Department for Education on planning for the Music Hub Investment Programme, and we expect the earliest we will be able to share details about the full timeline is November.

In the meantime, relevant organisations should plan on the basis that we will not be issuing an invitation to apply to lead a Music Hub before the end of 2022 (calendar year).

When will the conversation and consultation phase begin?

The conversation and consultation phase will continue following the announcement of the Programme's timeline. We expect the earliest we will be able to share details about the full timeline is November.

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As part of their application to become a Hub Lead Organisation, what information will organisations need to provide about how they plan to work across geographical areas? Will organisations be required to have already formed partnerships and collaborations?

We will publish detailed requirements for Hub Lead Organisations following the conclusion of the conversation and consultation phase with the sector. This will include relevant requirements for working across geographies, which have yet to have been fully determined, and our expectations for Music Hub partnerships, including the arrangements we expect applicants to demonstrate or evidence as part of their application.

Will the performance and history of organisations involved in Music Education Hubs be taken into consideration during the Hub Lead Organisation application process?

It is likely we will consider an organisation's experience and track record in managing and overseeing activity that is similar or aligned to that of a Music Education Hub when assessing applications. However, we will publish full and detailed requirements for Hub Lead Organisations, including the assessment criteria we will use to make funding decisions, once the conversation and consultation phase with the sector has concluded.

Are current Music Education Hubs allowed to use their existing funding to prepare for their applications to become a new Hub Lead Organisation?

No. Current Music Education Hubs can only use their funding to support activities outlined in their Funding Agreement with the Arts Council.

Hubs and partnerships

Do the partnership models explored within this webinar reflect the Department for Education and Arts Council England's preference for the structure of future Hubs?

The presentations and research discussed within this webinar were not intended to be indicative of any planned approach, but an opportunity to explore thinking from beyond our usual circles, be inspired by the achievements of different collaborations, and learn from their challenges. Each Hub will need to determine the governance model that will work across the areas it serves and how best to organise delivery across each of the Hub Strategic Functions.

How will Arts Council England support the development of new partnerships, especially in areas which have historically faced challenges forming partnerships?

It will be the responsibility of organisations applying to become a Hub Lead Organisation to bring together a range of organisations and individuals via the Hub partnership. If awarded funding, these partnerships will work collectively to ensure that local needs, demands and opportunities are responded to, and that a

consistent, high-quality offer is available to all children and young people within the Hub area.

To help with this, we have held a series of webinars – including this one – to explore different partnership models across the creative, culture and education sectors. We have also published research by Andrea Spain into the range of partnership models which have emerged in the Music Hub sector and the journeys which multi-area Hubs have taken.

We want to understand and talk through any concerns on how to realise the ambitions within the NPME and explore what partnership model arrangements could look like. Throughout the conversation and consultation phase, we will speak with stakeholders across the music education, formal education, youth, creative and culture sectors and beyond to learn what support organisations will need as they develop new – and build on existing – partnerships. This feedback will inform the development of the final Music Hub Investment Programme.

Following the conclusion of the conversation and consultation phase, we will publish detailed guidance and supporting materials on the Music Hub Investment Programme. These documents will provide more information that will support the development of partnerships.

Are there any plans for Hub partnerships that are not geographically close? For example, rural hub partnerships?

During the conversation and consultation phase, we will consult with the sector about different partnership models and the most appropriate mechanisms for achieving a reduced number of strategic Hub Lead Organisations covering larger areas. We are keen to hear all ideas, and the feedback from these conversations will shape the final Investment Programme.

How will new Hubs work with multi-academy trusts (MATs)? With schools being asked to take a leading role in music education, and MAT examples today showing the potential to deliver independent local or national music activities, is there a danger of unintended duplication with MATs and Music Hubs working to their own agendas in future?

MATs can consider what involvement they might like with Hubs. For example, they might wish to apply to lead a Hub, to be a partner in one or multiple Hubs, or

perhaps be interested in the opportunities of the new Lead Schools for Music announced in the NPME.

The success of the Hub partnerships will lie in their ability to respond to their local contexts and the needs of the young people, families, teachers, and other providers they serve. Each Hub will need to determine the governance model that will work across the areas it serves and how best to organise delivery across each of the Hub Strategic Functions. It is likely that there will be an advisory or oversight function in each Local Authority area to include local stakeholders.

Can Hubs choose to remain independent, with strong internal and external partnerships and low risk, with no pressure to collaborate with another geographical area?

We will publish detailed requirements for Hub Lead Organisations following the conclusion of the conversation and consultation phase with the sector. This will include relevant requirements for working across geographies, which have yet to have been fully determined.

Will all Hub lead partners, especially those already covering very large areas, be required to cover more geography?

We will publish detailed requirements for Hub Lead Organisations following the conclusion of the conversation and consultation phase with the sector. This will include relevant requirements for working across geographies, which have yet to have been fully determined.

In the new Programme, how will Music Hubs work with schools in diverse communities? Will these communities be involved in discussions about the new Programme?

The refreshed National Plan for Music Education, which outlined the ambition for the new Music Hub Investment Programme, was informed by the work of an advisory panel and sector consultation, including broad consultation through the [Call for Evidence](#), which received over 5,000 responses from parents, teachers and students and 275 responses from young people. Further details

The Music Hub Investment Process will lead to new organisations and new partnerships being involved in Hubs, stimulating educational projects that engage

even more children, young people and communities with a richer, more diverse range of high-quality musical experiences.

The success of these new Hub partnerships will lie in their ability to respond to their local contexts and the needs of the young people, families, teachers, and other providers they serve. Each Hub will need to determine the governance model that will work across the areas it serves and how best to organise delivery across each of the Hub Strategic Functions.

Building on the sector consultation of the National Plan for Music Education, the Music Hub Investment Programme will include a conversation and consultation phase, during which we are keen to hear from organisations and communities from throughout the creative, cultural, education and charitable sectors. Feedback from these conversations will inform the development of the final Music Hub Investment Programme.

Current Hubs

What does this investment programme mean for current Music Education Hubs?

Current Music Education Hub Lead Organisations were identified through an investment process which took place in 2011-12 and, while there has been change within the network since then, there has not been a full investment process since.

We expect that many current Music Education Hub Lead Organisations will remain an important part of the new programme, either because they successfully apply to become a Music Hub Lead Organisation for a larger Music Hub area or partnership, or because they are a key delivery partner in one of these larger areas.

Will Music Education Hubs continue to be funded until the new Music Hub programme begins?

In June, alongside the publication of [The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education](#), the Department for Education [announced funding](#) for the programme up to 2025. This means Music Education Hubs will continue to be funded until the new Music Hub programme begins.

Will the concept of a Music Hub almost become redundant and need to expand its scope into a 'Culture Hub' when the Cultural National Plan is released?

The Department for Education is working with the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England to develop the National Plan for Cultural Education, which will complement the refreshed National Plan for Music Education and the work of Music Hubs. More details will be available when the National Plan for Cultural Education is published.

How do I find out more?

[Sign up to the Music Hub Investment Programme newsletter](#) to stay up to date with the latest progress, events and consultation activity.

Alternatively, you can contact musichubs@artscouncil.org.uk and we will aim to respond to you within five working days.