Music Education Hubs: Needs analysis guidance

Updated January 2020
Introduction
This guidance has been updated to support a shared understanding of the role, importance and expectations of a Music Education Hub’s needs analysis. As well as being more explicit about each Hub’s role in responding to their local area’s needs, this guidance highlights considerations in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. Nationally, evidence suggests that some young people continue to miss out on high quality opportunities to engage in music-making, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and with special educational needs or disabilities. Collectively, we can seek to address this and use the needs analysis as a tool towards a broad and inclusive, high quality music education for all children and young people.

The ambitions in the National Plan for Music Education are to ensure there are musical opportunities for children from all backgrounds and every part of England, with Music Education Hubs funded to develop and deliver activity that supports their local young people, schools, and communities. This responsibility is shared across all Hub partners as well as the Hub lead organisation and ensures that the Hub can address a range of needs, overcome potential barriers and provide equitable access. The Plan reads:

[The National Plan] aims for equality of opportunity for all pupils, regardless of race; gender; where they live; their levels of musical talent; parental income; whether they have special educational needs or disabilities; and whether they are looked after children.

Both schools and Hubs will have an important role to ensure equality of access to opportunities. To support this, Hubs will undertake a regular needs analysis across all children and state schools (including academies and free schools) in their area. This should look at the range of opportunities and resources currently available in schools and beyond, and how these fit with the needs of all pupils. Working in collaboration
with schools and other local delivery partners, Hubs will develop their offer based on this analysis, so that the music education provided is relevant and responsive to changing demand across the range of musical genres.

Our strength as a nation owes much to our diversity and to our ability to draw on the talent that can be found all around us. Music Education Hubs – as well as the wider arts sector and the Arts Council – have an influential role to play in championing diversity and as publicly funded bodies a duty to see that the Plan’s vision for inclusion, equity and equality are at the heart of what we do.

By putting a comprehensive needs analysis at the centre of their work, Hubs can develop achievable, effective plans to meet this commitment. A Hub’s provision should reflect and celebrate the diversity, interests and passions of the communities they serve – and in doing so be a catalyst to attract new participants and audiences, inspire people to want to progress and become more involved in the work of the Music Education Hub.

A holistic approach to inclusion can positively impact all Hub partner organisations, equipping them to meet the needs of local communities and support a vibrant culture of local musical participation. Taking a proactive approach to inclusion can also build Hubs’ organisational resilience by diversifying income streams, highlighting or uncovering opportunities, and impacting future recruitment to the workforce, boards and volunteer pools from communities that may have previously felt excluded or under-represented.

The Arts Council considers inclusion in all its work and you can read more about our Creative Case for Diversity, access reports and resources on our website here.

What is a needs analysis?
As part of their funding requirements, Hub lead organisations should submit an updated needs analysis once a year on behalf of the Hub. However, given the ever-changing landscape for music-making and education, Hubs may prefer to view the needs analysis as a live document that can be revisited more regularly, aligned to planning cycles, and as a useful tool for helping your aspirations and build realistic steps to achieving them.

Creating a needs analysis entails a process by which a Hub draws on available data and evidence in order to build its rationale for the business plan, resultant programme of activity, allocation of resources, and prioritisation.

This process should include reflection on current and recent activity and opportunities in their area, and identification of any gaps or areas of work that
might be missing. It should consider the participants, types of music-making, approaches to musical learning and progression, and a holistic look at how the organisation and the wider Hub partnership addresses and supports inclusion, including through its workforce and the representation your organisation champions.

A thorough needs analysis will help all Hub partners to understand what priorities and actions should be put in place to address lack of access and inequity, and to ensure that activity reflects the diversity of the local area and is able to meet the needs of a diverse range of participants, both now and in the future.

A needs analysis will:

- provide local context about your Hub’s area – for example through reference to local strategies or deprivation data – and help the Hub partnership understand the need within the geographic area of coverage. This might include summarising local challenges, available resources and scale of work, and what diversity looks like in the communities that the Hub covers and with whom it is working to reach.

- analyse how well the Hub policies, structures, and activities reflect or support the demographics and needs of both the communities you work with and are working to reach.

- identify gaps in provision and barriers to engagement and progression that exist, while considering both Hub and non-Hub activity.

- consider if and how current and planned activity aligns with other local priorities, initiatives and work with children and young people, including how the Hub lead organisation works with partners to align and draw in funding streams to support Hub priorities.

- consider the Hub’s processes and ways of working that might support a broad and needs-led approach, for example considering models of delivery, marketing and communications, and training needs.

- consider the make-up of the Hub partnership, workforce, leadership and board (including volunteers) to assess what diversity or skills gaps exist.

- identify and highlight gaps in data and knowledge, allowing you to address any evidence or data gaps in the future.

- draw conclusions that will then lead to practical and manageable actions as part of your business plan and decisions about how resources are allocated. This might involve rebalancing your offer, developing new activity and/or refining existing activity, policies and processes.

- be shared and signed off by the Hub’s governance, as well as shared with your Relationship Manager.
Who should be involved in the needs analysis?
Hubs should draw on and involve the Hub partnership – partnership and collaboration are key to ensuring high quality provision and equality of opportunity for all children. Partners can contribute to or oversee data and evidence gathering, support the Hub lead organisation to reach more diverse communities and, support policies that are designed to improve equality and diversity and recruit a diverse workforce.

It is also useful to draw on the knowledge and skills of your board, schools, families and young people when undertaking a needs analysis. The process should gather a wide range of evidence and data sources, including the views of and meaningful consultation with a range of participants and stakeholders, including those the Hub partnership does not currently work with. Examples of stakeholders are:

- Schools and teachers
- Parents and guardians
- Children and young people
- Local youth sector representatives
- Arts and cultural sector organisations – including engagement with Bridge organisations
- Music educationalists, independent teachers and wider workforce
- Community leaders
- Any other relevant local stakeholder e.g. the local authority

The Hub board is expected to review and sign off the annual needs analysis and monitor performance against any resultant actions.

Hubs should consider the audience and uses for its needs analysis, or part of the information therein, and consider the public facing role of document. It may be appropriate to share some elements of the needs analysis to the public and/or various communities who may wish to understand how the Hub is prioritising its use of money and why. We also recommend considering what information would be useful for sharing with partners to support shared evaluation and understanding of impact.

What should be included in a needs analysis?
A needs analysis should provide the Hub with evidence and insight into the Hub’s musical offer, its reach and impact, and the workforce and governance. Here are some key areas to be considered as part of a needs analysis:

- Reach of your offer – coverage, who benefits, and who is missing out?
- Quality, nature and range of provision
- Musical diversity, in genre, skills and setting
- Progression routes and opportunities in and out of school
- Use of technology
- Accessibility
- Inclusivity
- Partnerships
- Governance
- Workforce

Data and evidence sources should wherever possible include data available from within and outside of the Hub partnership and covering in school and out of school provision. This could include:

- An audit of local assets, for example this might include equipment, resources, venues/spaces, available partners and expertise
- An audit of opportunities and the suitability, nature and quality of provision from across a range of genres and activity
- Data from across the Hub partnership (including but not limited to the Arts Council data return and feedback) looking at the provision on offer and those participating. Where possible, this should include an analysis against protected characteristics and socio-economic factors to give you an understanding of the backgrounds of those who participate as well as those who do not currently participate:
  - Age, disability (includes mental health), sex, race, religion and belief, socio-economic background
  - Where appropriate, sexuality, gender re-assignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity
  - Where data may be difficult to access, the organisation is expected to consider how this might be improved and what evidence can be used to help assure the Hub that provision is inclusive and impactful.
- An analysis of the above against demographic data and indices of multiple deprivation for the area
- Evidence of the suitability, nature and quality of provision, and how it addresses participants’ needs, of barriers to access and progression routes, and of the quality of resources and teaching.
- Views and consultation with young people and parents
- Views and consultation with school headteachers and teachers
- Workforce surveys and data, including the views of lead organisation staff and the wider Hub partnership workforce. It should analyse how current staff at all levels of your organisation reflect the demographics of the geographic area, to inform your approach to ongoing recruitment, and to understand need for equality and diversity training, career development and approaches for inclusive work practices. For Hub lead organisations who are
part of a local authority, or those situated in larger organisations with overarching policies, this might mean adapting them as needed to ensure relevance for the Hub.

- Self-evaluation – the Arts Council has a self-evaluation toolkit available [here](#).
- Demographic data for the area
- Local authority children and young people’s plan or equivalent (usually available on their website)
- Data from the Bridge organisation – for example drawing on existing analysis of area demographics, educational and arts sector data.
- Local Cultural Education Partnerships may similarly have carried out further needs analysis work to complement that of the Hub.

Data provides essential evidence to inform a Hub’s strategic direction. As such the quality of data should be considered as should the frequency of collection to help inform your thinking.

**Template**

We have produced a basic template to support the needs analysis process, which you can use at your discretion. By drawing on a range of data sources, it first asks you to describe your Hub’s aspirations and key aims for the area (in line with your business plan), identify and analyse the current Hub provision, and then identify gaps or areas for improvement and intended actions in order to meet the identified needs of the Hub.

**What next?**

Following the annual needs analysis, Hubs should use this intelligence to make evidence-based decisions and implement actions highlighted. The Hub business plan and annual programme of activity should be based upon the findings of the needs analysis and describe what will be delivered, why and by whom so that the link between evidence and resultant actions in your business plan is clear. You may find that undertaking a process of co-design and involving people with lived experience in the planning of the work, once the needs analysis has taken place, is highly beneficial to your organisation. Guidance for business planning and the programme of activity can be found on the Arts Council website [here](#).

Your Relationship Manager will review your needs analysis as part of your mandatory documents.

**Youth Music guidance**

Youth Music has created the following guidance for Music Education Hubs: [Developing an inclusive approach to the core and extension roles](#). This supports Hubs to develop inclusive practice in their work and ensure that all children – regardless of their background or circumstances – can access, engage with, and make progress through creative music-making opportunities.
Also available is an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion self-assessment tool which is designed to help organisations think about their existing practice and where they want to go next.

An inclusive approach is one that considers issues of equality and diversity. Youth Music’s guidance should be read in conjunction with this guidance. The definition of inclusion included in their guidance, which arose from the work of the National Centre for Inclusive Excellence together with the Alliance for a Musically Inclusive England, is as follows:

- **Holistic** – the personal, social and emotional benefits of music drive our vision and mission
- **Equitable** – people facing the biggest barriers receive the most support
- **Authentic** – the work is designed in collaboration with the people it’s for
- **Representative** – the people we work with reflect our diverse society
- **Diverse** – all musical genres, styles, and techniques are valued equally

**What the law says**

This section outlines our collective legal duty and sets out some important considerations for publicly funded organisations.

Under the Equality Act (2010) people are not allowed to discriminate, harass or victimise another person because they have any of the protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. People are also protected from being discriminated against because they are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics or because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Arts Council England, as a public sector organisation, also has additional responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty, which puts the onus on organisations to positively promote equality, not just avoid discrimination. In meeting this legal requirement, Arts Council England shares these responsibilities with the arts and cultural organisations it funds and requires organisations to be compliant with all equality legislation. Your needs analysis will provide evidence of how your organisation will advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

The Duty sets out that organisations need to demonstrate that they are thinking about how they can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services, including internal policies and those across the Hub.
partnership supporting the funded work of the Hub, and for these issues to be kept under review.

It means that organisations must have due regard to the need to:

• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
• Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general Equality Duty. The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

• Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
• Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
• Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status. This means that the first aim of the Duty applies to this characteristic but that the other aims (advancing equality and fostering good relations) do not apply.

The Act states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of the needs of disabled people. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that compliance with the Duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

You can take specific steps voluntarily to help people with a protected characteristic. This is called ‘positive action’. Taking positive action is legal if people with a protected characteristic:

• are at a disadvantage in some way in relation to work
• have particular needs which are different from other people who don’t share the protected characteristic
• are under-represented in an activity or type of work

The Equality Act says employers can take steps to:

• help people with a particular protected characteristic overcome their disadvantage – for example, by offering internships or placements
• encourage the participation of people with a particular protected characteristic in employment or training – for example, by reserving places on a training course
• meet their needs – for example, by providing support or mentoring

The Government Equalities Office has published *A quick start guide to using positive action in recruitment and promotion* to help organisations ensure what they are doing is legal by understanding what positive action is, how it differs from positive discrimination (which is illegal) and how they can use positive action to improve diversity in their workforce and when recruiting and promoting candidates.

All Music Education Hubs, as a condition of their funding, must comply with equality legislation and act legally. This means complying with both the Equality Act (2010) and, as Hub lead organisations receiving public funding via Arts Council England, with the Public Sector Equality Duty which was created under the Equality Act. Hub lead organisations have a duty to ensure compliance with this legislation across the Hub partnership in relation to Hub funding.

**Definitions and useful links**

Arts Council England’s *definition of diversity* encompasses race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, gender, sexuality, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnerships. We also include class and economic disadvantage and social and institutional barriers that prevent people from participating in and enjoying the arts.

**Equality** is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated differently or less favourably because of a characteristic that they share. However, this does not mean treating everyone the same. It means making sure that no one is disadvantaged from participating in art and culture because of barriers that disproportionately affect people who share the same characteristics as them.

**Diversity** is about recognising, respecting and valuing people’s differences to contribute and to realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all.

**Equality should be considered alongside equity.** The difference being that the intention of ‘equality of opportunity’ is to ensure that the same opportunities are open to everyone and can ensure all people are treated the same. However, not everyone is able to take up an opportunity due to various personal circumstances. Being ‘equitable’ therefore takes into account personal circumstances and provides everyone with what they need to start in the same (fair) place.
The Arts Council uses the social model of disability. The social model is based on the principle that disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference. It puts the emphasis on what needs to be done to identify and remove barriers.

Find more useful links to information, including other templates, glossary and detail shared with NPOs as part of the Equality Action Plan guidance on the Arts Council website, see below. These resources will be particularly helpful with supporting workforce and board diversity:
