Music Education Hubs:

Data Context Paper

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ACE-logo**Music Education Hub Data: Context**

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# Introduction

Annual data submitted by Music Education Hubs (Hubs) is published by Arts Council England as part of its ambition to support a transparent and open culture of data sharing, and a data-rich cultural sector that can harness the power of data as a means to ensuring strategic and evidence-based approaches to engagement with children and young people.

An [online dashboard is available](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/developing-creativity-and-culture/children-and-young-people/music-education-hubs/music-education-0), enabling you to see the data provided by each Hub, or to select a region to see the data for the Hubs covering that area – and how this compares to national figures.

The source data is also available in csv and Excel format should you wish to conduct further analysis. Please contact [meh.data@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:meh.data@artscouncil.org.uk).

The data published in the dashboard is:

* Number of schools worked with to deliver the core roles
* Number of schools worked with to support/deliver Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET)
* Number of pupils across all year groups in receipt of Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET)
* Number of schools supported through the School Music Education Plan
* Number of schools supported to deliver singing strategies
* Number of pupils receiving individual, small group and large group lessons via the Hub partnership
* Number and types of ensembles delivered or supported by Hub partnership
* Number and characteristics of pupils engaging in Ensembles (non-WCET) \*
* Continuation rates and standards achieved. \*
* Hub income and expenditure
* Hub grant expenditure\*
* Workforce totals, including the substantive workforce across Hub Lead Organisations and any other music services (or equivalent organisations) for whom they hold the grant on their behalf. \*

The items marked with an asterisk are pages that have been added as part of the 2023 dashboard update.

The above data was selected as the Arts Council and the Department for Education believes that it is the most reliable data received from Hubs. We will keep developing this dashboard to make it as useful as possible. The next sections of data that are planned to be added are referenced on the dashboard, under the page ‘Future’.

# Understanding the data

Context is critical to the interpretation of the data. While it is not possible to describe the context for every Hub and data point, there are key issues that may impact on the data for all years which you should take into account:

1. Every Hub is different in size, the number of schools and pupils in its area and the level of the grant received. The dashboard includes information about the number of pupils, schools and the grant amount and this should be taken into consideration when conducting analysis of an individual Hub or comparisons between Hubs.
2. Data has now been collected from Hubs for several years. In 2012, when Hubs were formed, each Hub was starting from a different point in terms of what it had previously delivered and to how many schools and pupils. Each Hub sets out annual targets in its business plans and SMART objectives, which are bespoke to their areas and in line with their strategic planning and ambition to address needs of communities locally. The annual survey guidance sets out a broad definition of support as ‘any action by the Hub lead organisation or Hub partners which has led to a meaningful action, engagement or improvement by the school’, however the exact definition of this is likely to vary between Hubs, and maybe even within the same Hub across years.
3. The number of Hubs within the network has changed over time since Hubs were first formed in 2012. Initially there were 123 Hubs and in 2022-23 there are currently 118 Hubs.
4. There may have also been important changes in the Hub operating or governance structure, such as changes in leadership, lead organisation or governing body or the introduction of new strategy or charging structures. This may have impacted on the Hub activity and therefore data for the Hub.
5. Hub lead organisations depend on many different delivery partners as well as schools to submit data to them so it can be collated and returned to the Arts Council. It should be noted that some data collected from some delivery partners is less reliable, incomplete and more difficult to collect.
6. Every Hub has a unique business model: some models see the Hub lead organisation delivering a large proportion of activity, others commission partners to deliver core and extension roles, and there are those who devolve funding directly to schools for them to commission activity. The business model may impact on the availability and reliability of data that is available for submission to the Arts Council ,and therefore how the Hub finances appear in the dashboard.
7. Annual finance data for Hubs is collected via the survey, and is split across Hub Lead Organisation Income, Partner Income and HLO Expenditure (excluding partner expenditure). This split between HLO and partner finances means that aggregated income will not balance with aggregated expenditure. The business model of the Hub will also impact on financial data. Some, such as commissioning Hubs, for whom the parental and school income might not flow through the Hub lead accounts will present a different financial picture. Hub spending and income data may not therefore equate proportionally to activity delivered.
8. After data is submitted it goes through a validation process so that we can be confident the data is as correct as possible. Despite this, there may be some inconsistencies in the data that are being investigated or will result in a clarification of guidance for the collection of future data.
9. The data collected is primarily quantitative and does not assess the quality of provision. Quality is an important consideration for all Hubs and the [Relationship Framework](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/developing-creativity-and-culture/children-and-young-people/music-education-hubs/music-education-1) highlights the Arts Council’s and the Department for Education’s expectations for Hubs in supporting and providing high quality music education.
10. Data is only one of the ways that the Arts Council assesses the success of Hubs and always uses it alongside other evidence, such as business plans, SMART objectives, management accounts and annual qualitative information via the narrative part of the annual survey.
11. The dashboard contains national averages and national totals. These are different figures and should be used for different purposes, as outlined below.
12. Hubs report school engagement against a list of eligible schools in their area, split into phases: primary; secondary; 16 plus and other. Middle schools are deemed to be either primary or secondary schools by the Department for Education and will appear within their correct phase in this data. Please use the Department for Education’s [Get Information About Schools service](https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Search) if you would like to see the phase of a particular school.
13. **National Averages**

Data for individual Hubs is presented alongside national averages. These averages are the mean of Hubs’ individual percentages derived from their reported figures. Occasionally, a Hub may be removed from national average calculations as an extreme outlier. There will always be Hubs above and below the national average. National averages could be used in the following way: *“In 2020/21, Music Education Hubs worked with an average of 81.8% of schools in their respective local authorities on Core Roles. Bath and North East Somerset Music Education Hub worked with 83.1% of schools in their area, putting them above national average for Core Roles engagement.”*

1. **National Totals**

Data for regional totals is presented alongside national totals. This is the aggregate of all Hub returns (i.e., these figures refer to the dataset as a whole) and could be used in the following sentence: *“In 2020/21, Music Education Hubs worked with 86.7% of schools in the North on Core Roles, and 82.5% of schools Nationally.”* These figures are therefore not the same as the national averages.

1. Hubs receive an annual feedback letter which comments on their performance and pinpoints a number of key strengths and areas for development using information gathered throughout the year. Draft national averages and totals may be used within these annual feedback letters. At the time annual feedback letters are created these figures are provisional and subject to change, as noted within the letters themselves. Between the annual letters being sent and the data being published, figures may undergo further validation checks, or Hubs may request changes where an error has been found. Changes to individual Hub values will impact national averages and totals. Therefore, figures provided in annual feedback letters may vary from the final figures shown in the dashboard.
2. The dashboard shows the number of pupils attending individual lessons, small group lessons, and large group lessons provided by Hubs. It is possible for an individual pupil to do more than one type of lesson and therefore be counted in all three of these tables. These tables should not be added together.

Therefore, also group lessons or more of these types of lessons. However, these categories should not be combined, as this would likely double count pupils which receive lessons of more than one category. Within categories it might also be possible that pupils are double counted. Whilst double counting pupils is aimed to be avoided, it is not always possible due to the nature of Hub systems and data gathering.

1. Pupils in receipt of WCET, attending lessons and ensembles delivered or supported by Hubs are also expressed as a % of total pupils attending in-scope schools in the Hub area. This figure is based on data published by the Department for Education on total pupils attending state funded schools that are deemed in-scope for the programme, including early-years pupils within these schools. These nursery and reception pupils are not covered by the Hub core grant but may be in receipt of provision provided or supported by the Hub. Therefore, these figures should therefore be considered as indicative only.

# Data dashboard cleaning notes

In 2022 we updated the infrastructure for how Arts Council holds data submitted by Music Education Hubs submitted as part of the annual survey, changing to a SQL server, and publishing data via an interactive PowerBI dashboard.

We took the opportunity this transition provided to undergo an enhanced cleaning and validation process on all the data. While checks were done to all data, most of the changes made were around data submitted via the Schools Form. This impacted individual Hub figures, alongside national totals and averages for schools engaged in all categories and WCET pupil data.

A brief summary of the types of cleaning and validation carried out is provided below:

* The removal of instances of schools duplication, where Hubs had duplicated schools within their return or used an incorrect LAESTAB number
* Data that was returned blank has been populated, where possible, using other data that was provided. For example, if ‘*Number of Pupils in this class receiving WCET’* was left blank, this has been populated with the value (if entered) from ‘*Number of Pupils in this class receiving WCET for the first time*’, as this must be the minimum number of pupils in that class. While the actual number of pupils receiving WCET may be higher than this, it is preferable to a blank entry, and impacts a small minority of values.
* An enhanced check has been carried out against information which can be proven or disproven using other information within the annual survey (e.g. if a Hub has entered data about their WCET delivery in a school, it has been checked that the Hub has indicated that they delivered WCET in this school.)
* Following detailed scrutinization of previous guidance and templates, as well as data submitted, it is clear that some Hubs have been submitting data on their Whole Class Ensemble Teaching that have operated for less than a term. As the Core Role specifies that ‘every child aged 5 – 18 has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument (other than voice) through whole-class ensemble teaching programmes for ideally a year (but for a minimum of a term) of weekly tuition on the same instrument’, this data has been looked at again, and split into two measures: Supported WCET (all reported); and Supported WCET of a Term or More. This will allow all submitted data to be utilised, including those where less than a term of WCET has been declared or where the number of terms has been left blank.
* Several Hubs have requested to amend their historic data following the discovery of errors or inconsistent reporting. We have corrected these individual instances now that they have been discovered.

As a result of the enhanced cleaning and validation process, some data reported within the dashboard will differ from that which was previously published.

# Specific issues to note in the 2021/22 data

1. During this time Hubs were likely to still be recovering from the impact of COVID-19 in England, and this context should be considered when reviewing Hub data. As well as impacting on levels and type of delivery, there may still be impact on the workforce, finances and ways of working. The severity of this impact may differ between Hubs.
2. This dashboard now includes a way of comparing a Hub’s school engagement to other Hubs of similar rural/urban geography. Five rurality categories have been created. Hubs are assigned to categories based on the percentage of their in-scope schools that are defined as rural using the 2011 Rural-Urban Classification for the school, as found on GIAS. These categories are: '20% or less Rural Schools'; '21% - 40% Rural Schools'; '41% - 60% Rural Schools'; and '61% to 80% Rural Schools'. The '61% to 80% rural schools' category regularly has less than 10 Hubs within it, therefore averages calculated for this category should be treated with caution.
3. Questions on continuation rates (C8) and standards achieved (C9) were reinstated. These questions were paused in 2019/20 and 2020/21, reflecting the need to reduce the pressure and burden on both Hubs and schools at the height of the pandemic. As Hubs and schools are likely to still be recovering from the impact of COVID-19, some Hubs may have been unable to collate this data in its entirety, so there may be some omissions.
4. Data was gathered on the number of ensembles delivered independently by schools (C6a). This was not captured in 2019/20 and 2020/21, as questions reliant on data collection by schools were omitted in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and government guidance. Any direct comparison made between ensemble numbers and types should ensure that the ‘Ensemble Lead’ drop-down option is therefore consistent.
5. Some changes were made to characteristic questions as follows:
   * Lessons and ensembles: pupil characteristics gender options now include ‘Non-binary’, and ‘Prefer not to say’. We do not expect all pupils to have been offered these options when the data was collected. Several Hubs have data provided to them in this way and need space to report these pupils accurately. These categories do not align with the school census, which we typically use for comparison purposes. It is noteworthy that Non-binary participants constitute 0.15% of the total ensemble participants this year and thus will have a minimal impact on any comparative analysis.
   * Lessons and ensembles: pupil characteristics gender options now include ‘Not Known’. This option enables Hubs to report pupils for whom they do not have gender data. Similar to the point above, this category does not align with the school census. However, it will ensure an accurate count of the total number of pupils participating in lessons and ensembles.
   * Workforce diversity categories were updated to include Latin American and Roma ethnicities, and age brackets changed to include ‘65-74’ and ‘75+’
6. On providing information on pupils in lessons (i.e. for Individual, Small Group and Large Group lessons), Hubs were able to provide figures for pupils against four delivery types:
   * Face to face only
   * Digital only
   * Blend of face to face and digital
   * Unknown delivery.

Pupils should not have been double counted across delivery types. Any instances where double counting was suspected have been removed from the national averages.

1. A new question (A17) asked respondents to select what delivery model their Hub lead organisation oversees, based on the proportion of activity delivered by the Hub lead organisation and/or Hub partners.
2. A new question (D2) asked Hubs how they had spent the Music Education Hub grant across delivery and admin expenditure. This question should be viewed as a subset of the existing expenditure question which asks about Hub Lead Organisation expenditure based on the total income which is both the grant plus all other income streams. Not all Hubs track how they spend the Hub grant across the given categories, and instead provided estimates. The grant is only a proportion of Hubs income/expenditure. Insight into Hub spending may be better gained from reviewing their entire expenditure; this can be found on the Finance pages.

# Specific issues to note in the 2020/21 data

1. The impact of COVID-19 in England affected activity during the academic and financial year, including changes to ways of working, alongside significant impact on business models, delivery, workforce and finances.
2. The option for Hubs to report across a partial academic year (as available in the 2019/20 survey) was removed because the whole academic and financial year were impacted by the pandemic.
3. Although the core roles were redefined for this year, in light of the pandemic, Hubs were expected to still report as they had done in previous years in relation to the active engagement seen across the core roles, as opposed to reporting all instances where there was only an offer of support or provision.
4. To allow for flexibility in reporting lesson attendees this year, Hubs were able to provide figures for estimated additional pupils, as well as the number of known pupils.
5. On providing information on pupils in lessons (i.e. for Individual, Small Group and Large Group lessons), Hubs were able to provide figures for pupils under two types of delivery:
   * Face to Face - pupils who exclusively received in-person lessons
   * Online/Blended - pupils who exclusively received digital lessons, or a combination of both face to face and digital lessons

In order to ensure that the total number of pupils for each lesson category was as accurate as possible, pupils should not have been double counted across both types of delivery category. Any instances where double counting was suspected have been removed from the national averages.

1. Questions reliant on data collection by schools were omitted in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and government guidance (all question numbers in brackets denote those previously included in the 2018/19 return). Key data, including continuation figures (B5), the number of ensembles delivered independently by schools (B7a), the number of pupils attending ensembles (B8) and the progression routes/standards achieved question (B9), was therefore not collected in 2020/21 - consistent with reporting for the 2019/20 data return period. This change reflected the need to reduce the pressure and burden on both Hubs and schools at this time.
2. The omission stated above, in conjunction with COVID-19 restrictions hampering children and young people’s ability to collectively make music together through ensembles, means that there is a further decrease in the national average for participation in ensemble provision. Activity organised independently by schools accounted for two-thirds of ensemble provision in 2018/19. A further decline was likely observed in the 2020/21 return as it proved challenging to provide regular ensemble provision during the continual tightening and easing of social distancing measures during the academic year.
3. The impact of the pandemic affected Hubs’ ability to generate income from other sources (i.e. school and parental contributions fell significantly). Parental income was significantly hampered by the impact of the pandemic, with many families facing a reduction in earnings through the furlough scheme. Total income fell for Hubs from £207,955,844 in 2019/20 to £186,522,243 in 2020/21.
4. Therefore, the national average for the percentage of income from sources other than the DfE Hub grant fell from 58.41% in 2019/20 to 53.94% in 2020/21. However, Hubs received a significantly higher proportion of Local Authority, Arts Council grants and ‘Other Earned Income’ as a result of the COVID-19 emergency support funds available.

# Specific issues to note in the 2019/20 data

1. The outbreak of COVID-19 in the UK from March 2020 onwards affected activity during the academic year, including changes to ways of working, alongside significant impact on business models, delivery, workforce and finances.
2. Questions reliant on data collection by schools were omitted in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and government guidance (all question numbers in brackets denote those previously included in the 2018/19 return). Key data, including continuation figures (B5), the number of ensembles delivered independently by schools (B7a), the number of pupils attending ensembles (B8) and the progression routes/standards achieved question (B9), was therefore not collected in 2019/20. This change reflected the need to reduce the pressure and burden on both Hubs and schools at this time.
3. For Ensembles data (Q9) Hubs were able to outline whether they were providing data for the whole academic year, or specifically for the September 2019 – March 2020 period (prior to the lockdown measures introduced in the UK). Over two-thirds (68%) provided partial data (i.e. Sept 2019 – March 2020), with the remaining Hubs opting for the whole academic year (32%).
4. In light of this option to report a partial data set, a short series of digital learning provision questions were introduced to capture the range of activity offered by Hubs during lockdown in March – July 2020.
5. Nearly two-thirds of schools working with Hubs faced significant disruption to core role provision due to the pandemic in 2019/20. This is reflected in the average percentage of schools worked with (e.g. core roles, WCET, SMEP and Singing Strategies) which are on average 5% less than 2018/19 figures.
6. As a result, there is a significant decrease in terms of the national average for participation in ensemble provision. Activity organised independently by schools accounted for two-thirds of ensemble provision in 2018/19.
7. We did not receive data from Torbay Music Education Hub. This Hub has therefore been removed from national averages for this year only.

# Specific issues to note in the 2018/19 data

1. Analysis shows the types of ensembles we ask Hubs to provide pupil numbers for (those run exclusively by Hubs and Hub Partners) declined by almost 7% from 7,813 to 7,290. Other types of ensembles, (which Hubs are unable to provide pupil numbers for) increased from 38,185 to 38,474. Therefore, when viewing the numbers of *pupils* taking part in these ensembles, users should keep in mind that the data provided is not the whole picture.
2. This is the latest published year of data that was not impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Specific issues to note in the 2017/18 data

1. The accompanying [2018 Key Data report](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Music%20Education%20Hubs%2C%20Key%20Data%20-%202018.pdf) continues the reporting methodology from the [2017 Key Data report](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/KeyDataOnMusicEducationHubs2017_0.pdf) where if the Hubs reported WCET group size is at least two pupils larger than the number of pupils the DfE records in each year group in the [school census](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2016-to-2017-guide-for-schools-and-las)[[1]](#footnote-2), the Hub’s reported number refers to a mixed year group or is applying a different counting methodology. These lines therefore sit within the ‘mixed/unreported year group’ category in both the Key Data report and the individual Hub data reported.
2. Due to a change in counting and reporting methodology, the number and percentage of pupils playing regularly in Hub supported/delivered ensembles figures now represent ensemble participation rather than a discrete headcount, so the same pupil could participate in more than one ensemble and/or choir. There is therefore a drop in reported ensemble participants compared to the previous year, but is now a more accurate baseline for future year-on-year comparisons.

# Specific issues to note in the 2016/17 data

1. The accompanying [2017 Key Data report](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/KeyDataOnMusicEducationHubs2017_0.pdf) notes a substantial increase in the number of pupils in receipt of WCET who are not classified in a known, single year group. This is partly due to an assumption that in instances where Hubs reported WCET group size is at least two pupils larger than the number of pupils the DfE records in each year group in the [school census](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2016-to-2017-guide-for-schools-and-las)[[2]](#footnote-3), the Hub’s reported number refers to a mixed year group or is applying a different counting methodology. These lines have thus been moved to the ‘mixed/not reported’ category in both the [2016 Key Data report](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/key_data_music_report.pdf) and the individual Hub data reported in the dashboard.

1. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2017-to-2018-guide-for-schools-and-las [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2016-to-2017-guide-for-schools-and-las [↑](#footnote-ref-3)