



Music Education Hubs: Inclusion guidance

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Contents

Introduction	3
Expectations of Hubs	4
Charging, remissions and subsidy	6
Support in developing your strategy	7
What does the law say?	9
Definitions	11

Introduction

Our strength as a nation owes much to our diversity and to our ability to draw on the talent that can be found all around us. Music Education Hubs (Hubs) – as well as the wider arts sector and the Arts Council – have an influential role to play in championing diversity and, as publicly funded bodies, have a duty to see that the vision for inclusion, equity and equality are at the heart of what we do.

A holistic approach to inclusion can positively impact all Hub partners, equipping them to meet the needs of local communities and support a vibrant culture of local musical participation. Taking a proactive approach to inclusion can also build Hubs' organisational resilience by diversifying income streams, highlighting or uncovering opportunities, and impacting future recruitment to the workforce, governance and volunteer pools from communities that may have previously felt excluded and who have been under-represented.

In 2011, the first National Plan for Music Education (NPME) set out a vision for children and young people from all backgrounds and every part of England to have the opportunity to progress and achieve excellence in their music-making. As part of the core roles, all Hubs have been proactively supporting children and young people to access and progress their learning across a range of activities. The importance of equality, diversity and inclusion has grown over the past decade. In 2020, the Department for Education (DfE) specified that Hubs should 'focus particularly on provision that is accessible and appropriate for disadvantaged pupils, those with disabilities and those with special education needs' and the refreshed NPME, published in June 2022, places even greater focus on the importance of inclusion as one of the five strategic functions of Hubs. This is expressed as follows:

"Music Hubs will drive broad access to music education, so every child has the opportunity to participate, irrespective of their circumstances, background, location or their special educational needs or disabilities."

In December 2022, all Hubs were requested to provide evidence of publishing a summary of their equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy on their website, to ensure that each Hub's approach is visible to local children and young people, parents/carers, stakeholders and partners. All Hubs will need to continue to develop and articulate their approach to EDI, demonstrating how the Hub will widen access and opportunities, ensure the needs and circumstances of all children and young people are appropriately understood and responded to, and that provision is inclusive and equitable.

This document draws together and clarifies the expectations of Music Education Hubs during 2023-24 and shares routes and opportunities for support. To note, we

use 'EDI' and 'Inclusion' interchangeably in this guidance, drawing on sector research and learning such as Youth Music's 'IDEA' ethos and language.

This document is primarily aimed at Music Education Hubs delivering against the requirements for the 2023-24 funding period. However, it may also be helpful for anyone applying to lead a Music Hub as part of the Music Hub Investment Programme, to understand our reporting requirements and expectations for Hubs.

Expectations of Hubs

We expect Hub Lead Organisations (HLOs) and their partners to demonstrate that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded at the heart of their Hub.

Each HLO will be expected to develop and publish their strategic approach to inclusion as part of their LPME, which outlines how the Hub will respond to the barriers to participation faced by children and young people in the Hub's geographic area, including socio-economic challenges and other relevant factors relating to access and equitable progression (eg location).

An inclusion strategy should:

- outline the specific support made available for children and young people who are eligible for Pupil Premium, including looked-after children and/or those who are care experienced, and those who have an identified special educational need or disability (SEND)
- reflect the Hub's approach to ensuring that inclusion underpins the entire offer, as the responsibility of all partners and individual team members – for example by demonstrating:
 - the strategy links to all areas of delivery and policy
 - that all partners support the development and delivery of the strategy
 - that partners take ownership of actions
 - that Hub-wide approaches ensure the strategy is understood and delivered through the work of all staff.
- demonstrate how an inclusive culture and widening opportunity will be embedded across the Hub and ensure that inclusive work is adequately resourced, in relation to partners, staffing and financial support
- draw on evidence, research and examples of good practice to support the design of programmes and activities which are inclusive and improve opportunity and access. This should demonstrate that protected characteristics, as well as class or socio-economic backgrounds, have been considered

- set out and connect to other relevant policies and activity detailed within the LPME, including the Hub's work with schools, the CPD and workforce offer, performance management/quality frameworks, the Hub's charging and remissions policies and the instrument stock and management policy
- be accessible via the Hub's dedicated website or online platform/s
- map against and respond to the Hub's needs analysis and consultation procedures, and include opportunities for young people to contribute to decision-making
- describe the approach to developing a music education workforce and Hub governance that reflects the diversity and lived experiences of the area it represents
- describe how the inclusion strategy will be reviewed, monitored and developed

Within the strategy, HLOs are also required to confirm there is an identified Inclusion Lead who will:

- provide leadership, support and direction for the Hub's inclusion strategy
- ensure equitable access and progression for children and young people facing additional and/or complex barriers to participation
- drive cultural change across the Hub partnership through their advocacy and practical support for inclusive practice and structural change

The Inclusion Lead will be appropriately trained and experienced and will provide support to Hub teams and services to understand and deliver using inclusive approaches and practices. They will strategically plan accessible provision for children and young people:

- in specialist settings, including special schools and alternative provision settings and those settings that have not historically engaged with the Hub
- with special educational needs and disabilities in mainstream settings
- who are looked-after, including work with the Virtual School in each local authority area covered by the Hub
- have access to specialist resources or equipment, including accessible and adapted/adaptive instruments

The Inclusion Lead will also be expected to connect with the relevant National Music Hub Centres of Excellence to support and implement best practice.

Ultimate responsibility for inclusion lies with the Hub board or oversight group, which will oversee and monitor the inclusion strategy. Inclusion should be embedded across the whole Hub partnership's approach, policies, and workforce, with staff suitably trained and informed. HLOs will be expected to ensure that there is appropriate accountability built into their inclusion strategy, and that it is a dynamic document, at least annually reviewed for its effectiveness and relevance. The use of SMART objectives, actions, and ongoing monitoring through use of workforce and governance data, are expected as ways of developing your strategy. Where your strategy is in early development, the section on available support below signposts you to ways to develop your approach into a full strategy.

Either as part of your inclusion strategy or your LPME, HLOs should include evidence that your organisation is taking action, through any ongoing recruitment, to ensure that your organisation's workforce (including volunteers), and the wider Hub workforce where appropriate, reflects the diversity of the individuals and communities you are working with and working to reach, including membership from protected characteristic groups (for example, ethnicity, disability, sex and individuals across socio-economic backgrounds).

Similarly, your Hub's governance should model and promote inclusive practices. Please refer to our [governance guidance](#) for more information.

You should provide evidence of publishing the whole, or a summary of your Hub's inclusion strategy by **1 December 2023**, incorporating any feedback received from your Relationship Manager as part of their initial review in September 2023, if applicable.

Charging, remissions and subsidy

As part of your Inclusion Strategy or LPME, Hubs should also submit a copy of the Hub's Charging & Remissions Policy to the Arts Council. As with the Inclusion Strategy, you should provide evidence of publishing the whole, or a summary, of your Hub's charging and remissions policy by the **1 December 2023**.

HLOs are expected to implement appropriate and transparent charging and remissions, which reflect and respond to the financial barriers experienced by the families of children and young people within the areas covered by the Hub.

Hubs should set charges locally and transparently that achieve the widest possible engagement and demonstrate value for schools. In most cases, DfE funding will be only one of several funding sources available in a local area that the HLO, and their partner organisations, will draw upon.

Funding to Hubs does not replace funds allocated to schools to deliver the music curriculum. As outlined within the NPME, the DfE expects schools to pay for Whole Class Ensemble Teaching/large/small-group and instrument hire. Parents and carers should not be charged for any provision which is a compulsory part of the curriculum, which is designed so that all children in the class are able to participate, including Whole Class Ensemble Teaching or smaller group tuition, if delivered in class time.

Music education provision and support must be made available free of charge for looked after children.

HLOs must ensure information about the Hub's fees for lessons, instrumental hire and music groups, including any free or subsidised support offered to targeted groups of children and young people, is communicated and published via appropriate communication channels (eg via targeted communications to schools and via the Hub's dedicated website).

Support in developing your strategy

The Arts Council's [Investment Principles Resource Hub](#)

The [Essential Read: Inclusivity and Relevance](#) in the Investment Principles Resource Hub sets out the ambitions of the Art's Council's Inclusivity & Relevance principle and includes resources to help organisations to reflect and embed inclusivity within their organisation, programming and forward business planning:

- [Inclusivity in workforce, leadership and governance: Preparing to reflect](#)
- [Reflecting on inclusivity in your organisation](#)
- [Reflecting on inclusivity in your programming activities](#)

It also includes tools and exercises from [OF/BY/FOR ALL](#) that Hubs may find useful in becoming more relevant to the people that they work with as well as extending that relevance to more communities:

- [FAQs about Relevance](#)
- [Existing and desired communities guide](#)
- [Quick community mapping guide](#)
- [Creating a vision of a more inclusive, relevant future](#)
- [The Arts Council's Equality Objectives](#)

During 2023-24 we will continue to review our support and guidance towards inclusion, including reviewing current Hubs' published approaches to inclusion.

Youth Music

During 2022-23 the Arts Council funded Youth Music to develop the [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access \(IDEA\) framework](#). Through collaboration with a team of leading experts, Youth Music has built the framework and is now testing it with eight Hubs through a year of action research and development support.

The IDEA framework is designed to support music organisations to improve their practices, at pace. It breaks down how you can make that happen through an action-focused approach to realising your IDEA ambitions.

To ensure the principles of IDEA are considered across all areas of strategy, culture and operations, the framework is broken down into eight pillars:

1. Vision, Values, and Strategy
2. People and Culture
3. Key Policies and Procedures
4. Reach and Engagement
5. Musical Offer
6. Youth Voice
7. Communications
8. Partnerships and Advocacy

Over the coming year, Youth Music will host training, support and publish resources that support music organisations, including Hubs, to develop and improve their strategies. [Sign up to Youth Music newsletters](#) to stay abreast of this work.

Also available from Youth Music is an [IDEA self-assessment survey](#) which is designed to help organisations think about their existing practice and where they want to go next.

The Youth Music-funded [Changing Tracks](#), led by Hertfordshire Music Service programme, provides comprehensive peer support and learning, training and consultancy for, with and by music services wanting to improve equality, diversity and inclusion.

Music Mark support

Music Mark continues to champion the importance and benefits of an inclusive music education. As part of their role as an Investment Principle Support Organisation, they will provide [resources](#), guidance, [training and events](#) to the music education sector.

Work on the Talk Into Action campaign – their equity, diversity and inclusion movement – will continue throughout 2023/24, supporting organisations in the sector to achieve their goals.

What does the law say?

This section outlines our collective legal duty and sets out some important considerations for publicly funded organisations.

Under the Equality Act (2010) people are not allowed to discriminate, harass, or victimise another person because they have any of the protected characteristics.

The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. People are also protected from being discriminated against because they are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics or because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Arts Council England, as a public sector organisation, also has additional responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty, which puts the onus on organisations to positively promote equality, not just avoid discrimination. In meeting this legal requirement, the Arts Council shares these responsibilities with the arts and cultural organisations it funds and requires organisations to be compliant with all equality legislation. Your inclusion strategy, LPME and needs analysis will provide evidence of how your organisation will advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

The Duty sets out that organisations need to demonstrate that they are thinking about how they can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services.

It means that organisations must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general Equality Duty. The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status. This means that the first aim of the Duty applies to this characteristic but that the other aims (advancing equality and fostering good relations) do not apply.

The Act states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of the needs of disabled people. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

It states that compliance with the Duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

You can take specific steps voluntarily to help people with a protected characteristic. This is called 'positive action'. Taking positive action is legal if people with a protected characteristic:

- are at a disadvantage in some way in relation to work
- have particular needs which are different from other people who don't share the protected characteristic
- are under-represented in an activity or type of work

The Equality Act says employers can take steps to:

- help people with a particular protected characteristic overcome their disadvantage – for example, by offering internships or placements
- encourage the participation of people with a particular protected characteristic in employment or training – for example, by reserving places on a training course
- meet their needs – for example, by providing support or mentoring

The Government Equalities Office has published [A quick start guide to using positive action in recruitment and promotion](#) to help organisations ensure that what they are doing is legal by understanding what positive action is, how it differs from positive discrimination (which is illegal) and how they can use positive action to improve diversity in their workforce and when recruiting and promoting candidates.

All Music Education Hubs, as a condition of their funding, must comply with equality legislation and act legally. This means complying with both the Equality Act (2010) and, as HLOs receiving public funding via Arts Council England, with the Public Sector Equality Duty which was created under the Equality Act. HLOs have a duty to ensure compliance with this legislation across the Hub partnership in relation to Hub funding.

Definitions

Arts Council England's definition of diversity encompasses race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, gender, sexuality, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnerships. We also include class and economic disadvantage and social and institutional barriers that prevent people from participating in and enjoying the arts.

Equality is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated differently or less favourably because of a characteristic that they share. However, this does not mean treating everyone the same. It means making sure that no one is disadvantaged from participating in art and culture because of barriers that disproportionately affect people who share the same characteristics as them.

Diversity is about recognising, respecting, and valuing people's differences to contribute and to realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all.

Equality should be considered alongside equity. The difference being that the intention of 'equality of opportunity' is to ensure that the same opportunities are open to everyone and all people are treated the same. However, not everyone is able to take up an opportunity due to various personal circumstances. Being 'equitable' therefore considers personal circumstances and provides everyone with what they need to start in the same (fair) place.

The Arts Council uses the social model of disability. The social model is based on the principle that disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference. It puts the emphasis on what needs to be done to identify and remove barriers.