

Music Hubs Investment Programme South West Group

January 2023

McGowan transcribe + translate

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Note on transcription:

Between Monday 9 January – Tuesday 17 January 2023, Arts Council England conducted six focus groups with 140 participants from throughout the music, education, youth, creative and cultural communities as part of their consultation on the Music Hub Investment Programme. We recorded these focus groups in order to create and publish anonymised transcriptions so everyone can access the conversations.

Focus group participants were made aware of the plan to record before they confirmed their place at the focus group and were reminded at the beginning of their session.

The audio recordings of the focus groups were independently transcribed by an external contractor. The transcription contractor has sometimes lightly edited the transcripts for clarity and has noted where audio is not clear enough to transcribe. The contractor has not transcribed periods where focus group participants were doing individual tasks, or long periods of silence. This has been noted in the transcripts.

Arts Council England has subsequently anonymised these transcripts by removing the names of participants and their organisations, as well as all other identifying details, such as the location of their organisation.

The list below outlines the type of organisation each ‘Voice’ represents, as self-identified through our focus group expression of interest form:

Organisation type:

- Voice 1: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation

- Voice 2: n/a
- Voice 3: n/a
- Voice 4: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 5: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 6: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 7: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 8: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 9: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 10: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 11: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 12: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 13: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 14: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 15: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 16: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 17: I work for a music education organisation

The focus groups were facilitated by Melissa Wong, assisted by Arts Council England employees. Hannah Fouracre (Director, Music Education at Arts Council England) attended every focus group. This focus group was observed by representatives from the Department for Education, who have been anonymised in this transcript in line with Department for Education policy. Arts Council England employees have not been anonymised for clarity.

Beginning of transcription:

Hannah Fouracre: Right. Morning, everybody. Thank you very much for coming in so early, into Bristol on a very, very wet day. We really appreciate it. We will be having I hope what will be a really interesting conversation and very interactive, so welcome. My name is Hannah Fouracre, Director for Music Education at Arts Council England, and we appreciate you putting yourselves forward to be part of the delegate group for today's focus group for the south-west. Just a little bit of housekeeping; tea, coffee, and water is at the back. Help yourself whenever you like. Same with the loo. If you need it, you just head back to the bar, immediately turn left down the corridor, and follow the signs for the toilets. I've asked and they're not planning a fire alarm today, so if it goes off follow the... Go out the two doors and follow the signs and the staff. You'll also notice the little machine in the centre of the room. We are recording today's session so that we can create an anonymised transcript of our conversation today.

That's going to help our researchers analysing the feedback that we get from you today. We're also planning to share the recording so everybody who's not here today can see what we've talked about, but it will be done anonymously. Because of that, and this is slightly odd, but every time you speak, could you start by saying your name so that your comment can be attributed to you? Thank you. You don't really get used to it, so we will keep reminding you as you speak. You'd have thought after three hours that you would, but it's not natural. We'll keep reminding you if we haven't. Outline agenda for today. We've got quite a lot to get through. I'm going to start by just setting a little bit of context. Some of you might have heard me say some of this. You might have read some of it today.

Hannah Fouracre: You may have heard me say some of the context already before, but I want to make sure that we're all on the same page as we go into the conversation that we're planning to have. We are planning to take a break around ten-fifty, and it is going to be interactive, as I said. We really do encourage you to speak freely, to think innovatively. Everything that we're talking about today is really important. It's important to the Arts Council. It's important to the Department of Education. It's important to you and all of your colleagues, but most importantly to children and young people. I think we'll be exploring lots of ideas. I'm not expecting that we'll reach a consensus. There will be lots of different views and opinions, and we'll really welcome those, but I do ask you to share them respectfully of others, please. I'm joined today by our external facilitator Melissa. Would you like to say hello?

Melissa Wong: Hi. I'm Melissa Wong. I'm a freelance researcher and evaluator for [unclear words 0:19:48.5] cultural sector, especially relating to children and young people, learning and participation, and social and [unclear words 0:19:53.8].

Hannah Fouracre: Melissa was supposed to be joined today by Dougie Lonie, but unfortunately he has had a personal circumstance arise that has meant he's not been able to join us today, so apologies from him. I'd like to start by just asking everybody to introduce themselves, and if they're representing an organisation the name of the organisation they're representing, please. I'll start with Maria.

Maria Turley: Hi. I'm Maria Turley, and I'm Senior Manager for Children and Young People and for music education at the Arts Council.

Voice 1: Morning, everyone. My name's [redacted], and I'm Chief Exec at [redacted].

Voice 2: Hi, I'm [redacted]. I am currently Chair of the [redacted].

Voice 3: Hi, I'm [redacted]. I'm [redacted] at the Department for Education. I'm here as an observer. [redacted].

Simon Jutton: Hello. I'm Simon Jutton. I work for the Arts Council based in the South-West office here in Bristol.

Voice 4: Hi, [redacted], currently the [redacted] Hub Lead, [redacted].

Voice 5: Hello, [redacted], Strategic Lead for [redacted].

Voice 6: [redacted], Lead for [redacted].

Voice 7: Hi, [redacted]. I manage the [redacted].

Voice 8: I'm [redacted]. I'm the Chief Exec of [redacted].

Voice 9: I'm [redacted]. I'm CEO of [redacted]. We're a music charity based in [redacted].

Voice 10: I'm [redacted]. I'm General Manager of [redacted].

Voice 11: I'm [redacted], Director of Education at [redacted].

Voice 12: I'm [redacted], Director of [redacted]. We're based in [redacted].

Voice 13: Hello, I'm [redacted]. I'm Director of Creative Learning and Engagement [redacted].

Voice 14: I'm [redacted]. I help with a small charity in [redacted] which helps young musicians.

Voice 15: I'm [redacted]. I'm the General Manager of the [redacted], and we work with children with physical disabilities.

Voice 16: Hi, [redacted]. I'm the Chair of the [redacted].

Hannah Fouracre: Thank you. Welcome all. A little bit of context. I'm going to start with just a very brief introduction to the Arts Council, in case anybody doesn't really know us very well. We are the national development agency for creativity and culture in England. We're a non-departmental body sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport. We invest public money from the government and from the National Lottery to help us deliver our ten-year strategy, Let's Create. Since 2012, we've worked really closely with the Department for Education to support the delivery of the government's National Plan for Music Education, and that's included our role as the fund holder for Music Education Hubs on behalf of the Department for Education, as well as co-investing in a network of national youth ensembles and a programme called In Harmony. Welcome.

Hannah Fouracre: Did you want to introduce yourself quickly? We've only just started.

[Laughter]

Voice 17: Morning! My name's Voice 17. I'm the Artistic Director of [redacted].

Hannah Fouracre: Thank you very much. Welcome. If you want to get a drink at any time, just help yourself. The Department for Education provides the funding for Music

Education Hubs, and in our role as a development agency we're able to support Hubs more broadly. We fund many Hub partners, for example, like music organisations, music education organisations, festivals, venues. We also support Hubs to apply for funding like National Lottery Project Grants, and for music educators to support for funding through programmes like Developing Your Creative Practice. We've got relationships with every local authority, as well as many place-based partnerships, and we invest £9.6 million a year into music, which supports many Hub Lead Organisations and Hub partners. Following the publication of the refreshed National Plan in June last year, we were delighted that the department confirmed the Arts Council's continuing role as fund holder, and they asked us to run an investment process for Music Hubs, which we will be launching later this year.

We are really excited about continuing our journey with everybody who is contributing to a fantastic and accessible music education for children and young people across England. The new National Plan for Music Education builds on the vision that was outlined in the 2011 version, but it responds to the changes that have been navigated since then by the education, music education, and music sectors, and by young people themselves in the 11 years since it was published. The plan sets out the government's priorities until 2030 for music education for children and young people, including plans to strengthen Music Hubs. It articulates a refreshed vision, which is that all children and young people should be enabled to learn to sing, to play an instrument, and to create music together, and that they should have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talent, including into a professional creative career. The plan highlights the real importance of Music Hubs, with meaningful engagement and collective action

by a broad range of partners that are relevant to the musical lives of children and young people.

That's based on an understanding that by working together, that's the best way to support young people to develop as musicians, and to provide variety, reach, and opportunity. Because of Hubs' key role, the National Plan outlines a refreshed strategy for them. First of all, what is a Music Hub? A Music Hub is a group of organisations that work together to create joined-up music education and vision for children and young people under the leadership of a Music Hub Lead Organisation. The range of partners within a Music Hub will continue to be determined at a local level, and each member of the partnership is expected to play a key role in supporting Hub activity. The operating and governance models for Music Hubs will also be determined locally based on what is relevant and useful in each place. The National Plan replaces the core and extension roles for Music Education Hubs that are currently in place with a refreshed strategy for Music Hubs that is expressed by a vision, three aims, and five strategic functions.

The vision aligns with the whole vision for the National Plan, and the three aims are on the slides here; to support schools and other education settings to deliver high-quality music education, to support all children and young people to engage with a range of musical opportunities in and out of school, and to support young people to develop their musical interests and talent further, including into employment. Underpinning, driving, and facilitating the work of the Music Hub will be the responsibility of the Music Hub Lead Organisation. Thinking about their role, they will be responsible for the coordination and the facilitation of the Music Hub Partnership, and for the strategic development and oversight of the local plan for

music education. They will be accountable for the effective use of the Department for Education's funding, and for the development of high-quality music education in their local area that will be delivered by the Hub partnership and expressed through the local plan for music education.

They will achieve this through five strategic functions, which are set out on the screen. We've also got copies in front of you for exercises that we'll be doing later. In summary they are; to facilitate the operations of an effective and sustainable partnership, to connect with and respond to the needs of schools, to implement a strategy to ensure that music education is inclusive for all children and young people, to implement a strategy which will support equitable progression for all children and young people, and to ensure the strategic, financial, and operational sustainability of the Hub. As part of the National Plan, the Department for Education also confirmed continued investment of £79 million per year into the Music Hub programme, which includes a grant of over £76 million a year directly into the Hubs. The plan announced that Arts Council England will run an investment process, as I mentioned, and will be inviting organisations to apply for the role of the lead organisation that I've just outlined.

Those organisations will receive government funding to coordinate Music Hub Partnerships from September 2024. Some key dates. In spring '23 we'll be sharing the guidance for applicants. Our online portal, Grantium, will open for applications in summer, and after carefully considering every application against the criteria stated in that guidance for applicants, we'll be letting applicants know the outcome of their application in early 2024. As a reminder, in the National Plan the DfE stated its intention to fund fewer, more strategic Hubs through the investment process, and that that will be achieved through prescribing

geographies. On our website you can find the DfE's rationale for that, which I'm sure some of you have read already. The DfE's also outlined some guiding principles that we've outlined here that we need to keep in mind today as we go through the exercises we'll be doing. The guiding principles are that new Hubs will cover the multiple local authority areas and be more consistent in terms of size, coverage, and quality of provision.

Geographic areas should be prescribed prior to the application process, which means that prospective applicants will be making an application for a specific geographic area. Prescribed geographic areas will not be determined by current arrangements that are in place, but will be informed by open and objective consultation and evaluation. This one is important. It's not intended that fewer Hub Lead Organisations means that children and young people will be able to access less provision or have to travel further. There shouldn't be fewer organisations that are designing, developing, and delivering provision and support to children and young people in the Hub area. The Hub Lead Organisations themselves will become more strategic, overseeing, working with, and funding delivery partners to do that work. We want to make sure that we're drawing on experience and knowledge from everybody in the music, education, youth, creative, and cultural communities to help shape the Music Hub Investment Programme.

In the autumn last year we launched a sector conversation and consultation phase for the programme, and to date that's included a range of sector communications activity, stakeholder management, and market engagement. To support the development of the programme, we're also testing options for prescribed geographies to make sure that we understand as far as we can the implications in

terms of transitioning and mobilising to those new arrangements. That means we'll be able to present to the DfE some recommendations that are appropriate to the needs of the programme, to the organisations that might apply to lead a Hub, and to the children and young people themselves. To achieve that, we're running these focus groups. We've also got a supporting open-access survey that mirrors the content of these focus groups. That's because we couldn't talk to everybody in this format, so the survey will help ensure that everybody's got the opportunity to contribute.

We'll be using the outcomes of this activity and the survey, and the analysis of it by our external facilitators to make some final recommendations to the DfE about prescribed geographies. Before I hand over to Melissa, who will outline what it is we're going to do today, I just wanted to pause to see if anybody had any questions, reflections on what I've said, or that will help your understanding as we move forward to talk about prescribed geographies. No? Are you sure?

[Laughter]

Hannah Fouracre: That's the first time that's happened. Okay. What I would say is, then, quite a lot of questions will come up as we delve into some options. At any point, feel free to ask a question and we can go over that then. There's also an opportunity at various points to put thoughts of things that you want us in the DfE to think about on to flipchart paper, so you'll have the chance to share those comments and questions in that format if you're not ready to do so now. In which case, I will hand over to Melissa. Thank you.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. Hi everyone, I'm Melissa. As Hannah mentioned... Actually, sorry. Can you just go on to the next slide? Great. Perfect. You'll notice it says our role up on the slide. As Hannah mentioned, I was meant to be joined here today by Dougie Lonie, who some of you might know. He's co-founder and co-director of there is an alternative, an agency developing creative research tools for social impact. Although he couldn't be with us today because of personal circumstances, he was very much involved in designing the focus group that we're going through today, and he'll be very much involved in reviewing and analysing the data, and reporting back to Arts Council and DfE. I know that he wishes he could have been here with us. Just to delve into what Dougie and I are doing together, we've been commissioned by Arts Council to facilitate these focus groups to ensure that a wide range of voices is able to be heard, and to ensure that these focus groups run smoothly throughout the consultation process.

Neither Dougie nor I have any directive responsibility for the final decision that will be made, but what we'll do rather is to ensure that your ideas are fairly represented and provide summaries of our conversations to Arts Council and the DfE. Hannah mentioned that this event is being recorded. Just to dive a little bit more into what that means, the transcripts will be fully anonymised. What that means is, your names will be removed and any identifying details will be removed, for example if you name your organisation, and when we pull all of this information into our reporting for Arts Council and the DfE, we won't be identifying any individuals within our report. Rather, what we're looking to do is provide a synthesis, analysis, and interpretation of everything that's been said at a regional level, as well as at a national level. I hope that provides a bit of reassurance. Just going on to the next slide. Thank

you. As Hannah mentioned, we're carrying out a national consultation with everybody involved in the musical lives of children and young people to help shape these new Music Hub geographies.

This week, we're traveling across the country delivering five stakeholder focus groups, one in each Arts Council area. We'll also be running a digital focus group next week, so I believe all together, across all six of these focus groups, we'll be talking to around 175 people in person. We're hoping to hear from an even greater number of people through the open survey to give as many people as possible the opportunity to feed in. The focus groups and the survey cover the same content, but there are slight tweaks just to reflect the differences in the different formats. Basically, what that means is if you come to this focus group today and you don't have time to respond to the survey, know that your views have been taken into account. In the same breath, if you come away from this focus group and think of something else that you wish you had said, or want to elaborate on something further that came out of this focus group, you can go back to the survey afterwards and feed that in. Next slide, please.

Just to talk a little bit about what we're going to do together today in these next couple of hours, we'll be working towards three overall aims. The first aim is just to interrogate these three different methodologies. I believe you were sent them in advance. Hopefully you've had a chance to look at them as well. We're looking at these three different methodologies for prescribing geographic areas. We're also going to try to draw out and understand the implications of these different prescribed geographies, and when we talk about the implications we're thinking about it in short, medium, and long term. Transition, mobilisation, as well as the ongoing impact and what that means for

children and young people. Finally, we want to explore the DfE's guiding principles for Music Hub geographies, which Hannah talked about a little bit earlier. The things that we're not going to do together today; we're not going to agree an overall preferred geographic option. We do absolutely want to understand everybody's preferences and the rationales for those preferences, but we're not going to make any decisions here together today.

The other thing we're not going to do is, we're not going to debate the use of prescribed geographies within the new Music Hub Investment Programme. That's a decision that's already been made. The question is, what will those new prescribed geographies look like? Let's talk a little bit more about the session structure. For the discussion today, we've borrowed three example scenarios for prescribed geographies. These are all drawn from real-world examples relating to service delivery in music, or education, or arts-related sectors. You'll have noticed when looking through them, and we've heard back from many people as well, that these examples are not an exact fit for music education, and they're not intended to be. They're just intended to ground our conversations in something concrete, something that has worked in other sectors, and they're intended to stimulate feedback about what the implications of these three different approaches might be for the music education world.

What we're looking at, we're calling these three scenarios a regional approach, a sub-regional approach, and a locally nuanced approach. We'll talk a little bit more about what that means when we dive into each of the three scenarios. It's also important to say that these scenarios don't necessarily reflect the views or preferences of either the Arts Council or the DfE. I know this very well from having worked with Arts Council to prepare for this focus group

today. They don't have a preference in mind. They don't have an exact number of Music Hubs in mind. They're very interested in hearing your views, so this is really an opportunity to shape the decision. Let's go to the next slide. As I said, we'll look at the implications of these three example scenarios and what they might look like if they were applied to Music Hubs. The way we're going to do that is through the lens of these five strategic functions that Hannah's described. You should all have a print-out of that in front of you. If you don't, just raise your hand and we'll bring one over.

We want to understand the implications of the scenarios in terms of how Music Hub Lead Organisations will take responsibility for partnership, for schools, for progression and musical development, for inclusion, and finally for sustainability. When we're thinking about these scenarios, we're just looking at them in terms of how these scenarios would shape the geographic regions that Hub Lead Organisations work within. You don't need to understand the specifics of the three scenarios. You don't need to understand their work or focus. You don't need to know what types of organisations are leading them, or even the specific locations that they use. It's just to give you a general sense of what that approach might look like. Some of you might have looked through the example scenarios, looked through what that means within your particular area, the local area where you work. You might have some questions about that. The exact number and geographic structure of the Hubs is not likely to be replicated, but if you do notice something in the way that the geographies are broken down in terms of their general approach, that's something that you can absolutely feed back on.

Basically, what we're doing is we're testing a rough number and a rough geographic structure for an equivalent Music

Hub cohort. We're not looking at applying any of these scenarios wholesale. Finally, just to emphasise that the final number and the final geographic structure of Music Hubs will ensure that national coverage is sustained, and that organisations of all kinds are able to contribute as active partners. Let's talk a little bit about the four tasks that we'll be doing. We'll go through each of the scenarios one by one. I'll tell you a little bit about each scenario. First, I'll give you an opportunity to ask any clarifying questions that you have, just to make sure you understand the scenario before we dive in. Then I'm going to give you a few minutes for individual reflection. I'm going to ask you to write sticky notes with your individual thoughts, ideas, or questions against each of these five strategic functions. Over on those boards on the side, we've got one sheet for each of the five strategic functions as well as a sheet for general thoughts relating to the scenario as a whole.

In front of you, you'll see that you have three different colours of sticky notes. What we're asking is that you use green to write thoughts relating to opportunities, yellow for anything where you're like, hmm, this might happen and I'm not sure what that means, it could be positive, it could be risky, and pink to identify risks that might happen under that scenario. Essentially, a RAG rating. Once you've done your individual reflection, I'll bring everyone together for a group discussion. We're going to reflect on what the general themes and trends that came out of everyone's comments are. What are the things that jump out? Finally, I'm going to ask you to rate the overall effectiveness of each scenario against the strategic functions on a scale of one to five. You've got some sticky dots in front of you as well, and over on the door on the other side of the room we've got a rating matrix, so for each scenario you'll put a dot to show how you rate that on a scale of one to five. I'm going to ask you, just so that this exercise is comparable

with what we're doing in the surveys, to put your dot in a box rather than on a line.

Any clarifying questions about the tasks we're going to do?

Hannah Fouracre: Should we clarify people that don't have any green sticky notes? Should they be using blue?

Melissa Wong: Yes! I believe there were a lot of positives that came out of yesterday's focus group, so we've run low on green. If you don't have any greens, please use blues.

Hannah Fouracre: Is there another swap?

Maria Turley: I don't think we're quite at a swap with pink yet, but we're not far off. We might have to use that peachy-coloured one. If you're running out of colours, let me know. This is a live issue. If in doubt, put your opportunities at the top of the sheet, your risks at the bottom, and your neutrals in the centre please. Thank you.

Melissa Wong: Very helpful, thank you! Let's just talk through as well some ground rules for how we'll work together. I'm aware that there are a lot of people in this room from different types of organisations, different relationships with Music Hubs. What I'm going to ask is, when you're thinking through the questions today, that you're thinking about it through the lens of your own experiences and perspectives within the context of your organisation. What are the implications of each scenario for the organisation you work in, or if you're a freelancer for your individual practice? We're not expecting that everybody in this room is going to be an expert on all the things that Music Hubs do, on all of these strategic functions. Just focus on what you can do, and what you're

bringing to the table. When we're coming together as a group to have our group discussion, please raise your hand and wait to be invited to speak, just so we can ensure that a wide range of voices are heard. When people are speaking please allow them to finish, because people should be entitled to speak without interruption.

As Hannah mentioned, for the purposes of our transcription, just state your name clearly before you speak, every time you speak. Finally, I'm going to ask everyone to observe the Chatham House rule. Essentially, that's about respecting the confidentiality of what's being said in the conversation today. If you go back to your organisations this afternoon and you tell people about this focus group, absolutely feel free to talk about the overall discussion that we had, but please don't identify any specific individuals or what they said. Are we happy with these rules? Yes! Please use your best penmanship.

[Laughter]

Maria Turley: We had some issues yesterday. It was tricky.

Melissa Wong: Right. Shall we dive into scenario one? Scenario one is bridge organisations, probably a scenario that many of you are already familiar with. This is essentially a regional approach to breaking down the geographic areas that Hub Leads will be responsible for. We've got a little bit of a description about what bridge organisations do, but the main thing you need to understand is that rather than having 118 Music Hubs, as we do now, we would be going down to 9 or 10, following the official government regional structure. Are there any questions that could clarify what this scenario is about? Yes.

Voice 7: Could I just ask for some clarification around how many schools Hubs are tasked to work with? I know that with bridge organisations, thinking about things like Artsmark, they're tasked to work with 20 per cent of the schools in their bridge region. That obviously has an impact on considerations in terms of for each of the schools we don't know exactly what the data requirements, what the impact requirements for reporting is going to be. That's something perhaps that would impact.

Hannah Fouracre: The National Plan sets out, and it says that Hubs will support all schools.

Voice 7: Thank you.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you. Hi.

Simon Jutton: Just to clarify, so in the south-west we have two bridge organisations that cover the region. Presumably this is more about taking the regional approach?

Melissa Wong: Exactly, this is more of a regional approach. If we only had approximately nine or ten across the country, and what that would mean in terms of the geographic coverage that Hub Leads would be responsible for. Great.

Voice 16: Can I just... I know you're not saying that it would necessarily be bridge organisations, and it's the regions they look after, but just to clarify, because bridge organisations are going, aren't they, under the Arts Council structure?

Hannah Fouracre: Hannah. Our investment in the work that the bridge organisations have been doing for the last decade is coming to an end. We're having a different funding relationship with them moving forwards. What we're trying to provide is an example methodology of

where another programme has been working in a regional way. How would that work if it was the same structure for Music Hubs? You don't need to be wondering about what's happening with bridges.

Melissa Wong: Voice 2?

Voice 2: Just so people know, I've had a quick back of the packet calculation; there are 22,300 schools of all shades in England, not including independents, and currently there's 8.3 million kids in English schools. That's the scope of what we're working with.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. I saw a hand from Voice 10.

Voice 10: It's more a question about scale really, because with a regional approach, are we trying to streamline parts, or is it that a regional approach is a kind of strategic head, and then underneath that you have regional staff that are appropriate for regional and sub-regional and local levels? Are you looking at regional organisations that are slimmed down along the size of an existing Hub, or is it just about channels of communication, and that one regional Hub would communicate with DfE and Arts Council?

Hannah Fouracre: What we're trying to invest in is a network of strategic lead organisations, so the ones that will make sure the delivery partners are in place across the whole geographic patch, whatever size that is, to make sure that the strategy's in place, the funding's being used appropriately; so, it's that strategic role for the lead organisation. What we won't be doing, well, unless it strongly came out in our consultation, is that we're not at this moment anticipating that we would say what the model needs to look like beneath the lead organisation. We want

leads to tell us what would work best in their area, and who their partners are to deliver it.

Maria Turley: That could be something you can put on a sticky note today as well, that kind of observation. If it worked this way, that's what the implication would be.

Melissa Wong: Any other questions or clarifications? Okay. Well, one thing... Oh, sorry. Voice 15.

Voice 15: Just one. Maybe this is a stupid question. Are you anticipating that the Hub Lead Organisations will be organisations that exist already, or new organisations that will be formed to take on this role?

Hannah Fouracre: Both, I guess. What we would have in the guidance for applicants is the due diligence that we would expect to be in place to be able to assess whether the organisation's got track record and things. That would set out what we'd be looking for if it were a new organisation, but that could be up to the applicants to decide if there was a new organisation being set up to deliver it.

Melissa Wong: Great. Voice 6?

Voice 6: Can I just clarify, are you asking from this question a critique of bridge organisations themselves, or that structure, or is it about the merits of a model that works on that scale?

Melissa Wong: Exactly, the latter. Merits of a model that works on that scale. Great. Thank you for all your questions. Let's just take eight minutes now for some individual reflection, and do feel free to just go up and put your post-its on the flipboard as you're ready.

[Respondents complete task 0:52:52.7 - 1:01:21.6]

Melissa Wong: All right. If you could finish your last sticky note and put it on the board, please. I'm going to ask everyone, just because this is quite a large space and everything's happening over here, let's just all get up and come stand closer together. We can get a read of what's happening on these boards.

Maria Turley: Shall I do a strategic mic move?

Melissa Wong: Strategic mic move? Yes.

Maria Turley: That's its technical name. It's surprisingly heavy.

Melissa Wong: Isn't it?

Maria Turley: Oh, that would have worked even better. That would have been the sensible thing to do, just move the table.

Melissa Wong: Just give a moment for everyone to finish putting up their sticky notes, because I see a lot in hands still.

[Respondents complete task 1:02:25.5 - 1:02:41.9]

Melissa Wong: Right. Just a quick scan. It's really great to see a lot of comments from people, a lot of different responses. I'm noticing that partnership has the most sticky notes out of all the flipcharts, so this seems like a good place to start. I'm also noticing the balance of colours on this flipchart. A lot of concerns about the potential risks.

[Laughter]

Melissa Wong: Let's start on the positive!

Hannah Fouracre: That's your statement of the day, Melissa. Lots of concerns.

Melissa Wong: To start on a positive note. I'm not going to get a chance to read through every comment from everyone, but what I'll do is, I'll just take a sample of comments, try to get a sense of what the room is feeling, and if there's anything important that you feel I missed off please do say. This one reads, a team of critical friends, one for each HLO from within Arts Council? Or commissioned by Arts Council, dot, dot, dot, question mark. Familiar to organisations who work with them already. Interesting. Is this one making assumptions about who the leads might be? Not sure if anyone wants to clarify what this one means.

Unknown: No, it just meant that some organisations who work with them already might just know what that structure is.

Melissa Wong: Oh, I see. Sorry. You're not assuming that the leads might be anybody, but just understand what that structure means and looks like and feels like. Okay, perfect. Thank you. This one says, can all partners operate on a regional level? That one's sounding a little bit concerned. Healthy ecosystem of delivery partners. All right. Sharing knowledge on a national level. Let's get a sense of some of the pinks. Some big words that jump out to me. Too big. Too unwieldy. Bureaucratic. How much will be spent on admin/infrastructure versus delivery? Not enough capacity to effectively manage all relationships. Partnerships would be very large, leading to complexities around access, comms, etc. This one also seems to be a question around partnerships. Let's see. Something, large-scale organisation. Something, 300 delivery partners.

[Laughter]

Melissa Wong: Would you like to read that?

Unknown: Yes. I didn't get a star in primary school. Bridge-scale organisation would have to monitor maybe up to 300 delivery partners in the south-west. This would need funding. If the top three per cent top-slice is suggested in the spend report for south-west Hubs, could lose up to £280,000 of funding, which is the equivalent of funding North Somerset.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. Great. A lot of comments around the admin structure. A lot of comments around the complexities of managing partnerships. Some positive comments around sharing that could happen at a national level, the familiarity of this framework. Any other reflections on the overall themes that are coming out? Kath.

Voice 7: I would just say some of that sharing that's being talked about on a more regional level already happens on a more regional level without a Hub being prescribed as that regional area. Did that make any sense?

[Agreement]

Melissa Wong: I see a lot of nods in the room. Thank you. Any other themes that jumped out, or anything that we've missed? Okay.

Voice 5: Oh yes, I think I was just going to say... Sorry, [redacted]. I struggled sometimes, the point we're making, to figure out which heading it actually slotted under. I think some of those, I think, oh, is that actually about inclusion? Is that actually about progression? There's so much crossover. The challenge I find with this is, without talking about the specifics

it's very difficult to actually weigh up the pros and cons of these models. It does feel like it's very abstract. We'll give it a damn good go, but it does feel very abstract.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. I do appreciate it is a complex task, and especially with the level of abstraction that we're working at right now, so I really appreciate everyone giving this a go. In the back.

Voice 6: I would just like to echo and reinforce what Voice 5 said. I've found it quite challenging in this, but particularly on the... Obviously, because it's mirrored on the online survey, feeding back what is essentially a very big strategic conversation. Mapping against three exemplar models, fine, but breaking that, without being repetitive about each of these five aims, is extremely challenging. Which is fine, because it's still possible to get the points across, but I think what's possibly a risk here is that, for example, it's easy to put everything in partnership because so much of what we do is about partnership. Therefore, it might look, oh, actually this model is clearly good about inclusion because no one's put anything inclusion, or it's not effective about inclusion because no one's put anything inclusion, whereas actually that's not representative, I think, of what we're trying to say. I guess my only point or suggestion is, when all this comes together, that it's not looked at in five... That's positive because there's lots of this.

It needs to be seen as a whole, because I'm finding this a very challenging process, as Voice 5 said. Therefore, I haven't put anything on that piece of paper, and I haven't put it on that piece of paper. Doesn't mean I'm not thinking about it and it's not relevant. It's just it happened to get put on there.

Melissa Wong: I think that's a really good point, and something that Dougie and I will absolutely take into

account as we're reporting on what's come out of these focus groups. Thank you so much for sharing that.

Maria Turley: I would say remember general thoughts as well. We have this bit that's catch-all. As you're looking across the other five, exactly as you say, you think, this is relevant in this way, in a more overarching way, I want to make the point in that way, then make the point in that way and put it on that sheet.

Melissa Wong: Thank you, Maria. Keeping that in mind, we are going to just keep working through one at a time, but remembering that there is an incredible amount of overlap between these different categories. Taking a look at schools, again just a sample. More authority over schools? Potential for improved ways of working with multi-academy trusts. Greater opportunities for sharing of good practice, ensuring that all areas benefit from strategy. Those are some of the positives. Some of the risks. How to engage all schools on a regional level. How to secure continued local authority investment. Will advocacy be affected? Danger of another level of administration, therefore taking funding away from CYP. I think I've seen this comment on a few different boards. Too big a gap between oversight and delivery. Data dominates decisions in the absence of nuanced understanding/relationships. Risk of patchy provision. The potential to not recognise local infrastructure, demographic. Would this achieve the vision of the National Plan? That's just a flavour. Seeing a lot of nods in the room. Would you agree with what's coming out from these sticky notes.

Voice 5: I think I stuck this on another post-it, but it's echoed here. If the National Plan is one plan, and then it's being interpreted ten different ways, but that's still not on a scale because it would then also have to be delivered and interpreted

in a more granular level because we just know it would, so it is a concern that you're almost putting an extra layer of interpretation, and therefore inconsistency and patchiness...

Melissa Wong: It's what's lost in between those layers of interpretation.

Voice 5: Yes, as it gets filtered down.

Melissa Wong: Okay, great. Yes.

Voice 17: Do we have any data currently about how effective bridge organisations are at working with schools?

Melissa Wong: It's a good question. Would one of my Arts Council colleagues like to answer that?

Unknown: Well, we have data on the number of schools they've worked with each year?

Unknown: Has that been effective? We don't know if that's been an effective...

Unknown: I don't know enough about the details of the programme.

Simon Jutton: I think it varies a lot according to the... The bridges were all very different. That was one of the issues, actually. They're very, very different organisations, and some of them automatically had very direct relationships with schools. Some, like [redacted], for example, was much more about social enterprise, so a lot less to do with schools. It varied according to the organisations.

Maria Turley: On the programmes they're delivering as well. Something like Artsmark, for example, has a reach

which other more locally specific programmes might not, so it kind of depended on their remits and business plans as well. I'm not sure if that's helpful.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you. For the record, that was Simon and Maria from the Arts Council. No worries.

Maria Turley: Oh, really sorry. Maria!

[Laughter]

Melissa Wong: Voice 7.

Voice 7: I just wanted to go back to a point that Voice 5 made, from [redacted], about the different levels, because if we go back to the new National Plan model, which has got CYP then schools, then local plan, then national plan, there's nothing which says local plan, then regional plan, then national plan. We're actually potentially voting in an extra layer, which isn't actually stated within the national strategy.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. Who would like to go first?

Voice 13: Just to echo one of those points where it's been talking... I've been talking about this a lot in my organisation about transactional relationships. Actually, I think that point moves across a couple of things, particularly in inclusion, actually. We find actually it needs to be much more about those smaller relationships and actually those individual relationships that actually push forward some of those agendas and get things done. I would echo that in terms of that point.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you. Yes.

Voice 4: I'm wondering where local authorities will fit into this, because I'm suggesting they wouldn't, particularly as many of

them are imploding anyway. If we're going straight from the local to thinking about regional, actually we're bypassing local authorities now, although at the moment local authorities is the way we've got coverage across England. Maybe that layer might not exist.

Voice 5: What would be lost through that? I think it is patchy, and there's actually an enormous amount of value in additional match funding and added value that comes from those relationships in the positive cases.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you everyone. It feels like there are a lot of common themes that are coming out around layers of administration and bureaucracy, things being lost in translation, what relationships would look like, both the practicalities of those relationships as well as how meaningful those relationships are. With that said, let's move on to inclusion. Just a flavour of what's been said. One national plan being interpreted ten ways, and then also being delivered, filtered down locally. Specificity or local need could be lost. Echoes a lot of things that have already been said. Finally tackle the workforce challenge through more large-scale CPD training, etc. Interesting. Sounds like an interesting opportunity. Data drives quality, plus...

Voice 11: EDI.

Melissa Wong: EDI, thank you. With more distance, more objective decisions can be made. Interesting. Opportunity to share more best practice across large partnership. That's a nice one. Financial scale to invest in investments and provision to allow all children to be included. Some really nice positives here. Some of the risks. How to ensure local difference. Inclusion more easily deprioritised as issues of under-representation are even more under-representation compared to large regional cohorts. Loss of

nuance/local understanding of CYPs' needs due to scale of responsibilities. Equity could be lost if numbers dominate. Quantitative evaluation. That's a flavour of what's been said. What are we picking up on as the key things that jump out to you?

Voice 16: I suppose the key thing coming through there, and we didn't put anything on that board, but thinking about it in my experience in the [redacted], and I used to manage a college in [redacted], is that the demographics of that region are so different to the demographics of Bristol in terms of need and where the main aspects of deprivation are in terms of where you'd need to focus your spending on music. The broader it is, and I think somewhere somebody said something about rural versus cities, and I think that, particularly with the south-west, is a real issue because of the nature of the peninsula, which is perhaps more of an issue in the south-west than in other parts of the country where it's a more concentrated demographic.

Melissa Wong: Yes, some very regional-specific issues. I'll see if there are any other hands to give a range of people a chance to chip in. Yes.

Voice 2: I think the geography one is important across all of this, and it just isn't in the peninsula. If you think of Northumberland, [redacted], that's huge. Even lower population. The geography versus the funding versus the opportunities versus siting opportunities on such a large area is very, very difficult.

Melissa Wong: Thank you.

Voice 10: I was interested by that board, the comments on data, because I'm not sure where the correlation between data and regional delivery came from. I haven't come across that, but there seems to be an assumption in the room that on a regional

model it would be data-driven rather than need-driven. I'm posing that question, really. Where has that come from?

Voice 11: I put both the data ones on there, so I thought I might talk to that because I think unless we get clarity on that, they're either a positive or a risk. If it's really well managed and it creates challengeable data, and people can really talk to that, and groups can learn from their data, but equally well if it's numbers-driven and not needs analysis, not about local context, it won't work. It will be the opposite effect. My other point I just wanted to make about inclusion is that the other... Not totally, but we've got partnerships, we've got schools, progression, we've got sustainability, money, whatever you call that. Inclusion to me is a band through it all, and I'm really concerned, in a good way... I think it's also great to have it called out, but I think we just need to remember that.

Melissa Wong: Great. Thank you so much.

Voice 8: One comment, just to echo what you said about particularly the connection between inclusion and progression. Our organisation is about inclusive progression. That's what we do. I do worry that this model could really lose... I mean, I've talked about it. That kind of nuance around individual young people's needs, and the very, very different and difficult barriers that they face. I do worry about this model as being an issue here, I think.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. I do think inclusion and progression of musical development are very closely related. Let's move on to looking at this board. Starting with some of the greens. Greater strategic overview due to there being only ten geographies. Diversity of offer and cross-pollination. City concerts times country festivals. Hopefully regional equity in opportunities for young people. More opportunities for progression due to wider

partnerships? More realistic in terms of employment/HE progression. Moving down the board, potential for this to support better dialogue and connection for progression and professional training. Area so large that local difference and rural/urban differentiation is lost. Musical opportunities for children and young people will take a back seat while partnerships are formed and developed, so some short-term risks around that specifically. Great. That's just a flavour around progression and musical development. What's jumping out at you?

Voice 2: I think on the last one, it's time and how long will sustained partnerships actually take place? The plan is ten years. We can't get to the ultimate of the plan within one year, so it will take time.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you. Echoing those concerns around the transition, Voice 7.

Voice 7: I wrote that one. That was me. It was very specifically written, because in 2016 we took on [redacted] as well. It's taken six years for that partnership to embed and grow to create musical progression for children [redacted], so I caution the time because that's how long the breadth... It's not that nothing happened in year one, that's not what I'm saying at all, but it takes a very long time. Again, that comment goes across...

Melissa Wong: Thank you.

Maria Turley: I've done a general note for this one, just those two comments.

Melissa Wong: Thanks, Maria. I really liked what was said here about more opportunities being opened up due to working on a larger area. More opportunities opened up for

employment and CPD as well due to working on a larger scale. Obviously, some short-term risk, but also potential opportunities for children and young people to benefit. Anything else? Yes.

Voice 17: I wrote a note somewhere, probably not on that board, that said there's a risk that there may be fewer opportunities, because if you homogenise across a larger region then you have to take away things from areas to make it the same as another area, or to have one orchestra in each main area and not sub-bands, or something. I don't know. You might end up with fewer.

Melissa Wong: It could go in either direction depending on how things are handled. Yes.

Voice 4: I think it would be quite interesting to map across, exactly several people have already said, what is already happening. It almost feels like it hasn't been taken into account, and to where it might get to. An awful lot of that is already happening, and yet I don't think necessarily it's an urban/rural tension. I think almost it's a south-west and other areas kind of thing. Plymouth is the city in the south-west, and all the same issues. You can't get them to travel two miles to a different place for an ensemble, and they argue about transport as well. It's the same issues, and unfortunately those are the young people we're trying to get to because the more able will do it already anyway. More able as in financially and whatever else. The ones we're trying to help are the ones that are going to be impacted on, always, whatever size model we have.

Melissa Wong: Great. Thank you for that. I think [redacted]... Oh, [redacted]. We haven't heard from you yet.

Voice 9: Yes, just on that progression thing, I think the opportunity... Not that this doesn't happen, but having a wider

geography there's a greater diversity of expertise as well. I think that's really positive, but also then raising a lot more awareness of what opportunities are available for young people. It's not just about shrinking stuff down into an area, but it's about that, what's the advantage of opening up so much more awareness of what's happening in a larger area.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you.

Voice 5: I think I'm just really meditating on inclusion and progression, because I think what I do like about this idea is that sort of... I'd probably use the word enforcement, but by saying, 'This is how we do it in the south-west,' that you don't have each individual area interpreting what inclusion means. Going back to inclusion, you know, that's almost really making it bespoke for the individual child, never mind the individual school, town, village, county, region. There's something about saying everyone has to do this, and the actual delivery of that, that's the biggest challenge that we've got nationally. I can see that that, being prescriptive at that really chunk, chunky... Chunkular, I was about to say. Sorry, I'm quite tired.

Unknown: It's a good word.

[Laughter]

Voice 5: Yes. Being prescriptive on that scale does seem appealing, but it's the relationship and the dialogue between the local and the granular, because that is where we're going to actually meet young people's needs and meet schools' needs and teachers' needs. That doesn't mean it's in an opposition to being really prescriptive at higher level.

Melissa Wong: Perfect. Thank you. Okay, two more comments, then we're going to draw a line under this.

Voice 8: For me, this goes back again to what are we actually trying to change, and what are the outcomes we're looking to achieve in the next ten years? The whole plan has to be about that, and if we ask ourselves that question then we're on to something, I think. It's not about numbers. It's about the change, I think.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you. Brilliant reminder.

Voice 6: It's fascinatingly complex, isn't it? There's so much that's positively conflicting. There's the urban/rural conversation, and I absolutely chime with that. How you solve urban problems is totally different to how you solve rural problems, although I acknowledge Voice 4's statement that they are sometimes the same problems, but the solutions are very different. What did I want to say? It was about... I've lost my thread now, sorry. I think somebody said about mapping. I think, Voice 4, it was you again. I remember when bridge organisations started and they came up saying, 'The first thing we're going to do, we're going to do the mapping of all mappings,' it was called. It happened. I did want to ask what happened to it, can we have it, and it didn't seem to actually go anywhere. That sort of reminded me that bridge organisations came in, and I may be wrong in this, but I think they came in and delivered something different at a new level. I worry with that regional approach, these conversations, 'Oh, it's about every child in every school, or every child, every family, every school, and so it works outwards.'

Putting in a regional approach feels like it's a new layer. It's not a different way of making sure that we get down to that granular level of every child. Therefore a new layer is, of course, more cost. More time, more money. That, as somebody said, is money coming out of children and young people. I think it feels like this conversation... I'm torn between do I think the really big, macro-strategic stuff, work out how that affects the child, or start

with the child and see how that pans out. I can't solve that one in my head yet.

Melissa Wong: I don't think we're going to solve that.

[Laughter]

Melissa Wong: That was a brilliant segue on to our final flipchart around sustainability. Range of comments here. Let's pick out a few of them. Oversight of all policies and strategies centrally by HLO, seen as a positive. Opportunities to access more funding/share practice due to scale of HLOs. Better connectivity between hubs, more strategic approach. In the middle, possibly sustainable as larger, but not if additional layer. Beware sustainable at expense of effective at a school level. Potential costs of creating infrastructure to manage such large areas. Some existing funding, real plus in kind, may not remain available. A lot of reflections around funding. Some interesting reflections as well about infrastructure and oversight. What else jumps out at you?

Voice 1: I think pretty much across the board all of the benefits that have emerged from this can be achieved without cementing the Hub structure in this kind of macro overview. That's pretty much it. All of these benefits, you can achieve from informal partnerships. It's kind of already happening at this level. I just think it's become so bureaucratic and expensive that it's... It's a no from me.

[Laughter]

Maria Turley: Writing it down.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. Just to say as well, Maria's been capturing all the general reflections in this last sheet here.

Maria Turley: Nothing gets lost.

Melissa Wong: Nothing gets lost. Yes.

Voice 17: I was just thinking about the macro structure that you were talking about. Is that not the National Plan?

Voice 1: Yes.

Voice 17: Therefore, it's already there. We know what we're working... What we have been working towards for the last 11 years, and what the... I mean, it's actually not supposed to change hugely, in their own words.

Melissa Wong: Right, so what's the added value of this?

Voice 17: Yes.

Melissa Wong: Okay, brilliant. Really great discussion that we've had about this scenario. Thank you everyone so much for all of your contributions. I'm just going to ask you to do one more thing for scenario one, which is to take a sticky dot and to tell us your rating on a scale of one to five for scenario one. One is not effective at all, five is extremely effective, and once you've done that then you can take a five-minute break.

[Break 1:29:43.8 - 1:38:22.3]

Melissa Wong: Right everyone, let's get started again. If everyone could grab their seats. Thank you. Right. We're doing a really good job so far. We've worked on one scenario. We've got two more to talk through. Scenario two is what we're calling a sub-regional model of Music Hubs. We learned yesterday - always testing, always learning - that it's a bit confusing when we tell you too much about

what these example scenarios are like. All you really need to know is, within this sub-regional model what we're looking at is approximately a network of 40 Hubs across the country. We've currently got 118 Music Hubs. This would be scaling down to around a third of the number of Hubs that we have currently. Think about what that would mean in terms of the number of Hub Leads overall, and the rough size of geographic area that they would have strategic responsibility for, whilst remembering that there would continue to be a network of organisations working underneath them to support delivery across that geographic area.

Do we have any clarifying questions about this scenario?

Voice 5: Yes. I think with this, it was partly because when I looked in our own area for this one and the next one, they were really similar. I wonder how they're defined. Is it a certain pupil population? A number of schools, or number of maths teachers? Like you say, just in the example I looked at, the sub-regional and the local really weren't very different when you looked at Dorset.

Melissa Wong: Okay. I'm afraid I don't know about the specifics, again because the specifics of this don't matter too much. It may have been the case that in your particular area it happened to be pretty similar between scenarios two and three, but just thinking more broadly what we mean by this, a sub-regional level, imagine... I think the south-west currently has how many Hubs? Like, probably 20-something?

Maria Turley: Forty is about a third nationally, so it's like a third of the ones in the south-west.

Melissa Wong: Imagine scaling down to a third of the number of Hubs that we have now, with the corresponding growth in the size of the geographic coverage areas.

Hannah Fouracre: Hannah. Voice 5, I think what your question is really useful for you to reflect on the board, which is when we... In the beginning I said that we were looking for more consistency in terms of size. I think what's really useful is, you asked does that mean about size of pupil number, but it might also be, is it size of geography? I think that's a question to capture as we go through the exercise.

Voice 5: Or the number of schools, teacher number. There's all sorts of different things there.

Hannah Fouracre: Yes. Write it on a sticky note!

Melissa Wong: The main thing we'll keep repeating throughout this session is, write it on a sticky note. It's all about capturing this so we can make sure that Dougie and I are able to play that back when we report to Arts Council. Voice 1 first, and then we'll go to you, Voice 2.

Voice 1: I don't know if this is helpful. The first thing I did was Google Maths Hubs map, and then there is one. Is that helpful? I didn't know if it was helpful for me to look at. Just, I'm thinking that they've done a lot of the thinking already about what this might look like, and I found it helpful in terms of helping my thinking process. I just didn't know if that was something that is useful in terms of your process.

Melissa Wong: I think it would be tricky to try to get it up on the board, and we're trying not to get people to focus too much on the specific geographic boundaries of the Maths Hub. If that's been helpful for your thinking, absolutely take

that into account. I just don't want to get drawn into the specifics of it right now. Thanks for that. Voice 2.

Voice 2: Just to follow on from Voice 1, looked at the map and there are four Maths Hubs across the south-west. You're talking of a reduction of 14-odd at the moment to maybe 4 if we were to take that.

Melissa Wong: Perfect, thank you. Voice 11.

Voice 11: I just wondered if anyone had got the data on how many delivery organisations are currently funded through the Hubs? So, not HLOs but delivery organisations.

Unknown: I started a questionnaire across the south-west, and those who have shared back with me that information, I've had about five back, and that was around 150 delivery organisations from the [unclear word 1:43:24.8] that gave me some information back. I would suspect that we're heading for 300.

Melissa Wong: Thank you, everyone, for having done so much prep work. Voice 10.

Voice 10: I looked at my local authority level for the Maths Hubs, and I was interested to see that my local authority had shifted between Hubs several times. My question is, what duration will this new Hub model be for, and is there the flexibility that regions can opt to shift to other Hubs?

Hannah Fouracre: The National Plan is until 2030. That sets out the vision and the strategy for Music Hubs up to 2030. The investment process that we're going through at the moment is for funding up to three years, and then it will be up to the government to determine what happens next. We've always had the flexibility within the Hub programme to enable lead organisations to change with they've needed

because of local context. I think at the moment we're trying to determine what would it look like to move to this model at the point of starting in September '24, and to understand the implications of that so that we can determine whether that's something that's achievable.

Voice 10: I think, to come back on that, Hannah, is what I'm hearing around the room, is that question of time to develop partnerships. If we're only looking at a three-year model with some opportunity for flexing, how does that ensure consistency for the young people we're trying to reach?

Melissa Wong: I think that's a great question, and something that we would love if you could capture in your sticky notes. Hold that thought and write it down, please. Did I see Voice 6?

Voice 6: I think it was just a... I get agitated when I hear the phrases Hub partners, delivery organisations. What defines a Hub partner? Is that the person who is frequently, proactively involved on the steering group, on the board, because that by definition precludes a huge number of people, as does the word organisation. We've worked with a lot of individuals [unclear words 1:45:32.7] and they're magnificent, and do just as much as an NPO-type size organisation. I'd just guard against that.

Melissa Wong: Thank you, good reminder on language. Voice 5, and then Voice 4.

Voice 5: Sorry, I did just have another point. I think it's the other thing about delivery organisations. I think it might be a mistake to assume that all Hubs have a similar level of delivery partners, because there are some who have very, very few indeed, and some that have hundreds. Like I said, there's such regional variation at this point.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you. Voice 4.

Voice 4: I'm just intrigued, and I'm not expecting an answer, but the geographies might be neighbouring geographies, but our funding is based on the numbers of young people. It's picking up on what Voice 5 said. It might be that we end up a bit like with the parliamentary areas, slightly changing in order to get similar size areas which won't correlate with the local authorities we currently have, or joined-up local authorities. We might have this group of local authorities, well that one's got to now... To get the... It could be quite a complex picture, couldn't it?

Melissa Wong: It sounds like that's an important thing to think about in terms of the specifics of how the boundaries are drawn, and if you think that could create opportunities or challenges either way please do capture that on a sticky note so that we can play that back. [redacted] again.

Voice 2: Guess what? If you follow the idea of constituencies a model, and constituencies are supposedly equal numbers of people, if you divided the total population of kids into 30, each constituency would be looking after 278,000 kids.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you. Very good maths. Somebody please tell Rishi Sunak that.

Maria Turley: It's worth going back to the guiding principles as well. There's obviously a guiding principle there which is around consistency of size. I think a thing that's really useful to hear from all of you on sticky notes, because I'm going to have that tattooed on my forehead, is consistency means lots and lots of different things. In exactly the way that the three of you have just done, thinking consistency of geography means this. Consistency in terms of numbers of kids means this. Being

able to capture that and shove it on a board somewhere would be incredibly helpful for us.

Melissa Wong: Absolutely. Great. Anymore? Yes, Voice 17.

Voice 17: Just to clarify, you're purely saying that we're talking about the number, size of Hubs. We're not talking about anything to do with the way Maths Hubs work or the way they deliver what they do.

Melissa Wong: Correct.

Voice 17: We're going from very big to slightly less big.

Melissa Wong: Exactly.

Maria Turley: Best summing up ever.

[Laughter]

Melissa Wong: All right. Again, I'll give you eight minutes just to do individual reflections. Remember to use the three colours. If you're running low on colours just put your hand up, we'll try to get some to you.

[Respondents complete task 1:48:25.8 - 1:58:08.4]

Melissa Wong: All right then, everyone. Please put up your sticky notes, and gather around and we'll have a group discussion about scenario two.

[Respondents complete task 1:58:15.8 - 1:58:53.7]

Melissa Wong: I've also been told people feel hesitant putting up their dots before the group discussion, so if you want to wait until afterwards that's absolutely fine. If you've

already put up a dot and you want to change your dot after the group discussion, make sure you remove it because everyone only gets one vote.

Maria Turley: You can't not put a dot, because we will find out who you are and make you put a dot.

[Respondents complete task 1:59:21.6 - 1:59:48.5]

Melissa Wong: All right, everyone. Come closer, I don't bite. Right. Let's start by taking a look at the stickies. Again, we'll work through each of these strategic functions one by one, again remembering that there is significant overlap across these strategic functions. They don't sit in a box, unlike your dots.

Maria Turley: They do sit in a box.

Melissa Wong: They do sit in a box. The first thing that I'm noticing about scenario two is that there are fewer sticky notes. That's just something to log. Not sure what that means. We'll find out a bit more as we dig into it. Starting with partnership. I'm seeing a lot of positives, which is really great. Just to give you a flavour, I'm seeing more partnership opportunities. Healthy balance between strategic overview and regional/local knowledge. As an organisation working nationally, this would mean less relationships to manage, freeing up money and capacity. Better scale of regional understanding in both arts and education sectors. Under yellow, slightly less unwieldy. Less money spent on admin, etc.? Does allow for considered strategic partnerships. May still add a layer, which takes away from CYP. Only one risk that's been logged, and this is, I think, a risk that sits across all of the strategic functions. This person has said, same issues as bridge model, but slightly less.

[Laughter]

Maria Turley: I'm going to put that one in here as well.

Melissa Wong: I think that's a good idea. Great. What jumps out at you from what's been said? Yes, Voice 4.

Voice 4: Voice 4. I'm being a bit cynical, but I think because we had such an in-depth conversation earlier, I felt I've already said it all. I'm trying to just come up with a few key things. I'm not sure if things are less if you've got the set-up of having 40. What concerns me is, at its simplest, does the three combining imply, well, I don't want them to... Whereas the larger, we don't even know who might be an HLO in that circumstance. This becomes more personal, and you then feel done unto and you're going to have to change what you're doing. I think that's the biggest worry for this particular size.

Melissa Wong: A bit more risk around the way that the geographic mergers might happen, and how those partnerships would have to transition into new ways of working.

Voice 4: Yes. My frustration is, we ought to keep saying it's about the children and stop getting personal.

Melissa Wong: Yes, Voice 5.

Voice 5: I'm going to be gobby again. I think, following on from Voice 4's point, I think it's because we understand the specifics of the various models and the way the Hub funding is kind of baked into the business models of those organisations, and so you can kind of start to anticipate the real specifics of what would be the massive challenge. Like I say, we're not meant to be talking about that. The flipside, I think I mentioned, is that there are a lot of partner organisations that probably work

across those kind of geographies, because arts and community groups probably do work within a certain geographical circumference from their base, and maybe work across two or three counties. Again, it's a similar thing of having fewer relationships and a bit more parity, rather than having that multiple level of relationships.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you. Voice 1.

Voice 1: Yes, I just wanted to say something from the perspective of an organisation that's working nationally and has relationships with multiple Hubs. That presents a real capacity issue from our side, to be able to hold that many relationships. That means there's a hard limit to how many Music Education Hubs we can work with, and how many Hubs we can support to provide their service to more young disabled people. I was all quite positive about this one in that I know it would be very disruptive for Music Education Hubs, but just from the perspective of my organisation it would mean that we could have deeper, more meaningful relationships that would cover more geographical area.

Melissa Wong: Brilliant, thank you. Voice 8.

Voice 8: Just to add to what Voice 1 said, we work nationally as well, and certainly our experience to date of working with Hub Lead Organisations that work over several geographies already, it does work. Several of the examples are included in [unclear words 2:04:32.9] report that came out last year, and it does work from our experience. As Voice 4 says, we just need to keep going back to the young people, not our agendas. That has to be the starting point here. If it needs some heads knocking together then so be it, quite frankly.

Voice 5: Only to follow up; I'm not against disrupting. Don't tell anyone, but I'm not against disrupting the Hub structures. I think

that is probably exactly what needs to be disrupted. It's understanding the specifics of what that means and what a headache that would give all of us. I'm sure the outcomes on the other side of it would be glorious and wonderful.

Maria Turley: Disruption, but understanding what that takes?

Voice 5: Yes. We need change. Don't get me wrong, things need to change.

Melissa Wong: Thank you, everyone. I think this is a really great discussion around the short-term challenges that would come around the discussion, but also really important to keep our focus on what would this ultimately mean for children and young people, and the opportunities that they're able to access. Let's move on to schools. Quite a mixed rainbow here. Let's take a look at a few of the stickies. Schools understand this model. Could music be valued as much as maths?

[Laughter]

Melissa Wong: Next one says, good for MAT partnerships. More easily identifiable and digestible to education sector at this time. Interesting thing to keep in mind about the education context. Moving down. School structures don't reflect geographical areas anymore. How can a Hub reach every school? There was a lot of discussion around how many schools there are in the south-west. Still a very large number of schools per Hub. Challenges around tailored provision, etc. Key word is relationships. Still a large area to consider, so still more admin. Great. What jumps out at you from schools? Voice 4.

Voice 4: What concerns me is exactly as one of those was saying about the relationship with schools. We used to know all the headteachers of all the schools, but now they're part of MATs. The MAT executive head may be in a different geographical area. You might be trying to impact a particular offer or whatever you want to do, and they don't have the say-so. It's somewhere else, and they will know a different procedure. I think that adds a layer of complexity with regards schools and MATs, and I think that will impact when we talk about the 87 and the idea of teaching schools, etc., because they don't geographically work the way we're starting to talk.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you. Any other reflections on schools? Yes, Voice 10.

Voice 10: It crosses over between the partnerships and the schools. I mean, we're having a debate about structure without actually defining what young people need to give them a successful music education. Then we look at, do regions and geographies have those component parts within them? My concern is that we prescribe geography without these component parts there.

Melissa Wong: That's something really important to be keeping in mind when those geographies are prescribed, especially looking at the boundaries. Could you put that on a sticky note for me? Try and fit it into one sticky note. Voice 7?

Voice 7: I really agree with Voice 10, and that's very eloquently put actually. What Voice 4 was saying earlier about MATs not being with any prescribed geographical area, no matter if that's a big one, a small one, a middle-sized one. They don't fit, and I think all of the issues, all the things that we're talking about, are the same as the issues we talked about with the larger regional Hub but slightly less of an issue. Everything that we said was a

problem is still a problem or a challenge. We call them a challenge. Still a challenge, and all of the benefits are still the benefits. A lot of what we're saying is repetition, and I think that's also a reason perhaps that there's not so many sticky notes there.

Melissa Wong: Yes, echoing this first one here, still the same problems as bridges but slightly less. Yes.

Voice 16: Can I add to that, the issue of MATs and them not matching geographical areas now; that's only going to get worse as they get bigger and more conglomerates, and more national, and therefore we can't try and match where MATs are, because that is a moveable feast that nobody's in control of. Therefore, it would change really quickly. I think in a way, even though that was a post-it note I thought of with my group, it's a bit of a red herring isn't it, because it's a structure that nobody controls.

Melissa Wong: I think that's a really brilliant observation, and I like the term red herring. Could you elaborate on that point in a new sticky note for me? Yes, in the back.

Voice 2: We've moved from maths to MATs. We've got rid of the H, but the important thing is, in whatever configuration you look at, how successful is the current infrastructure for music education that is there? You need to have a historical perspective on geography, and you need to have thought about... If you introduce something that goes across current boundaries, what are you going to gain educationally and what could you lose?

Melissa Wong: I think that's the big question of the day! Yes, definitely. One last one. You've got it? Okay, thank you. One last one from Voice 5.

Voice 5: It's a brief one, and I've stuck it on a post-it note because I think even with this model, and even with the more local model, I think it's still got to be... There is still a level underneath which is about a community of practice within a certain community that is very local. I'm not talking about an administrative, bureaucratic level. It's, the solutions to the music education problems in that area will be solved by those teachers and those schools in that area. I see the Hubs, whichever hub role, as facilitating that. Even with this model, there's still got to be another level underneath. In a way, that would apply to all three of the options we're talking about.

Melissa Wong: It's questions about the relationship between the strategic oversight and what that means on the ground. If you could... You said you'd already captured that. Brilliant, thank you. Let's move on to inclusion. Let's see what's been said. Better opportunities for partnering with similar settings, i.e., PRUs/SEND. Current model may be one kind of setting per area. That's interesting. I'm going to park that.

[Laughter]

Maria Turley: Shall I see if I can...

Melissa Wong: Yes. Good to be able to share practice over a wider area as we do currently.

Maria Turley: It's a manageable size of HLO network enabling good practice to be shared.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. I think there's an emergent theme around practice-sharing here. As size of Hub decreases, does understanding of inclusion decrease? Could be better than scenario one because of closer awareness of school/CYP level, but larger budgets to

manage equipment and expertise. Right. Any reflections on what's been said under inclusion?

[Unclear phrase 2:12:36.5]

Melissa Wong: Voice 7.

Voice 7: Just to say that we currently have an EDI strategy, a south-west EDI strategy, that all of the Hubs have contributed to and written. That's not our strategy for our local patch, because we have to go away and shape that. It was the example again of this idea that it is possible to share practice and to share experience without putting that under a lead organisation. I think these are the kinds of nuances in terms of sharing of practice that aren't necessarily known or recognised. We also have a south coast alliance of Hubs that is writing, and is fundraising, and creating opportunities and inclusion opportunities. I think there's lots of things there that are shared that perhaps don't impact as much, although inclusion rightly is the thread throughout, doesn't impact as much on the size of what a Hub will be as something like the schools, where that relationship is key. On taking on another area, our first job was to meet with every school. It was about relationships, and we had to be funded extra money to do that, and that's that level of greater area, greater depth of relationship needed.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. It's really interesting to hear about things that are already happening across Hubs in terms of collaboration on a regional level. Maybe when you're thinking about the scenarios the thing to ask is, which type of structure would amplify what's already happening, or would support and give more profile to what's already happening? Something to think about. Yes.

Voice 10: I ask this question because I genuinely don't know the answer. Whose responsibility is it for ensuring that schools implement the NPME?

Melissa Wong: That's a good question.

[Unknown 2:14:40.5]: It is a good question. It's non-statutory.

[Unknown 2:14:42.3]: It's non-statutory, so no one.

[Unknown 2:14:45.2]: Schools' development plans are owned by schools.

Melissa Wong: School music development plans are owned by schools.

[Unknown 2:14:52.4]: When you think about as we shrink and have local organisations, could we be in a situation where some local schools say, 'Don't do anything like that, it's not relevant to us'?

[Agreement]

Melissa Wong: It sounds like what you're saying is that is a risk, especially if there are more schools that fall within one Hub. That's something to be taking into consideration in terms of the size of the geographic areas that they'll cover and how many schools will fall within that. Can we try to capture that on a sticky note? Great.

[Unknown 2:15:24.1]: As we've got someone from DfE here, could we make it statutory?

[Laughter]

Voice 3: Really, though, they're not legally required to teach music at all if they're not a maintained school. It's an amazing amount of activity that schools do simply because we [unclear words 2:15:42.5]. You would get some MAT leaders who might declare that no music's going to go on in their schools. I think it would be a risky decision, because Ofsted would need to pass judgement over whether they're supporting their children's cultural development, which is a statutory responsibility. In the mix, I expect you're right. I think, from a policy point of view, generally speaking if you just make something statutory it doesn't mean it works well. It means something goes on, but it still could be awful! That's the other dimension to this. The statutory point's been well made, so I appreciate it.

Melissa Wong: For the record, that was Voice 3.

Maria Turley: I think the language in the plan is worth referring back to. This is the point where I reveal that I've read the National Plan three million times now, so I can remember the lot of it. Essentially, it is worth coming back to that. School music development plans are owned by schools. The language is around the responsibility for Music Hubs to proactively be reaching out to work with schools to develop their school music development plans, which would capture what it is that the Hub and the school do together to support music in schools. That's the general overarching language which sits around that piece of work, just in case it's helpful. I think I've got that basically right.

Melissa Wong: Great. Thank you, Voice 3. Thank you, Maria. Let's move on to talking about progression and musical development. Quite divided here. Not much in the middle, so that's interesting. On the greens, more progression opportunities across large area. Easier to manage opportunities than larger model, but provides greater... Easier to manage opportunities than larger

model. Provides greater diversity of opportunity than current. More opportunities...

Maria Turley: I like how you were checking it went on the back or not.

Melissa Wong: More opportunities for musical development, potentially, in a wider range of genres. Interesting. Under the pinks, are there FE and HE opps at this scale? Are there opportunities for work and employment in music at this level? This is the point. Does it work with Maths Hubs? I know it doesn't help. Still very large geographies. Local and virtual music-making opportunities needed. We're hearing things about more progression opportunities being available, but some questions about work and employment opportunities. Also, interesting comments about the diversity of opportunities. I think that links to the point around inclusion as well. Voice 4.

Voice 4: I come back to, we already do this. If someone or an organisation is coming to the south-west, we'll talk to each other and say, 'Can you fit them in?' We already do that. I can see that's what's being referred to there, that you then get that breadth. It's not just about what's already in your location. Again, I think perhaps just a lot of the stuff hasn't necessarily been shared. We're not good at blowing our own trumpets, are we, at sharing what we're already doing. At what point does it suddenly go, yes, that's so worthwhile, it's worth moving on to this.

Melissa Wong: Great comment. Voice 2.

Voice 2: What's missing in all of this is an assessment of how each of these scenarios and each of these five areas can guarantee high quality. We haven't said, we haven't mentioned,

quality at all yet. High quality appears in three of the five...
Whatever they're called. How does each model ensure quality?

Melissa Wong: What do we mean by that?

Voice 2: Well, I don't want to get into that, because that's something even more complex, which we should understand but we don't. We don't understand it on a school level, and we don't necessarily understand it at Hub or Lead Organisation level. I don't think anybody really has a route through that says, this is quality.

Melissa Wong: We're getting into some quite complex nitty-gritty of what we mean by quality within some of these strategic functions. I'm going to just put that to the side and just try to get a range of other reflections.

Voice 13: My point was just about accountability, and actually in all of these models I think the devil in the detail of how does a larger Hub Lead Organisation hold to account the other delivery partners within a larger area? That's really for me one of the key questions about whether it will be successful or not.

Melissa Wong: Brilliant, thank you. Could you write a post-it note about accountability for us, please? Last comment from Voice 7.

Voice 7: I'm just going to call in geography again as we did in the pervious round. Even if you've got a smaller geographical area than a region, you've still got children who can't or won't - there is a can't as well - travel to a wider variety of music in a wider geographical area.

Melissa Wong: There is a question for Hubs if they're working in larger geographic areas around how they can ensure that there continue to be local opportunities.

Voice 7: It has to be local, and I would call into question areas like the Isle of Wight, where they can't travel off the island. Well, they can, but it takes hours and it's very expensive, to go to a regional opportunity. They're not going to do that. A few might if they get funded, but it's not... There is a very clear local need within the geography.

Melissa Wong: How can we ensure continued provision of opportunities responsive to local needs within larger geographic areas? Last one. Sustainability. Again, just a few post-it notes here. I'll pick out a few. More opportunity to access corporate investment. Interesting, love to hear more about that. Less confusion over competition and duplication in funding applications. Size could enable HLOs to access both national and regional funding. Possible economies of scale. How far does everyone travel? We've already talked quite a bit about that, so let's put that one to the side. Noticing a lot of these comments are around access to funding.

[Unknown 2:22:44.6]: Sorry, could I just [unclear words 2:22:45.6]? I'm not sure how we're answering these. Are we comparing this with the last one we did, or comparing with where we are now when you say more or less? I'm not sure what that's linking to, sorry.

Melissa Wong: Great question. Would anyone who wrote any of those stickies like to...

[Unknown 2:23:00.4]: The last one. Sorry, I was just saying I wrote one.

Melissa Wong: It's in comparison to the current.

Voice 1: I wrote all of the dosh ones, which probably says more about where my brain has been for the last three months than

anything else. Just the potential to put in large strategic funding applications across broader areas. There's less potential for overlap and complication. If you've got three Hubs that are all putting in funding applications to the same funder, and they're very similar, then that sets up competition and makes it less likely that any of them are going to get it. There was something I put down about if you've got larger areas, you've got more potential for there to be rural and urban areas within that, and so therefore you have more opportunity to start accessing corporates that might be within urban areas that are not in rural areas. It just opens up more opportunity to get more investment from more...

Melissa Wong: Thank you. Voice 8.

Voice 8: I'd just support what Voice 1's saying. I think that from our experience, being able to raise money both nationally and locally and regionally is a really good combination, and you can be more creative. You can really find opportunities by having that range of different engagements that you might not be able to do if you're too small or too large. In this sense, I think it's quite a good point. Also, applying for funding together really helps your thinking and your strategy. It actually has a knock-on effect to how you run your organisation too, so there are other advantages beyond that.

Melissa Wong: Brilliant. I like that bit about sharing thinking and other advantages in terms of that strategic dialogue that can happen. Could you put that on a sticky note for us, please? Thank you. Great. A brilliant discussion on scenario two. Lots of general thoughts that have been added to the board as well, I'm sure reflecting our discussion. Maria's been doing a great job capturing that. Before you take your seats, can I ask you, if you haven't already, to grab a dot and tell us how you would rate the scenario? If you've already put up a dot and you've

changed your mind after our discussion, please just remove your previous dot before you put up a new one.

[Respondents complete task 2:25:22.5 - 2:26:16.1]

Melissa Wong: Please grab a seat, and we'll take a look at scenario three together. Scenario three is what we're calling the locally nuanced option. This scenario is taken from Teaching School Hubs, which some of you might be familiar with. There's a bit of detail about what Teaching School Hubs are if you're interested, but the main thing that you need to know is, this scenario is looking at approximately 87 Hubs across the country. By way of comparison, there are currently 118. This would be scaling down to approximately three quarters of what we have now. The other thing to keep in mind is, under the DfE's guiding principles they've said that there won't be any single [unclear words 2:27:06.5], so essentially we're not prescribing any particular number of local authorities that might belong to this locally nuanced option, but expect that it will be at least two if that's helpful. Are there questions of clarification about scenario three? Yes.

Voice 11: It's just an observation, really, that that principle seems to me about breaking the linkage between the political cycle and the local authority and the development of music education. [Unclear words 2:27:39.8] I just wondered how much that's out there being said, because why not let one local authority do it? Why is that principle there?

Melissa Wong: I'll refer that question to DfE or Arts Council. One of the...

Voice 3: It's not the objective to break that local political link at all. I absolutely take the point that it would do that de facto, where you have Music Hub which is effectively the music

service. [Unclear words 2:28:19.4] quite a lot of local authority music services have spun out, as many of you all know, and indeed it's a [unclear words 2:28:28.3] service for possibly more independent from the local authority in that [unclear words 2:28:35.3] still have the local political [unclear word 2:28:39.2]. It is something to be remarked upon, but not as often as you might think. [Someone else] made that point to me a few moments ago, but it's not quite as loud as one might expect.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. Yes, I'm not sure who was first.

Voice 6: Just an observation also on that. Looking at some of the big, the Kents, Hertfordshire, Essex, all of those, if there is also a desire for areas to be roughly similar, then that almost defines this process itself. If, for example, Kent...

[Unknown 2:29:15.9]: Because it's a large area.

Voice 6: If you're looking at Kent as an example, mainly because of the sea, that puts it next door to East Sussex and London. If you're looking at a size that is East Sussex and Kent, and the rest of the country would be a similar size, that decides this process.

Voice 3: Yes, you're right. There is a tension between those two elements which would need to be worked through.

[Unknown 2:29:47.1]: I suppose, just to follow on from what we're talking about, I suppose it's not to say that we're asking the wrong questions, but it's these two points that I think make the biggest difference is, the models of Hub Lead Organisations now that are music services, that effectively the Hub funding is propping up what otherwise would be a traded service offer without a subsidy, and we know that there are some that are like that. Also, this issue of inclusion. For me, it's like I find it almost impossible to put anything in the box about inclusion,

because you just know that each individual Hub Lead Organisation has a very different perception of what musical inclusion means, its significance, its importance, how we're going to change young people's lives through music. There's such discrepancy nationally that I feel like those two questions would be more fruitful to interrogate, but that's not what we're being asked. It's just about size. It just doesn't feel like we're going to get to that place by only talking about size. There we go, that's more of an observation.

Melissa Wong: I agree that there are a lot more questions that need to be dug into, and I think those will happen beyond the scope of these focus groups. Obviously, there's a lot still to be decided. This is just a very early stage conversation about what Music Hubs will look like in the future, focusing specifically on this question around geographies, but I think the point is well taken. Voice 4.

Voice 4: I think it's going to be interesting in focus groups across the country if you're saying 87, because there are quite a few that are larger groups than that already. That's going to impact on the answers that they give. How are you going to get past that?

Melissa Wong: I think this is why we're speaking to so many different people across the country, and Arts Council I know have really taken an effort to ensure the diversity of different types of Hubs, of different other stakeholders that are represented in this room, is we do want to hear from people who are working in Hubs of all different sizes to understand what their reflections on these different models would be.

Voice 7: My apologies if you've just answered this and I zoned out slightly there for a second. A lot of the Teaching Schools Hubs carve out larger counties into separate bits. Is there an

inclination for looking at this particular model that we are looking at carved out areas of larger counties?

Melissa Wong: I think that's a really good question, and I think that if that's something that strikes you as a concern or a challenge, that would be really helpful to capture in your stickies so that Arts Council and DfE can be taking that into account in how the geographies are prescribed. I think I saw a hand over here.

Voice 16: It's just an aside, really, that I think we haven't mentioned, and I wonder whether it's just to think about this or factor in, is one of the key things about... I was involved with the foundation of the first Music Hub out of a music service in Cornwall, is the music service had all the instruments, and all those instruments now have been dispersed across different Hubs. Who owns them? That actually is a key factor, access. How do kids get access to an instrument? How are they loaned? That is a major factor that just hasn't come up, so I just put that out there.

Melissa Wong: That's a really good point. How are resources allocated? How are they distributed? It would be great to capture your reflections on that, so please do.
Voice 2.

Voice 2: When I looked at the 11 Teaching Hubs that there are in the south-west, I began to think about quality of leadership, which I think is an important factor. One of these Teaching Hubs, one was outstanding and it's now requiring improvement. Quality of leadership of the new organisations is important. Equally, one of the Teaching Schools has not been Ofsted-ed since November 2007, so that comes back then to the challenge of leadership that a new Hub would face, and also the assessment of the quality of a new Hub that was going

beyond a local authority. I'm just raising the question of how that would be looked at.

Melissa Wong: I'm really impressed with how much research has gone into this. You're bringing so much knowledge into this, Voice 2. It feels like we're moving into a space where we're talking more about individual reflections than clarifications now. Unless there are any more clarification questions, I'm going to ask you now to... One more clarification.

[Unknown 2:34:31.0]: Just one more practical, because I haven't a clue. How many local authorities are there in England?

[Over speaking 2:34:36.3]

Melissa Wong: One hundred and fifty two. Great. Let's just take a few minutes now to individual reflections, and put them up on the boards when you're ready.

[Respondents complete task 2:34:52.3 - 2:38:22.7]

[End of Transcript]

South West Focus Group Recording 2 of 2

January 2023 CL - Group - 41 Mins

[Mixed Respondents]

[Other comments: Some Respondents were not always picked up clearly by the microphone, resulting in some lost and unclear speech. Over speaking also occasionally obscured speech. Transcript lightly edited to clear speech only.]

Melissa Wong: All right everyone, gather around please. Hi everyone, can we please come around the boards and have a group discussion? We're almost there. Everyone in the back, if you could come closer. It looks like there's lots of interesting conversations, I would love if you could share them with everyone else as well. Right, everyone, thank you so much. I appreciate this is a long session and you've done a really great job of staying focused and contributing throughout. Just want to remind everyone, this is the last scenario we're going to be talking through as a group. There are some people who we've heard a lot from already, which is fantastic. Love that you're all chipping in. I also want to make sure that we're hearing from as wide a range of people as possible. If you've already said a lot, challenge yourself to create space for others to be heard. If you haven't said very much yet, challenge yourself to speak up and make yourself heard. All right?

Working through them one by one, first thing I notice is there are fewer sticky notes than for the previous ones! I'm sensing you're all getting a little bit tired, which is absolutely understandable. What we're going to do is try to talk things through as a group. Maria is going to be capturing any general thoughts. There will be a record,

even though there aren't as many sticky notes directly from you. Starting with partnerships, a read of what's been said. Partnerships would be more relevant to area. Smaller, more agile partnerships, responding to local need. Strategy can be co-created, and therefore more powerful. Easy to develop necessary relationships to ensure consistency of application of strategy. On the yellows, delivery partners and networking with many HLOs, lots of admin for an underfunded sector. Is this the least bad option, which would minimise upheaval? Some concerns around the transition. Under pinks, increase of MATs will result in CEO-led vision of music ed [sic]. Not sure what that means. If you could explain, that would be great. Massive competition for local funding. Should avoid single-lead hubs running multiple regions, as can happen with teaching schools.

Right. What are the things that are jumping out at you from this board? The way that partnerships develop is incredibly interesting. The stuff about responding to local need. The level of contribution that different types of organisations can make. This bit about delivery partners is interesting, so some challenges as well. Barry has already talked a bit about the challenges of working with many hubs. Are there any community music organisations who would also like to chip in about their experiences?

Voice 9: Yes, I think, from my perspective, we wouldn't - growth is an interesting thing. For some organisations, they only work in a small region. There might be some pressure if there's a, if a Music Hub works across a larger area, there might be some pressure to extend reach, which might be beyond some organisations. Then there's some interesting similarity between some of the work that goes on around consortium development and different sizes of organisations, and how if you've got this model, it probably allows for much more organisations who are

individuals to be heard a bit more by their lead organisation. If you go for a different model, it's important to make sure those more individual voices don't get lost, so it's how do their voices get amplified within, when there's much bigger, more able, larger-reach organisations there?

Melissa Wong: Yes, that's a really interesting point, thank you. Anyone else who wants to chip in on that front? All right. Let's move on to schools then. What are we saying? Delivery reflects need. Closer, more individual relationship to hub lead. Better local collaboration at micro local level. Locality, communities of practice. Yellows. This model still needs time and space to develop, but would be quicker to embed. Again, something about the transition. Who knows best, a MAT music director or an HLO? Why should they collaborate? Interesting. What's jumping out at you from the schools board?

Voice 11: The similarity between the size of MAT, and the number of MATs, and what we're talking about as a model seems to be jumping out, and whether that's good or bad.

Melissa Wong: What are the upsides and what are the downsides.

Voice 11: I didn't write any of these actually. All of mine went on general now because it feels easier, but I found them really interesting. I think that point about risk of CEO-led is really interesting. I'd like to hear more about it. That idea that maybe things become a bit more like, 'No, do you know what? We're not doing that, we're doing this, across 20 schools.' Then we say, 'Okay, well, we'll park that 20 schools because they don't want to work with us.' That feels like a big element of what - and we see it already with MATs, where an executive head makes a decision to do this kind of music education.

Melissa Wong: When the decisions are made, at that level, what's the risk around the relationships?

Voice 11: Yes.

Voice 17: I wrote the one about the vision of CEO of the MAT. That is becoming my experience, that they will make a decision about their MAT. It's not that they're not delivering music education, they're delivering music education in their image if you like.

[0:06:35.9] Unknown: Yes, totally, exactly.

Voice 17: That may or may not be what the kids need, want, in order to achieve the National Plan, fundamentally.

Voice 11: Just to add to that, I think the whole, the National Plan being, mentioning musical interest, as much as it talks about talent, that, I do really worry when you go to CEOs of MATs because I'm not sure they're driven by young people's needs, wants, sorry, wants and interests. I think they're very much driven by 'results'.

Melissa Wong: There's something interesting around what they would be asked to prioritise and focus on, and the way that success is measured and how that changes the focus. I also just want to flag, it's my understanding that there aren't any schools in the room. Is that correct? That's just something to remember in terms of the conversation we're having today. I wonder what schools would be saying in response to some of these comments that we're having, especially those who lead MATs. Right, let's move on to inclusion. I'll read out all three. Closer link between strategic decisions and on-the-ground delivery. Local solutions to local issues. If understanding of inclusion is

strong, equals more inclusive offer. A need to develop wider partnerships between hubs, to share practice.

It sounds like the strengths of this model are around the local understanding and awareness, and the localness [sic] of the solutions. Then there's this challenge around if we're having still a fairly high number of hubs, what does that mean in terms of knowledge exchange between them? Is that a fair summary of...? Anything else to add to that?

Voice 5: I think I put it on a general Post-it note that it's almost a more specific directive around musical inclusion I think would help solve that. I still think the interpretation of what that is is massively different, literally depending on who's in charge. Again, this comes down to people and their musical background. I really think that if you have no lived experience of ever being challenged to access these offers, you have no earthly idea what the problem is. You simply can't see the problem that needs solving, and that's a real problem. I'll just add that I think many primary school teachers feel the same way. They've been conditioned that music education is a very elitist, exclusive thing, and that they aren't able to teach it because of the way our sector has evolved.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you. Voice 4.

Voice 4: Just to continue with that, again, just something to flag up when you go to the focus groups because inevitably, these people were successful in music, so you just need to keep balancing that out. That's why I think it would be really useful to ensure you have got maybe some school representation, of people who felt a failure, for whatever reason, formerly. Inevitably, this cohort is people that have been successful or...

[0:09:42.1] Unknown: It's true, though I'd like to say, no GCSEs, don't read music, no formal background. Hi.

[0:09:45.8] Unknown: Well done.

[0:09:46.7] Unknown: I should say as well, we do have schools at the other focus groups and we did have schools at this one, but we had some drop-outs, which included the schools. We are hearing school and MAT voices. In other focus groups.

[0:09:58.5] Unknown: Without getting too deep, I think we need to be discussing what on earth do we mean by music education?

[0:10:04.3] Unknown: That's another question.

Melissa Wong: Oh dear, okay. This is a conversation for another day. Voice 13, and then Voice 1.

Voice 13: Just on that point around inclusion, actually that, in this model, where they were talking more about co-creation, sharing of power, I think that's where you get the understanding, that lived experience coming in to being able to impact on the leadership and what activities actually take place.

Melissa Wong: There's an interesting relationship between how partnerships would work in this scenario and what inclusion would look like, potentially.

Voice 1: I'm going to try and work out what I've been thinking while I'm talking, which is possibly a risky strategy. Yes, I think there's something about the relationship between hub lead and partner organisations that is playing out here. If you've just got one organisation that's the hub lead, and they provide everything, how good is that as a model? Now, there was another thought here around the assumption that you lose that local knowledge if you're not boots-on-the-ground delivering it, and if you're a bigger, you're part of a bigger area and a bigger

organisation. I think you only lose that in the way, if you lead in such a way that you don't listen anymore. I think we started by saying that we're not going to, however this is carved up, we're not going to lose organisations that are delivering. This is about providing opportunity to have more organisations within a larger area, contributing more broadly. Yes, I think you only lose out if you don't listen. It's very much about the leadership style of a lead organisation, and how much they commit to the partnership model of delivery. Don't know if that made sense.

Melissa Wong: Yes, absolutely.

Voice 11: Yes, just to add on to that, I think it starts with listening to young people as well and the youth voice, which has been massively - if I could talk about the plan quickly, the 270-or-so young people who fed into that, that's a very interesting number. Also, something I feel like we haven't said yet is that we all prioritise. We're being asked, and rightly so, to make sure every child gets an excellent quality education. I agree with that, but with limited public funds, you will prioritise. That's the starting point. You obviously strategise to reach everyone. My concern is, again, something that, it's a sort of elephant in the room, I just have this thing of how you balance every child matters with equity, diversity, and inclusion. Inclusion, I always think of EDI, not just I. Equity, diversity, inclusion starts with really looking at we have limited funds, where is it going to go? Not we're going to reach 450 schools. Those 450 schools, we might touch them, but it might reach eight per cent of kids, who do what? We don't know.

That really worries me going into this new National Plan. I think it's a really exciting plan and it sings awfully to our strategy and our plan, which is great, but it's how you move from that strategic, top-line, brilliant idea that everyone deserves the best in the world - and I agree with that - and then say, but we've got £79 million to do it with, go. You will prioritise. The question

then is what does inclusion look like? For me, it's E, D, and I. Before we finish, I guess I just want to say, I think this has been a really wonderful thing, but EDI and the people in this room, I wondered if that was worth saying.

Melissa Wong: Yes, thank you for that. It is worth reflecting on who's in this room, who is able to input into this process, and what that means in terms of EDI. One final flipchart to look at, and then I do want to - there's a lot under general thoughts, so let's take a look at that as well. The comments on sustainability. Interesting. The pros. Small enough to be relevant. Approachable. Relationship/client not transaction/customer. The risks. Less value for money i.e. economies of scale. Is there anything else that people would like to add on sustainability? Voice 4.

Voice 4: I may be interpreting it wrongly, but having read through what it says, that, much as we're already doing a lot of that stuff, it does seem like you need to buy in an expert to help you address all of that, when sustainability is written the way it is. Rather than, perhaps, the way I think, from an educational perspective, is can I carry on doing this? If I set it up, how is it going to keep going? Whereas sustainability, at the moment is, appears to be linked with the green issues and what everyone has got to do. I think that possibly needs a little bit of picking apart. Again, what we can prioritise with that, actually, realistically.

Voice 6: It's come up a couple of times, that word economies of scale, and I think, for me, it's one of the most misused concepts in the world. I think economies of scale aren't achieved by smallness or by bigness, it's about getting it just right. You become too big, you add layers. You become too small, you lose economy, in a genuine sense. I think it is an important concept. It's certainly a concept I've been making a lot of

progress with over the last year. There is a sweet spot, I think, size-wise. I'm not saying what that is because I don't know, and that's different to everybody. I think it's not getting into that rabbit trap of economies of scale means big. Actually, it does to an extent, and then it becomes negative.

Melissa Wong: Thank you, good reminder for us all.

Maria Turley: Economies of scale isn't about size, it's about appropriateness.

[0:15:46.9] Unknown: Yes, smartness.

[0:15:48.0] Unknown: It's about, I guess it is about size, but there is a sweet spot of size. It doesn't just expand, expand, expand, then you start to bell-curve, I guess.

Voice 16: That links to what we put, is like this is the least bad option. It's not the most, the best option, but it's the least, if you see what I mean, in terms of economies of scale. Maybe it's not a ringing endorsement, but if there's three options on the table, perhaps...

Melissa Wong: This is moving us quite nicely into our final reflection exercise, where I'm going to ask you to reflect on your individual preferences amongst the three. Just one final thing before we do that. Maria, is there anything else that's come out under general thoughts that we haven't already talked about?

Maria Turley: I'm ignoring all of that because that's all things you've said. Model size, I think we've talked about that. Something here about workforce, that one's quite interesting. More chances to develop individual teacher knowledge and understanding. Music education is elitist and exclusive. National directive on inclusion needed. We

have talked about that. The workforce point is a very interesting one. Possibility that little may change, as not enough - is that adjustment?

[0:17:04.5] Unknown: Adjustment.

Maria Turley: ...to the hub landscape to engender change. That's an interesting point. It's the most status-quo option is, I think, how I'm interpreting that. Is this the closest - two things remaining - saying, so very similar point. Does this model mean that bigger counties will be carved up? Which is a thing that's, something that's come up a few times. Too similar to what exists, so that's another status-quo point. Doesn't seem to be achievable to avoid single LA hubs. Have I read that out right, whoever wrote that? I'm sorry - I like Post-it notes that start with I'm sorry - but - and then I can't read the rest. I'm sorry, but...

[0:17:54.2] Unknown: ...I think local authority HLOs are best.

Maria Turley: Who wrote, 'I'm sorry, but', at the top of their Post-it note? What does it say?

[0:18:04.9] Unknown: I'm sorry, but I think single local authority hubs are best.

Maria Turley: Thank you very much, got it, right. Messy borders and boundaries, interesting point. Singular LA-run hubs enough. Someone has said it doesn't go far enough. There you go.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you so much. Great summary. One final thing to do on scenario three before you all take your seats, is to just pick a dot and tell us how would you rate the scenario on a scale of one to five? Sorry?

[0:18:35.4] Unknown: Did you do progression?

Melissa Wong: Did we?

[0:18:38.2] Unknown: I don't think we did.

Melissa Wong: Did we miss progression?

[0:18:40.3] Unknown: I think you missed progression, but I...

[0:18:41.6] Unknown: You missed progression out.

Melissa Wong: I'm so sorry.

[0:18:42.1] Unknown: I was just going to have a look at it because I don't...

Melissa Wong: Okay, so very quick read out of progression. Progression and development limited to local or national. No mid-ground regional opportunities. Does any of this achieve the aims of national versus local? Career pathways. Can every CYP be included if the available budget is smaller? Less opportunity for progression unless hubs work together. No greens.

[0:19:08.6] Unknown: Very true.

Melissa Wong: That's a whirlwind tour of progression. Right, so please put a dot, to tell us how you would rate this one, on a scale of one to five. We are going to go a few minutes over, but just, I think about five, ten minutes. Is there anyone that needs to rush off immediately at 12:30? Okay, great, thank you so much. I promise I won't keep you more than an extra ten minutes. Right, so grab your seats. Thank you. We're just going to do some final reflection on the discussion that we've had today, having worked

through these three different scenarios. I've got two questions for you to reflect on. Again, we're going to do this individually, and put your sticky notes up on the flipcharts, just at the end, over there. The two questions are, overall, which is your most preferred scenario and why? Going to ask you to take one sticky note and write a brief, one or two sentence summary of your rationale, and to stick it up under scenario one, two, or three. If you had to pick from amongst the three.

[0:20:35.6] Unknown: We can't do none of the above?

Melissa Wong: I think the reality is that Music Hubs are changing and the number of them, the way that their geographies are prescribed is going to change. It may be that your preference is none of the above, but ultimately, something is going to happen, and this is an opportunity to input on what your preference is. To choose if you can't have your ideal option, what would be your second most preferred option?

Voice 2: Can I just say that none of the above is a valid response because there are many other structures that could have been considered. You could have considered or we could have considered LEPs, we could have considered other economic partnerships. There are a whole myriad of other things that are out there.

Melissa Wong: That's a great point.

Voice 2: We have limited the discussion, rightly so, I understand why, but none of the above is a valid option given the weight of discussion we've had today. I know people think that change, that things need to change. Yes, they need to change, but what needs to happen, in my opinion, is a much greater challenge and support on a national level for those hub lead organisations

that are currently in existence. There's great work that's going on, and it would seem that we are denying the level of great work that is going on at a structural level, as well as at a delivery level.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. I think, yes, none of the above is a valid option. What I would suggest is try to pick which of the three is closest to your preference and say, 'I would prefer scenario two, but adjusted in this way', or, 'I would prefer scenario three, but with these changes.' Right, Voice 4.

Voice 4: I was just going to say if we want to reduce them, it could be that actually the question is who is looking at wanting to combine? Some might well stay individual, and some might want support and help to combine in some way, which would, therefore, then reduce the number of hubs.

Melissa Wong: I think that's also a great point, which leads very well into the second reflection question. Is there anything else that should be taken into consideration in making the decision about prescribed geographies? Voice 2, Voice 4, you both made some excellent observations. If you could put them on a Post-it, and stick them under anything else... Those are the two questions, what's your preferred scenario, and is there anything else? Did I see a hand on this side?

Voice 11: I think I'm just responding to Voice 2 a bit, which is that I think there is some great work going on, but I'm really concerned that, for the last however long, we've been doing something that works for a few, and what we need, I'd love to think a baby step would mean we'd work with more better. I do think it's time for wholesale change, but I don't know what that looks like. I think you've got to ask yourself a question after a while, if you keep repeating the same thing, and you're getting

similar results, not massively different, then is it, has it got, have we got to go, got to change this? A change is better than a baby step. I don't know the answer, but that's where I'm putting my flag now if you know what I mean.

[0:23:56.5] Unknown: Got to change the right thing.

Voice 2: Need to change the right thing.

[0:24:00.4] Unknown: You've got to change the right thing.

Voice 2: You've got to change the right thing, but we've been trying to baby-step changing the right thing, it feels like. I just, I think the structure is a problem. I think that change, it does have to change. I think the structure is a problem.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. I really like that, I really like the way that you're talking about how change is necessary. Maybe there's something about that to capture if change is necessary, but this is what needs to be taken into account in moving towards that. Right. Final...

[0:24:35.7] Unknown: I want to say I agree with what Voice 11 is saying, and there could be greater change if we had greater long-term funding. For the bulk of the last ten years, we've had single, little, two-year funding. Well, how do you [unclear words 0:24:51.8]? It's very, very difficult to develop strategically because they've had to think short-term. Equally, I know we're in an economically-challenged area. The basic funding level has not increased, and that is also something that is a problem. That isn't going to change because we are where we are, in the economic situation, but that's also a factor that hinders change.

Melissa Wong: Yes, all really brilliant observations. I'd love if we could capture those and put them up on the board.

Voice 5: I suppose, similarly, it's a bit like Voice 4's point of another option is about the hubs who have natural synergy and were already moving towards, taking that into consideration, due to - and again, that's partly through personnel and personalities and skill sets. There's so many factors here. I think the other thing it's about almost a rurality. I've started working in say Leicestershire, and they're miles away from Dorset. Finding people that have common goals. I wouldn't [unclear words 0:26:00.0] in a hub that was all about rural challenges, and that could be working with Lincolnshire. It's about what are we sharing and why and how? It all comes down to geography isn't the most important factor, but there we go. Yes.

Melissa Wong: It sounds like there's a Post-it there around when we're prescribing geographies, this is who you need to be talking to in setting those boundaries. Maybe another Post-it around how can you find ways for people in different geographic areas to collaborate within our common issues? Go on, Voice 7.

Voice 7: I'm not quite sure how to phrase this one, just going to get it out. I asked at the beginning about what we were being asked to report on. What it was the lead organisation was going to have to do - I've now lost my train of thought completely. That's really important in terms of the make-up of what a hub looks like. It also impedes progress and change because of how we're asked to report or what we're asked to report on. The idea of, that Voice 2 just said, about holding more support for hub leads, whoever they're going to be, I'd just like to throw in the idea about what we're being asked to talk about or how that's being captured, by whom is that accountability happening? It feels like there could be some regional work here, but under the guise of regional advisors, who would be holding hub leads to account. That doesn't add the regional loop into the regional map, but it puts a more regional focus on accountability. Most importantly, that those people have an

understanding of music education, which will enable us to actually talk to whoever that lead hub organisation is, to actually unpick that strategy and challenge their strategy. That will give greater impact for change.

Hannah Fouracre: The Arts Council and DfE are currently working together on understanding, developing a plan for evaluation and data, moving forwards, for the new programme. Many of the issues that we've talked about today, apart from geography, that people have questions around accountability and governance and leadership and inclusion, those we're drawing from the National Plan to develop the guidance for applicants, which will make it very clear what the expectations are for those moving forwards. I also wanted to say what we are having to do when developing the investment programme, is making sure that we're creating a programme that is completely fair for any organisation that would like to make an application to lead a Music Hub, and not thinking about what the successes are and what we can build on from the last ten years of hubs. Making sure that we're not designing something that only builds on what existing hubs are like and what their geographies are and partnerships, conversations that they might be having. We have to make sure it's fair for everybody to throw their hat in the ring.

Melissa Wong: Can everyone get their Post-its up under their most preferred scenario and anything else?

[Long pause]

Melissa Wong: I'm noticing, it looks like there's one person who hasn't yet had a chance to put up a dot for scenario three, so please do that as well when you come up here.

Someone has been very naughty and put their dot on the line.

[0:30:32.0] Unknown: Is someone rebelling, Melissa?

Melissa Wong: If you want to edge your dot... Right, let's do the scores on the doors of your most preferred scenarios. I don't think we have one for everyone yet. Is there anyone who hasn't put up their sticky note? Feel free to gather over, it's really nice to have everyone closer by, so I don't have to shout. Okay. Let's take a look at your most preferred scenario from amongst the three. It looks like there's, it's interesting to see that everyone preferred, every scenario had at least some people who preferred that over the others, so we're not ruling anything out entirely. Just starting from the top, bridge organisations, we've got two people who prefer that. Hub needs to reflect common goals to address local challenges. Maybe fewer larger regional hubs would allow for greater local autonomy, cut out the middle man. Other comment says, none of the options, but radical change is required. Why aren't we looking at what is required for a high-quality music education, then work out geographies that provide this? Someone's really challenging the exercise we've done today, but still prefers - so this really belongs here, doesn't it.

Scenario two. This looks like a half, I think, so just to note that. Somebody has said, shake up, therefore inclusion, but also a question mark. This one says if it has to be one of these, would be music hub model. If breaking away from local authority boundaries and politics, make sure the change properly does this, not make local/regional politics more difficult. Providing some efficiencies, but making sure we don't lose what has worked so well already.

Change is needed. This is the best balance between strategic functions and...

[0:33:18.7] Unknown: I think it said local/regional knowledge.

Melissa Wong: ...local/regional knowledge - thank you. Let's see what this half note says. Between options two and three, I think there should be 60-ish hubs because it balances the need to increase partnerships, consistency, and opportunities, with the need to maintain local knowledge, and to avoid too much bureaucracy. Right, so something in between then. Finally, the preference for around, it says 78, but I think it's actually 87. Scenario three because least upheaval, but does changing the model really affect change of outcomes? Ability to co-create. This will have the least impact on provision for CYP over the past few years - next few years, presumably? We're looking at what's happening going forward. Balance because of change versus disruption. It seems like a lot of the reasons for preferring scenario three is just thinking about the transition and what that, things will look like in the short term, and ensuring that nothing is lost for children and young people.

Really great spread, really interesting to see your rationales for your preferences. Under anything else, not going to read out every one, but just a sample of what's been said. Listen to existing HLOs about what geographical combinations that will work best for their CYP. Ensuring that the boundaries aren't drawn in isolation from conversations with those who are delivering currently. Leadership style, collaboration, consortium/co-creation/collaborative leadership. The importance of leadership. Also inclusion is number one factor. Clear directive to DfE/Arts Council, this is a distraction. The debate should be about content and delivery of the plan.

[0:35:27.3] Unknown: ...rather than talking about structures.

Melissa Wong: Okay, all right. Challenging the focus of what's, the focus of this process. Somebody has said demography, not geography. I assume this means looking at how many children and young people hubs are expected to reach, rather than the size of the - is that [redacted]?

[0:35:51.7] Unknown: No, it's about the needs of different cohorts of young people because that's where strategically you make differences.

[0:36:01.4] Unknown: Yes, that's inclusion, basically.

[0:36:02.7] Unknown: A strategy that's rooted in [over speaking 0:36:03.9] for me, that bit's your strategy. The strategy decides how you [unclear word 0:36:10.5] or how you [?deduct 0:36:11.2] the resources, and then... It's absolutely not about numbers or boundaries.

Melissa Wong: Got it, okay, thank you so much for that clarification, really helpful. What's this one say? To DfE/Arts Council - these are all written like letters - more...

[0:36:39.3] Unknown: Just more! [x 2]

Melissa Wong: More. More developmental. Do not...

[0:36:49.1] Unknown: I'm sorry, I just didn't get a start doing handwriting as a kid.

[0:36:55.3] Unknown: It says, make the role of relationship managers more developmental. Don't leave it to subject organisations to lead on sharing good practice.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. All right. Great, thank you so much for everyone who's chipped in. Lots of other things

to be taking into account, lots of other questions beyond just the geographic question that we're talking about in today's focus group. That brings us to an end. You guys have done a brilliant job. Thank you so much for being so engaged, for being so honest and reflective. We did have some slides about next steps, didn't we?

Maria Turley: Hang on, give me a sec. I got distracted by Post-it notes.

Melissa Wong: Just want to give you an overview of what next, what are we going to do with everything that's come out of today's focus group. We're continuing to run focus groups throughout the rest of this week. We're doing five across the country, until Thursday. We're also running a digital focus group next week, on Tuesday. We'll be speaking to more people then from across the country. Finally, the survey closes at midday on Sunday 15th, so if there's anything else that you wanted to elaborate on, anything else you think of afterwards, do fill out that survey. Please do, it's only one per organisation, but encourage other organisations that you work with to fill out the survey as well. Once all of the data has been collected from the focus groups and the survey, Dougie and I will be combing through everything, reflecting on what you've said, and analysing it and reporting it back to Arts Council and DfE. I'll hand it over to Hannah now, just to talk about what will happen after that.

Hannah: Thank you. After we've completed the focus groups, we're planning to share the, how many of each type of different organisation has attended the focus groups, alongside the anonymised transcripts of each of the sessions, so people can read what we've talked about today. Then, as Melissa said, all of the ideas and feedback are going to be analysed by her and Dougie. That is going

to assist the decision-making process for the new geographies for Music Hubs. We're hoping to share, in the spring, what the new geographies will be, and how your feedback, through the sessions and the focus group, have shaped those. As I said earlier, we're planning to publish the guidance for applicants in the spring, and open the portal later in the year. They're the next steps.

I'd just like to end by saying thank you so much today for coming and throwing yourselves in so positively, both in the thinking about opportunities and challenges. I said at the start that what we were going to be talking about was difficult, and it is, and part of what makes that difficult is that there hasn't been an investment process for a decade in this programme. That brings a real range of challenges. We now have a new National Plan and a new strategy for hubs, so there's lots and lots for us to be thinking about. Thank you for your contributions. I am aware that there was an extremely serious oversight, and that there weren't any biscuits, and I'm very, very sorry about that. I owe you all a biscuit or two or three next time I see you.

[0:40:21.8] Unknown: Going to claim that on expenses.

Hannah: I think that's all that's left to say is thank you to Melissa, and thank you to you guys, and a safe journey home. Thank you.

Maria Turley: Can I say something really quickly? Which is the boring bit, which is don't steal my Sharpies. We've got two more focus groups to run, and they are dwindling by session, so please do leave them behind.

[End of Transcript]