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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

MUSIC HUB INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Guidance for Applicants

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Access support

We are committed to being open and accessible to everyone. We realise some people may find that there are barriers to applying for a grant or accessing our services. Our [Access Support information sheet](#) explains the ways we can help.

Do you need this information in another format?

You can also find the following versions of this guidance on our [website](#):

- audio
- Easy Read
- large print

If you require this guidance in a different format, please contact us. We will work to extend your application deadline for the length of time it takes us to produce the accessible format. You must inform us of your request for an alternative accessible format by Friday 18 August 2023.

If you experience or expect any barrier with making your application and would like more information, please get in touch.

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You can also **Livechat** with us by visiting our website: www.artscouncil.org.uk

We will be as flexible as possible and consider and respond to requests on an individual basis.

Summary of key information

Key information relating to this fund is summarised below. Please read this document in full before beginning your application. We reserve the right to make changes to the guidance and/or programme after its launch. We will communicate any changes as quickly and as clearly as we can.

What is the focus of the Music Hub Investment Programme?

Arts Council England is leading this Investment Programme on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE) to appoint new Hub Lead Organisations (HLOs) for Music Hubs.

Each new HLO will receive grant funding to coordinate and support the delivery of music education provision through a Music Hub partnership. This includes a core revenue grant for the Music Hub and a capital grant for musical instruments.

The HLO will be responsible for ensuring this delivery is in line with the DfE's aims for Music Hubs, as set out in [The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education](#).

Who can apply?

Any properly-constituted organisation that can demonstrate their ability to deliver the responsibilities for HLOs detailed in this guidance can apply.

You can find full information in the [eligibility section](#) of this guidance.

We also welcome applications from consortia led by a named organisation.

When is the deadline for introductory conversations?

All applicants must have a conversation with Arts Council England prior to making an application.

Introductory conversations will be held between 10 July and 18 August 2023.

You can find further information about introductory conversations in [section four – making your application](#) of this guidance ('Book and attend an introductory conversation').

When will the application portal open?

Grantium will open on Tuesday 18 July 2023.

When is the deadline for full applications?

Grantium will close at 12pm (midday) on Thursday 12 October 2023.

What is the grant allocation for each Music Hub?

The value of the core revenue grants and the capital grants for musical instruments will be determined by a funding formula set by the DfE. Applicants must submit budget proposals based on the final grant values provided in the [Music Hub areas and grant allocations essential document](#). These will be updated in July 2023.

Minimum additional funding sources

At least 50 per cent of the Music Hub's total income (excluding the capital grant for musical instruments) should come from sources other than the core revenue grant provided by the DfE by the end of the 2024-25 funding period. Additional funding does not need to be leveraged against the capital grant for musical instruments.

When will we make our decision?

We expect to announce our funding decisions in April 2024.

When will new Hub Lead Organisations begin their funding agreement?

New HLOs will receive funding to co-ordinate and lead their Music Hubs from September 2024.

What is the funding period?

HLOs will be funded through the core revenue grant for an initial period of one year, from 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025. Following the first year, future funding is planned, subject to the outcome of the next government Spending Review.

HLOs will have responsibility for administering the capital grant for musical instruments. The funding will be allocated to successful HLOs in a series of payments in financial years 2024-25 and 2025-26, with 90 per cent of funding to be drawn down in 2024-25 and the final 10 per cent in 2025-26.

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Section one – Welcome to the Music Hub Investment Programme

Music Hub Investment Programme: Guidance for Applicants



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Section one – Welcome to the Music Hub Investment Programme

Thank you for your interest in applying to become a Music Hub Lead Organisation. We are delighted that you are interested in helping to co-ordinate and deliver fantastic, accessible music education for children and young people.

About the Music Hub Investment Programme

In June 2022, the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) co-published the National Plan for Music Education (NPME) – [The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education](#) – setting out the government’s priorities up to 2030 for music education for children and young people, including alignment with the DfE’s [Model Music Curriculum](#).

The NPME sets out an ambition for Music Hub Lead Organisations (HLOs) to become more strategic, building and strengthening a wider range of partnerships, so that all children and young people receive high quality music education in every local area.

The DfE subsequently commissioned Arts Council England to lead the Investment Programme to identify and appoint new HLOs that will lead Music Hubs across new, larger areas. These HLOs will receive government funding to co-ordinate Music Hub partnerships from September 2024.

Essential reading

This guidance details what is expected from new HLOs, as well as how to apply and how we will assess your application.

In order to submit an application, you need to read this guidance alongside **six essential documents**:

- Programme of activity for Music Hubs
- Strategic functions for Hub Lead Organisations
- Governance and management arrangements for Music Hubs
- Music Hub areas and grant allocations
- Lead Schools for Music
- Purchasing and maintaining musical instruments

You will need to refer to the contents of these essential documents in your application. You can find all of these essential documents, including accessible versions, on [our website](#).

In addition to these, you should read [The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education](#) before applying.

Financial Information template

You will also need to complete a **Financial Information template** as part of your application form. We have created a 'how-to' guide, which can be found alongside the template on [our website](#).

Helpful documents

We have also published **four helpful documents**, including accessible versions, on [our website](#) to support you in preparing your application:

- Access Support
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Guidance on preparing a partnership agreement
- Microsoft Word version of the application form. This is to help you prepare your application offline. You are not able to submit your application as a Word document.

Further information for applicants

If you are not a current Music Education Hub Lead Organisation, you might find the following [guidance for current Music Education Hubs](#) for the 2023-24 funding period helpful:

- 2023-24 Relationship Framework
- Local Plan for Music Education guidance
- Needs analysis guidance
- Working with schools guidance
- Progression strategy guidance
- Inclusion strategy guidance
- Annual survey guidance

You might also be interested in the Arts Council’s wider approach to supporting the creative lives of children and young people in our 2020-2030 strategy, [Let’s Create](#), as you think about how you would work as a HLO and to help you develop your application.

About the Department for Education

The Department for Education (DfE) is responsible for children’s services and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England. The DfE works to provide children’s services, education and skills training that ensures opportunity is equal for all, no matter background, family circumstances, or need.

At its heart, it is a department for realising potential. It enables children and young people to succeed, by protecting the vulnerable and ensuring the delivery of excellent standards of education, training and care. This helps realise everyone’s potential – and that powers our economy, strengthens society, and increases fairness.

The DfE has confirmed that it will continue to invest around £115 million per annum in cultural education over the next two financial years (2023-24 and 2024-25) via its music, arts and heritage programmes. This includes £76,105,440 of grant-funding per annum for the Music Hub programme, with current levels of funding confirmed until April 2025¹.

¹ The first academic year of the new Music Hub programme runs from 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025, which is five months outside of the current Spending Review period for government. The full funding allocation will be subject to HM Treasury and other Department approvals.

The NPME builds on the [Model Music Curriculum](#), and all schools should be supported to use the Model Music Curriculum to provide a benchmark to help teachers, school leaders and curriculum designers make sure every music lesson is of the highest quality. In addition to Music Hubs, the NPME also stated the DfE's continued commitment to investing in the [Music and Dance Scheme](#) and [National Youth Music Organisations](#).

Additional investment has been made available to support the establishment of National Music Hub Centres of Excellence and a new Music Progression Fund. Further detail on these initiatives will be provided later in 2023.

The DfE will also invest £25 million of capital funding to support the purchase of musical instruments. Information about this funding, and how it connects to the work of Music Hubs, is outlined in this guidance for applicants and in the [Purchasing and maintaining musical instruments essential document](#).

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in creative and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections.

[Let's Create](#), Arts Council England's strategy for 2020-30, is built around three Outcomes and four Investment Principles. They are designed to work together to achieve our vision of a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences.

Arts Council England managed the only investment process for Music Education Hubs in 2012 and has been the fundholder since. We administer funding from the DfE, and are responsible for providing advice, capturing data, assessment, decision-making and the monitoring of performance for Hubs against agreed delivery plans. Hubs are also able to access support from the Arts Council's network of Investment Principles Support Organisations and our [Investment Principles Resource Hub](#), which shares more information about our Investment Principles and how you could begin to embed them into your Hub, organisation and activity.

[Music Mark](#) is funded as an Investment Principles Support Organisation and provides a programme of support for the music education sector which includes peer networking, training and resources across a number of key areas.

Further information on the current Music Education Hubs programme is available via [our website](#).

As part of the Music Hub Investment Programme, Arts Council England will be responsible for providing pre-application advice, assessment of applications, and the payment and monitoring of grants. The Arts Council will deliver these functions on behalf of the DfE and in line with Let's Create.

We have provided further information about Arts Council England's investment in music education [on our website](#).

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Section two – Background



Section two – Background

This section provides an overview of the NPME and how new Music Hubs aim to achieve its ambitions. This information is to help you understand the background of the Investment Programme.

The '[Before you start your application](#)' section of this guidance details all the information you will need to address in your application.

National Plan for Music Education

The NPME articulates a refreshed vision for music education, which is:

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

The NPME's three goals are that:

- all children and young people receive a high-quality music education in the early years and in schools
- all music educators work in partnership with children and young people's needs and interests at their heart
- all children and young people with musical interests and talents have the opportunity to progress, including professionally

The NPME also sets out non-statutory guidance for schools – that builds on the Model Music Curriculum – and revised expectations for Music Hubs, which form the basis by which the DfE will direct its investment into music education until 2030. It impacts how music, creative and cultural organisations, and the music industry, contribute to music education as partners in Hubs. It also influences how they work with education settings at a local, regional and national level.

The school music curriculum

The NPME also sets out clear ambitions for the school music curriculum and how this should complement co-curricular learning and musical experiences. Music should be planned, sequenced and taught as robustly as any other foundation subject.

[Ofsted’s education inspection framework](#), which came into effect in September 2019, has a strong emphasis on ensuring that schools provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils, and building pupils’ cultural capital informs Ofsted’s judgement about the quality of education. This applies equally to academies and maintained schools, and to special schools. In July 2021, Ofsted also published a [research review on music](#), summarising key learning on effective music curriculum design and delivery.

To support schools to deliver music effectively, in 2021 the DfE published a non-statutory [Model Music Curriculum](#), with an emphasis on clear progression and sequencing of knowledge which, when taken together, contribute steadily towards pupils becoming more musical. The model provides a blueprint for musical progression through primary and secondary towards GCSE and other qualifications. The new arm’s-length national curriculum body, [Oak National Academy](#), will also work with teachers across the country to co-create a package of free, optional, and adaptable digital curriculum resources that are built around a rigorous, high-quality curriculum. This will include resources for music education, at secondary level initially, building on the guidance in the Model Music Curriculum, with draft resources planned for release in September 2023 (primary resources to follow at a later date).

The DfE expects all primary and secondary schools to embed high-quality music education either by adopting the Model Music Curriculum or implementing a curriculum that is at least comparable in breadth and ambition, and is clearly sequenced. Schools are also expected to deliver high-quality curriculum music for at least one hour a week in key stages 1 to 3, supported by co-curricular teaching, and musical experiences. Music Hubs will be a vital support to schools in achieving this and drawing on the Model Music Curriculum.

The role of Music Hubs

Music Hubs will have a critical role in fulfilling the vision and goals outlined in the NPME. A Music Hub is a partnership, co-ordinated by a lead organisation, that is responsible for supporting, delivering and enabling access to high-quality music education activity for children and young people within a local area.

HLOs and their partners need to understand and respond to local context and support the needs and interests of all children and young people within the areas served by the Music Hub. The Music Hub programme funds a network of Hubs which cover every area of England to ensure all children and young people have equitable access to high-quality music education activity.

Infographic source: The power of music to change lives: A National Plan for Music Education, page 48

Every Music Hub is expected to deliver against **three aims**:



Music Hubs will outline how they will achieve these aims in a **Local Plan for Music Education (LPME)**, which partners will work collectively to design and deliver.

The role of Music Hub Lead Organisations

HLOs will receive and be accountable for government funding, and will have responsibility for **five strategic functions**, to be delivered through the Music Hub partnership and its LPME. They are:

- **Partnerships** – to take a leading role in building a sustainable, local infrastructure for high-quality music education and music-making, in partnership with schools, early years and other education providers, community music organisations, and other regional and national youth music organisations and industry.
- **Schools** – to support all state-funded schools in their area through ongoing relationships that help them to deliver high-quality music education – including a quality curriculum support offer, specialist tuition, musical instruments, and ensembles – and a broad range of progression routes and musical experiences for all pupils.
- **Progression and Musical Development** – to support children and young people to develop and progress with music, including into national or specialist opportunities, higher education and employment, so that the chance to be involved in high-quality music-making is shared more widely in our society. Music Hubs should support children and young people to access the wider world of music, including live performance and community music.
- **Inclusion** – to drive broad access to music education, so every child has the opportunity to participate, irrespective of their circumstances, background, location or their special educational needs or disabilities.
- **Sustainability** – the strategic, financial, and operational sustainability of each Music Hub will be ensured by; appropriate charging and remissions policies; leveraging DfE funding to develop wider investment into young people’s music from a range of sources and revenue streams; supporting a dynamic and well-trained workforce; being accountable and transparent by publishing plans, needs analysis and impact data; and acting on the Hub’s environmental responsibilities.

Local Plan for Music Education

The strategic and operational arrangements for each Music Hub will need to be expressed in a **Local Plan for Music Education (LPME)**, which will be developed, implemented, and communicated by the HLO in collaboration with its Music Hub partners.

The LPME should be flexible, evidence-led, and informed by the Music Hub's collective understanding and analysis of local needs and circumstances in the local authority areas and state-funded schools covered by the Music Hub.

It should describe how the Music Hub will deliver against the **three aims for Music Hubs**. It should also connect to the **five strategic functions** outlined for HLOs and incorporate all relevant plans and strategies associated to the Music Hub, including its:

- **SMART objectives** that underpin the Hub's aims and strategic functions, set annually and approved by the Hub Board (or equivalent oversight group), and reviewed regularly by the Hub partnership
- **programme of high-quality activity**, including the ongoing mechanisms used to ensure it has been informed by an appropriate and effective analysis of local needs and priorities across all areas covered by the Music Hub
- varied, diverse and representative **partnership arrangements**
- **school engagement strategy**, including approaches for increasing engagement and for appointing [Lead Schools for Music](#)
- approach to improving and enabling **progression and musical development**
- approach to **inclusion**, showing how the Hub will widen opportunities for all children and young people, ensuring their needs are understood and that provision meets those needs. This includes appointing an Inclusion Lead for the Music Hub.
- approach to **musical instrument purchase, storage and maintenance**
- strategic, financial, operational and environmental **sustainability plans and strategies**
- **governance and management arrangements**
- **financial arrangements**
- other key policies and strategies for the Music Hub (for example, workforce plans, communications, safeguarding)

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Section three – Before you start your application



Section three – Before you start your application

This section details all the information you need to understand before you start your application to be an HLO. You will need to address all the information within this section in your application, so make sure to read it carefully.

This section contains information on:

- [responsibilities for HLOs](#)
- [geographic coverage](#)
- [funding arrangements for the core revenue grant](#)
- [funding arrangements for the capital grant for musical instruments](#)
- [eligibility](#)
- [subsidy control](#)
- [transfer arrangements](#)

You can click the above links to go straight to that section.

Any eligible organisation is welcome to apply to the Music Hub Investment Programme, even if they are not currently engaged with the music education sector. However, your application will need to demonstrate you have the skills and experience required to deliver the responsibilities of a HLO. Read more in the [eligibility section](#) of this document.

Responsibilities for Hub Lead Organisations

Through this application process, we are inviting applications from organisations that are interested in becoming a HLO. If we invite you to become a HLO, your organisation will be accountable for:

- the **coordination and facilitation** of the Music Hub and its LPME, ensuring it fulfils the **three Hub aims**, and is based on a comprehensive **needs analysis** to inform the development of a high-quality music education **programme of activity**
- embedding the **five strategic functions** into how the Hub operates and delivers its LPME, including the appointment of **Lead Schools for Music** and a designated **Inclusion Lead** for the Music Hub
- embedding strong and effective **governance and management arrangements** for the Music Hub
- the **performance** of the Music Hub, including the setting of and delivery against ambitious **SMART objectives** and the implementation of appropriate **quality assurance** mechanisms
- managing the funding agreement with Arts Council England, including the **monitoring and reporting arrangements** set out in the Music Hub terms and conditions of funding
- embedding appropriate **safeguarding and child protection** policies and procedures throughout the Music Hub
- **communicating and advocating** for the work of the Music Hub

Needs analysis

By putting needs analysis at the centre of their work, HLOs can work with local partners and stakeholders to develop achievable, effective local plans that support and deliver the aims of the NPME. An effective needs analysis should demonstrate a clear understanding of local needs, opportunities, provision gaps and expertise gained through evidence (research, evaluation, self-evaluation and regular consultation). These approaches should draw on the

experiences and needs of a range of local stakeholders and communities, ensuring there are meaningful ways to consult with children, young people, parents/carers and partners.

Current guidance on needs analysis for Music Education Hubs can be found on [our website](#).

Programme of activity

We expect HLOs to work with their partners to develop, commission and secure a high-quality programme of activity for their Music Hub. This should be delivered through the Hub partnership and expressed within the LPME and should include:

- activity and support within schools and other education settings, including support for School Music Development Plans, classroom instrumental lessons, supporting the school music curriculum and co-curricular and extra-curricular programmes
- activity and support delivered out-of-school, at weekends, during school holidays, and after school
- workforce development opportunities for teachers and other music educators
- affordable access to musical instruments

Further information about types of activities and the support Music Hubs are expected to offer can be found in the [Programme of activity for Music Hubs essential document](#).

Strategic functions

The five strategic functions describe how the HLO should operate and deliver its LPME to ensure it fulfils the three aims of Music Hubs.

HLOs will be expected to demonstrate sufficient progress is being made in relation to partnership development, school engagement, musical progression and development, inclusion, and sustainability. Performance will be monitored in line with the Performance Framework (see [performance management section](#)).

Further information about these strategic functions, and what we expect applicants to reference in their applications to lead a Music Hub, have been outlined in the [Strategic functions for Hub Lead Organisations essential document](#).

Lead Schools for Music

HLOs will be expected to invite schools to join the Music Hub partnership as Lead Schools for Music, with at least one primary and one secondary Lead School for each local authority area covered by the Music Hub. Where a Lead School is an academy, the NPME expects that their academy trust should also be involved in the Hub's work. Where appropriate, HLOs should additionally appoint specialist Lead Schools (a special school and/or alternative provision for example).

Further information about the purpose and role of Lead Schools and what we expect applicants to reference in their applications to lead a Music Hub, have been outlined in the [Lead Schools for Music essential document](#).

Inclusion Lead

HLOs will be expected to appoint a designated and named Inclusion Lead, who will:

- provide leadership, support and direction for the Music Hub's Inclusion Strategy
- focus on equitable access and progression for children and young people from all backgrounds facing barriers to participation, particularly those eligible for the Pupil Premium and with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- drive cultural change across the Hub partnership through their advocacy and practical support for widening participation and inclusive practice in music
- be appropriately trained and experienced to support the Music Hub team

The Inclusion Lead will plan accessible provision for children and young people:

- in specialist settings, including special schools and alternative provision
- with special educational needs and disabilities in mainstream settings
- who are looked after, including work with the Virtual School in each local authority area covered by the Music Hub

The Inclusion Lead will be expected to connect with a National Hub Centre of Excellence to support and implement best practice.

Governance and management

HLOs will be expected to put in place appropriate governance and management arrangements that support the oversight of the Music Hub and ensure the effective management of the funding agreement(s) with Arts Council England. This includes:

- ensuring Hub governance arrangements enable impartial, evidence-based decision-making to be carried out, with oversight from a Hub board or equivalent oversight group that is distinct from the HLO's own governance arrangements and is supported by an independent Chair
- having a management structure in place that provides appropriate oversight, expertise and resources across areas such as partnership development, quality assurance, financial and asset management, consultation and research, evaluation and impact measurement, safeguarding, fundraising and business development, and communications and advocacy

Further information about the governance and management arrangements we expect to see for all Music Hubs can be found in the [Governance and management arrangements for Music Hubs essential document](#).

Performance management, quality assurance and setting SMART objectives

HLOs are held to account for their Hub's performance via the funding agreement terms and conditions. A high-performing Music Hub network ultimately helps us to collectively ensure more equitable access to consistently high-quality music education for children and young people.

A new Performance Framework has been introduced for the current Music Education Hub programme for the 2023-24 funding period. This includes a self-assessment and monitoring tool, which reviews performance holistically across all aspects of the Hub's activity and operations. The Performance Framework reflects the key expectations of Hubs and centres on seven performance areas which cover the five strategic functions of the NPME, as well as quality and the programme of activity set out in the Hub's LPME.

HLOs demonstrate how their Hub is performing through their LPME, associated SMART objectives, quarterly payment submissions and annual data return. HLOs are also expected to provide an overview of the quality framework(s) for their Hub's provision and the quality assurance methodology for the Hub. This should include an outline of mechanisms to be used to understand and track engagement, quality and progression.

Performance ratings are reviewed and agreed quarterly by the Arts Council and inform our regular programme reporting to the DfE.

Further information on the Performance Framework can be found within the [2023-24 Relationship Framework for current Music Education Hubs](#).

Monitoring and reporting

HLOs will need to meet specific requirements for monitoring and data reporting. This is to ensure Arts Council England can track the progress and impact of the DfE's investment in Music Hubs and to provide important data, evidence and insight about the music education sector.

If we invite you to lead a Music Hub then you will be assigned a Relationship Manager from Arts Council England. Relationship Managers are the main point of contact between the Arts Council and Music Hubs. As well as maintaining communication, they will lead on the monitoring of the Hub's performance and will make judgements that inform our funding decisions.

As part of these monitoring arrangements, HLOs will be expected to set SMART objectives to support the delivery of their Music Hub's LPME. These objectives will form part of your funding agreement with Arts Council England and will be tracked and monitored through quarterly reporting arrangements.

Alongside this, we will also require HLOs to complete an annual survey, covering the Music Hub's activity and performance over the previous funding period.

Further information on our monitoring and reporting arrangements for current Music Education Hubs is outlined in the [2023-24 Relationship Framework](#) and in our [current annual survey guidance](#).

The 2024-25 Relationship Framework will be available in early 2024 when funding decisions are made. This will set out our key expectations and requirements that will need to be adhered to as part of our funding agreement(s) with your organisation, if you are invited to lead a Music Hub.

Independent evaluation

An independent evaluation will be undertaken to measure and assess the impact of the Music Hub programme against the key aims, to track how the programme meets the overall aims and objectives as set out in the NPME, and to inform how to improve delivery over the life of the programme. HLOs will need to comply with requests made by either the DfE or a third party designated on behalf of DfE to support evaluation. All initial requests will come via Arts Council England in the first instance. HLOs will be expected to collect, record and share information and data relevant to the programme's aims and objectives. Successful applicants will be kept updated on plans for evaluation.

Safeguarding and child protection

Our terms and conditions make it clear that, by signing a grant agreement with the Arts Council, grant holders agree to the expectations we have set out for safeguarding and protecting children, young people and adults at risk. Please read our [information sheet on safeguarding and child protection](#) for further information.

Communications and advocacy

The HLO will be expected to develop and implement a robust communications and engagement plan that supports, promotes and celebrates the offer of the Music Hub to local schools, children, young people, parents/carers and other relevant stakeholders. The communications and engagement plan should include the use of appropriate and accessible communication channels, including a dedicated website or online platform. The communications and engagement plan should detail how the Music Hub intends to:

- publish information about the Music Hub's offer for schools, children, young people and parents/carers, including clear information about how to access and engage with the support and provision offered by the Music Hub
- publish relevant information and/or links to strategies and policies contained within the Music Hub's LPME, such as the Music Hub's inclusion strategy and its charging and remissions policies
- provide contact details for the HLO and other relevant delivery partners, ensuring communication channels exist to enable stakeholders to share feedback and inform needs analysis
- raise the profile of music education in their area to a range of stakeholders (such as education and creative organisations and networks, local government and MPs), highlighting and celebrating music education and young musicians and drawing attention to specific areas of expertise or achievement
- collate collateral and digital content of Music Hub work, such as images, videos and case studies, from delivery partners for use in communications and advocacy, in line with safeguarding policies and procedures

Geographic coverage

Music Hub geographic areas

Organisations applying to lead a Music Hub will be required to submit an application covering one of the **43 geographic areas** that form part of this application process.

Prospective HLOs will need to ensure their plans serve all state-funded schools within the geographical area they are applying to lead a Hub in, including academies, maintained schools and multi-academy trusts.

Further information about these geographic areas can be found in the [Music Hub areas and grant allocations essential document](#).

Applicants are welcome to apply to lead a Hub in more than one of these areas but will need to submit separate applications to ensure their proposals are specific to the area(s) they are proposing to lead.

Local authority coverage

The majority of Music Hubs will cover more than one 'upper-tier or single tier' local authority. When applying to lead a Music Hub, you must ensure your application provides appropriate and proportionate coverage to all local authority areas served by the Music Hub.

It is imperative that prospective HLOs demonstrate how they will meet the different needs of communities in each local authority area covered by their Music Hub, ensuring a consistently high-quality offer is available to all children and young people. This should also recognise different needs and circumstances, including those of rural and urban geographies.

Please read [Music Hub areas and grant allocations essential document](#) for further information about the local authorities covered by the Music Hub geographic areas.

Funding arrangements for the core revenue grant

Music Hub core revenue grant

Each HLO will be allocated a revenue grant to coordinate and support delivery against the three aims of Music Hubs set out in the NPME.

The DfE has made £76,105,440 available for Music Hubs during the 2024-25 academic year. The value of the grant each Music Hub receives will be determined by a funding formula set by the DfE. You can read more about the funding formula used for Music Hubs and how allocations are made in our [frequently asked questions](#).

The HLO will be responsible for administering the grant on behalf of its Music Hub. The Arts Council will release equal payments to HLOs on a quarterly basis (September, December, March and June), subject to payment conditions being met. The first quarterly payment will be available from September 2024.

Grant allocations are reviewed on an annual basis and are usually confirmed before the start of each funding period (ie academic year). The funding allocations for the 2024-25 academic year are expected to be finalised in July 2023, prior to the opening of the application portal and the start of the introductory conversation period. The final grant allocations will cover the period from September 2024 to August 2025.

In the interim, we have provided indicative grant allocations based on the 2023-24 funding allocation figures to support prospective applicants with their plans. Please see the [Music Hub areas and grant allocations essential document](#) for further information – the indicative allocations will be updated once final allocations have been published in July 2023.

As grant allocations can go up or down each year based on the number of pupils on roll in a local authority area, there will be some differences between the indicative and final grant allocations. Applicants should submit budget proposals based on the final grant allocations, once they are available.

The DfE are providing a core revenue grant and a capital grant for Music Hubs. There will not be additional ring-fenced funding to support teacher pensions.

Funding period

HLOs will be funded for an initial period of one year, covering the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025.

Funding agreements may be extended up to the end of August 2028, subject to performance and the guarantee of future funding from government. Future funding following the initial first year is planned, subject to the outcome of the next government Spending Review. Arts Council England can only guarantee future instalments of the grant as long as sufficient funds from the government are available to it. It is possible that the indicative amounts may therefore be reduced for future instalments.

Additional funding sources

Each HLO, in conjunction with its Music Hub partners, will be expected to coordinate the generation of additional funding from sources other than the grant provided by the DfE to support the activity of their Music Hub.

Income from sources other than the core revenue grant must equal or exceed a minimum of 50 per cent of the Music Hub's total income, exclusive of any capital grant received, by the end of the 2024-25 funding period.

Additional funding sources could include:

- chargeable activity/other earned income over the funding period
- funding from public organisations such as local authorities
- cash donations from individuals or companies
- grants from Lottery distributors
- donations of equipment or materials subject to suitable valuations
- grants from trusts and foundations
- public appeals and fundraising events
- financial contributions from your organisation (ie the HLO) or other Hub partners

Details about how current Music Education Hubs report on their financial income and expenditure is provided in the current [2023-24 Relationship Framework](#). We will be publishing an updated Relationship Framework for the 2024-25 funding period following the announcement of funding decisions.

Grant expenditure rules

HLOs are expected to direct a minimum of 80 per cent of the core grant towards activity and support delivered by their Music Hub. Grant funding should only be used on activity or support for state-funded schools and establishments. You can find more information about this in the allocations section of our [frequently asked questions](#).

Equally, no more than 20 per cent of the core grant can be used to cover strategic and/or administrative costs associated with the coordination and leadership of the Music Hub.

Our Music Hub areas and grant allocations essential document provides additional background and contextual information about the local authorities, the number of pupils and the number of state-funded schools served by each Music Hub. It is the HLO's responsibility to ensure the grant is appropriately distributed to partners within the Music Hub, taking into account the specific needs of children and young people, schools and other recipients and stakeholders in each local authority area covered by the Music Hub.

The awarded grants cannot be used to fund recharges for use of premises, HR, financial, legal support, redundancy costs and other general running costs and overheads which do not directly contribute towards the aims of the Music Hub. In addition, the grant cannot be used for marketing and advertising, or for any costs associated with the maintenance, technical development or updating of existing websites, or for the development and/or creation of new websites, in line with [Cabinet Office Spend Controls](#).

Payment conditions

If we invite you to lead a Music Hub, you will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Arts Council. The funding agreement comprises of four key elements:

1. Funding offer letter
2. Standard terms and conditions
3. Additional conditions
4. Payment conditions

Further information is provided in the current [2023-24 Relationship Framework](#). We will be publishing an updated Relationship Framework for the 2024-25 funding period, following the announcement of funding decisions.

Funding arrangements for the capital grant for musical instruments

The DfE has made an additional £25 million available to HLOs for the purchase of musical instruments for the Music Hub, including accessible and adapted/adaptive instruments for children and young people with SEND.

The funding will be allocated to successful HLOs in a series of payments in financial years 2024-25 and 2025-26, with 90 per cent of funding to be drawn down in 2024-25 and the final 10 per cent in 2025-26. Specific payment timings will be provided to successful applicants when conditional offers are made.

We advise applicants to read our [purchasing and maintaining musical instruments essential document](#) for more information on the capital grant and how it should be considered in your application.

Eligibility

Skills and experience

To be an effective HLO, you will need to demonstrate you can:

- **develop a vision and strategy** for music education across the whole Music Hub area you are applying to lead, in line with the vision and aims of the NPME
- demonstrate **excellent leadership**, working strategically in response to children and young people's needs and interests. Organisations should have proven capacity and experience (preferably within the creative, cultural and/or education sectors) to undertake business and strategic planning, to manage change and develop a culture of self-evaluation and improvement

- **broker and galvanise partnerships and relationships** with a range of stakeholders, which represent a full range of organisations and individuals across the music education, creative, cultural, education and youth sectors and broader place-based partnerships, to devise appropriate strategies, values, policies and activity
- **understand the needs of all children and young people** in your Hub area through evidence, research, evaluation, self-evaluation and consultation
- **respond to your duties in relation to the [Equality Act 2010](#)**, in particular in relation to the Public Sector Equalities Duty for relevant organisations, to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations
- **advocate for music education** at a local, regional and national level, through effective communications, stakeholder engagement and an appropriate marketing infrastructure

Eligible organisations

Organisations that are eligible to apply to lead a Music Hub must be properly constituted and be able to demonstrate they have a strong track record in delivering the necessary skills and experience needed to be an effective HLO. Eligible organisations will also have to demonstrate they have the capacity and experience to manage the application – and any funding that is subsequently awarded by Arts Council England – on behalf of their Music Hub.

The kinds of organisations that are eligible to apply as a HLO include, but are not limited to:

- statutory bodies, including local authorities
- schools and multi-academy trusts
- limited companies registered at Companies House (or equivalent, if outside the UK)
- community interest companies registered with the CIC Regulator

- charities or trusts registered with the Charity Commission
- limited liability partnerships registered at Companies House
- partnerships established under a deed of partnership
- industrial and provident societies or community benefit societies, subject to regulation by the Financial Services Authority
- organisations established by Royal Charter or other legislation

We cannot accept applications from individuals or from people applying in a purely personal capacity. We also cannot accept applications by and on behalf of arm's length bodies (this includes as part of a consortium application).

New entities

If you are considering setting up a new legal entity for the purposes of fulfilling the responsibilities of the HLO, but have yet to formally establish the entity by the time you submit your application, you must identify a suitable lead organisation to be responsible for the application. The lead organisation must be able to fulfil all eligibility criteria outlined in this guidance and will be accountable for the application and any grant award, if successful.

We would expect to see your plans for establishing any new entity outlined in your application. It should be noted that any new legal entity must also meet the eligibility criteria outlined in this guidance.

Consortia applications

We welcome applications from consortia and/or groups of organisations interested in coordinating and delivering activity through a formal partnership arrangement.

Organisations will usually consider bidding as a consortium if two or more organisations consider themselves well placed to apply for funding collectively.

One organisation must act as the lead organisation and submit the application on behalf of the consortium members. The lead organisation will solely be accountable for managing the application and any grant that we award and will be the only consortium partner classed as a HLO.

When assessing an application from a consortium, Arts Council England will consider the lead organisation against the key criteria for the fund. The lead organisation must provide details about the other consortium members in their application.

Consortia are not required to have a particular legal form when submitting an application to lead a Music Hub, but they will be required to assume a specific legal form if they are awarded a grant, which will include the submission of a formal consortium agreement.

Organisations applying to lead a Music Hub in their own right cannot be named as a consortium member of another application for the same Music Hub area.

Partnership agreements

Where grant funding is being directed towards Music Hub partners, the HLO will be expected to have robust partnership agreements in place to demonstrate how funding is being used in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant.

We have provided [further guidance on partnership agreements](#). We do not require applicants to have formal partnership agreements in place at the point of application, but organisations invited to become a HLO will need to have formalised their partnership arrangements, including evidence of signed partnership agreements, to satisfy first payment conditions.

Subsidy Control

The Subsidy Control regime regulates financial assistance given by public authorities (including Arts Council England) to organisations engaged in economic activity. As part of the application process, you will be asked to indicate whether the award meets the “flow through” model to comply with the [Subsidy Control Act 2022](#).

For the award to meet the “flow through” model under the Act, you must be able to demonstrate that by the end of the funding period all of the funding can be shown to have been used to deliver services for members of the public (the end beneficiaries).

If you are awarded funding, there will be additional specific conditions on the funding that require you:

- to ensure that the funding is efficiently run and you do not pay excessive sums for any goods, works or services using the funding;

- to hold the funding separate to all other funds and solely use the funding to deliver the agreed activities; and
- will keep records to demonstrate you applied the “flow through” model, in particular (but not limited to) recording the value of the support you provide to others as well as all costs you have incurred in delivering the support.

As part of the last specific condition, Arts Council England may at any time during or after the project request such records to ensure that the “flow through” model has been suitably applied. Where not all the funding has been used to deliver services to the end beneficiaries, then Arts Council England may choose to recover that proportion of the funding.

Our [FAQs](#) set out more information on Subsidy Control regime and you may choose to get your own advice on the compliance requirements.

Please note that if you are applying for a grant of £10 million or above (either cumulative in value or one-off awards for substantially the same project or purpose), your application will need to be referred to the Competition and Markets Authority for review (more information on this process is set out in the [FAQs](#)).

Transfer arrangements

TUPE

TUPE stands for ‘Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006’ and its amendment in 2014. The purpose of TUPE is to protect employees when the organisation employing them ceases to provide the service provision to a company or organisation, but the service provision, which will have the same or very similar specification, is to be provided by another company or organisation.

In relation to the Music Hub programme, TUPE may be applicable to:

- the transfer of the HLO's functions from one organisation to another, following the outcome of this (or a future) competition process; and
- the transfer of service provision or activity delivered on behalf of the Music Hub partnership from one organisation to another, as directed by the appointed HLO

As Music Hubs are partnerships of organisations working together to deliver a high-quality music education offer to children and young people across a defined geographical area, it should not be assumed that the appointed HLO has responsibility for directly employing the staff involved in the delivery of Music Hub activity. In the majority of cases, we expect HLOs to engage the services of organisations and/or individuals that are best placed to deliver these requirements through appropriate sub-contracting and commissioning arrangements.

In the event of a prospective HLO wanting to directly employ staff to deliver some or all of the services and activity provided by the Music Hub, or to transfer some or all of the services and activities from one organisation to another within the proposed Music Hub partnership, then the prospective applicant must consider and respond to the possible implications of TUPE within their application.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with the current HLO(s) operating in the geographic area(s) in which they are planning to apply to lead a Music Hub. This is to ensure that appropriate partnership, staffing and/or commissioning arrangements have been considered and outlined prior to the submission of the lead organisation's application. If you cannot obtain appropriate or accurate information from the incumbent lead organisation(s), then you should provide appropriate workforce and/or budgetary assumptions within your application based on the size and scale of the Hub area, including (but not limited to) how risks and mitigations will be managed in the absence of detailed information.

New Fair Deal or other pension protection is not expected to apply to this competition process, in the vast majority of cases – it may apply where an outgoing HLO is a school or multi academy trust. Where the HLO is a 'Best Value Authority', the 2007 Pension Direction is not a requirement of this competition process. However, it is the responsibility of the applicant to carry out its own due diligence.

You can find the contact details for current Music Education Hubs on [our website](#), alongside workforce data for 2021-22 published as part of the latest release of our [data dashboard](#) for Music Education Hubs. It is the responsibility of the applicant to consider this information when making an application to lead a Music Hub and ensure appropriate provisions are included in their application where the TUPE of employees is expected to take place.

It is the responsibility of the HLO's directors, other officers, or those directing an organisation's affairs to ensure that it properly fulfils its legal duties in relation to TUPE, where applicable.

Assets

As part of the current funding terms and conditions for Music Education Hubs, HLOs may be required to pass on knowledge, data, skills, documentation, materials, procedures and capital assets that have been developed and/or purchased with the grant to any other organisation(s) carrying forward similar work.

Current Music Education Hub HLOs are expected to have in place a register of capital assets purchased with the grant, of which some or all may be transferable to any newly appointed HLO following the outcome of this investment process.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with the current HLO(s) operating in the geographic area(s) they are applying to lead a Music Hub in to identify and consider appropriate provisions for the transfer of assets, where applicable.

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Section four – Making your application



Section four – Making your application

Before you apply, make sure to read all relevant information and guidance relating to the application process, listed in the [Welcome to the Music Hub Investment Programme section](#).

How do I apply?

All applications to the Music Hub Investment Programme are made through our online application portal, [Grantium](#). You can find our guidance on how to use Grantium on [our website](#).

Create or update your applicant profile

To apply online, you need to create an applicant profile on Grantium, if you do not have one already. Your applicant profile then needs to be validated by a member of our team. Please be aware that it can take up to 10 working days from the day you submit your applicant profile for us to validate it – please make sure you leave plenty of time.

The deadline for submitting your applicant profile is **midday on Monday 2 October 2023**.

If you already have an applicant profile, you must review all information to ensure it is up to date before you start an application. For help with this, see our guidance: [How to set up and manage an applicant profile](#).

For further details on how to set up your applicant profile and register to apply, please see our [Grantium guidance](#).

Book and attend an introductory conversation

All prospective HLOs must have an ‘introductory conversation’ with a member of our staff in good time before making an application. This includes organisations that may have previously been involved with a Music Education Hub. You should have read this guidance and started to think about your application before you book your introductory conversation.

An introductory conversation is a scheduled, structured conversation with the Arts Council, which will last for a maximum of 75 minutes and will usually take place on a virtual meeting platform (eg Microsoft Teams). As a general guide, the conversation will aim to cover the following points:

- your background and track record in coordinating and facilitating access to music education and/or establishing and managing successful partnerships of a similar size or coverage
- your plans for establishing an appropriate and successful Music Hub partnership for the area, including your proposed partnership arrangements, your plans for governance and management, and your proposals for coordinating and overseeing the Music Hub’s workforce
- your financial plans for the Music Hub, including your approaches to charging and remissions, income generation and the capital grant for musical instruments

You will have the opportunity ask any questions you may have regarding the guidance for applicants or the application process during the conversation. You can also talk to us about any access support or alternative accessible formats you require to submit your application.

If you intend to apply to be a HLO for more than one geographic area, you will need to book a separate introductory conversation for each area in which you are intending to lead a Music Hub.

We will not be able to read or provide written comments on draft applications. We will talk with all potential applicants but cannot guarantee success for any applicant.

We understand that plans and proposals discussed during the introductory conversation are subject to change once partnerships and your application are further developed.

Introductory conversations will take place between 10 July and 18 August 2023.

To book an introductory conversation, go to [our website](#) or contact our [Customer Services team](#) for further information and support.

You will be able to request an introductory conversation from **28 June 2023**.

The deadline for booking an introductory conversation is **31 July 2023**.

The latest date for having an introductory conversation is **18 August 2023**.

Please note that if you have not had an introductory conversation by this date, your application will be ineligible.

Please note – the lead applicant (ie the organisation that is applying to be the HLO and will hold the funding agreement with Arts Council England) must book the introductory conversation and attend. You may invite up to three other attendees (four in total) – this may include other members of the proposed Music Hub partnership and/or governing body.

It is possible for more people to attend the introductory conversation for applicants considering a consortium approach. This would normally mean that one person per organisation within the consortium can attend the introductory conversation.

If you intend to apply as part of a consortium which has more than four member organisations, please state all the consortium members you would like to attend within the introductory conversation booking form on our website. We will then get in touch with you to confirm that all consortium members can attend.

Once you have had your introductory conversation, we will send you an email to confirm that the introductory conversation has been completed. Do not delete this email as you will need to attach it to your application form (see the Attachments section of the online application form for instructions on how to do this).

If you do not attach this confirmation email, your application may become ineligible for funding.

Complete the online application form

You must apply online through [Grantium](#). We do not accept printed applications, but if you have difficulty applying online, please contact our [Customer Services team](#). You can also refer to our [Access Support information sheet](#) for more information.

You can start your application on Grantium, save your work, and come back to it at any time to complete it.

We have also published a [Microsoft Word version of the application form](#) to help you prepare your application offline. You are not able to submit your application as a Word document.

In your application, you will be asked to confirm the geographic area in which you are applying to lead a Music Hub. Applicants are only able to select one geographic area from the drop-down list. If you wish to apply to lead a Hub in more than one of the areas listed, you need to submit a separate application per area.

Once you have confirmed the area you are applying to lead a Music Hub in, you will be asked to tell us about:

1. **your organisation** and why you believe it would make a good HLO for the area you are applying for

2. your approach to **facilitating, developing and implementing your Music Hub’s LPME**, including the completion of a **Music Hub Development Plan**:
 - o The Music Hub Development Plan is an outline activity plan from 1 April 2024 up to 31 August 2025. This should include key priorities and milestones for how you will plan, prepare and implement your Music Hub and its LPME. We will publish a separate how to guide on [our website](#) when our application portal opens to help you complete this section.
3. the **partnership arrangements** you will aim to establish, develop and sustain for your Music Hub, including proposed roles and responsibilities for strategic and/or delivery partners outlined in a **Partners Table**:
 - o The Partners Table is a list of the organisations and individuals you intend to include in your proposed Music Hub partnership, and who you will work with and fund to deliver the Music Hub aims. This should include the names of partners, partnership status (expected or confirmed), roles and responsibilities and the approximate amount of funding each partner will receive from the core revenue grant (if applicable). We will publish a separate how to guide on [our website](#) when our application portal opens to help you complete this section.
4. your strategic approach to **school engagement**, including your plans for identifying and appointing **Lead Schools for Music** and the roles and responsibilities they will carry out for your Music Hub
5. your strategic approach to supporting **progression and musical development** for children and young people, including how you and your Hub partners will enable children and young people to progress their interests and potential as far as they would like, across a range of genres and traditions
6. your strategic approach to ensuring music education is **inclusive** of all children and young people with a range of needs, including how your Hub will ensure that **inclusion** and widening opportunity will be embedded across all activity, plans and policies. You will also be asked to tell us about your plans for appointing an appropriate **Inclusion Lead** for the Music Hub.

7. your approach to ensuring the strategic, financial, operational and environmental **sustainability** of your Music Hub
8. your approach to **musical instrument storage, purchase and maintenance**
9. your proposed Music Hub **governance and management arrangements** and how your organisation would effectively manage and lead the Music Hub in your area

Financial information for your Music Hub

You will need to present us with your proposed financial arrangements for your Music Hub, including the budget plans and financial controls you will put in place.

In the application, we will ask you to tell us about:

- your organisation's current reserves target (as per your organisation's reserves policy), explaining whether this relates to all of your unrestricted funds including designated funds, or just to free reserves
- detail on any assumptions or exceptional items included in your budget
- any key risks (and mitigations) you have identified in relation to your budget or balance sheet
- the financial controls you have or will put in place to oversee, monitor and manage the Music Hub's finances

You will also need to provide your organisation's financial statements for the previous financial year and complete the [Financial Information template](#) as part of your application form in Grantium, attaching it to your application where requested. There are two sections in the Financial Information template to complete:

- your organisation's balance sheet at 31 March 2023
- a detailed budget for the Music Hub (for the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025)

If you are applying as part of a consortium, the balance sheet should be for the lead organisation. The budget should be for the consortium activity.

You can find the how to guide to help you complete this template on [our website](#).

Monitoring information

As part of your application, you will also be asked to provide monitoring information for your organisation. You will need to supply monitoring information for your organisation only or, if you're applying on behalf of a consortium, for the lead applicant only.

You will need to gather this information before submitting your application.

You will be asked for the number of senior managers and members on your organisation's management committee, board, governing body or council who are from the specified groups. If, when gathering the data, individuals choose not to provide the relevant information, you can put 'not known/prefer not to answer' in the relevant box.

We will use this information to report to the government and to monitor the different backgrounds of people who receive grants. We will not use this information in creating assessment scores for your application. However, for this programme, we will use this information as part of our monitoring process to help us in our aim of investing in organisations whose governance and leadership are more representative of this country.

Upload the necessary attachments

You must provide the following mandatory attachments with your application form:

- confirmation that your organisation has had an introductory conversation with the Arts Council
- financial statements for your previous financial year, prepared to the relevant legal standard for an organisation of your size and legal status
- a completed Financial Information template, using the mandatory template provided.

If you have a document that details your proposed governance and management structure, such as a visual diagram, you can upload this in the Attachments section at the end of the application form. If you are applying on behalf of a consortium, this could include further information on your consortium arrangements. Please note, anything provided that is not related to governance and management will not be reviewed as part of your application.

You can submit attachments in the following formats: jpg, xls, xlsx, jpeg, pdf, doc, docx, pptx, and ppt. The combined limit on file size for all the attachments taken together is 50 megabytes.

If you have not attached the information in the correct format or used the templates we have provided, we will not be able to consider your application and it may be deemed ineligible.

Please only provide the information we have asked for. We will not consider:

- any additional information submitted (including any hyperlinks) that we have not asked for
- any further information you send after you have submitted your application, unless we have specifically asked you for it

When can I apply?

We will accept applications for the Music Hub Investment Programme from Tuesday 18 July 2023. **Applications must be submitted by 12pm (midday) on Thursday 12 October 2023.** Applications submitted after this time will not be considered.

Need some help?

We want to ensure the Music Hub Investment Programme application process is open and accessible to everyone. If you have any questions, experience any barriers within the application process, or require help to make an application, contact our [Customer Service team](#) for support.

You can also find the full list of questions that applicants will be asked to respond to in Grantium in the [Microsoft Word version of the application form](#), which includes character counts and templates for completing the Music Hub Development Plan and Partners Table.

Applicants can start to prepare their application offline using this document. However, all applicants must complete their application on Grantium. **We will not accept versions of the Microsoft Word application form either as an attachment on Grantium or as an email submission.**

You can find the weightings for each question in the '[How we will make our decisions](#)' section of this guidance. You do not need to use the full character count if you do not feel it is necessary.

Use the criteria/prompts in [section five of this guidance](#) to help you structure your responses.

After you submit your application

You will receive an acknowledgement email confirming that your application has been received by Arts Council England. This will be sent to the email address you used to log in to the Grantium portal.

Your full application will then be checked against the [eligibility criteria for this fund](#) and, if the application is eligible, it will be assessed using the prompts outlined in the next section of this guidance. We will contact you through Grantium if we need any more information.

If your application is not eligible, we will not process it any further and it will not be considered for funding. If this happens, we will write to you to let you know.

Please note that, once you have submitted your application, you must not approach the Arts Council to discuss your application. This includes both our staff and the members of our Area and National Councils.

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Section five – How we will make our decisions



Section five – How we will make our decisions

Initial review

We will check your application to ensure you have provided all of the information we have requested. We may issue a further information request if we consider there to be any essential information missing from your application.

We will make our decisions based on the information you provide in your application, any further information that we request and, where relevant, data and information from the Charity Commission and Companies House websites relating to your constitution and audited accounts from the past two years.

If you are an existing HLO for a Music Education Hub, we may also take into account your current programme risk rating if we consider there to be a significant risk to the delivery of a future funding agreement. Current HLOs with a “major” risk rating are not excluded from applying to lead a future Music Hub, but the Arts Council would need to be satisfied that appropriate risk mitigations have been identified in the application.

Assessment criteria

Each application will be evaluated by an assessment panel using the criteria outlined below:

Section	Question	Weighting	Criteria we will consider in our assessment:
About your organisation	Please tell us about your organisation. Why do you believe your organisation would make a good HLO for the area you are applying for?	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your track record of establishing and managing successful partnerships of a similar size or coverage • your track record of strategically coordinating educational and/or cultural activity and support for children, young people, families and schools • how your track record demonstrates that you are a well-run organisation that merits public investment • the quality of your work and how it responds to needs and priorities <p>If you are applying on behalf of a consortium, you will need to provide a simple overview of who your consortium members are.</p>
Facilitating, developing and implementing your LPME	How will you facilitate, develop and implement a LPME that delivers against the three aims for Music Hubs set out in the NPME and ensures a consistently high-quality music education offer is available to all children and young people within your Music Hub area?	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your collaboration with a range of local, regional and national Music Hub partners, drawing on appropriate skills and expertise, to develop and deliver a LPME that meets the strategic aims for Hubs • how you will capture the needs, priorities, and ambitions of children and young people, families, schools, teachers, and other relevant stakeholders in each local authority within your Music Hub area to inform your LPME

Section	Question	Weighting	Criteria we will consider in our assessment:
Facilitating, developing and implementing your LPME (continued)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> your understanding of existing provision and infrastructure so that your LPME can respond to opportunities and/or gaps how you will monitor the quality, impact and effectiveness of your LPME, including how you will capture and analyse data and evidence to inform planning, drive change, and ensure consistent monitoring and reporting the risks you have identified to delivery and the appropriate mitigation measures you will put in place to deliver your Music Hub's key priorities and milestones <p>You must complete the mandatory Music Hub Development Plan, setting out your Hub's key priorities and milestones, starting from 1 April 2024 up to 31 August 2025. This will be assessed as part of this question.</p>
Partnership arrangements	How will your organisation establish, develop and sustain an effective and appropriate partnership for the Music Hub?	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> your proposed partnership arrangements, including the roles and responsibilities of identified strategic and/or delivery partners you are seeking to work with your approach to reviewing and evolving the partnership in response to the developing needs and context of the Music Hub area your proposed arrangements for appointing, securing and/or commissioning partners to deliver and support Hub activity, including the purchase of musical instruments using the capital grant, where appropriate

Section	Question	Weighting	Criteria we will consider in our assessment:
Partnership arrangements (continued)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how current workforce arrangements have informed your partnership plans, where appropriate • how you will monitor quality and performance of Hub partners <p>You must complete the mandatory Partners Table to outline the proposed roles and responsibilities of identified strategic and/or delivery partners you intend to put in place for your Music Hub. This will support the assessment of this question.</p>
School engagement	What is your strategic approach to school engagement?	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how you will work with schools to identify their needs and priorities and support the development of their School Music Development Plans • how you will work with schools to remove barriers to participation in music education • your approach to communications, information sharing and networking • your approach to curriculum advice and support, including promoting high-quality curriculum resources such as the Model Music Curriculum and Oak National Academy

Section	Question	Weighting	Criteria we will consider in our assessment:
School engagement (continued)	What are your plans for identifying and appointing Lead Schools for Music in each local authority area covered by the Music Hub you are applying for?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your indicative plans for the roles and responsibilities of Lead Schools for Music and how these respond to the needs of schools in your Hub area • how you will identify and appoint appropriate Lead Schools in each local authority area covered by the Music Hub • how you will ensure there is remuneration or support in kind for schools to take on this role • your approach to monitoring the impact of Lead Schools
Progression and musical development	What is your strategic approach to supporting progression and musical development for children and young people, including how you and your Music Hub partners will enable children and young people to progress their interests and potential as far as they would like, across a range of genres and traditions?	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how you will collaborate with a range of Music Hub partners to develop a Progression Strategy as part of the LPME • how you will support children and young people to progress their interests and potential, including developing high-quality progression routes in and beyond formal education settings and across a range of genres and traditions • how you will work with Music Hub partners and other providers to address gaps in expertise and identify potential opportunities for provision • how you will work with schools and other providers to establish mechanisms to monitor progression of children and young people into further study, employment, and/or engagement

Section	Question	Weighting	Criteria we will consider in our assessment:
Inclusion	What is your strategic approach to ensuring music education is inclusive of all children and young people with a range of needs, including how your Hub will ensure inclusion and widening opportunity will be embedded across all activity, plans and policies?	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how you will collaborate with a range of Music Hub partners to develop an Inclusion Strategy as part of the LPME • how your Music Hub will ensure that inclusion and widening opportunity are embedded across all activity, plans and policies, including provision, leadership, workforce, governance, charging and remissions, and ensure this work is adequately resourced. • how you will draw on good practice, evidence and research to support the design of high-quality programmes and activities which are inclusive and improve opportunity and access • the specific support and resources, including access to musical instruments, that will be made available for children and young people who are eligible for Pupil Premium, including looked-after children and/or those who are care experienced, and those who have an identified special educational need or disability (SEND)
	What are your plans for appointing an appropriate Inclusion Lead to carry out the functions described in the applicant guidance?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how you will identify and appoint an appropriate Inclusion Lead and your plans for what their roles and responsibilities will be

Section	Question	Weighting	Criteria we will consider in our assessment:
Sustainability	What is your approach to ensuring the strategic, financial, operational and environmental sustainability of your Music Hub?	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your approach to charging and remissions and specifically how your policies will help to reduce or remove financial barriers experienced by children and young people in your area • your approach to generating additional income to support the Hub's offer and support for children and young people • your approach to supporting and sustaining a dynamic and well-trained music education workforce within your Hub area, including your CPD offer for the workforce employed or commissioned by the HLO • how you will act upon your organisation's and the wider Hub's environmental responsibilities, setting appropriate targets that align with the DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy • how you will monitor and evaluate your Hub's impact and performance, including the effective use of needs analysis, impact framework, self-evaluation and performance framework

Section	Question	Weighting	Criteria we will consider in our assessment:
Musical instrument storage, purchase and maintenance	What is your approach to musical instrument storage, purchase and maintenance?	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your approach to consultation and understanding needs for musical instruments in your area • how you will develop your strategy for investing the capital grant for musical instruments, including how you will plan your purchase of new stock in response to the needs and priorities for your area, and how you will ensure your purchasing will support access to instruments for children and young people with SEND • an outline of any plans you have to work with partners to deploy this investment. These can be identified and reflected in your Partners Table. • how you will store and manage assets as a HLO and/or through Hub partners, including the approach to repair and maintenance, record-keeping and reporting

Section	Question	Weighting	Criteria we will consider in our assessment:
Governance and management arrangements	What are your proposed Music Hub governance and management arrangements and how would your organisation effectively manage and lead the Music Hub in your area?	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your plans for establishing a Hub board or equivalent oversight group that is representative and reflective of the communities served by the Music Hub • your plans for ensuring independent and impartial accountability, including the appointment of an independent chair for your Hub board or equivalent oversight group • the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders within the HLO and/or the Music Hub • any gaps in diversity, skills or expertise that you have identified and how these will be addressed via recruitment, training and/or development plans • your ability to effectively support and manage employees and/or the wider Music Hub workforce through periods of change and transition, including the coordination and management of staff transferring under TUPE, where applicable • your commitment to ensuring fair and equal pay across the Music Hub workforce <p>If you have a document that details your proposed governance and management structure, such as a visual diagram, you can upload this in the Attachments section at the end of the application form. If you are applying on behalf of a consortium, this could include further information on your consortium arrangements. Please note, anything provided that is not related to governance and management will not be reviewed as part of your application.</p>

Scoring

Each section of your application will be given a score between 0 – 4. The scores are based upon how well you respond to the criteria and prompts listed previously.

The definition for the score given to each of the above sections is as follows:

Score	Definition
0	the answer does not meet any criteria
1	the answer meets some criteria
2	the answer meets all criteria
3	the answer meets all criteria, with some strong elements
4	the answer strongly meets all criteria

If you score “1” or below on any section of the application, it may result in your application automatically being rejected.

Financial risk review

The financial information section of your application will be considered alongside the submission of your most recent financial statements and the mandatory Financial Information template. The financial information section of your application will be given a risk rating:

Score	Definition
Major risk	means a particular issue gives us concern that the Music Hub may not be managed successfully, and immediate intervention may be required
Moderate risk	means that we have noted some risk to the successful delivery of the Music Hub but the risk can be mitigated, for example, by increased grant monitoring or additional payment conditions if the application is successful
Minor risk	means that although we may have noted a particular issue, we do not think it represents a risk to the successful delivery of the Music Hub

We will consider the following risk prompts when reviewing your financial information:

- how well your organisation demonstrates solvency, financial resilience and liquidity
- whether your organisation holds an adequate level of unrestricted funds
- whether your response and financial submissions demonstrate adequate financial planning, including whether the proposed budget for the Music Hub shows appropriate consideration of the financial needs of the work expected to be carried out

- whether income and expenditure levels are reasonable for the proposed work and whether these align to income and expenditure guidelines set out in this guidance
- whether there are appropriate financial controls in place to oversee the management of the Music Hub's finances
- any risks, specific to your organisation and/or Music Hub's operating model and finances, which could affect successful delivery of the funding agreements for the core revenue grant and capital grant for musical instruments

If you score a “major risk” on the financial information section of the application, it may result in your application automatically being rejected.

Decision making

Once we have assessed your application, we will consider whether to make you a conditional funding offer. Conditional funding decisions will then be shared with the DfE prior to the announcement of awards.

When will you tell me about your decision?

We expect to tell you in April 2024 whether you have been made a conditional offer of funding. This will include both the core revenue grant and the capital grant for musical instruments.

If we do not make you an offer

If you have been unsuccessful with your application to lead a Music Hub, we will provide you with written feedback about your application, which will include the scores awarded to you and the successful applicant, the characteristics and relative advantages of the successful application and the reasons why your application did not meet certain criteria outlined in this guidance.

All of our decisions will be subject to a 10-day standstill period. If you have been unsuccessful with your application to lead a Music Hub and wish to request further feedback about your application, or raise a complaint about the decision we have made, you must submit your request within this specified timeframe (please see our [section about raising a complaint](#) for further information).

If we make you an offer

Any decision to offer funding will be conditional and subject to successful funding agreement negotiation. If we make you a conditional offer of investment, we may ask you to submit updated versions of your Music Hub Development Plan, Partners Table, Financial Information template and/or your Music Hub's governance and management arrangements. These will be used to negotiate your core revenue grant funding agreement with us.

You will also be asked to meet certain conditions associated to the capital grant for musical instruments (see the [Purchasing and maintaining musical instruments essential document](#) for further details).

Any decision to offer funding will be subject to the acceptance of the respective funding agreements and our standard terms and conditions for Music Hub Lead Organisations, including any payment conditions that are specific to your organisation and/or Music Hub.

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Section six – Legal rights and obligations



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How do we make a complaint?

As an organisation, we will always listen to and respond to any concerns that you may have. If you would like to make a complaint about the service you have received from Arts Council England or the way we have handled your application, we have a process that you can use.

If you believe we made a mistake and you wish to make a complaint, you can find out about [our complaints procedure on our website](#). Please note that Arts Council England does not have an appeals process. We are unable to consider concerns that relate solely to the decision we have made rather than how we have made it.

Please note there will be a separate complaints process for the assessment and decision-making part of the Music Hub Investment Programme. This will be published in early October 2023, to align with the application submission deadline.

You can contact our Complaints Managers for further advice by emailing complaints@artscouncil.org.uk

Counter-fraud measures

Arts Council England has a [Counter Fraud Strategy and Policy](#) and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that grant holders given funding through this programme use the funding appropriately. This will include random sampling checks on a proportion of grants made. All grant holders must retain their financial and other documentation relating to the grant, and Arts Council England reserves the right to request this at any time. In addition, Arts Council England will complete checks pre- and post-award against grant applicants for due diligence and counter fraud purposes.

Freedom of Information Act

The Arts Council is committed to being as open as possible. We believe that the public has a right to know how we spend public funds and how we make our funding decisions.

We are also listed as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. By law, we may have to provide your application documents and information about our assessment to any member of the public who asks for them under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We may not release those parts of the documents which are covered by one or more of the exemptions under the Act. Please see the Freedom of Information website at www.ico.org.uk for information about freedom of information generally and the exemptions.

We will not release any information about applications during the assessment period, as this may interfere with our decision-making process.

Data protection

Arts Council England is committed to using any personal information (or personal data) we collect on a lawful, fair and transparent basis, respecting your legal rights as an individual in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679), the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and other applicable laws that regulate the use and privacy of personal data (Data Protection Law).

As part of us meeting this requirement, we have published our General Privacy Notice for you to refer to [here](#). This tells you more about the personal data the Arts Council collects, the different purposes that we use it for and on what legal basis, who we may share that personal data with, how long we keep it, and your legal rights, including your right to contact us and receive information regarding the personal data about you that we may hold from time to time.

For further information about our obligations and your rights under Data Protection Law, as well as how to report a concern if you believe that your personal data is being collected or used illegally, please also see the [Information Commissioner Office website](#).

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Contact us



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Glossary



Glossary of key terms: Music Hub Investment Programme

Access support relates to the ways that we are able to help people who are experiencing barriers at different stages of the application process. Access Support is available for Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people, as well as those experiencing poor physical and mental health.

Agreed Activity means the activity or activities to be carried out during the Funding Period, which has been agreed with us and for which we are giving the Hub Lead Organisation a grant as set out in the grant offer letter and in accordance with the Funding Agreement.

Arm's length body (ALB) is a public body that is a formally established organisation that is, at least in part, publicly funded to deliver a public or government service, though not as a ministerial department. The term refers to a wide range of public sector entities and is administratively classified by the Cabinet Office.

Assets, in this context, relates to knowledge, data, skills, documentation, materials, procedures and capital assets that have been developed and/or purchased with the Music Hub grant.

Capital assets, in this context, are any assets (or multiple assets) that are purchased, renovated, created, improved, or equipped using more than £1,000 of grant funding in any single transaction. The definition can be applied to capital purchases made using either the core revenue grant or the capital grant for musical instruments.

Capital grant/funding, in this context, relates to the £25 million of capital funding allocated to the Department for Education, and awarded to Hub Lead Organisations by Arts Council England, to support the purchase of musical instruments.

Co-curricular programmes are defined as activities and/or learning experiences that are connected to the curriculum and/or complement or extend pupils classroom learning.

Consortium means a group of separate organisations joining together in a contractual arrangement and co-operating to apply for the funding collectively.

Core revenue grant/funding in this context, relates to the funding allocated by the Department for Education, and awarded to Hub Lead Organisations by Arts Council England, to help coordinate and support activity delivered by Music Hubs.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is a ministerial department of His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Department focuses on supporting culture, arts, media, sport, tourism and civil society across every part of England.

The Department for Education (DfE) is a ministerial department of His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Department is responsible for children's services and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England. The DfE works to provide children's services, education and skills training that ensures opportunity is equal for all, no matter background, family circumstances, or need. For further details about the DfE, please [see section one within this Guidance for Applicants](#).

Free school meals (FSM) places a duty on maintained schools, academies and free schools to provide free school meals to pupils of all ages that meet certain criteria.

Funding agreements are legally-binding agreements that each Hub Lead Organisation enters into with the Arts Council. They typically comprise of an offer letter, the standard terms and conditions of funding and any additional conditions that are relevant to the Music Hub and/or Hub Lead Organisation.

Extra-curricular programmes are defined as activities and/or learning experiences that are not connected to a pupil's classroom experience, for example musical activities undertaken outside classroom time by a pupil who is no longer studying music in curriculum time.

Grantium is Arts Council England's online application portal. All applications to the Music Hub Investment Programme will be made via Grantium. Further guidance on how to use Grantium is available via [our website](#).

Hub governance relates to the governance and management arrangements which have been implemented to support the oversight of the Music Hub and ensure the effective management of the funding agreement with the Arts Council.

A **Hub Lead Organisation (HLO)** receives grant funding to coordinate and support the delivery of music education provision through a Music Hub partnership. HLOs are responsible for ensuring this delivery is in line with the Department for Education's aims for Music Hubs, as set out in '[The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education](#)' (NPME).

An **introductory conversation** is a meeting that all prospective Hub Lead Organisations must have with Arts Council England prior to making an application. Please see [section four \(Making your application\)](#) for further details.

Let's Create is Arts Council England's strategy for 2020-30 and is built around three Outcomes and four Investment Principles. They are designed to work together to achieve the Arts Council's vision of a country in which the creativity

of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. Find out more about Let's Create on [our website](#).

Local Plan for Music Education (LPME) is a plan which details the strategic and operational arrangements for each Music Hub. The LPME should describe how the Music Hub will deliver against the three aims for Music Hubs. It should also connect to the five strategic functions for Hub Lead Organisations and incorporate all relevant plans and strategies associated to the Music Hub. It should be developed, implemented and communicated by the Hub Lead Organisation in collaboration with its Music Hub partners. Please see [section two \(Background\)](#) for further details.

Looked after children refers to children and young people under the age of 18 who are under the care of a local authority, either as a result of a court order or a voluntary agreement with their parents.

The **Model Music Curriculum (MMC)** is a non-statutory blueprint for delivery of the music curriculum for key stages 1, 2 and 3, published by the Department for Education in March 2021.

Multi-academy trusts (MATs) are trusts that operate more than one state-funded academy school. MATs receive their funding directly from the Department for Education (DfE) and make their own financial decisions, outside of the control of a local authority.

A **Music Hub** is a partnership, co-ordinated by a lead organisation, that is responsible for supporting, delivering and enabling access to music education activity for children and young people within a local area. The possibilities for this partnership should be broadly conceived and reflect a diversity of stakeholders, including but not limited to, schools, early years and other education providers, community music organisations and other regional and national youth music organisations and industry.

Music Hub aims refers to the Department for Education's three aims for Music Hubs, as set out in '[The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education](#)' (NPME). Hub Lead Organisations are responsible for ensuring that delivery is in line with these aims. Please see [section two \(Background\)](#) for further details.

The National Plan for Music Education (NPME), known as '[The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education](#)' sets out the government's vision to enable all children and young people in England to learn to sing, play an instrument and create music together, and have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents, including professionally. The plan sets out how the government will achieve this vision by 2030, emphasising the importance of partnerships.

Pupil Premium refers to funding provided to state-funded schools and academies in England to help improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium are those who are recorded as eligible for free school meals, or who have been recorded as eligible in the past six years, are looked-after children and/or previously looked-after children.

The **Relationship Framework** is a guidance document that sets out the parameters of Art Council England's relationship with Music Education Hubs and describes what we expect from the organisations in which we invest government funding.

Relationship Manager refers to the Arts Council member of staff who is assigned to each Music Hub to be their main point of contact and communication with the Arts Council. Relationship Managers can suggest other sources of advice and support, and they lead the Arts Council's monitoring of Hub performance.

School Music Development Plan is a school's plan for delivering high-quality music education for all pupils in the three areas of curriculum, co-curricular and enrichment, and supporting pupils to progress. This should be

connected to the school's wider offer and development, as supported by any School Improvement Plans and where relevant, Trust Improvement Plans.

SMART objectives, in this context, refers to the objectives that will be set to support delivery of the Music Hub's Local Plan for Music Education. These objectives will form part of the funding agreement with Arts Council England and will be utilised to demonstrate how the Hub is performing, tracked and monitored through quarterly reporting arrangements. The acronym SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound.

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – A child or young person has special educational needs (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child or young person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The two definitions are distinct: some children and young people have SEN, some have disabilities and some have both.

State-funded schools and academies receive funding through their local authority or directly from the government to provide education to pupils between the ages of 3 and 18. Please see this [GOV.UK webpage](#) for further details.

Strategic functions refers to how the Hub Lead Organisation should operate and deliver its Local Plan for Music Education. The five strategic functions, as detailed within the National Plan for Music Education, are: partnerships, schools, progression and musical development, inclusion, and sustainability. Please see [section two \(Background\)](#) for further details.

Upper-tier or single-tier local authorities, in this context, refer to County Councils, unitary authorities, metropolitan districts and London boroughs. All Music Hubs are structured around upper-tier or single-tier authorities.

