Music Education Hubs: Business planning guidance

Updated January 2020
Introduction

Arts Council England requires an annually updated satisfactory business plan from each Music Education Hub as a condition of funding and reporting. Your business plan should cover your mid to long-term strategic vision and aims and include specific detail regarding your planned activity, budget assumptions for the coming financial year (minimum) of the Hub’s activity for which funding has been agreed, and relevant contextual information. We expect to clearly see how the core and extension roles will be delivered, how you will develop and monitor your Hub strategy, and what your SMART (specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-based) objectives are. Your business plan should evidence how you are responding to local needs, and your needs analysis is required to be submitted as part of your mandatory documents.

It should be clear what partnerships are in place, including any working relationships with Bridge organisations and/or National Portfolio Organisations, their role within the Hub. A shared understanding of quality and progression is important across a Hub’s partnerships and should be embedded in the business plan. By building local, regional and national partnerships and where appropriate, commissioning work to ensure a high-quality offer, partners can support the collective ambition to ensure that all children and young people take part in a high-quality music education.

Where your funding agreement spans multiple years, you should also include projections for future years of activity, although these need not be as detailed. Your business plan need not be a long document, but it must be complete, comprehensive and clear and show how you will use your resources to deliver the core and extension roles in the National Plan for Music Education (NPME).

Business plans are created and owned by Hubs – and Hub lead organisations are expected to discuss, develop and share these plans with their key strategic partners and across all areas highlight where Hub partners are supporting the work. Updates on progress against objectives are expected to be discussed as part of your governance and management structure and evidenced through your board papers or quarterly payment conditions. As appropriate, Hubs should consider publishing elements of their plan, as part of ensuring the offer and ambition of the Hub is clearly communicated to locally.
As the legal structures, governance and business models of Hubs vary, the Arts Council does not have a template for the business plan, but we do set out below the minimum information you should supply to us. Business plans should be individual and tailored to the needs of the organisation. You should set the SMART objectives which you will use to measure your progress. The plans should demonstrate that you have considered the risks associated with your programme thoroughly and have appropriate controls in place to mitigate them. You should provide us with evidence that the business plan has been approved and adopted by your Hub governance (for example by resolution of your board, and if applicable, by the Chief Executive/authorised signatory of your local authority).

Business plans must incorporate (or include as an appendices) an activity plan, SMART objectives, needs analysis and budget which are acceptable to the Arts Council, as per the funding conditions. This is to ensure your Hub meets the ambitions set out in the NPME. The business plan should also include a risk register, highlighting any planned organisational changes, risks or issues which you expect might impact on the work of the Hub.

**SMART Objectives**

Your objectives must be agreed by the Arts Council and should cover how you intend to deliver the core and extension roles. Objectives should consider organisational targets that might be required, for example enhancing board diversity and developing new partnerships in certain areas. Objectives can be either quantitative or qualitative, depending on what they relate to. However, to be SMART and effective they must combine at least two of the following: time, money, quantity and quality Every Hub should write their own objectives and show how they will be monitored and evaluated. Your Relationship Manager will take the context of your Hub into consideration when reviewing your business plan and SMART objectives.

For more general advice on how to develop set SMART objectives specific to your Hub you may wish to refer to our *Guide to Business Planning for Arts and Cultural Organisations* by Dawn Langley and Susan Royce [here](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Business%20Planning%20%3B%20Guidance%20for%20arts%20and%20cultural%20organisations.pdf).

**Suggested SMART Objectives**

The aims and objectives within your business plan will be agreed with the Arts Council. Every Hub should write their own aims and objectives related to the core and extension roles, the following list gives some examples indicators you may wish to consider and build on. The monitoring of your objectives allows Hubs and the Arts Council to continue to demonstrate the effectiveness and value of

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Department for Education investment, as the role of Hubs embedded in the wider education and cultural sectors.

The following examples do not represent an exhaustive or comprehensive list.

**Engagement with schools:**
- number of publicly funded primary, middle and secondary schools involved in the delivery of each of the core and extension roles and how, broken down by type of education establishment, including pupil referral units and special schools
- number of schools you support to achieve an Artsmark

**Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET):**
- number of children undertaking WCET at different key stages, broken down by: ethnicity; children known to be eligible for free school meals/Pupil Premium/children with special educational needs (schools to provide); and instrument (and by local authority where more than one area is covered)
- number of schools with at least one WCET programme (one year); number of schools with at least one WCET programme (one term)

**Instrumental lessons/progression:**
- number of children receiving instrumental and vocal tuition following WCET, broken down by: type of lesson; ethnicity; age; gender; or known to be eligible for free school meals; children with special educational needs/disabled children
- number of children receiving instrumental and vocal tuition broken down as above
- breakdown of instruments and standards across this group, as part of understanding the standards being reached you may want to consider the number of graded music exams achieved by pupils
- number of Arts Awards, GCSEs and alternative qualifications achieved by young musicians
- locally relevant objectives around genre diversity
- number of teachers and quality of provision

**Progression:**
- locally relevant objectives for a range of progression routes (formal, informal, non-formal) across a variety of genres and ability levels
- attendance and diversity at creative and music-specific careers events

**Ensembles:**
- number and type of ensembles supported by Hub partnership in primary, middle and secondary schools
• number and type of local area ensembles (including non-formal provision) run by the Hub partnership
• number of children involved in schools and area-based (e.g., non-formal) ensembles, broken down by: key stage; gender; ethnicity; known to be eligible for free school meals/children with special educational needs/disabled children; you may also want to consider the geographic location of attendees to understand access from those in rural communities
• breakdown of genre diversity across ensemble offer
• locally relevant objectives to support informal or non-formal activities
• range of performance opportunities and partnership to support the ensembles in your area

**Singing/vocal strategy:**
• number of state-funded schools with one or more choirs (that meet at least once a week, sustained beyond one term)
• number of state-funded schools offering vocal tuition
• number of children receiving vocal tuition in school
• number of local area training choirs beyond school and number of children involved
• number of local area intermediate and advanced choirs beyond school and number of children involved
• attendance at singing-related CPD or curriculum support provided
• range of performance opportunities for singers quality and progression metrics for your singing provision

**Performances:**
• number of local performances per year
• number of performances in regional/national events or festivals
• range of partners supporting performances

**Curriculum support:**
• number of schools supported through the School Music Education Plan
• locally relevant KPIs related to depth of engagement with schools
• number of teachers benefiting from
  (a) networks
  (b) professional development courses and
  (b) ongoing training in the classroom provided or contracted via the Hub

**Instrument hire scheme:**
• number of individuals hiring instruments
• number of remissions (looked after children/children known to be eligible for free school meals/children with special educational needs/disabled children)
Finance and fundraising:
- income raised from schools, separated out between income from school budget and income from parents that is passed on by schools
- income raised from parents
- income raised from other non-public sources
- expenditure on administrative costs

Responding to local need:
- range of partners involved in Music Education Hub delivery
- range of services not provided locally but via other Hubs or national bodies where they have suitable services/expertise
- regularly updated needs analysis, informed by the views of a diverse range of parents/children/schools including those from disadvantaged backgrounds – the needs analysis will generate locally specific key performance indicators for a Hub to work to
- consider a range of protected characteristics and socio-economic factors in your needs analysis and resultant objectives
- needs analysis gathers views from those not already engaged with the Hub
- breadth of genre offered, including use of digital technology
- engagement considered across related local or national initiatives such as the Local Cultural Education Partnership, Bridge networks, or with the youth sector, youth justice, local mental health and wellbeing initiatives etc.

Data, evidence and impact:
- collecting and analysing data for out of school provision (e.g. large-scale performances and events; lessons; ensembles; singing strategy; fundraising etc)
- collecting and analysing data for music education in schools (e.g. WCET; curriculum support; CPD etc)
- data is reliably and accurately gathered from partners, schools, parents and young people as needed
- impact of Hub strategy is understood
- quality of provision is monitored/evaluated and improved where needed
- engagement in peer learning or with neighbouring Hubs supports your understanding of impact, shares best practice and allows cross-area efficiencies to be made.
Mandatory components of the Business Plan

A summary of the Hub’s planned activity
Include a short introductory text or summary of all the key facts about your Hub and its work, its key achievements to date and what you intend to achieve in the coming year to address the core and extension roles. As a guide, imagine a text maximum of one page of A4 or maximum three minutes’ reading time. You can present your key partnerships, the scope of your activities (e.g. in terms of schools, children, instrumental teaching, vocal work, events, quality and nature of the planned activities) and objectives and rationale for these, for example building reach and diversity, ensuring access to activities for those that might not otherwise engage, supporting progression etc), the outcomes and results you are hoping to achieve, and what data or evaluation will be used to monitor performance, include the fundraising activities you will undertake and the innovative or creative approaches you will be taking.

Mission, objectives and aims of the Hub
Here you can present the mission statement or vision for your Hub and set a number of clear objectives or long-range aims that you will achieve by the end of the funding period in order to meet the core and extension roles. You could also show your activities as a set of monthly or termly milestones or targets or include your programme of activity. Your business plan should describe your working relationships with a wide range of partners, and if appropriate set out how your wider organisational aims align or diverge from the aims of the Hub.

The context of your Hub’s work: a needs analysis
You are required to undertake an (at least) annual needs analysis and show how the design of your Hub programme is responding to and addressing equality and inclusion in order to meet the needs of the diverse range of children and young people in your area. Here you should evidence that a robust, detailed and updated needs analysis of your area has been undertaken, drawing on a wide of stakeholder perspectives including youth voice, and show the resultant actions from this analysis, and how you will collect and collate data on an ongoing basis. You may want to show how you will prioritise certain groups over others vary the nature of provision to address needs. Guidance and a template for a needs analysis can be downloaded from the Arts Council website here. The needs analysis should be submitted as part of your mandatory documents.

Governance
Your governance model and the legal structure you adopt should be described to show who in your organisation takes ultimate responsibility for the governance and financial matters of the Hub. The governance structure should effectively

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2 [https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-5](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-5)
monitor and oversee the planning and delivery of the work of the Hub, monitor performance against objectives, ensure a broad range of views are considered in developing Hub strategy, avoid conflicts of interest, and monitor risks.

If you have a Hub board, steering committee, advisory body, partnership group or strategy group etc, who are not legally responsible for the governance of the Hub, i.e. separate to the governance of the Hub lead organisation but play an important role in the Hub’s work and strategy development, you should describe the membership and their terms of reference (your Relationship Manager may request to see a copy of these terms of reference). You should show that the roles of members, how they demonstrate a range of skills and perspectives, and how frequently they will meet has been considered to ensure the board or equivalent works effectively. You must make sure your board or advisory group has the necessary skills and experience to meet your aims and objectives. The Arts Council expects broad and diverse representation on Hub boards, demonstrating a range of perspectives, skills and protected characteristics. Representation should reflect key stakeholders in the area and beyond, including youth voice, strategic partners, the wider arts/cultural, youth and music industry/sector, not just education. You must show how you will manage conflicts of interest between the advisory board and senior leadership team. The advisory board must be enabled to support and challenge strategic decisions, for example on expenditure, focus areas, needs analysis and development of the business plan. The relationship between your organisation and advisory board must be clearly defined within its terms of reference, ensuring the purpose of the group is clearly communicated internally and externally.

Where necessary, you should include an organisational diagram to show the relationship between the partners. Further guidance from the Arts Council on appropriate and effective governance can be found here.³

**Human resources, staff and capacity**
What is your management structure? Who are the lead officers managing the Hub and what is their relevant experience and expertise (this may include detailing the position within a local authority structure)? What succession plans are in place? Who are the tutorial staff body (full-time equivalent, contractual arrangements, qualifications/specialisms etc)? Is capacity expected to change? How will you demonstrate a commitment to promoting equality and diversity as an organisation? Who are the key partners for the Hub and their roles? How are they informing the Hub strategy and delivery? How will partners expand the capacity and reach of the Hub? Please also identify continuing professional development (CPD) needs.

³ [https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-5](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-5)
**Budgets**

Hubs must use the Arts Council’s budget template (unless another format is agreed by Relationship Manager) which can be downloaded from the Arts Council website here. Please show income from all sources (e.g. Department for Education grant, local authority grant, fees paid by parents, income from schools, trusts/foundations etc). You should also indicate any significant in-kind income from partners or others.

In line with criteria originally set out in the Music Education Hub prospectus, we will look to ensure Hub budgets and finances are being appropriately managed and monitored, costs/fees are appropriately set, and staff pay fair and equitable. Further guidance on fair pay can be found on the Arts Council website. We will also consider (but not limit our consideration to) the following:

- whether overheads, management fees, administrative costs and any other recharges relate directly to the amount of time spent on the agreed activity and calculations are clear.
- how well the Hub identifies and secures funding from other sources, to best meet the local needs of pupils’ music education.
- whether efficiencies are enabled or planned through partnership working
- whether a maximum of 20 per cent of the Hub grant is spent on back office functions, and a minimum of 80 per cent on front line expenditure.
- the Hub’s approach to ensuring remissions/subsidy can support equality of access for young people.
- ensuring all income derived from Hub grant activity is ring-fenced for the use of the Hub activity only as per the Terms and Conditions of the grant.

Nigel Taylor and Music Mark have published *Developing Organisational Resilience: A guide for Music Education Hubs* which we recommend all Hubs read.

**Communications strategy**

Consider the different audiences and groups that you need to communicate with and the methods you will use to promote the Hub’s offer to schools, parents/carers and other audiences. This includes your web, social media and other online communications. Hubs should also consider the way the vision for the Hub is communicated to all those involved in Hub delivery, enabling effective advocates.

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4 [https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-5](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-5)
5 [https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-5](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-5)
for the Hub. Arts Council’s *Digital Culture Network* can support Hubs in their use of technology across a range of areas, including comms and marketing.

Government money cannot be used to support website development or for marketing activity. However, a vital element of a Hubs work is in communicating the available opportunities locally. Please give a brief summary of your strategy for how you and your partners plan to communicate with parents, families, children and young people, teachers and stakeholders, for example to ensure those from low income backgrounds are aware of subsidies available and building awareness of the Hub for those not already engaged with you.

**School Music Education Plans**
All Hubs developed School Music Education Plans in 2014. Please provide the most up to date version of the plan, either as an integral part of your business plan or as an appendix. It should show how you have, and describe how you will, engage with, support and challenge all schools in your area to achieve the highest quality outcomes for young musicians possible, and how you will engage with any schools which have not yet worked with your Hub partnership. It should demonstrate your understanding of the educational landscape in your areas and note how you intend to monitor and develop relationships with teachers and schools. Refreshed SMEP guidance can be found [here](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-5). Artsmark is a valuable way for schools to develop their arts provision and you can read more about it [here](https://www.artsmark.org.uk/).

**Fundraising and development plan**
DfE funding will only be one of several funding sources available in a local area that the Hub (and their partner organisations) will draw upon. Hubs should demonstrate skills in fundraising and are required to identify diverse sources of income to best meet the local needs of pupils’ music education. Some of these funding streams may come from other local or national public, charitable and private funding sources and the National Lottery. Your business plan should set income targets for fundraising and demonstrate a range of potential funders, sponsors, donors etc. Your business plan should consider risks associated with your fundraising strategy and include SMART objectives for who will undertake this work, and how will partners be involved.

**Approach to quality and understanding impact**
Please provide an overview of your quality assurance methodology for the work delivered and supported by the Hub partnership. This may include an indication of the standards you expect, intended impacts, the use of the Arts Council’s Quality

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8 [https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-5](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-5)
9 [https://www.artsmark.org.uk/](https://www.artsmark.org.uk/)
Principles and/or other relevant frameworks, processes and metrics, and how you will monitor and review how the Hub is working.

Hubs may find Youth Music’s quality framework Do, Review, Improve useful\(^{10}\). Similarly, the Arts Council has published information regarding its Quality Principles, which can provide the principles for a framework, a self-evaluation toolkit, and Impact & Insight toolkit. The latter is in development to support participatory work in funded organisations.

We expect to see all Hub partners taking responsibility for ensuring provision meets its intended outcomes and inspires young people to enjoy, value and continue their music education.

A risk register
You must consolidate the risks you have identified in your business planning process into a risk register that identifies the key areas of risk/challenge for your Hub, the likelihood of the risk and the actions/steps you have taken to mitigate them. Risk registers are an opportunity to consider the long-term vision and risks.

Instrument purchasing and loans
We have developed new guidance \(^{11}\) for Hubs, based on research with a group of Hubs in the South East, which can support Hubs consider key factors in relation to managing instrument stocks and purchasing. The guidance can be found here and as part of the business plan Hubs are expected to show they have considered their approach to ensuring appropriate stock levels are available and maintained locally.

Technology
Considering use of digital technology in provision across the Hub partnership can support high-quality and well-organised Hub activities. Hubs are asked about their use of technology as part of the annual data return and the Arts Council’s Digital Culture Network is available to support Hubs develop their use of digital technology and this can be considered in a number of ways:

- Digital media allow you to promote, create, distribute and share learning and performance experiences with participants and audiences online, supporting your artistic and cultural objectives
- Digital technologies create opportunities for innovation in artistic, educational cultural and musical practice, both online and offline – for example in composition, in work with SEND settings, or sharing specialist resources.

\(^{10}\) [https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/youth-music-quality-framework](https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/youth-music-quality-framework)

\(^{11}\) [https://www.artsCouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-5](https://www.artsCouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs#section-5)
Digital systems can help improve how your organisation works and your organisation’s resilience and sustainability, e.g. through saving money by automating existing processes, or through creating new revenue streams.

A strong digital approach can help you to deliver better value from our public investment in arts and culture.