



# MUSIC HUB INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Sector Engagement:

January 2023

Summary of findings



#LETSCREATE

Photo © Richard Farnes - AYM award winners performing alongside BBC Symphony Orchestra at BBC Maida Vale Studios

# CONTEXT & METHODOLOGY



# MUSIC HUB GEOGRAPHIES SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

We want the experience and knowledge of everyone from the music, education, youth, creative and cultural communities to help shape the Music Hub Investment Programme. That's why we are asking for feedback and ideas from stakeholders during a 'conversation and consultation phase'.

As part of this, in January 2023 we developed and tested example ways of creating ('prescribing') new Music Hub areas with a range of relevant stakeholders and sector organisations. Through this sector engagement activity, we aimed to:

1. Engage with a range of stakeholders and potential applicants to the Music Hub programme, through in-person, digital, and survey options
2. Consider different methodologies for prescribing new geographies for Music Hubs
3. Draw out and understand what the implications might be for transition, mobilisation, partnership development, governance, access and engagement
4. Explore the Department for Education's guiding principles for new Music Hub geographies



# STRUCTURE AND FACILITATION

This sector engagement took place in January 2023 and comprised of:

- Five **stakeholder focus groups** (one focus group for stakeholders from each Arts Council Area), delivered in-person in London, Manchester, Birmingham, and Bristol. Each session was three hours long.
- An online **stakeholder focus group** (with Arts Council Area-based breakout groups). This session was three hours long.
- A **stakeholder survey**, which was open from 4 to 15 January 2023

The focus groups and the survey covered the same content with amendments designed to support the different formats.

We commissioned independent facilitators and researchers Melissa Wong and Douglas Lonie to plan and facilitate these conversations, enable a range of voices to be heard, and to provide summaries and analysis of the evidence collected during the focus groups and through the survey.

All focus group sessions were attended by Hannah Fouracre, Director of Music Education at Arts Council England, and members of the Arts Council national Music Education team. A representative from the Department for Education (DfE) was also in attendance at each in-person focus group.

# STRUCTURE AND FACILITATION

We invited the sector to register their interest in taking part in a focus group through an online form on our website. We received 369 completed forms. Using the information provided in the forms, we worked with our independent facilitators to create balanced focus groups that were representative of the geographic makeup of the country, the type and focus of organisations working within music education, and stakeholders from throughout the music, education, youth, community, creative and cultural sectors. This process ensured groups included a broad range of experiences and perspectives, and included people who work with children and young people with different needs and from different communities. Sessions were designed to support collaborative conversation where everyone's voice was heard.

In order to make as many places available as possible, we offered one place per interested organisation across all of the focus groups. Places were limited, but we ensured that everyone had the opportunity to share their feedback through our open-access survey. We have also shared anonymised transcripts of the focus groups so that everyone can reflect on the conversations.

Anonymised evidence collated during this activity and the analysis offered by our external facilitators informed the Arts Council's feedback to the DfE about the use of prescribed geographies as part of the Music Hub Investment Programme.

# METHODOLOGY

Participants in the focus groups and survey were reminded about the DfE's rationale for fewer, more strategic Hubs. They were also introduced to some guiding principles for prescribing geographies, which were outlined by the DfE:

- New hubs will be more consistent in terms of size, coverage and good quality provision
- They will cover multiple Local Authority areas
- Geographic areas will be prescribed (or agreed) prior to the application process
- Prescribed geographic areas will not be determined by current arrangements. They will be informed by open and objective consultation and evaluation.
- One organisation will be appointed to lead the Music Hub as Lead Organisation in each prescribed geographic area
- Fewer Hub Lead Organisations (HLOs) does not mean fewer organisations being involved with Music Hubs. HLOs will become more strategic, working with (and funding) Music Hub collaborating organisations to design, develop and deliver appropriate provision and support for children, young people, schools and other collaborators in their Hub area/s.

# METHODOLOGY

Across all activity, participants were asked to explore potential implications of three example methodologies for prescribing geographies on the delivery of the five strategic functions for Music Hub Lead Organisations outlined in [The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education](#). This included thinking about transition, mobilisation, and ongoing impact.

Examples were drawn from real-world subdivisions of England for the delivery of services in education-related sectors, and broadly represented:

1. A regional structure
2. A sub-regional structure
3. A more locally nuanced structure

It was not the intention that the example methodologies would be exactly replicated for the new Music Hub structure. They were intended to be a starting point for thinking about an equivalent approach for Music Hubs in terms of rough number and structure.

# METHODOLOGY

This process was followed for each example methodology by participants in the focus groups:

- CLARIFICATION: Identify clarifying questions about the example
- INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION: Log thoughts, ideas or questions against each strategic function
- GROUP DISCUSSION: Consider what they had observed overall about the contributions and what stood out.
- RATING: Rate the effectiveness of the methodology against the strategic functions of Music Hubs ('1 – not effective at all' to '5 – extremely effective'). Focus groups delegates also selected a preferred example.

The survey mirrored the content of the focus groups with amendments designed to support the different format. For example:

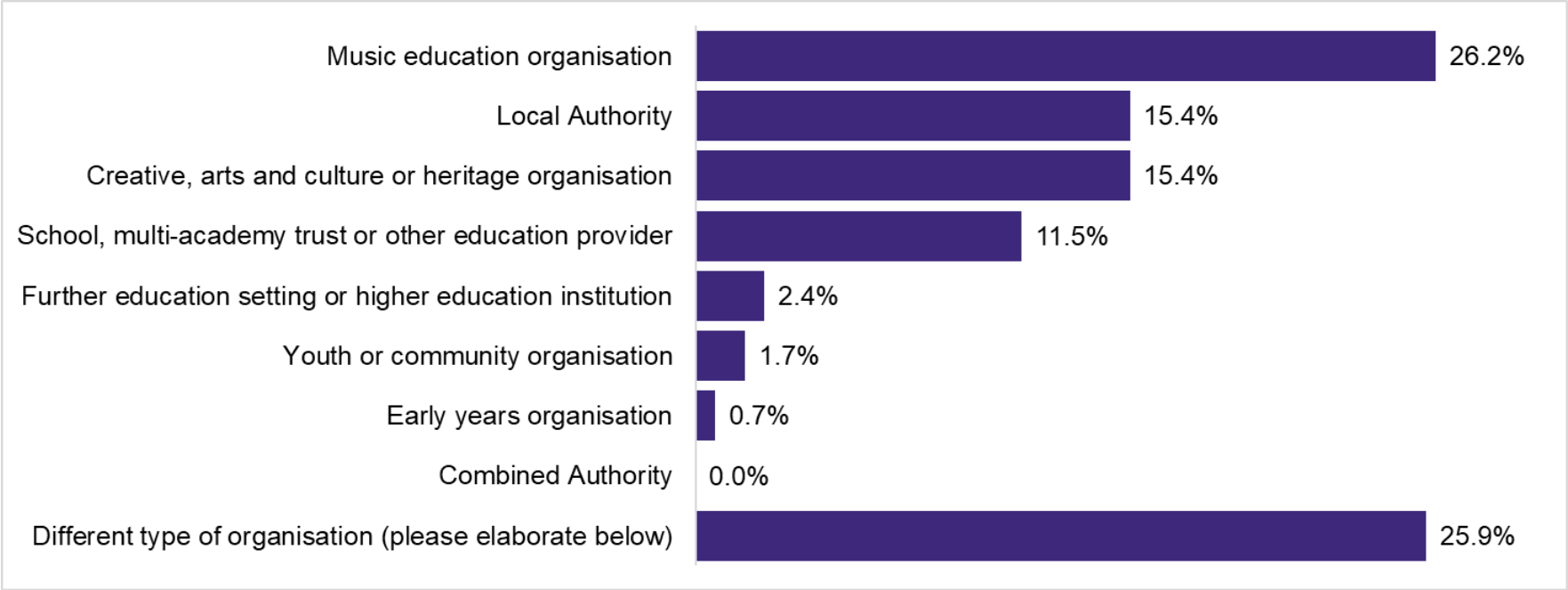
- CLARIFICATION: Did not feature and was replaced with briefing information for each methodology
- GROUP DISCUSSION: Was replaced with an opportunity to provide overall thoughts about each methodology
- RATING: Survey responders were not asked to select a preferred methodology



# SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

We received 286 responses to the open-access survey. These included responses from representatives of current Music Hub Lead Organisations, schools and multi academy trusts and other education settings, music and cultural organisations, youth and community organisations/services, and individual practitioners and freelancers.

## Which option best describes your organisation type?

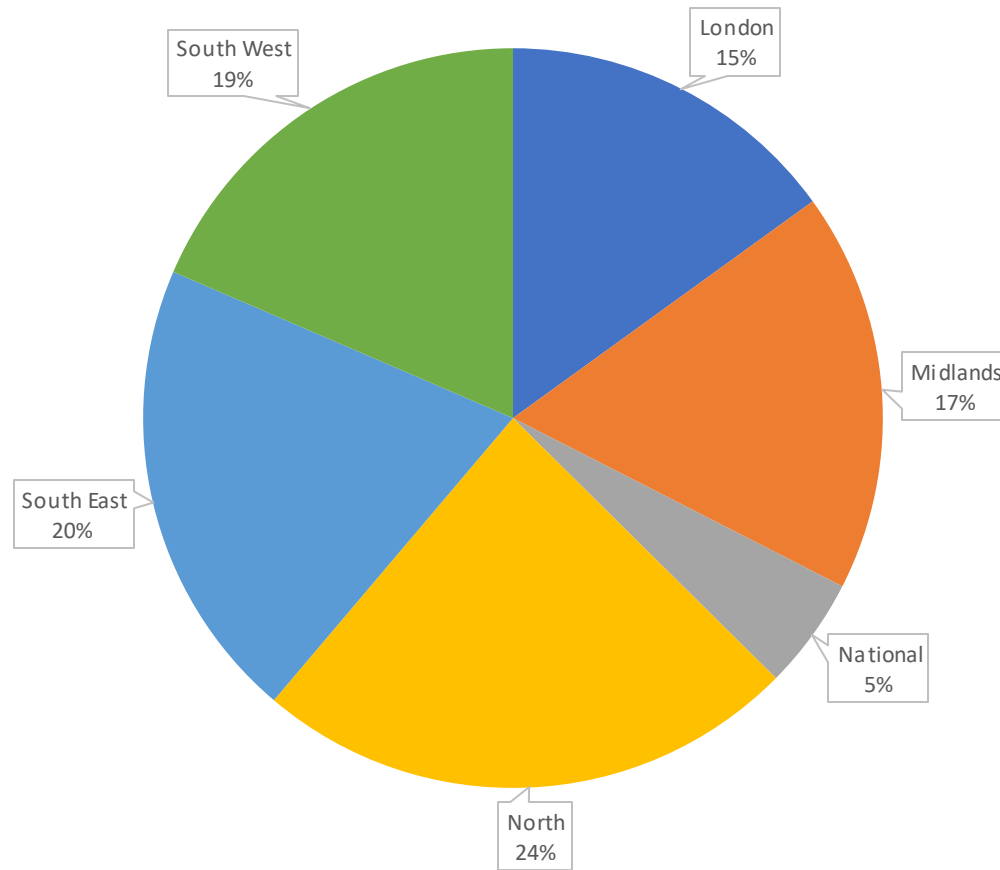


Breakdown of 'different type of organisation' category: the majority of respondents that selected this category are associated with Music Education Hub lead organisations. Other responders included trade organisations, membership bodies and subject associations; freelancers and independent practitioners; Teaching School Hubs; tech and equipment suppliers/manufacturers; promoters; music charities and organisations; and education charities and services



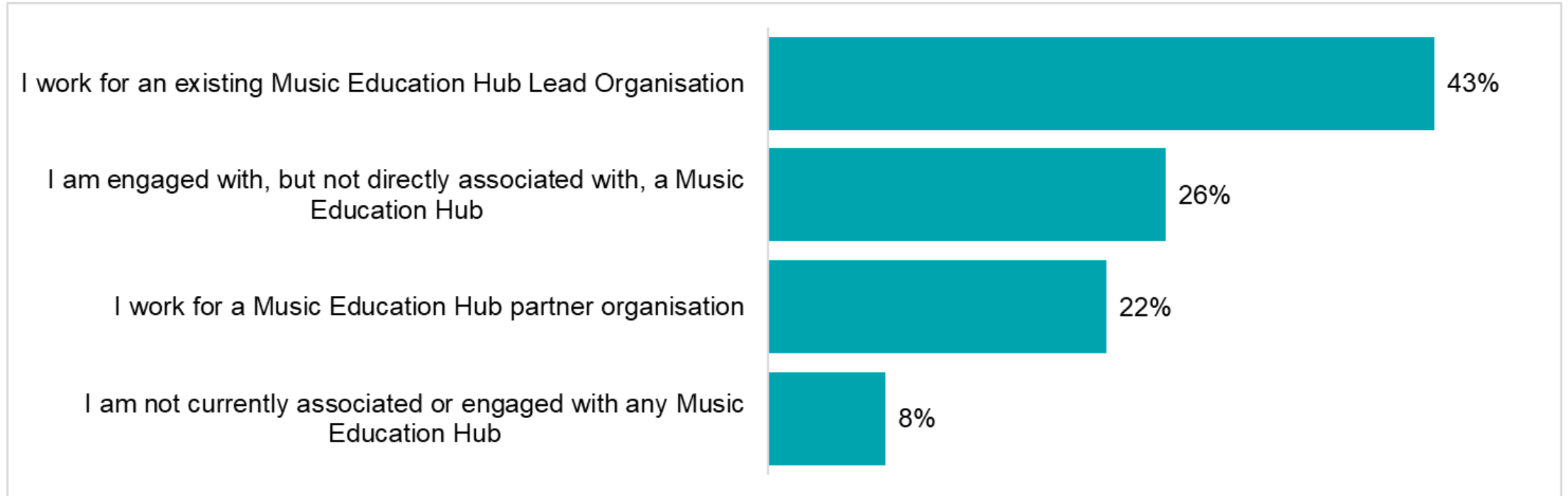
# SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

What Arts Council Area are you or your organisation based in?



# SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

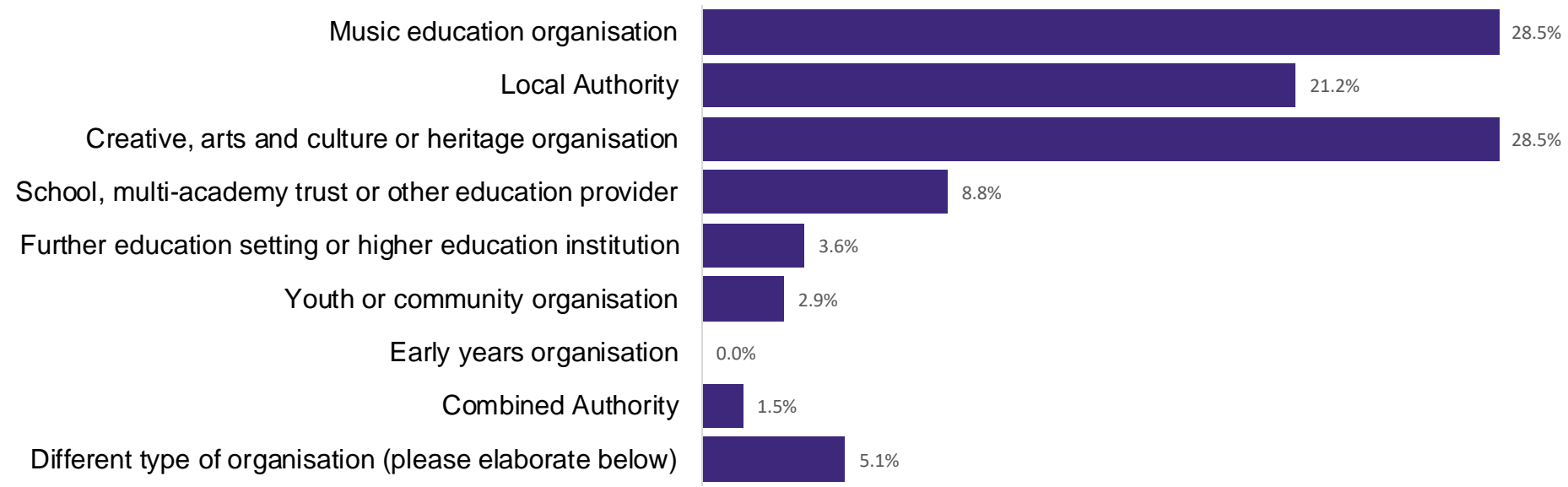
## What is your current engagement with Music Education Hubs?



# FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Focus groups were attended by 139 delegates (80 at the in-person sessions, and a further 59 at the digital session). Delegates included representatives from current Music Hub Lead Organisations, schools and multi academy trusts, music and cultural organisations, youth and community organisations/services, and individual practitioners and freelancers.

## Which option best describes your organisation type?

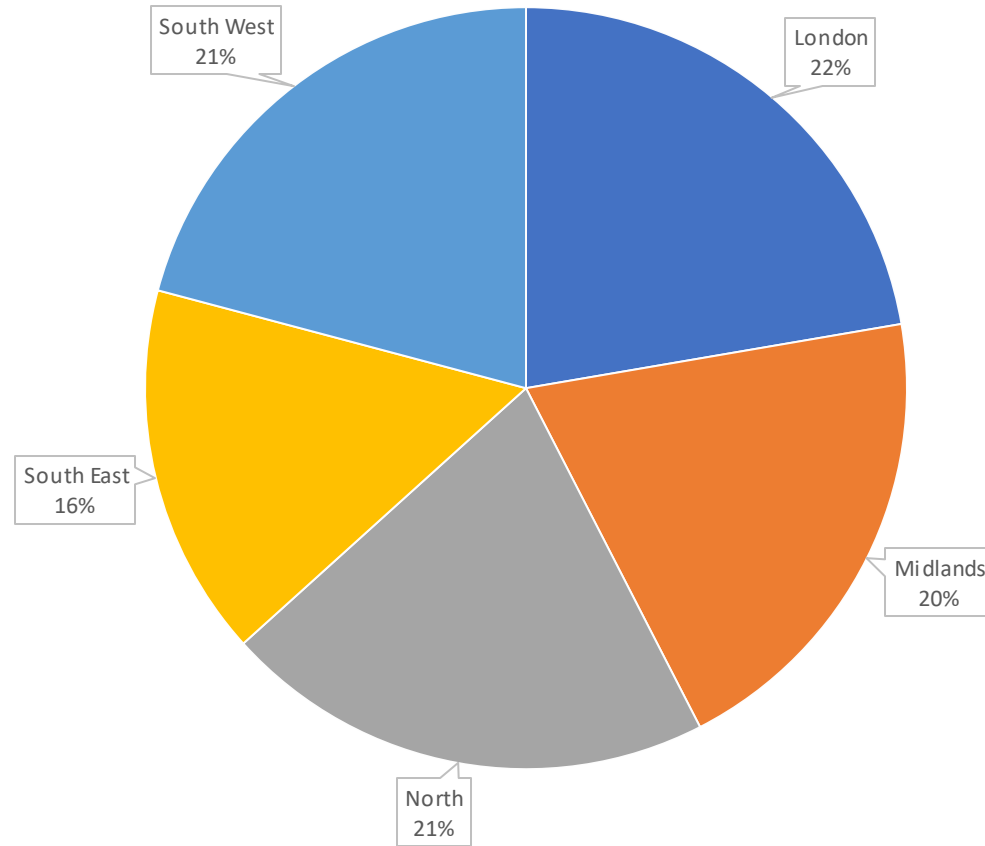


Breakdown of 'different type of organisation' category: responders included a membership body and subject associations; music charities and organisations; education charities and services; and national disability organisations



# FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

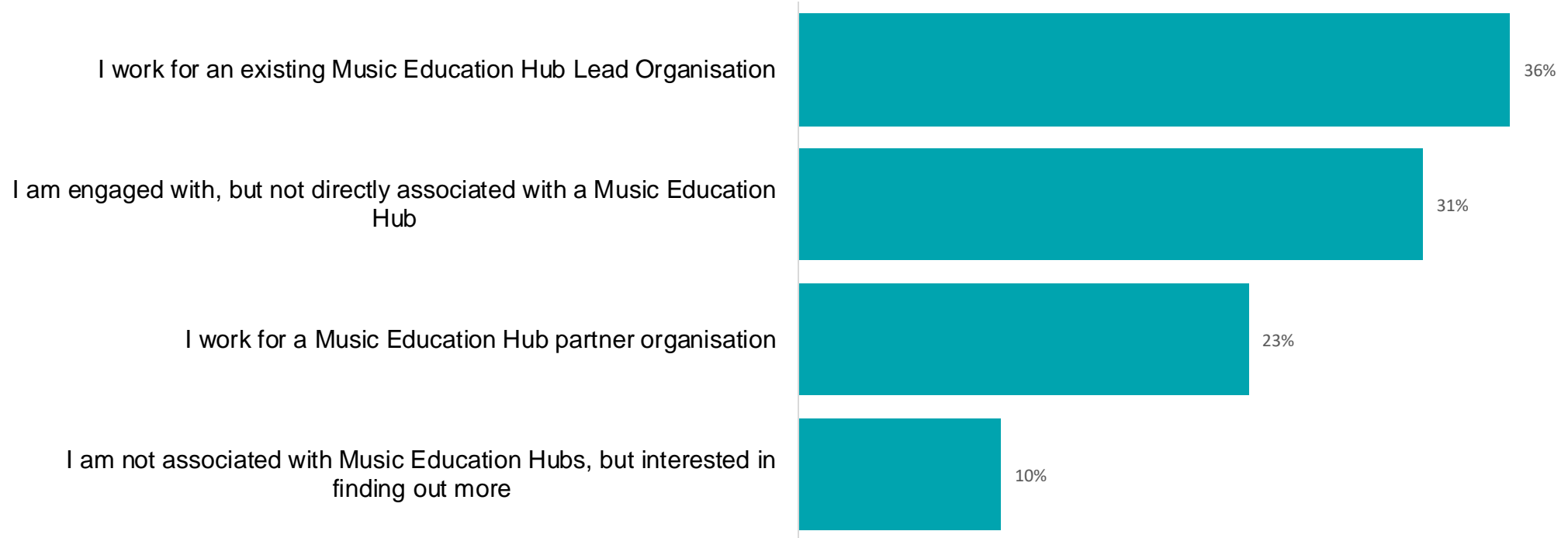
What Arts Council Area are you or your organisation based in?





# SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

## What is your current engagement with Music Education Hubs?



# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



#LETSCREATE

Photo © Jamie Calder / Richmond Music Trust – Live @ The Rose

# KEY FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

Our facilitators analysed the written feedback shared by respondents in the survey, and the discussions of the focus groups. Key themes of the findings:

- There is a consistent interest in and support for change, along with a clear message that the way structural change is delivered really matters.
- We heard that it takes time, expertise, and capacity to achieve effectively and sustainably, and the Investment Programme must consider how the sector will move into a new structure, and how a change could impact organisations and their teams.
- More strategic collaboration across wider geographies could be beneficial for the experience of children and young people. It could also enable consistent monitoring and evaluation, provide better access to training and networking for the music education workforce, and support fundraising and income generation
- The number of Hubs is considered to be less important than the appropriateness and quality of the new geographies, and how they will respond to the needs of children and young people
- The new structure should seek to respond to local contexts, existing alliances and ways of working, and build on positive and impactful sector development



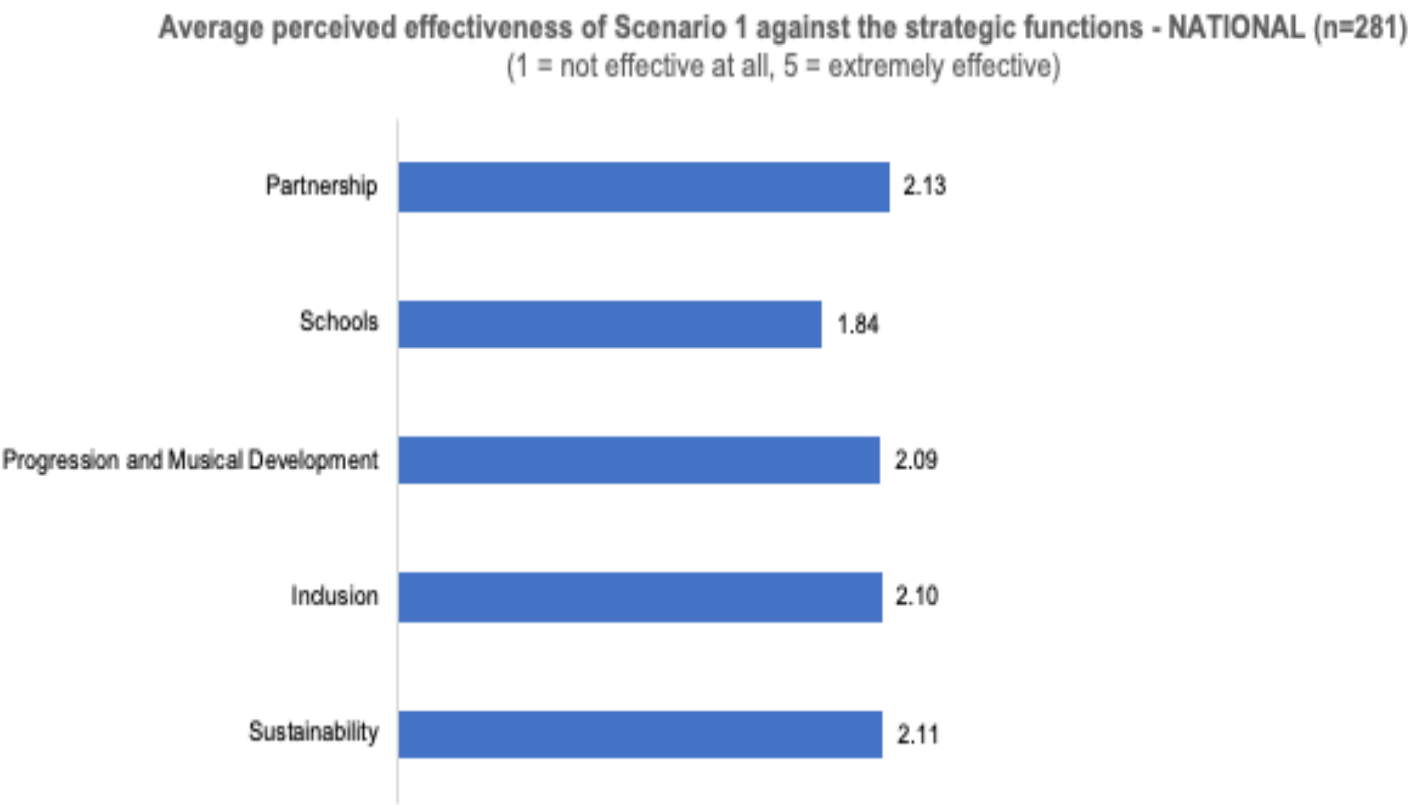
## KEY FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS (CONTINUED)

- Some Hubs covering single Local Authority areas may be appropriate, based on the needs and lives of children and young people in those places
- Clarity is required around why a structural change will better support the experience and outcomes for children and young people
- Clarity is required around what is meant by consistency and we heard that consistency both in terms of geographic size and demographics should be considered
- Clarity is required around the role and responsibilities of new Hub Lead Organisations
- This consultation focused narrowly on the ideal number and size of Music Hubs nationally. Once a preferred methodological approach for this has been decided, we heard that there is a need for further consultation around the exact geographic boundaries of the new prescribed areas.

# EXAMPLE METHODOLOGIES: KEY FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

**Survey respondents** were asked to rank the effectiveness of each example methodology against the five strategic functions outlined for Music Hubs in the National Plan for Music Education:

## Example One: a regional structure

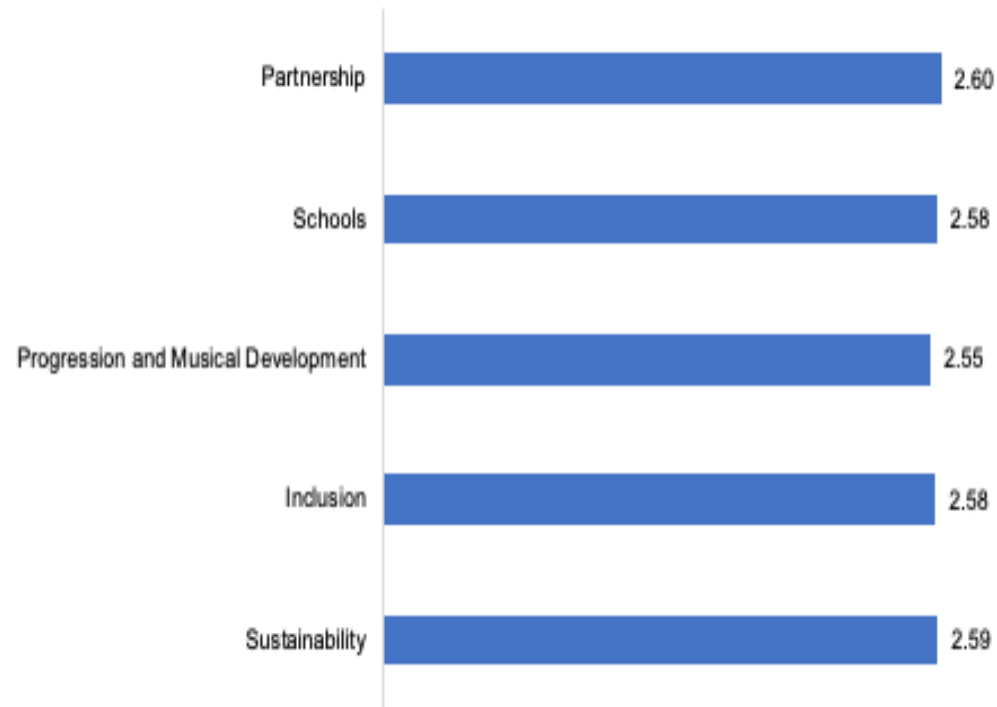




# EXAMPLE METHODOLOGIES: KEY FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

## Example Two: a sub-regional structure

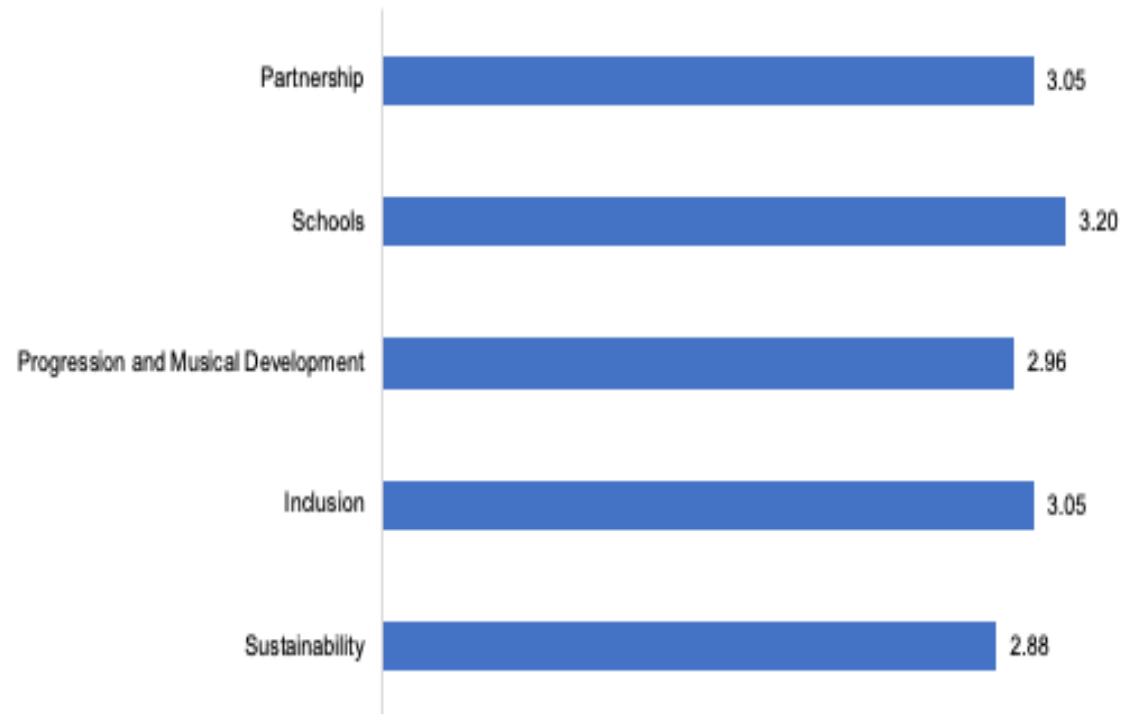
Average perceived effectiveness of Scenario 2 against the strategic functions - NATIONAL (n=276)  
(1 = not effective at all, 5 = extremely effective)



# EXAMPLE METHODOLOGIES: KEY FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

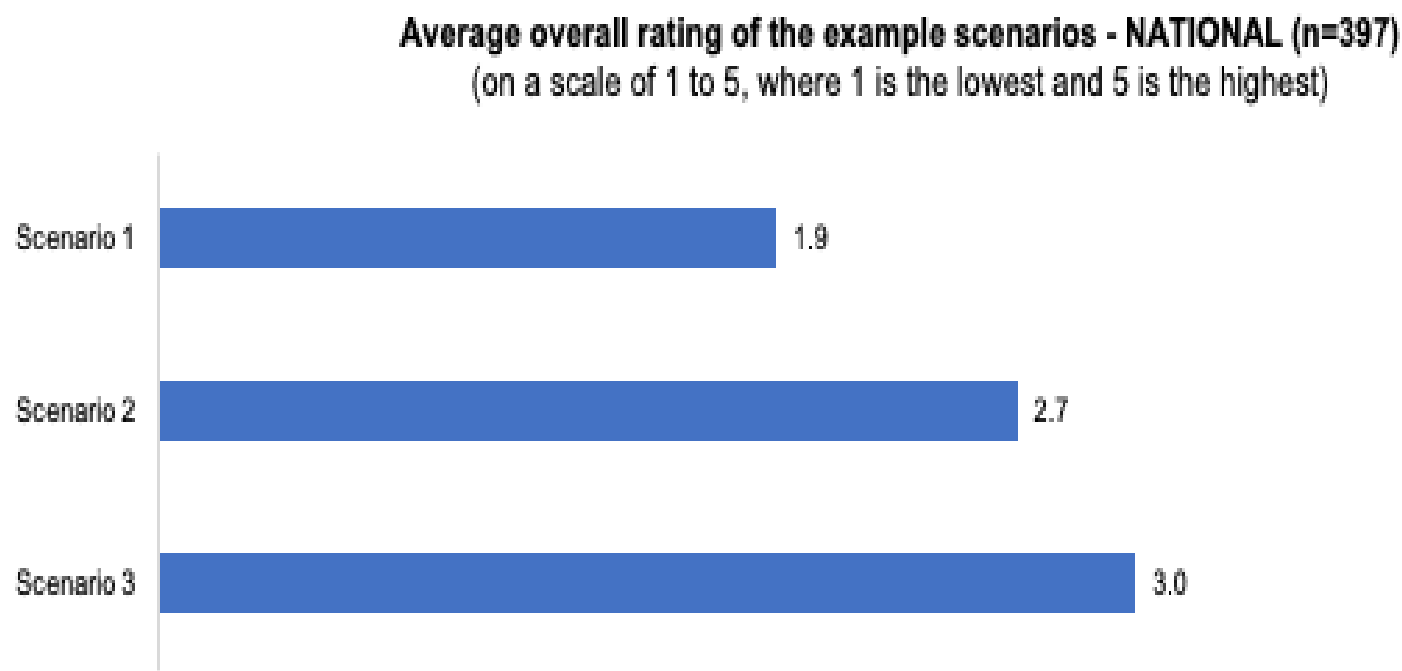
## Example Three: a more locally nuanced structure

Average perceived effectiveness of Scenario 3 against the strategic functions - NATIONAL (n=276)  
(1 = not effective at all, 5 = extremely effective)



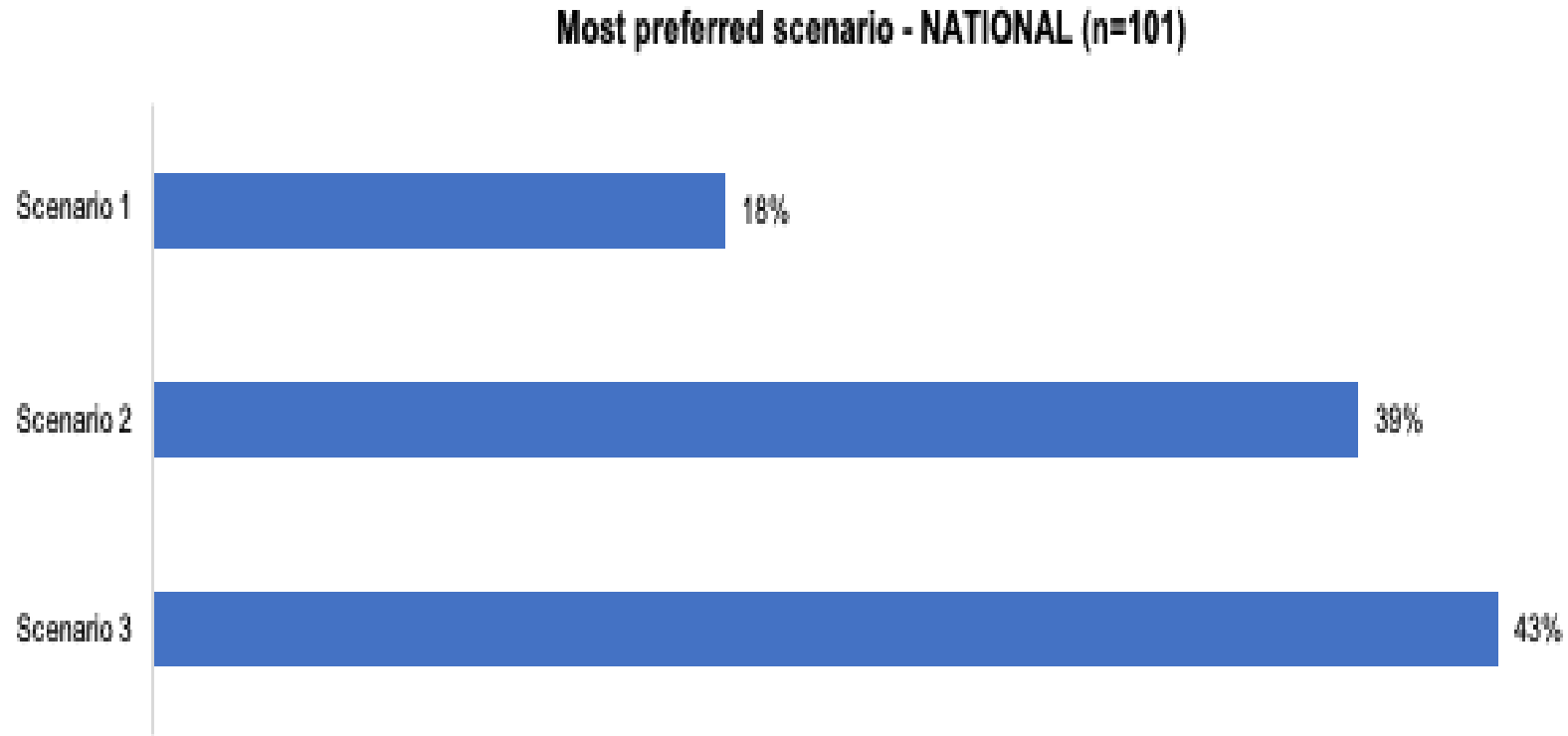
# EXAMPLE METHODOLOGIES: KEY FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

**Focus group delegates and survey responders** were asked to rank the overall effectiveness of each example methodology against the strategic functions for Music Hubs outlined in the National Plan for Music Education:



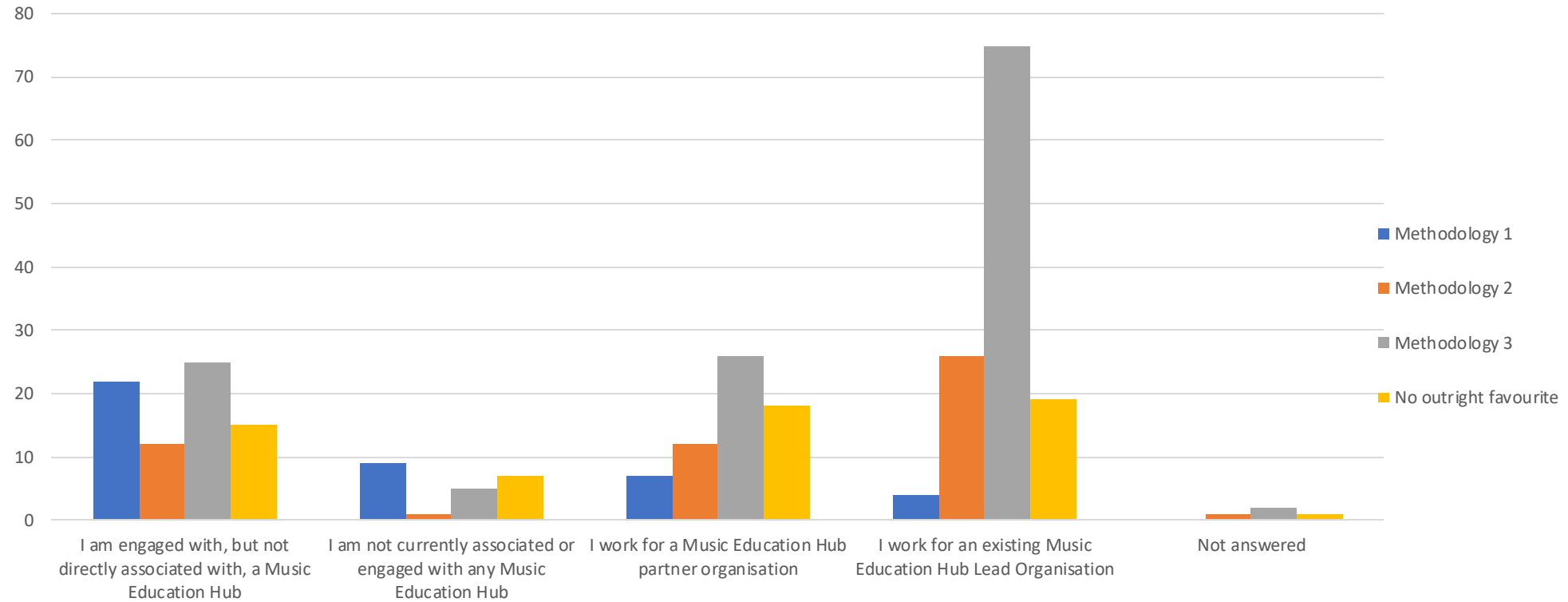
# EXAMPLE METHODOLOGIES: KEY FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

**Focus group delegates** were also asked to identify which scenario they preferred:



# EXAMPLE METHODOLOGIES: KEY FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

The preferences of **survey respondents** for each example methodology mapped against the type of organisation they represent:





# NEXT STEPS

Arts Council England:

- Listened and reflected carefully on feedback
- Discussed everything we learned with Arts Council Area and National Council members and our Executive Board
- Shared findings from the sector engagement activity and some potential ways forward with DfE

The DfE is now reflecting carefully on what the sector has shared and will work closely with Arts Council on the Investment Programme, taking all the feedback into account in informing next steps.



# METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

- Evidence is drawn from the summary and analysis of the consultation process collated by Melissa Wong and Douglas Lonie, with analysis based on these findings.
- Average ratings of the perceived effectiveness of each scenario against each strategic function are based on online survey responses.
- Average overall ratings of each scenario are based on responses from both the focus groups and the online survey.
- Most preferred scenario responses were collected in the focus groups only and are only presented at a national level due to small sample sizes within each Arts Council Area.
- 51 participants both attended a focus group and responded to the online survey. As a result, their views may be double-counted in both the qualitative and the quantitative responses. However, it is also possible that their responses within the two methods may have differed (e.g. as a result of reflecting on others' views at the focus groups or in response to wider consultation with colleagues within their own organisation).
- 21 respondents to the online survey reported that they work nationally or in more than one Arts Council Area, so their responses were counted against all regions in which they reported working.





#LETSCREATE

Photo © Aisha Iqbal / Nottingham Music Service - Robin Hood Youth Orchestra at Nottingham Castle