



Music Education Hubs: Needs analysis guidance

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Introduction

This guidance is designed to support a shared understanding of the role, importance, and expectations of a Music Education Hub's/Music Hub's (Hub's) needs analysis. It has been updated to reflect the aims and expectations of [The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education](#) (NPME). It explains a Hub's role in responding to their local area's needs, highlights considerations in relation to equality, diversity, and inclusion, and introduces environmental sustainability as a new area of reflection.

In the refreshed NPME, the Department for Education (DfE) sets out a vision that:

"All children and young people should be able to learn to sing, play an instrument and create music together, and have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talent, including into a professional creative career."

The related three aims and five strategic functions rely on a thorough understanding of the needs of children and young people, parents, schools, partners and other stakeholders in order to fulfil this vision.

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.

Why is a needs analysis important?

A Hub's provision should reflect and celebrate the diversity, interests, and passions of the communities they serve – and in doing so be a catalyst to attract new participants and audiences, and inspire and enable people to progress and become more involved in the work of the Hub. By putting a comprehensive needs analysis at the centre of your work, you can develop achievable, effective plans that support and deliver the aims of the NPME and meet this commitment.

Through needs analysis you will be able to ensure you have listened to and considered a diverse range of perspectives and needs, and are then able to deliver an inclusive, well-resourced programme of activity which meets the needs of local communities and supports a vibrant culture of musical participation.

On inclusion in the work of Hubs the NPME reads:

"It is essential that there are affordable options for children and young people of all ages to participate, sustain their engagement, and develop

their skills and interests in music. Children and young people may face barriers to participation because of barriers to participation because of various factors such as where they live, their socio-economic status, access to instruments or equipment such as assistive technology, or disability. Understanding and seeking to remove those barriers will level up opportunities and increase the breadth and depth of the future talent pool for the creative industries."

Nationally, evidence suggests that some young people continue to miss out on high quality opportunities to engage in music-making, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and with special educational needs or disabilities. Collectively, we can seek to address this and use needs analysis as a tool towards a broad and inclusive, high-quality music education for all children and young people.

Our [Inclusivity & Relevance Investment Principle](#) and [Equality Objectives](#) are a commitment to achieving greater fairness, access and opportunity across the cultural sector. We want England's diversity fully reflected in the individuals and organisations we support and the culture they produce.

What is a needs analysis?

The NPME requires that Hub Lead Organisations (HLOs) work with their Hub partners to develop and implement a Local Plan for Music Education (LPME). A strong needs analysis should be at the core of every LPME, providing an evidence base for why and how you will deliver your programme of activity and carry out the vision, aims and five strategic functions of the NPME.

An effective needs analysis should demonstrate a clear understanding of local needs, opportunities, provision gaps and expertise gained through research, evaluation, self evaluation and ongoing consultation.

Submission of your LPME including a summary of your needs analysis is required at the start of each funding year. However, given the ever-changing landscape for music-making and education, you should view the needs analysis as a live document that can be revisited regularly, aligned to planning cycles, and used as a tool for helping your aspirations and building realistic steps to achieving them.

In creating a needs analysis you should draw on available data and evidence to build a clear rationale for your LPME, programme of activity, allocation of resources, and prioritisation.

This process should include reflection on current and recent activity and

opportunities in your area, and identification of any gaps or areas of work that might be missing. It should consider the participants, types of music-making, approaches to musical learning and progression, and a holistic look at how the HLO and the wider Hub partnership addresses and supports inclusion, including through its workforce, governance, and the representation your Hub champions.

A thorough needs analysis will be a collaborative process, engaging with Hub partners, schools and stakeholders to inform and then to share understanding of what priorities and actions should be put in place.

An effective needs analysis will:

- provide local context about your Hub's area – for example through reference to local strategies or deprivation data – and help the Hub partnership understand the need within the geographic area of coverage. This might include summarising local challenges, available resources and scale of work, and what diversity looks like in the communities that the Hub covers and with whom it is working to reach
- analyse how well the Hub policies, structures, and activities reflect or support the demographics and needs of both the communities you work with and those you are working to reach, drawing on the Hub's self-evaluation
- identify gaps in provision and barriers to engagement and progression that exist, while considering both Hub and non-Hub activity
- consider if and how current and planned activity aligns with other local priorities, initiatives and work with children and young people, including how the HLO works with partners to align and draw in funding streams to support Hub priorities
- consider the Hub's processes and ways of working that might support a broad and needs-led approach, for example considering models of delivery, marketing and communications, and training needs
- consider the make-up of the Hub partnership, workforce, leadership, and board (including volunteers) to assess what diversity or skills gaps exist
- identify and highlight gaps in data and knowledge, allowing you to address any evidence or data gaps in the future
- draw conclusions that will then inform your programme of activity and lead to practical and manageable actions as part of your LPME. This might involve rebalancing your offer, making decisions about how resources are allocated, developing new activity and/or refining existing activity, policies, and processes

- include how the Hub will address any lack of access and inequity, and ensure that activity reflects the diversity of the local area and is able to meet the needs of a diverse range of participants
- be shared and signed off by the Hub's governance

Who should be involved in the needs analysis?

HLOs should draw on and involve the whole Hub partnership as well as drawing on consultation with a range of audiences. A comprehensive needs analysis requires collaboration with partners contributing to or overseeing data and evidence gathering, ensuring reach to diverse communities, and supporting the resultant Hub programme of activity and policies, including those that are designed to improve equality and diversity and to recruit a diverse workforce and governance.

It is useful to draw on the knowledge and skills of your Hub board (or equivalent oversight group, herein referred to as the Hub board), schools, families, and young people when undertaking a needs analysis. The process should draw on a wide range of evidence and data sources, including the views and experiences of a range of stakeholders and communities, ensuring there are meaningful ways in which the perspectives and voices of children, young people, parents/carers and partners are heard and responded to via regular, meaningful consultation. This should include stakeholders and communities that the Hub partnership does not currently work with.

Examples of stakeholders include:

- schools and teachers
- parents and guardians
- children and young people
- local youth sector representatives
- arts and cultural sector organisations
- music educators, independent teachers, and wider workforce
- community leaders
- place-based partnerships
- any other relevant local stakeholder, eg the local authority

The Hub board is expected to review and sign off the annual needs analysis and monitor performance against any resultant actions.

Hubs should consider the audience and uses for its needs analysis, including what aspects may be appropriate for sharing with the public and/or various communities who may wish to understand how the Hub is prioritising its use of money and why. We also recommend considering what information would be useful for sharing with

partners to support shared evaluation and understanding of impact.

What should be included in a needs analysis?

A needs analysis should provide the Hub with evidence and insight into the Hub's musical offer, its reach and impact, and its workforce and governance.

Here are some key areas to be considered as part of a needs analysis:

- reach of your offer – coverage, who benefits, and who is missing out?
- quality, nature and range of provision
- musical diversity – in genre, skills and settings
- progression routes and opportunities in and out of school
- use of technology
- accessibility
- inclusivity
- partnerships
- governance
- workforce
- environmental sustainability

The [Additional conditions for the 2023-24](#) funding period set out the overarching expectations of a needs analysis, reflected here in this document, as well as a new requirement for 2023-24 for Hubs to demonstrate the progress they have made, or intend to make, in considering their environmental impact:

"You should consider the DfE's [sustainability and climate change strategy](#) and how you contribute to this strategy's aims. This might include, for example, monitoring and reducing energy usage, reducing waste, environment-focused musical activity and working with stakeholders and other organisations to determine appropriate future actions and an approach for the Hub."

The Arts Council is committed, through its [Environmental Responsibility Investment Principle](#), to supporting cultural organisations to become exemplars in this area. We recognise that Hubs may be in the initial stages of their environmental journey but by including local and national environmental sustainability considerations in a needs analysis, you will be able to make impactful steps to working with stakeholders and other organisations to determine future actions and approaches.

Data and evidence sources should, wherever possible, include data available from within and outside of the Hub partnership and cover in school and out of school

provision.

This could include:

- an audit of local assets – for example this might include equipment, resources, venues/spaces, available partners, and expertise
- an audit of opportunities and the suitability, nature, and quality of provision from across a range of genres and activity
- data and feedback from across the Hub partnership (including but not limited to the Arts Council's data return and feedback) looking at the provision on offer and those participating. Where possible, this should include an analysis against protected characteristics and socio-economic factors to give you an understanding of the backgrounds of those who participate as well as those who do not currently participate:
 - age, disability (includes mental health), sex, race, religion and belief, socio-economic background
 - where appropriate, sexuality, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity
 - where data may be difficult to access, the organisation is expected to consider how this might be improved and what evidence can be used to help assure the Hub that provision is inclusive and impactful
- an analysis of the above against demographic data and indices of multiple deprivation for the area
- evidence of the suitability, nature, and quality of provision, and how it addresses participants' needs, of barriers to access and progression routes, and of the quality of resources and teaching
- views and consultation with young people and parents
- views and consultation with school headteachers and teachers
- workforce surveys and data, including the views of lead organisation staff and the wider Hub partnership workforce. It should analyse how current staff at all levels of your organisation reflect the demographics of the geographic area, to inform your approach to ongoing recruitment, and to understand the need for equality and diversity training, career development and approaches for inclusive work practices. For HLOs who are part of a local authority, or those situated in larger organisations with overarching policies, this might mean adapting them as needed to ensure relevance for the Hub
- self-evaluation – the Arts Council has a [self-evaluation toolkit](#) available here

- demographic data for the area
- local authority children and young people's plan or equivalent (usually available on their website)
- data from partner cultural or music organisations – for example drawing on existing analysis of area demographics, educational and arts sector data. Local Cultural Education Partnerships may similarly have carried out further needs analysis work to complement that of the Hub
- environmental data, eg energy usage, water consumption, waste generation, recycling, travel, and production materials

Data provides essential evidence to inform a Hub's strategic direction. As such, the quality of data should be considered as should the frequency of collection to help inform your thinking. Where data may be difficult to access, the HLO is expected to consider how this might be improved. We have provided some useful [data links](#) at the end of this guidance.

How should a needs analysis be implemented?

Following the annual needs analysis, Hubs should use this intelligence to make evidence-based decisions and implement the actions highlighted. The Hub's LPME, SMART objectives and annual programme of activity should be based upon the findings of the needs analysis and describe what will be delivered, why and by whom so that the link between evidence and resultant actions in your LPME is clear. Guidance for developing your LPME and programme of activity can be found on the Arts Council website [here](#).

Undertaking a process of co-design and involving people with lived experience in the planning of the work, once the needs analysis has taken place, is highly beneficial.

What tools and support are available?

Arts Council template

We have produced a [basic template](#) to support the needs analysis process, which you can use at your discretion. By drawing on a range of data sources, it first asks you to describe your Hub's aspirations and key aims for the area (in line with your LPME and SMART objectives), identify and analyse the current Hub provision, and then identify gaps or areas for improvement and intended actions to meet the identified needs of the Hub.

Support for inclusion

The Arts Council's guidance for Hubs on inclusion should be read alongside this needs analysis guidance and can be found [here](#). It includes a description of our collective legal duty as publicly funded organisations, in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as signposting to further support such as [Youth Music's IDEA framework](#) and related [resource list](#) and [inclusion resource hub](#).

Further Arts Council guidance and information on our equality objectives and inclusivity and relevance investment principle can be found here:

[Equality Objectives](#)

[Investment Principles – Inclusivity & Relevance](#)

Environmental sustainability guidance

[Essential read: Environmental responsibility](#)

We have published the following resources to help organisations in the cultural sector to understand and respond to their environmental impact. Over the coming year, Music Mark also plans to provide support to the sector regarding environmental sustainability.

[Environmental Responsibility Resource Hub](#)

[Julie's bicycle: Resource Hub](#)

[Creative Climate Justice Hub](#)

Useful data links

Music Education Hub annual data

The Music Education Hub annual survey data dashboard can be found [here](#).

Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation, commonly known as the IMD, is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England.

IMD ranks every small area in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area). This is initially created at a small local area level called lower-layer super output areas (LSOAs) but can also be displayed at local authority level.

This measure is based on seven different domains, or facets, of deprivation: Income Deprivation; Employment Deprivation; Education, Skills and Training Deprivation; Health Deprivation and Disability; Crime; Barriers to Housing and Services; and Living Environment Deprivation.

In addition to the seven domain-level indices above, there are two supplementary indices: the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI); and the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI). These are created as subsets from the Income Deprivation domain.

[Full details and data from IMD](#)

There are several tools which can be used to help you interpret what this data means for your hub:

The [Indices of Deprivation 2019 local authority dashboard](#) allows you to view a summary of the indices of deprivation for your local authority and the LSOAs within each district.

The [Indices of Deprivation 2019 explorer](#) allows you to search by a place name or postcode and shows the relative deprivation of neighbourhoods in that area (2019 and comparison to 2015). The explorer includes a dashboard which provides a summary of how relatively deprived the area selected is within each index.

Labour market statistics

[Nomis](#) is a service provided by the Office for National Statistics to provide access to the most detailed and up-to-date UK labour market statistics from official sources.

[Labour Market Profiles](#) are available at local authority, and combined authority, level. These provide headline figures for population, employment, unemployment, qualifications, earnings, benefit claimants and businesses. [Local Area Reports](#) are also available at a multitude of levels. These include information on the characteristics of people and households in the area.

Schools, pupils, and their characteristics

Provided by the DfE's statistics service, [Schools, pupils and their characteristics](#) shows the latest statistics on school and pupil numbers and their characteristics, including: age; gender; free school meals (FSM) eligibility; English as an additional language; ethnicity; school characteristics; and class sizes.

Statistics: special educational needs

[This publication](#) combines information from the school census, school level annual school census, general hospital school census and alternative provision census on pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

The publication includes breakdowns by type of SEN provision (either SEN support or EHC plan), type of SEN, age, national curriculum year group, gender, ethnicity, English as a first language, and free school meal eligibility.