



Permanent Secretary

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Chair of the Education Select Committee
Helen Hayes MP
By email: educom@parliament.uk

10 March 2025

Education Select Committee's Evidence Session on Music Hubs – 21 May 2024

Dear Helen,

I am writing to you in response to the [letter](#) dated 23 May 2024, from the previous Chair of the Education Select Committee, Robin Walker MP, to the then Minister of State for Schools under the previous government, Damian Hinds MP.

Music Hubs restructure

The previous government announced the restructuring of Music Hubs into 43 partnerships across England as part of the implementation of the national plan for music education. In summary, the rationale for the reform was to offer improved and more equitable access to musical activities for children and young people, with greater consistency of provision and ability to scale up effective programmes, and greater access to both more advanced ensembles and access to cultural capital in urban centres. The partnerships also give the opportunity for more strategic leadership and sharing of specialist roles across wider areas. The evidence in part stemmed from the 2022 research by Andrea Spain into multi-area Music Hubs¹ and was informed by a two-stage consultation led by Arts Council England involving music educators, local authorities and other stakeholders. The rationale of the previous government is also set out in more detail in the national archive records².

My Department remains committed to good quality evaluation on this, as on other programmes. This is why the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) has been commissioned to conduct a three-year independent evaluation of the Music Hubs programme. The research findings will inform future Music Hubs policy.

¹ Andrea Spain (2022), [Multi-Area Music Hubs in England](#)

² National Archive (2024): [Music Hub Investment Programme: geographies for future Music Hubs](#)



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In the meantime, Music Hubs have been delivering under the new partnership arrangements since last September. The aim is to enhance the effectiveness of Music Hub partners so that every child has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, sing, perform and engage with music, and so enable them to achieve and thrive. Although the timeline for the reform has been challenging, Arts Council England has reported that all programme grant funding is in place and the new partnerships are delivering across all areas.

Music Hubs funding

Ministers have already committed £79 million per annum funding for the programme for academic year 2024/25, which includes the £76 million grant funding for the partnerships themselves. Hub lead organisations and their delivery partners will need to make business decisions to make the best use of their funding.

We also continue to invest £25 million capital funding for musical instruments, equipment and technology and expect all funding agreements to be in place by the end of February. A requirement of the grant funding is for Music Hubs to draw on both qualitative and quantitative evidence to provide an overview of need in the Hub area and to develop a purchasing strategy for how they will use the grant to address the needs identified. Through this process, Music Hubs will be able to identify any potential underspend of their grant funding.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

In the summer, Ministers agreed to provide short-term funding to support the increased employed contribution rates for the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) from September 2024 to March 2025, for non-local authority employer organisations that are hub lead organisations, consortium members or delivery partners within Music Hub partnerships.

I can confirm that Ministers recently agreed to extend this funding to the end of August 2025, for those organisations that remain eligible for the TPS grant. We informed the current TPS grant recipients on 4 February of the grant extension. Future music hubs funding for academic year 2025/26 onwards is subject to the ongoing Spending Review.

Yours sincerely,

**SUSAN ACLAND-HOOD
PERMANENT SECRETARY**