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Music Hubs evaluation: interim report

Research report

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Glossary of terms

ACE – Arts Council England

AP – Alternative Provision

A level – Advanced Level qualification

BTEC – Business and Technology Education Council qualification

CPD – Continuous Professional Development

DfE – Department for Education

EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan

FSM – Free School Meals

GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education

HLO – Hub Lead Organisation

KS1 – Key stage 1

KS2 – Key stage 2

KS3 – Key stage 3

KS4 – Key stage 4

KS5 – Key stage 5

LPME – Local Plan for Music Education

NPME – National Plan for Music Education

PP – Pupil Premium (commonly paired with FSM in education reports; implied but not directly expanded)

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disability

T level – Technical Level qualification

WCET – Whole Class Ensemble Teaching

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Executive summary

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned NatCen to evaluate the restructured Music Hubs programme, introduced in September 2024 under the 2022 National Plan for Music Education (NPME), which was published by the previous Government. The restructure included reforms which reduced the number of Hub partnerships from 114 to 43, with most serving larger geographical areas and providing support on inclusion, teacher development, music technology, and progression. This evaluation tracks how the new model is being implemented, what outcomes it is achieving for schools and young people, and the lessons that can be learned from the first year of operation (September 2024 to July 2025).

The evaluation uses a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative research. Data was collected at 3 key points to capture experiences under the previous model, establish a baseline as the new model began, and assess the progress one year on. This included teacher surveys in 2024 and 2025, Hubs staff surveys in 2024 and 2025, parent and pupil surveys in late 2024, and qualitative interviews and focus groups with Hubs staff, peripatetic teachers, and school teachers responsible for music, conducted in both 2024 and 2025. This approach provides robust evidence on the perspectives of those delivering and experiencing music education.

Key insights

Strengths and Successes

The evaluation found that Music Hubs continue to deliver services that are highly valued by schools, teachers, parents, and pupils.

- **Breadth and quality of provision:** Hubs deliver a wide range of services, including peripatetic music teaching, instrument loans, continuous professional development (CPD), ensembles, and performance opportunities. Teachers rated the quality of Hubs' provision highly for both the previous model and the new model. Three-quarters of parents reported satisfaction, emphasising affordability and quality.
- **Support for teachers:** CPD and planning support were highly valued, especially by less confident primary teachers. Around 80% of teachers agreed that Hubs provided useful professional development. This was maintained during the transition to the new model.
- **Relationships and communication:** Teachers' views of Hubs improved under the new model. 80% rated their relationship as good or excellent, compared with

73% under the previous Hubs model. Similarly, 80% rated communication positively, up from 71%.

- **Benefits for pupils:** Almost all Hubs reported providing progression opportunities. Parents highlighted gains in confidence, wellbeing, and social development, with nearly half saying their child could not have accessed opportunities without school or Hub support.
- **Inclusion:** Many Hubs offered free or subsidised provision for children on Free School Meals (FSM), Pupil Premium (PP), those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), or those in alternative provision (AP) settings. Inclusion was described as central to Hubs' mission, and schools valued tailoring to local needs. While overall take-up of this support by schools remains limited, it has increased since the previous model, suggesting that awareness and engagement are gradually improving.

Persistent challenges

The evaluation also identified enduring barriers that could undermine the ambitions of Music Hubs if left unaddressed:

- **Funding pressures:** Rising costs and constrained budgets remain the most significant risk, affecting both demand (schools' ability to pay) and supply (Hubs' capacity to deliver). Affordability also limited participation for some families, with parents and pupils identifying cost as one of the main barriers to taking part in additional music activities.
- **Geographical access:** Geographical access and transport costs have been long-standing challenges for rural schools and families. While larger Hub partnerships under the new model improved consistency and widened access, barriers related to distance and travel costs remained. Whether the restructured model mitigates these challenges will be monitored as implementation continues.
- **Capital Grant processes:** While the grant has improved access to instruments, perceptions that administrative complexity, poor timing, and lack of flexibility in how the funding could be spent once allocated have made this new process less smooth.
- **Partnership working:** Partnerships between Hubs, Hub partners, and schools remain valued but uneven. Instances of joint working, especially where schools took a leading role, were limited overall. Aligning ways of working across larger Hub geographies remains a challenge.

- **Awareness among families:** Awareness of Hubs is low, despite many parents and pupils using their services via schools. Only a third of parents and 30% of pupils reported knowing about their Hub. Although families typically learned about music opportunities through their schools, increasing public awareness remains an intention.
- **Workforce pressures:** Recruitment and retention of peripatetic teachers is a widespread challenge, with over three-quarters of Hubs describing recruitment as very or fairly difficult.

Thinking about these challenges, Hubs were generally optimistic about areas within their control, such as delivery, communication, and inclusion, but more negative about external factors, notably funding, workforce pressures, and geographic barriers that continue to affect equity and sustainability. Schools echoed concerns about affordability and capacity to engage with Hubs. Parents and pupils highlighted cost, transport, and limited awareness as barriers to participation, despite reporting positive experiences of music provision. Emerging signs of progress

- **Stronger foundations:** By the end of the first year of the new model, most Hubs reported being operationally well set up to deliver their strategic functions of supporting schools, inclusion, and progression, though funding sustainability remains a concern.
- **Improved communication and relationships:** Teachers reported clearer and more consistent communication from their Hubs, alongside stronger working relationships overall. This suggests that Hubs are establishing more effective channels of support and engagement with schools alongside the new model.
- **Emerging consistency:** Larger geographical Hubs under the new model were beginning to create more strategic collaboration and consistency across wider areas, though development is ongoing.
- **Continuity of valued services:** Most teachers, parents, and Hub staff reported that access to lessons, ensembles, and events had been maintained through the transition, indicating resilience in delivery during the first year of the new model.
- **Optimism about long-term benefits:** Teachers and Hubs staff expected the model to improve consistency, widen access to CPD, and increase participation which is the basis of an important foundation for stability.

Overall, the first year of the new Music Hubs model demonstrates promising continuity and early progress, with many of the most valued features of the previous model maintained. Hubs continue to play a pivotal role in delivering high-quality provision, supporting teachers, and widening access for children and young people. Schools and

families particularly appreciate strong relationships, responsive support, and inclusive opportunities.

At the same time, the transition has brought longstanding challenges into sharper focus. Ongoing pressures around funding, workforce capacity, and geographical access risk undermining equity, while administrative difficulties linked to the Capital Grant and low public awareness of Hubs remain obstacles.

Despite these barriers, there are clear indications of stabilisation and improvement. Teachers report stronger relationships and communication. Hubs are embedding their strategic roles, and families highlight positive impacts on children's confidence, wellbeing, and progression. Although the system is still in transition, the restructure is beginning to establish the foundations for a more coordinated and sustainable approach to music education.

Looking ahead, the next few years will be critical. The current government has given increased priority to music in schools as part of the Opportunity Mission. In this context, realising the ambitions of the Hubs will require sustained investment, a focus on equitable access, and continued monitoring to secure progress and address persistent challenges. The next phase will focus on embedding the model's intended benefits, including improving the consistency and quality of music education provision, and ensuring that Hubs work more strategically across local, regional, and national structures. This will involve ongoing attention to identifying local need, strengthening governance and oversight, and developing robust approaches to business planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Further details on stakeholders' perspectives and priorities are provided in the chapter summaries that follow.

Guide to the report

Each chapter of this report provides a summary of findings to help readers navigate the evaluation in more detail:

- **Chapter 2** reflects on schools' and Hub staff's experiences under the previous model, highlighting valued practices and challenges that shaped expectations for restructure.
- **Chapter 3** presents baseline findings for the new Hubs model, drawing on surveys of Hub staff, parents, and pupils to establish the starting point for implementation.
- **Chapter 4** examines experiences after the first year of roll-out, capturing schools' and Hubs' perspectives on progress, challenges, and early impacts.

- **Chapter 5** brings together conclusions, outlining what is valued, where the main sticking points lie, and the early signs of stability and improvement under the new model.
- **Chapter 6** sets out key recommendations, drawing on evidence from across the evaluation to identify practical steps for strengthening the Hubs model.

Together, these chapters provide both breadth and depth, detailed evidence on specific aspects of the programme and overarching findings.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Music education is widely recognised as central to the cultural and personal development of children and young people. It includes singing, instrumental learning, composition, and performance, as well as newer areas such as music technology and production, which provide recognised pathways into higher education (Department for Education, 2022). Music education supports creativity, self-expression, and confidence, while also fostering transferable skills such as discipline, teamwork, and resilience (Hallam, 2015). Despite this, access to high-quality music education in England has long been uneven, shaped by geography, school priorities, and family circumstances (Henley, 2011; Cultural Learning Alliance, 2024). Recognising this, successive government policies have sought to strengthen opportunities for children and young people to access high-quality music education, both within and beyond school.

The National Plan for Music Education (NPME), ‘The Power of Music to Change Lives’ (2022), published under the previous government, set out a long-term vision to ensure that all children and young people in England have access to high-quality music education, regardless of background. The current government’s Opportunity Mission does not depart from the previous government’s vision, given the emphasis on every child achieving and thriving at school, through high standards and tackling inequalities. The current government has recently set out their plans to reform the curriculum, qualifications, accountability, and enrichment in schools, with a stronger focus on arts education, in their response to the independent Curriculum and Assessment Review. (Department for Education, 2025). Music education is central to these reforms and is a driver of creativity, confidence, and cultural capital.

A significant reform under the refreshed NPME was the restructuring of Music Hubs. The previous model, introduced in 2012, established 114 local Hubs¹ funded via Arts Council England (ACE) to bring together schools, local authorities, and music organisations to widen participation. The DfE set out what it expected ACE to deliver within this remit, including overseeing the delivery and performance of the Music Hubs programme to improve music education in England, aligned with the then government’s stated intention.

Hubs were designed to bring together schools, local authorities, and music organisations to widen participation. These Hubs were typically smaller and more locally focused, with the nature of partnerships and provision varying across the country. In 2023/24, Music Hubs collectively supported over 20,000 schools (91.5%), delivered Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET) to more than 808,000 pupils (9.8%), facilitated lessons for nearly 482,000 pupils, provided over 203,000 instrument loans, supported almost 14,000 schools with instrument access, and delivered CPD to over 11,000 schools, reaching

¹ At the outset in 2012, there were originally 123 Hubs; partnership changes led to the creation of 114 Hubs by 2023-24.

thousands of teachers. This illustrates both the breadth and importance of Hubs in the music education system.

Music Hubs can be accessed both directly by parents and pupils, for example, through lessons, ensembles, and instrument loans, and indirectly through schools, which draw on Hubs for teaching support, resources, and professional development. As a result, many families engage with their local Hub through school-based provision without necessarily being aware of their role.

From September 2024, the system was restructured into 43 new Music Hub partnerships. Music Hubs partnerships comprise of consortium members (in some cases) and Hub partners which are co-ordinated by a hub lead organisation (HLO). The majority of the previous 114 Hubs which served each local authority remained within Hub partnerships.

This change aims to help focus on key areas such as teacher CPD, inclusion, music technology, and progression pathways into the music industry. Additionally, schools were expected to develop Local Plans for Music Education, bringing together education providers and cultural partners to expand and diversify local opportunities. The intention of this restructure is to establish a more joined-up, equitable, and sustainable music education system.

The last central government musical instruments grant for Local Authority music services ended 2011, prior to the introduction of Music Hubs. From 2012, the Music Hubs held the bulk of this stock and continued to fund new purchases, as well as repairs and maintenance. However, decreasing stock levels meant many Hubs were less able to respond to local need including providing adapted instruments and equipment to support children with SEND.

In September 2024, ACE made a one off £25 million Capital Grant from DfE available to Hubs. This was for HLOs to the purchase of instruments, equipment, and technology – including adapted/ adaptive instruments – on behalf of their Hub partnership until August 2026.

The new grant is intended to increase the range, relevance and accessibility of instruments and equipment, as well as ensuring provision was more equitable. There is an expectation on Music Hubs to take a more strategic approach to provision based on local need whilst ensuring value for money.

The new process for HLOs included working closely with Hub partners, consulting with stakeholders and developing new partnerships to make better use of existing stock held by others locally and avoid purchase duplication. The completion of the needs analysis then informed purchasing plans from a new DfE purchasing framework of a range of approved suppliers.

The DfE commissioned NatCen to undertake this evaluation to track the implementation of the new model and assess its impact on schools, teachers, and children and young

people. The evaluation also seeks to capture lessons learned from the earlier Music Hubs system, providing insights into what worked well, what challenges persisted, and how the sector is adapting to the restructure.

The evaluation will cover the first 3 years of the new model, with a final report due in autumn 2027. The future strands of the report will involve annual follow-up surveys with parents, pupils, teachers and Hubs staff and qualitative interviews and focus groups. In addition to this, there is an intention to undertake a comprehensive impact evaluation of the new model.

1.2. Methodology

The research combined quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews and focus groups to explore the provision of music education across schools. Data was collected in multiple stages between September 2024 and July 2025.

This interim report brings together evidence from 3 stages of research:

- Stage 1a (September to October 2024): A survey of teachers² involved in the delivery of music education and qualitative interviews and focus groups with schools and Music Hub staff reflecting on their experiences of the previous Music Education Hubs model.
- Stage 1b (November to December 2024): Surveys of Hubs staff, parents, and pupils to establish baseline measures for the new Music Hubs model.
- Stage 2 (June to July 2025): Follow-up surveys and qualitative work with Hubs staff and teachers after the first year of implementation.

Together, these strands provide a robust mixed-methods evidence base, combining large-scale survey data with rich qualitative insights. This allows us to understand not only the reach and effectiveness of Music Hubs, but also the lived experiences of the people delivering and benefiting from music education across England.

For the surveys, target sample sizes were determined using power calculations to ensure sufficient confidence in key analyses. The achieved samples were within the thresholds required to support reliable findings. Comparisons between regions were examined, but no substantial regional differences were observed.

Teacher surveys

Online surveys of school music teaching staff were conducted in Stage 1a and Stage 2. Stage 1a invited a stratified random sample of 7,020 schools for the main survey. This

² For the remainder of this report, primary and secondary school teachers involved in the delivery of music education will be referred to as 'teachers.' Where the report mentions peripatetic music teachers in particular, this will be clarified.

sample was drawn from a list of state schools provided by ACE and shared with DfE. This list identified which schools fell within each Hub's remit and tracked schools' engagement with Hubs. The sampling frame was stratified by (previous) Hub, local authority, phase of education and engagement with Hubs.

Stage 1a responses were received from 757 teachers (for key engagement questions³) and 766 teachers (for teacher confidence and attitudes⁴). Stage 2 re-invited the same schools, with 6,918 schools contacted and 613 teachers completing the survey⁵. Surveys took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Detailed information on sampling and response characteristics is provided in Appendix A, with full teacher profiles in Appendix B.

Music Hub staff surveys

Surveys of Music Hub staff were conducted in Stages 1b and 2. All 43 Music Hubs across England were invited to participate. Respondents included managers and staff at HLOs and Music Hub partners, peripatetic music teachers, and other staff contracted to deliver music provision. A total of 420 participants completed Stage 1b, and 431 participants completed Stage 2. Further details on participant characteristics and response breakdowns are provided in Appendix A.

Parent and pupil surveys

Parent⁶ and pupil surveys were administered in Stage 1b. Parents were recruited through schools, which were sampled from across England. Schools were asked to share the survey with pupils who were engaged with music education or parents of pupils involved in music education so that views could be captured from those who engage with music education and services. A total of 657 parents and 647 pupils completed the surveys, covering a broad mix of pupils across key stages 3–5. Further participant profiles are provided in Appendix A.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research involved online interviews and focus groups via MS Teams with teachers, Music Hub staff, and peripatetic music teachers responsible for planning and delivering music education. Stage 1a included 14 encounters with 29 participants. Stage 2 included 5 encounters with 21 participants. Encounters were conducted individually, in

³ Questions about schools' engagement with Music Hubs

⁴ Questions about teacher confidence and attitudes related to music

⁵ There were no differences in responses based on number of questions answered for Stage 2.

⁶ Also includes carers.

pairs, or in groups. Further methodological details and sample characteristics are provided in Appendix A.

The qualitative findings in this report show the range and diversity of views and experiences among those who participated in an interview or focus group. Verbatim quotations and examples from the interviews and focus groups are used throughout to help illustrate the findings. However, the prevalence of particular views and experiences cannot be estimated.

2. Schools' and Hubs staff's experiences under the previous model

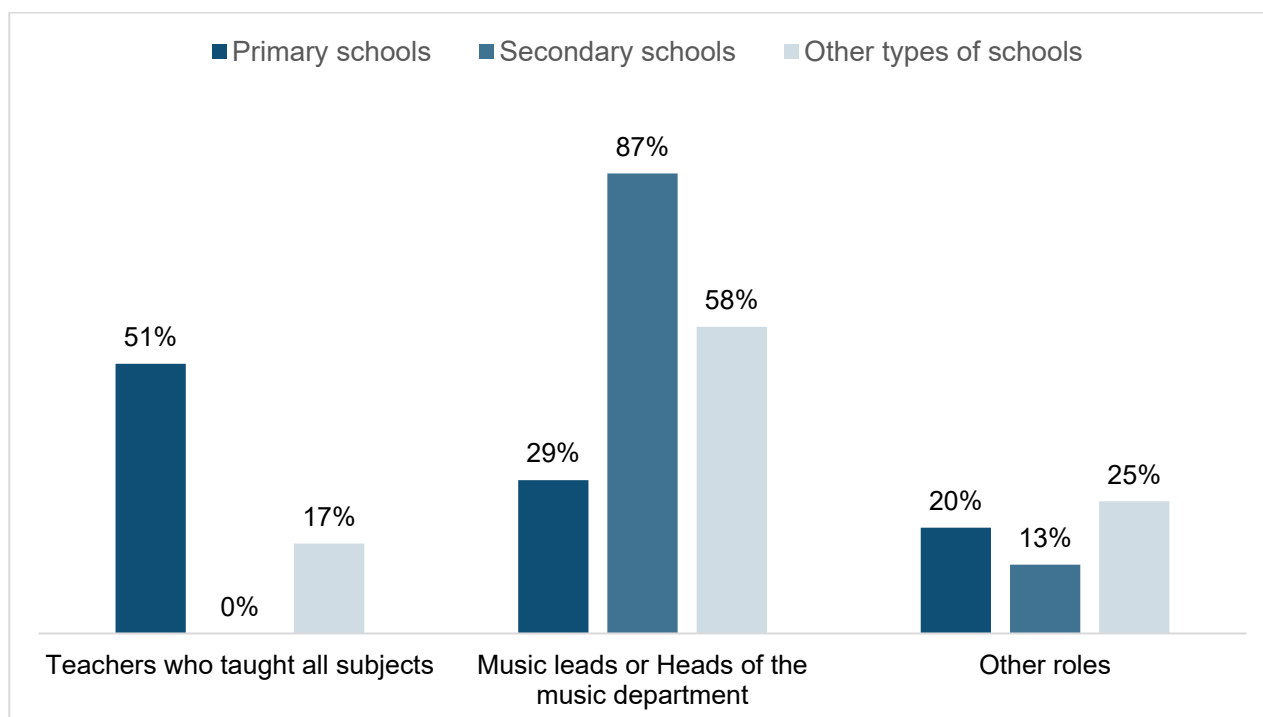
2.1. Overview

This chapter outlines key findings about schools' music teachers' and Hubs' staff's experiences with what were previously called Music Education Hubs, prior to the roll-out of the new Music Hubs model from September 2024. The findings are based on a survey of and in-depth interviews and focus groups with teachers and in-depth interviews and focus groups with staff who had worked at the previous Hubs (Stage 1a).

2.2 Teacher characteristics

The profile of schools taking part in the survey was consistent with the number of different types of schools in England. 81% of respondents were based in primary schools, 13% were in secondary schools, and 6% were in other types of schools which mostly included special schools, but also middle schools, all-through schools, and AP settings. It is important to note that these other types of schools and settings all operate quite differently to each other. However, sample sizes for these schools were low so it was not possible to distinguish these findings into smaller categories. Figure 1 shows the roles of teachers by type of school.

Figure 1: Roles of teachers by type of school



Source: Stage 1a survey of teachers, Autumn 2024

The majority of respondents across all types of schools reported that they had ten or more years of experience of teaching music (63%). This was highest for respondents from secondary schools (81%), compared to those from primary schools (60%) or other types of schools (60%). Only 15% of respondents from primary schools, 9% from secondary schools and 6% from other types of schools had been teaching music for less than 3 years.

Teachers' highest educational qualification in a music subject varied by type of school. For primary school teachers, 43% did not have any academic qualifications in music, 23% had a bachelor's or master's degree in music, 18% had completed a music GCSE or equivalent 10% had completed a music A-Level or T-Level, and 6% had other qualifications in music. For secondary school teachers, only 3% did not have an academic qualification in a music subject, while 94% had a bachelor's or master's degree, or even a PhD. The profile of teachers from other types of schools was in between those from primary and secondary schools.

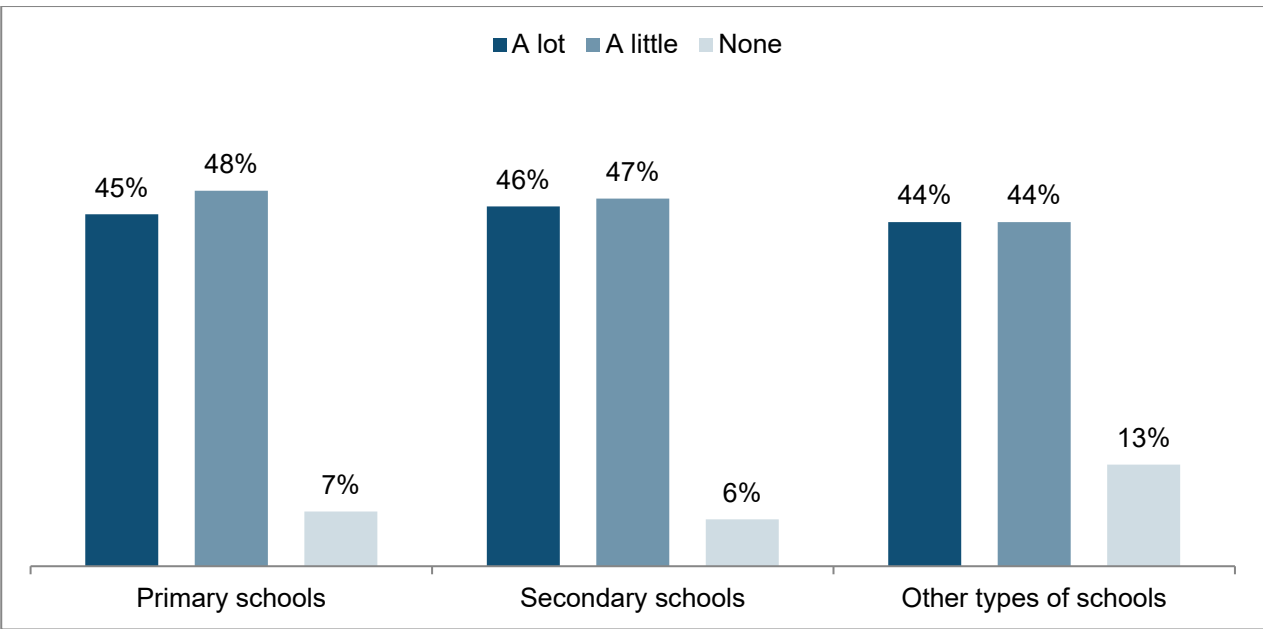
70% of teachers reported having achieved a music board exam grade, diploma, or certificate of any level. Teachers from primary schools largely indicated their highest achieved exam as grades 6 through 8 (35%) or grades 1 through 5 (21%), and 35% had not achieved any exam grades. Teachers from secondary schools indicated that their highest achieved exam was grades 6 through 8 (52%) or even a diploma (38%), and only

4% had not achieved any exam grades. Percentages for teachers from other types of schools were somewhere in between.

2.3. Schools and Music Hubs: awareness, engagement and partnership working

Most teachers (86%) knew about Music Hubs before the survey; 8% had only heard the term; and 6% had never heard of Music Hubs. Of those who had heard of Music Hubs, 45% reported that their school engaged with their local Music Hub a lot; 48% said their school engaged a little; and only 7% said their school did not engage with their local Hub. There was no difference in engagement levels between teachers from primary schools and respondents from secondary schools (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: School engagement with local Music Hub prior to September 2024



Source: Stage 1a survey of teachers, Autumn 2024

The main reasons for schools not engaging with Hubs, according to teachers, were that they did not know what was on offer (46%), their local Hub did not reach out or they did not know whom to contact (44%), teachers did not have time to coordinate engagement (25%), lack of support or interest from other school or music department staff (8%), and lack of support from senior management (8%).

Our qualitative encounters suggested that those who were less familiar with their Hubs' offer were working in schools where less emphasis was placed on music provision by senior leadership, and/or had less demand for additional provision from pupils which would encourage them to look into how their Hub can support them. Furthermore, these participants also voiced challenges around their own time. These perceptions were

echoed by Hub staff themselves and in one case, a further explanation was offered by them: a lack of engagement from schools stems from the use of their service not being a statutory requirement.

Participants from both schools and Hubs also identified strong relationships between the two prior to September 2024 and emphasised the significance of these relationships in a broader narrative of the value of the Hubs for schools. School teachers communicated to us that the Music Hubs had, they felt, a clear purpose to address the needs of a given school and would stretch to meet these needs. As one teacher told us, “If I needed more support in a certain area, I could find this support from them.”

Schools communicated that a key strength of this attention to detail had been the Hubs’ ability to foster partnerships between schools and different local music services and institutions. These partnerships have allowed schools to access opportunities that they could not typically, such as participation in large events or access to music professionals in good quality venues. For example, a participant highlighted how their Hub had coordinated a local orchestra to do a workshop for KS1 pupils. In tapping into the local area in this way, schools again felt the Hubs were responsive to their needs and specific context.

Participants also highlighted examples where the Hubs widened access to local music opportunities for more pupils and teachers that already existed. In some cases, participants also drew attention to how Hubs’ fostering of local partnerships had been used to leverage and pull in additional funding for schools’ music provision.

Participants were keen to emphasise that such benefits had not occurred overnight. The work of Hubs to support schools’ specific needs and develop local partnerships was a product of both parties developing relationships over many years. For example, as a member of staff at one Music Hub explained, with the move to funding Hubs in 2012 instead of music services, the Hub had to embed itself and gain the trust of schools. When this and other examples were successful, participants communicated to us that they saw Hubs as credible, respected, and trusted, with a proven long-term commitment to supporting music education provision. This was aided in some cases by a deep embedding of personnel into the life of schools.

Just under three-quarters (73%) of teachers described their relationship with their Music Hub as excellent or good, 21% described it as fair and 6% as poor or very poor. For the respondents who described their relationship with their local Music Hub as poor or very poor, the most common barriers were that they did not know what was on offer from their Hub (42%), teachers did not have time to coordinate engagement (34%), the Hub didn’t reach out and they didn’t know whom to contact (32%), or their Hub did not have the capacity to support them (24%).

The majority of teachers (71%) described the communication they received from their local Music Hub as excellent or good, 22% described it as fair, and only 7% thought it was poor or very poor.

2.4. Hubs and music teaching in schools

The following sub-chapters present findings from the teacher survey and qualitative encounters with teachers and Hubs staff with the previous Music Education Hubs prior to the rollout of the new model in September 2024.

2.4.1. Support for teachers

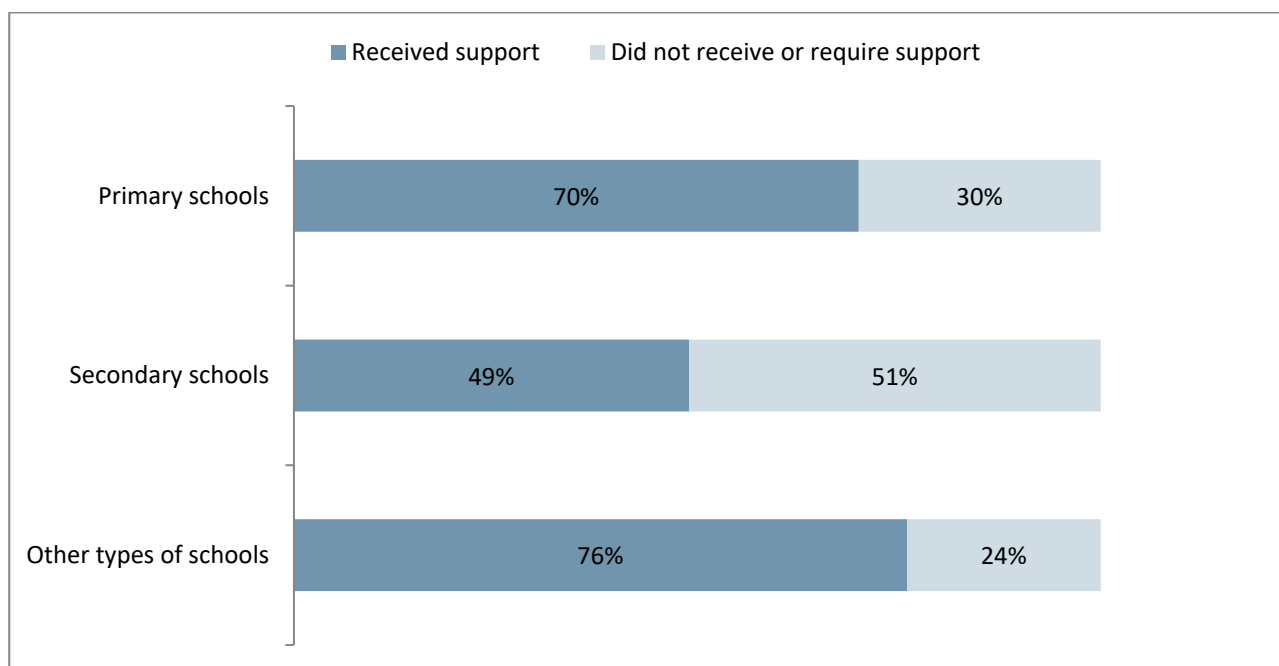
Most teachers (68%) reported that the effectiveness of the support their schools received from their local Music Hub was excellent or good, 25% described it as fair, and only 7% described the effectiveness of support to be poor or very poor. Teachers who reported the effectiveness of support from their Hub as fair, poor or very poor pointed out issues such as having inadequate numbers of skilled staff to teach ensembles or one-to-one lessons, insufficient support for setting up extracurricular music activities like clubs, and insufficient support for infant and early years settings. Respondents also mentioned wanting clearer information and communication about what Hubs offered, and support options that were less expensive.

Of the 62% of teachers who reported that their school had a Music Development Plan in place, 18% described the support they received from their Music Hub in creating it as excellent, 28% as good, 17% as fair, and 5% thought it was poor or very poor, while 33% of respondents said they did not require or receive any support from their Hub.

Just under half (49%) of respondents reported that their local Music Hub was one of the places they drew guidance and resources from to inform their school's music curriculum. 19% rated their Hub's guidance and resources as excellent, 47% as good, 28% as fair, and 6% as poor or very poor.

Two-thirds (67%) of teachers reported that music teachers at their school received some support from their local Music Hub with planning or delivering music provision, and one-third (33%) did not receive or require any support. Responses by school type are presented in Figure 3. For the teachers, whose schools did receive this type of support, the most common purposes of this support were for musical events and performances for pupils to perform in or attend (67%), co-curricular music provision (43%), and music curriculum planning (33%). Three-quarters (75%) of teachers who received support from their Hub rated it as excellent or good, 21% rated it as fair and 5% rated it as poor or very poor.

Figure 3: Schools receiving support from their local Music Hub



Source: Stage 1a survey of teachers, Autumn 2024

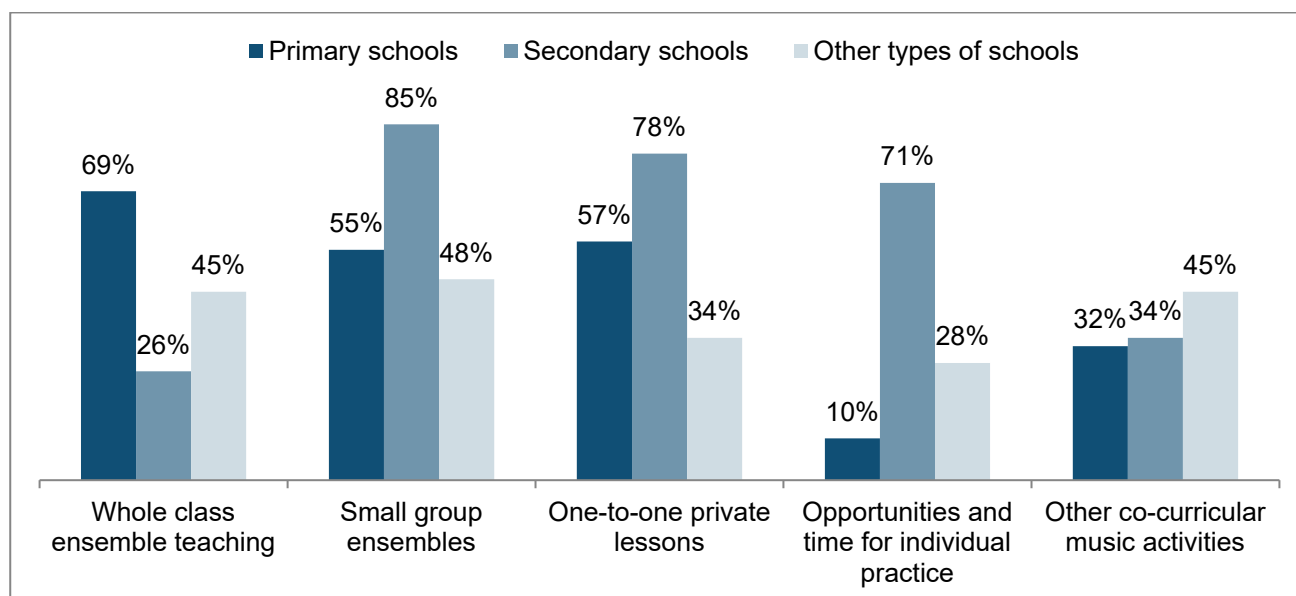
61% of respondents reported that their school received some support from their local Music Hub for CPD opportunities, with the most common types being related to teaching music (67%), musical leadership (48%), music curriculum planning (42%), and understanding and teaching composition (26%). Just over three-quarters (77%) of respondents who received support related to CPD rated it as excellent or good.

2.4.2. Support for pupils

Most teachers (92%) were aware that Music Hubs provided an instrument loan service. Of these, 73% reported that pupils at their school received instruments from their local Music Hub. Views about instrument provision were very positive: 91% reported that the instruments met the overall needs of their pupils in an excellent or good way; 88% described the quality of the instruments as excellent or good; and 82% described the accessibility of the instruments as excellent or good.

The majority of schools (92%) provided co-curricular music activities (see Figure 4). A third of respondents (33%) reported that their school provided other types of co-curricular music activities (including choirs, recorder clubs, general music clubs, and composition classes/clubs). Of the 76% of respondents who received support for co-curricular music activities from their local Music Hub, 76% described it as excellent or good.

Figure 4: Co-curricular music activities provided by each type of school



Source: Stage 1a survey of teachers, Autumn 2024

Virtually all schools (99%) held music events or provided other opportunities for pupils to perform. These included performing during assembly or class (83%), a termly or annual school performance (81%), and Music Hub performances or experiences (41%). Other performance opportunities (36%) included performances with professional musicians and performances at local community events, churches, care homes, and nursing homes.

Just under three-quarters of schools (73%) organised trips for pupils to attend music performances outside of school. Of those that did, 52% received support from their local Hub for organising these trips. 70% rated this support as excellent or good. Out of the 70% of teachers who reported that their school organised opportunities for external musicians to perform for pupils at school, 57% received support from their local Hub for organising these opportunities. 68% rated this support as excellent or good.

69% of teachers reported that pupils at their school accessed music progression opportunities. The most common progression opportunities accessed were music board exams (68%), out-of-school⁷ provision (55%), local, regional, and national opportunities and ensembles (36%), and 'advanced' ensembles or ensembles of different 'levels' (22%). Of the 67% of respondents who received support from their Hub for accessing these opportunities, 66% described this support as excellent or good.

⁷ weekend, holiday and after school

2.5 Inclusion

The teacher survey included questions about schools receiving support from their Hub that was targeted specifically at improving inclusion. Less than half of all schools taking part received or required those kinds of support. Where such support was received, it was most commonly for pupils eligible for FSM or PP, less for pupils with SEND, and least commonly for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Table 1 shows support received by schools from Music Hubs for inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

Table 1: Support received from Music Hubs for inclusion, by disadvantage groups

Area of support	% of schools receiving inclusion support	FSM/ PP	SEND	Minority ethnic groups
Improving instrument access	44	84	53	28
Co-curricular music activities	29	84	61	36
Performance opportunities	29	82	72	53
Accessing music progression opportunities	25	67	74	48
Attending music performances at school	23	95	82	60
Attending music performances outside school	22	89	84	63

Source: Stage 1a survey of teachers, Autumn 2024

We identified a connection in our qualitative encounters between the strong relationships between schools and Hubs discussed above, and the ability of Hubs to support pupil inclusion in music. These relationships have given Hubs a detailed understanding of the particular inclusion needs schools have; an attention to detail that Hubs staff communicated was essential to their role.

“So, in terms of inclusivity [...] it's just something we've always had to be aware of because that's kind of the purpose of a music service or a Music Hub. [...] If you're not doing that, well, you're not meeting your purpose.” (*Music Hub participant*)

For example, a staff member from a Hub explained that in previous decades, music provision had not reflected the racial, religious, and class backgrounds of the area. The Hub worked to identify what was preventing a wider range of pupils from participating, and had developed and adapted services in turn, such as organising concerts during

Ramadan that were mindful of Muslim pupils' schedules. Some participants noted a mutual benefit here. Hubs gain knowledge in the process of supporting a school's specific inclusion needs which they can then apply more widely. At the same time, schools are an equal partner in this process, coming in conversation with their Hub to a conclusion about how best to move forward with their music provision (as opposed to feeling instructed as to what to do).

In attending to the specific needs of a given school, Hubs were also able to support pupil inclusion in ways that go beyond music education. This was observed especially by a staff member from one Hub, who felt that they had managed to encourage schools to not only look at how music is taught but also consider the benefits of music on children and young people more generally, particularly the most marginalised. They gave an example of providing SEND pupils with work experience at the Hub and noted that some of their staff were themselves previously pupils who had used the Hub.

"I think the thing about Hubs and the music service is, we are a bit like an extended family for some of those young people. There are some people in challenging circumstances." (*Music Hub participant*)

This was felt to illustrate a knock-on benefit for the area, in that it had helped contribute to the employment prospects for young people living there. Likewise, they and other participants we spoke to pointed to the value of music practice for pupils struggling with behaviour at school, given the discipline needed for rehearsal.

A key challenge identified was the funding constraints schools face which prevent them from being able to afford additional support from Hubs to support inclusion in their music provision. For example, a school music lead described how their Hub would need to draw on PP funds, when trying to provide instrument tuition for pupils whose parents could not afford this. This prevented them from providing the tuition as the school had already needed to use these funds elsewhere.

2.6 Quality

From our qualitative encounters, we identified a strong sense from schools that Music Hubs provide a high-quality offer to pupils and staff. This also extended to schools which had engaged less with their Hubs – they nonetheless held a perception that the support they would receive would be of a high standard. Staff felt the Hubs provided expert instrument tuition and other music services to pupils and believed this had a direct benefit to pupils. One teacher, for example, put the high rate of their pupils who take up lessons choosing to continue (75%) down to the support the school receives from its Hub.

"I think they've got a very good programme, and I've tapped into it when I've needed it and been able to access the [particular] things that I've needed to

use it for our school's development rather than just using it as a blanket.”
(Teacher participant)

Teachers also made references to the offer on hand for staff themselves. Schools had taken advantage of a range of CPD, which was consistently seen as supporting teachers who lack confidence, to go on and deliver music education. Teachers also made reference to the quality of support given to school music leads' planning. Here, as identified elsewhere, the quality of relationships Hubs had with schools meant teachers felt they were receiving a tailored, dedicated approach to planning. There was some reference to facing issues navigating Hub websites to see what was on offer, however this was not identified as a major challenge.

2.7 Teacher confidence and attitudes

Teachers overall had high levels of confidence about teaching music. However, their responses varied by type of school in a pattern consistent with the differences in teacher profiles. More teachers from secondary schools agreed that they were confident teaching music to their class compared to teachers from primary schools and other types of schools (see Table 2). Responses to the question about teaching singing did not vary as much between primary and secondary schools (see Table 3).

Table 2 : Agreement with the statement “I am confident about teaching music to my class”, by type of school

Agreement with the statement	Primary	Secondary	Other types of schools	All
Strongly disagree	3	6	7	4
Disagree	8	-	7	7
Don't know	4	-	-	3
Agree	41	14	24	37
Strongly agree	44	80	62	50
<i>Bases</i>	<i>617</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>766</i>

Table shows column %. Other types of schools include special, middle, all-through and alternative provision schools.

Source: Stage 1a survey of teachers, Autumn 2024

Table 3: Agreement with the statement “I am confident about teaching singing to my class”, by type of school

Agreement with the statement	Primary	Secondary	Other types of schools	All
Strongly disagree	3	3	16	4
Disagree	10	5	9	9
Don't know	4	5	2	4
Agree	36	41	27	36
Strongly agree	48	46	47	47
<i>Bases</i>	<i>614</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>763</i>

Table shows column %. Other types of schools include special, middle, all-through and alternative provision schools.

Source: Stage 1b survey of teachers, Autumn 2024

High levels of ability to read music were much more prevalent among secondary school respondents than those in primary and other types of school, which is consistent with the data on teachers' academic qualifications in music and exam board grades (see Table 4).

Table 4: Agreement with the statement “I am able to read music”, by type of school

Agreement with the statement	Primary	Secondary	Other types of schools	All
Strongly disagree	9	1	11	8
Disagree	18	1	7	15
Don't know	1	1	-	1
Agree	27	10	23	25
Strongly agree	45	87	59	51
<i>Bases</i>	<i>615</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>763</i>

Table shows column %. Other types of schools include special, middle, all-through and alternative provision schools.

Source: Stage 1b survey of teachers, Autumn 2024

While among secondary school teachers, 92% strongly agreed that they could play an instrument sufficiently well to use in music lessons, the corresponding figure for primary schools was only 35%, and 55% for other types of schools. Over a third of primary school teachers (35%) disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement (see Table 5).

Table 5: Agreement with the statement “I am able to play an instrument sufficiently well to use in music lessons”, by type of school

Agreement with the statement	Primary	Secondary	Other types of schools	All
Strongly disagree	14	2	16	12
Disagree	21	1	5	18
Don't know	4	1	-	4
Agree	25	4	25	22
Strongly agree	35	92	55	44
<i>Bases</i>	<i>609</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>757</i>

Table shows column %. Other types of schools include special, middle, all-through and alternative provision schools.

Source: Stage 1b survey of teachers, Autumn 2024

Most teacher survey participants enjoyed teaching music, with the proportion who strongly agreed being markedly higher among secondary schools (see Table 6).

Table 6: Agreement with the statement “I like teaching music”, by type of school

Agreement with the statement	Primary	Secondary	Other types of schools	All
Strongly disagree	2	-	4	2
Disagree	4	-	-	3
Don't know	5	2	2	5
Agree	39	19	24	36
Strongly agree	50	79	69	55
<i>Bases</i>	<i>611</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>758</i>

Table shows column %. Other types of schools include special, middle, all-through and alternative provision schools.

Source: Stage 1b survey of teachers, Autumn 2024

Overall, these results highlight a clear difference in musical confidence and skills between primary and secondary school teachers. Primary teachers are generally less likely to hold formal music qualifications, to read or play music confidently, or to report enjoyment in teaching the subject. Given that primary school represents the first formal exposure many pupils have to music and instruments, this gap has important implications for progression.

2.8 External challenges

The main barriers to schools' Music Hub engagement prior to September 2024 identified in our qualitative encounters were factors external to the Hubs themselves. These regarded constraints on funding, the geographical inaccessibility of some schools for Hub organisations, and a perceived undervaluing of music education by the previous government that had a knock-on effect among schools and parents.

- **Funding constraints:** One challenge raised was that funding had not kept pace with demand. Participants from schools told us they faced challenges affording music provision due to wider school budget constraints, limiting what some schools were able to purchase from Hubs. As such, there are schools who wish to engage, or who have engaged previously, who cannot afford to do so any longer. At the same time, Hubs reported difficulty meeting demand from those schools that were able to engage, both in terms of the availability of staff but also in terms of affordability of support.

Attempts to address this gap include drawing on funds from elsewhere; for example, one Hub integrates music into pupils' Personal Education Plans to access further funding. Elsewhere, schools in more affluent areas have been able to rely on parents paying further towards music provision costs.

"We are constantly packaging together everything we can and adding value, and very often the added value is [...] just me doing more hours at work. This is the thing; there's no slack left at the moment. We're really squeezed. I'm this optimistic, happy person, and if I'm saying it, it really is, we're very, very squeezed. Schools are squeezed." (*Music Hub participant*)

- **Geographical inaccessibility:** Schools also pointed to the financial and time costs of engaging with Hubs due to being located more distantly from them. In some cases, schools discussed this in reference to being in a rural location and in other cases due to their Hub simply serving a wider area, though in either case they were referring to their circumstances prior to September 2024. These schools were aware of what the Hubs could provide and would like to tap into what they offer but found it more difficult to engage given their proximity. This was compounded by funding and resourcing challenges. In one instance, a teacher

reported that they knew of another school whose Hub had said it would not provide music tuition given the distance involved in reaching them. Schools closer to Hubs recognised the benefit wider provision can bring to these more distant schools, but were concerned that in the process, this encourages Hubs to provide a more standardised music offer, discouraging more bespoke support built on close relationships with schools.

- **Undervaluing of music education:** From both Music Hub staff and schools, we found a perception that previous governments had undervalued music and arts education more generally through their policies and statements. It was suggested that Music Hubs receive fewer requests because parents and schools did not view music education as a priority area. A Hub staff member, for example, suggested that a long-term emphasis on the value of STEM subjects in schools by previous governments had drawn a focus away from pupils studying the arts. Another example was that a headteacher making provision of weekly music for every child a lower priority due to a lack of time in the school schedule. Others felt that Ofsted are poor at assessing music education standards. Finally, some suggested parents themselves may not understand the value of music education and so will be less inclined to invest time or money into extracurricular music provision via a Hub.

2.9. Expectations for the new Music Hubs model and learnings for the future

Over half the teachers who knew about Music Hubs were aware of the new model: 9% knew a lot, 35% a little, and 21% were only aware that it was being rolled out. Over a third (35%) had never heard about the changes. Of the respondents who were aware of the new model, 81% planned to work with their Music Hub, 17% were unsure, and 1% said their school did not plan to work with the new Music Hub.

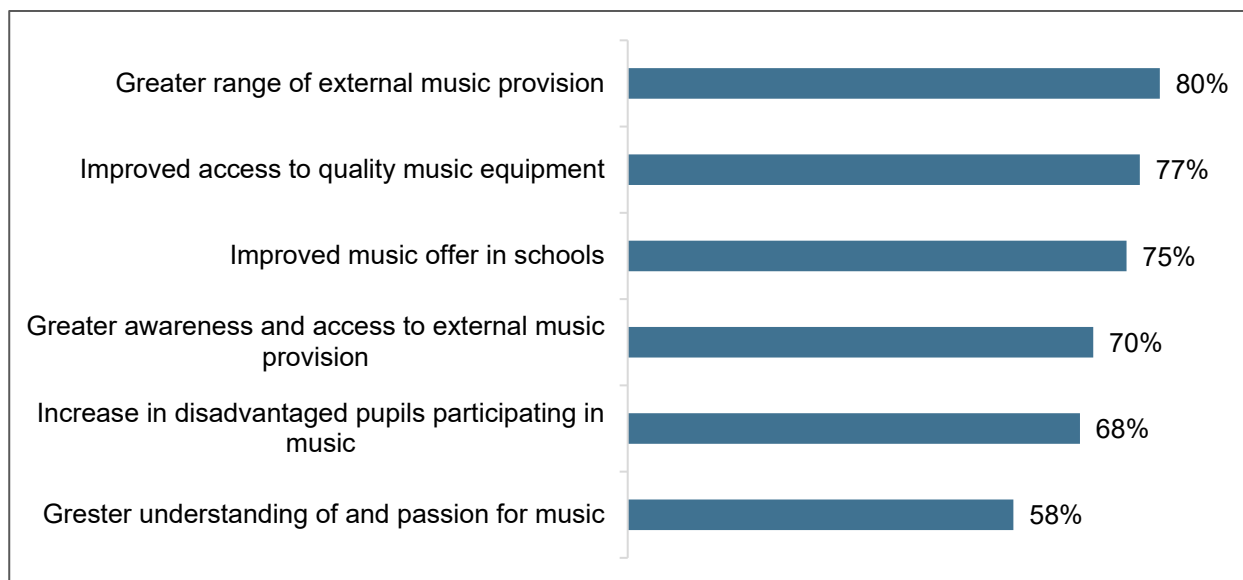
For those who were unsure or did not plan to work with their Music Hub in the new model, the most common reasons were that they did not know what the Hub's offer was (48%), it was too early in the school year to think about this (34%), they did not know whom to contact (30%), or staff at their school did not have time to coordinate engagement (16%).

Of those who were planning to work with the new Hub, most (93%) expected a range of benefits for teachers such as improved access to and participation in music CPD opportunities (86%), improved consistency of music provision across schools (71%), and increased confidence in understanding and teaching music (66%).

Benefits for pupils from the new Music Hubs model were expected by 96% of respondents whose school was planning to work with the new Hub. The most common

expected benefits were a greater range of music provision for pupils outside of school (80%), and improved pupil access to quality music instruments and equipment (77%). (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Anticipated benefits of the new Music Hubs model for pupils



Source: Stage 1b survey of teachers, Autumn 2024

From our qualitative encounters, the overriding learning communicated by teachers was that, prior to September 2024, their experience of the Hubs was of institutions which worked with a clear purpose to address the specific asks and needs of each school and their local context. This, more than anything else, was what schools wished to retain into the future as they felt they could point to multiple gains resulting from this. Some were concerned that this was not well understood by the DfE. At the same time, not all schools were receiving this support given geographical constraints and all participants felt funding constraints, as detailed in Chapter 2.8, were a risk to the level of support continuing as it is. Demand for music education provision was in some cases identified to be rising, and concerns were raised that this would not be met with adequate funding.

2.10. Chapter summary

Chapter 2 explored how schools and Music Hubs worked together prior to the roll-out of the new Hubs model in September 2024. Findings were drawn from a survey of teachers alongside qualitative interviews with teachers and Hub staff.

Overall awareness of Music Hubs was high, and the majority of schools engaged with their Hub in some way. Around three-quarters of teachers described their relationship with their Hub as good or excellent, highlighting the importance of strong personal connections and long-standing trust. Teachers valued Hubs' responsiveness to local

needs, their role in facilitating events and partnerships, and the quality of peripatetic teaching, CPD, and instrument provision.

Support for teachers included CPD, curriculum planning, and guidance, with many reporting that Hubs boosted their confidence and skills in delivering music. This support is particularly important given the differences in confidence, musical background, and training between primary and secondary teachers: primary teachers are generally less confident and less musically qualified, meaning Hub engagement plays a vital role in ensuring pupils receive a strong foundation in music from the outset of their education. For pupils, Hubs enabled access to instruments, co-curricular activities, progression routes, and performance opportunities often in ways that schools could not provide alone.

Inclusion was a central part of Hubs' work. Schools reported support targeted at disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, though financial barriers limited the reach of such provision. Teachers also emphasised the wider wellbeing and social benefits of inclusive music opportunities.

Challenges under the previous model included funding constraints for both schools and Hubs, geographical inaccessibility (especially in rural areas), and a sense that music was undervalued at national policy level at the time compared with other subjects. These factors restricted engagement and created uneven access across regions.

Looking ahead, teachers and Hubs staff expected the new model to improve access, consistency, and support but stressed the importance of retaining the trusted, tailored relationships that had been built up over time.

3. Baseline findings for the new Hubs model

3.1. Overview

This chapter outlines key findings from 3 online surveys carried out in November-December 2024 as part of Stage 1b fieldwork⁸ to collect baseline data after the new model had just begun delivery.

3.2. Establishing the new Music Hubs model

The Hubs staff survey included a number of questions about Hubs' progress with establishing the new model.⁹

When asked about whether there was any work still left to do on setting up their Hub in the new model, 4% of participants said this question was not applicable to them, as nothing had changed for their Hub. Of the remaining respondents, 26% reported that their Music Hub had completed setting up, whilst 74% reported that their Music Hub still had some work left to. Of the latter, 22% were unsure when their Hub would be fully set up by, 39% thought their Hub would be fully set up by the end of the academic year (July 2025), 19% by the end of spring term (March-April 2025), 11% by February 2025 half-term break, and 8% in the next academic year or later (September 2025 onwards).

The main types of work that remained to be done were administrative tasks (e.g. contracts, data agreements, training staff-49%), finalising the delivery strategy (e.g. Hub integration, shared ways of working across the larger area, governance, policies-41%), staffing and recruitment (e.g. administrative staff, teachers, board members-30%), financial tasks (e.g. expand capital grants, secure more funding, establish financing plan, buy equipment-27%), and partnerships (e.g. developing or improving partnerships, or gaining more partners-19%).

The Hubs staff survey also included questions about how well Music Hubs have been working since the transition. 10% of participants said that questions about new partnerships did not apply to them, as their Hub had not formed any new partnerships with other music services. Where new partnerships had been formed, participants were generally positive about the experience. 85% believed that their new partnership/consortium had been working very well or fairly well since the transition to the new model, 88% said that it had been very easy or fairly easy to communicate with the

⁸ Stage 1b fieldwork refers to baseline surveys of Hubs staff, parents and children and young people in the first academic year under the new Music Hubs model.

⁹ These questions were asked of all survey respondents, but it was found that only Heads of HLOs and Hub partners were likely to provide responses. Peripatetic teachers were much more likely to be unsure how to answer compared to staff in other roles. Keeping this in mind, we have only analysed responses from Heads of HLOs and Hub partners for these questions, making it comparable to Stage 2.

other partners/services in their partnership/consortium, and 70% reported that it had been very easy or fairly easy to align priorities and ways of working with the other partners.

81% of respondents reported that their Hub delivered to a wider geographical area in the new model. Of these, 81% described that their Hub was very well or fairly well set up to successfully deliver music education to a wider geographical area, while 7% were unsure. 69% of respondents reported that their Hub did not deliver to the same schools in the new model as before, of which 83% said that their Hub was able to very well or fairly well adapt its provision to meet schools' individual needs since the transition to the new model, while 6% were unsure.

The majority of Hubs staff described that their Hub's offer very or fairly successfully met the needs of the schools in their area (96%), or the needs of children and young people in their area (90%). Only small percentages of respondents were unsure how to answer (4% for both).

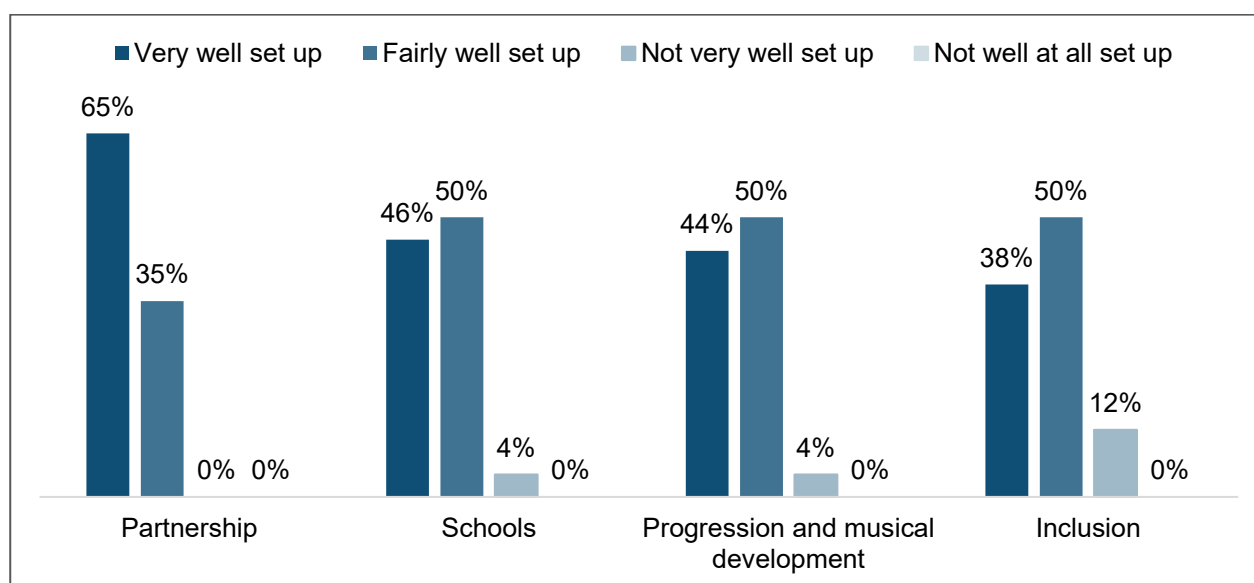
3.3. Music Hubs' strategic functions

Heads of HLOs and Hub partners were asked about the Hubs' 5 strategic functions, including: partnerships, schools, inclusion, progression and music development, and sustainability (financial and operational)¹⁰.

Figure 6 presents views on how well Hubs are set up to deliver the partnerships, schools, inclusion, and progression and musical development strategic functions. Most Hubs staff had a positive view of their Hubs ability to deliver these strategic functions.

¹⁰ Reflecting the management roles of these participants at their Hubs, percentages of 'unsure' answers were very low (from 0% to 4%), and therefore these respondents were excluded from calculations of the figures reported below.

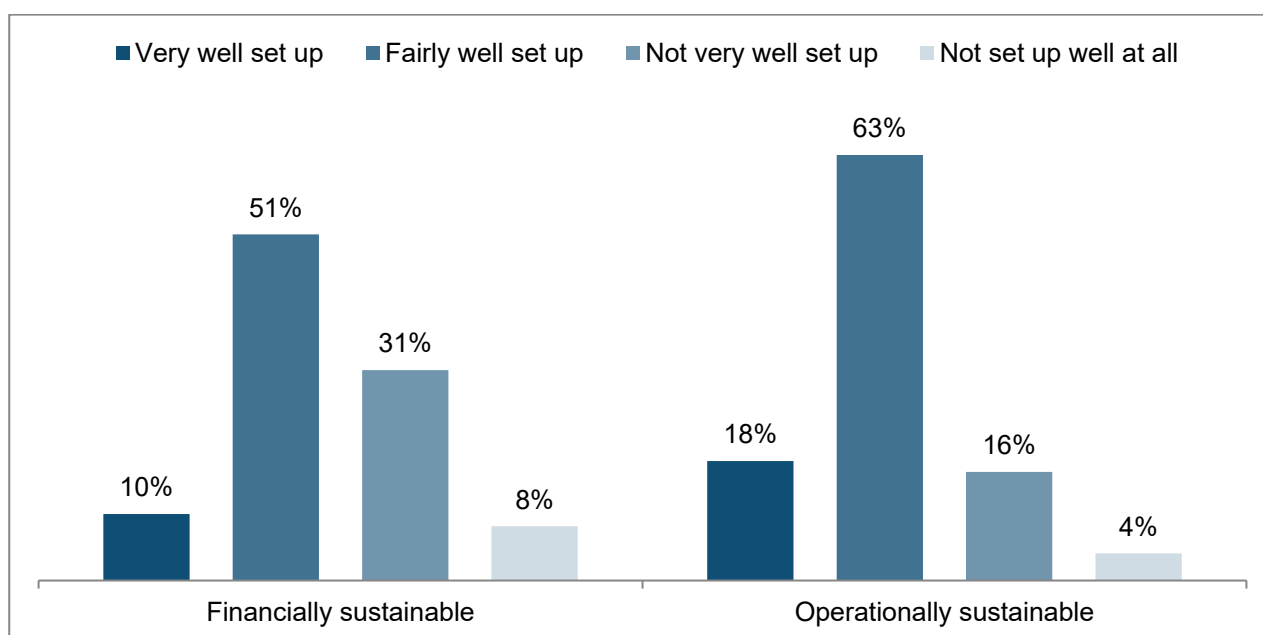
Figure 6: Views of Heads of HLOs and Hub partners on how well their Hub is set up to deliver the strategic functions



Source: Stage 1b survey of Hubs staff, Autumn 2024

Figure 7 shows that Hubs are more confident in their operational sustainability than in their financial sustainability. In particular, Heads of HLOs and Music Hub partners were more likely to say their Hub had the workforce and capacity needed to operate effectively, whereas fewer felt their Hub had the financial stability to match this.

Figure 7: Views of Heads of HLOs and Hub partners on how well their Hub is set up to be sustainable



Source: Stage 1b survey of Hubs staff, Autumn 2024

3.4. Peripatetic music teachers

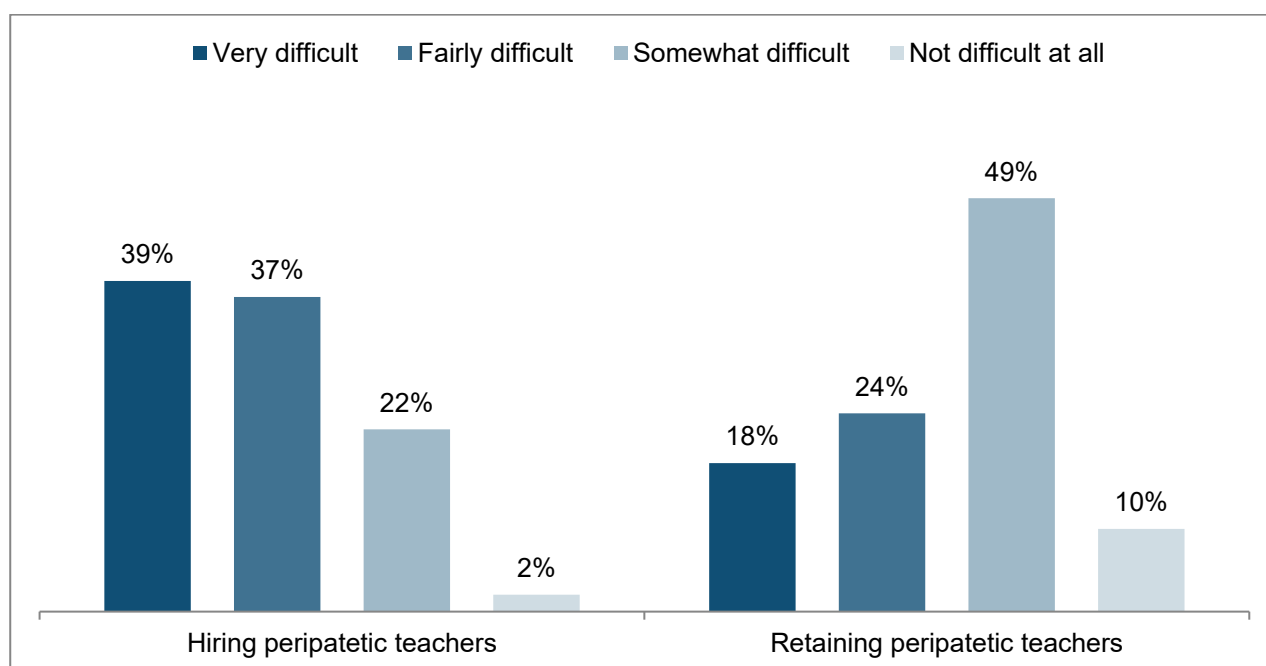
Just under three-quarters of peripatetic music teachers completing the survey (74%) had 10 years or more experience of teaching music, while 11% had between 5 and 10 years, and 16% had less than 5 years.

According to Heads of HLOs and Hub partners, almost all Hubs (96% of responses) offered CPD training for the peripatetic music teachers. Where this was offered, about a third of respondents (31%) reported it being offered more often than every 3 months, another third (36%) said it was offered about every 3 months/every term, and the rest (33%) said CPD was less frequent.

The majority of peripatetic music teachers (86%) reported that they had received CPD training from their Music Hub in the last 12 months that was related to their role as a peripatetic music teacher. 82% of whom described the quality of support that they received from their Hub as excellent or good.

Just over three-quarters (76%) of Heads of HLOs and Hub partners reported that it was very or fairly difficult to hire peripatetic music teachers who had the necessary experience and skills. Levels of difficulties with retaining peripatetic music teachers were reported to be somewhat lower but still relatively high, just under half (49%) reported that it was somewhat difficult (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Views of Heads of HLOs and Hub partners of hiring and retaining peripatetic teachers



Source: Stage 1b survey of Hubs staff, Autumn 2024

The majority of peripatetic music teachers (71%) reported that they would still see themselves in the role in 3 years, while 11% said that they did not see themselves still working as a peripatetic music teacher in 3 years, and 19% were unsure. The latter two groups thought that they instead would be retiring, moving towards classroom teaching or performance work, or moving to a role not in education.

Almost all (98%) Heads of HLOs and Hub partners were positive about how well their Hub met schools' needs for peripatetic music teachers with 35% indicating they did this very well and 63% stating that they did this fairly well.

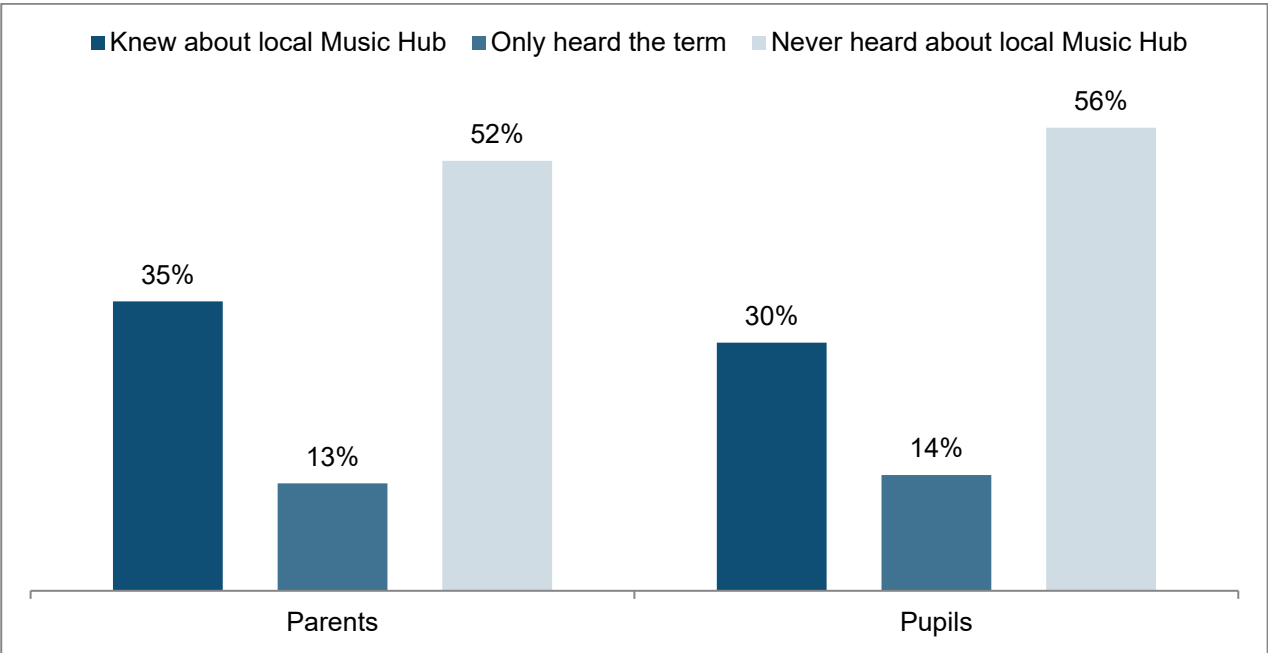
3.5. Hubs working with schools and families

3.5.1. Information and communication

85% of Hubs staff described schools and families within their area as very well informed or fairly well informed about their Music Hub's offer. 35% of parents knew about their local Music Hub. This level of awareness is notably lower than that reported by teachers when asked the same question (see Chapter 2.3). The pattern of responses did not vary by whether the child was eligible for FSM or by region, with the exception of London, where parents were somewhat more likely to know about their local Music Hub (only 38%

had never heard of their local Music Hub). Similar to parents, only 30% of pupils knew about their local Music Hub, (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Parent and pupil awareness of their local Music Hub



Source: Stage 1b parent survey and pupil survey, Autumn 2024

The most common methods used by Hubs to communicate with schools and local families included email (94%), social media including their Hub’s website (93%), presence at community events (67%), in person or virtual meetings (63%), paper or online newsletters (61%), and telephone calls or online messaging (56%).

Of the parents who had heard about their local Music Hub, the main ways they heard were through their child’s school (62%), through friends and family (19%), directly from their local Music Hub (16%), through social media (16%), and through their local authority (10%).

3.5.2. Supporting music staff in schools

Almost all (99%) of Hubs staff reported supporting music staff in schools with various levels of the music curriculum, which decreased as pupils progressed in age, with lower support for post-16: Key stage 2 (99%), key stage 1 (97%), key stage 3 (85%), music GCSEs (75%), music A-levels (59%), and music BTECs (52%).

80% of Hubs staff said that their Hub provided CPD to schools in the last 12 months for their staff who taught music, 19% were unsure, and 1% said CPD was not offered. The most common types of CPD Hubs offered to teachers related to teaching music (93%), music curriculum planning (81%), musical leadership (57%), understanding and teaching

composition (54%), and other types (20%) such as for music technology, music and school development plans, inclusion and support for children with SEND, supporting early years, and leading ensembles.

70% of Hubs staff reported that their Hub had organised networking events for music staff in schools in the last 12 months, 26% were unsure, and 3% said that no such events had been offered.

3.5.3. Schools as leaders and equal partners

The advisory group¹¹ highlighted that schools can play an active role in delivering music opportunities with Hubs, extending their role beyond that of recipients.

16% of respondents reported that it was very common for schools in their area to lead on music projects with support from their Hub. 31% reported that it was somewhat common and 19% said it was not common. Another third of Hub staff (34%) said that they were unsure. Similarly, 13% of respondents reported that it was very common for schools in their area to be equal partners on music projects in their school with support from their Hub. 29% reported that it was somewhat common and 19% said it was not common. 39% reported being unsure.

Overall, partnerships between Music Hubs and schools were relatively uncommon, with schools more often taking a leading role than acting as equal partners.

3.5.4. Music provision for schools and pupils

Almost all Hubs staff (99%) reported that their Hub provided instruments and/or equipment to schools, or to children and young people directly, through an instrument loan service (the remaining 1% were unsure). Where an instrument loan service was known to be available, 94% described that their Hub met schools' needs for music instruments very or fairly well, and 74% described that their Hub met schools' needs for other music equipment or services very or fairly well, with 19% being unsure.

Most Hubs staff said that their Hub offered instrument or singing music lessons to pupils at school (93%) and 81% offered lessons not on school premises. Where lessons were offered, 98% described that their Hub met the needs for instrument and/or singing lessons in their area very or fairly well. Hubs staff also reported that their Hub offered music ensembles to pupils not on school premises (94%) and at school (87%). Almost all Hubs staff (98%) reported that their Hub organised concerts, recitals, or other music events for children and young people to perform in (the remaining 2% were unsure).

¹¹ The advisory group comprises experts and stakeholders from across the music education sector who provide independent advice and feedback to DfE and the NatCen team.

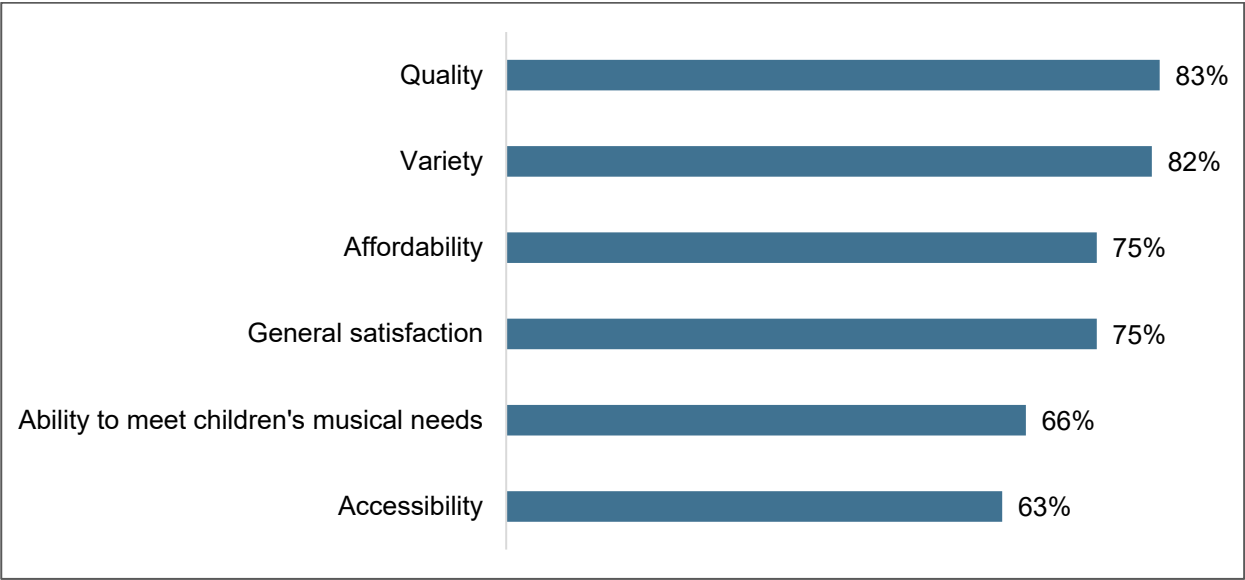
Half of parents who were aware of their local Music Hub (50%) had not used it for music lessons, instruments, or activities for their children, while 42% said that they had. 42% of pupils reported that they had used their local Music Hub for lessons or activities, while 37% had not, and 20% were unsure.

3.5.5. Affordability, quality, and accessibility

Hubs staff who reported that their Hub provided instruments and/or equipment to schools, viewed provision generally positively: 62% described the quality of the instruments as excellent or good, and 33% as fair.

Of the pupils who had used their local Music Hub, 77% rated the lessons or activities they participated in as excellent or good. Parents who had engaged with Music Hubs expressed high levels of satisfaction with their local Music Hubs, praising the affordability, variety, and quality of services. However, accessibility remained a challenge, with many noting that their children would struggle to reach Hubs independently (see Figure 10), although many pupils were engaging with Hubs through schools without realising.

Figure 10: Parent ratings of Music Hubs on various attributes



Source: Stage 1b parent survey, Autumn 2024

In the parent and pupil surveys, respondents were asked to reflect on the quality of music lessons, at school as well as outside school. 90% said they attended music lessons at their school. Of those, 81% described the quality of these as excellent or good, 16% described it as fair and 3% as poor or very poor. Answers from parents were similar. Compared to lessons at school, a smaller percentage of parents (61%) and pupils (49%) reported that they (or their children) attended lessons outside school.

Similarly, parents (94%), and pupils (86%) had very positive views of music lessons outside school with the majority rating it as excellent or good.

A minority of pupils borrowed musical instruments – 17% in the parent survey and 18% in the pupil survey. Where instruments were borrowed, they were most commonly borrowed from school¹² (60% of responses in the parent survey), followed by directly from a local Music Hub (19%) or a music shop (4%). 72% of parents who borrowed instruments for their children described the quality of the instrument as excellent or good, 27% described it as fair, while 1% described it as poor. Pupil responses were very similar.

3.5.6. Inclusion

82% of Hubs staff reported that their Hub offered reduced fees or free music activities for children and young people who were eligible for FSM or PP, 4% said this was not offered, and 14% were unsure. The majority of Hubs staff (72%) described the services their Hub provided for children and young people who were eligible for FSM or PP as excellent or good.

72% of Hubs staff said that their Hub offered music activities and/or events that had been specifically adapted for children and young people who had SEND, 6% said this was not offered, while 22% were unsure. 66% rated the services that their Hub provided for children and young people with SEND as excellent or good.

Just over half of Hubs staff (57%) reported that they offered music activities and/or events that had been specifically adapted for children and young people attending AP settings, 6% said this was not offered, and 36% were unsure.

47% of parents agreed with the following statement: “My child could not have accessed their musical activities and opportunities without support from their school / our local Music Hub.” According to parents, the main barriers that stopped their child from being able to take part in any more music activities included financial cost (e.g. too expensive) (41%), lack of local / in-school opportunities (17%), lack of time (e.g. the child being too busy with other academic or extracurricular commitments) (14%), and their child’s SEND or illness (11%). The barriers mentioned by pupils included being too busy and lacking time for music activities (65%), costs (31%), not knowing where to find available music activities (15%), lessons and music activities being difficult to get to (13%), and not owning an instrument (12%).

3.5.7. Supporting children and young people’s progression in music

All Hubs staff (100%) reported that their Hub supported children and young people with accessing music progression opportunities, often through a combination of multiple routes. The most common types were out-of-school provision¹³ (94%), music board

¹² It is worth noting that many schools acquire their instrument stock from Music Hubs.

¹³ weekend, holiday, and after school provision

exams (88%), ‘advanced’ ensembles, or ensembles of different ‘levels’ (86%), and local, regional, and national opportunities and ensembles (79%).

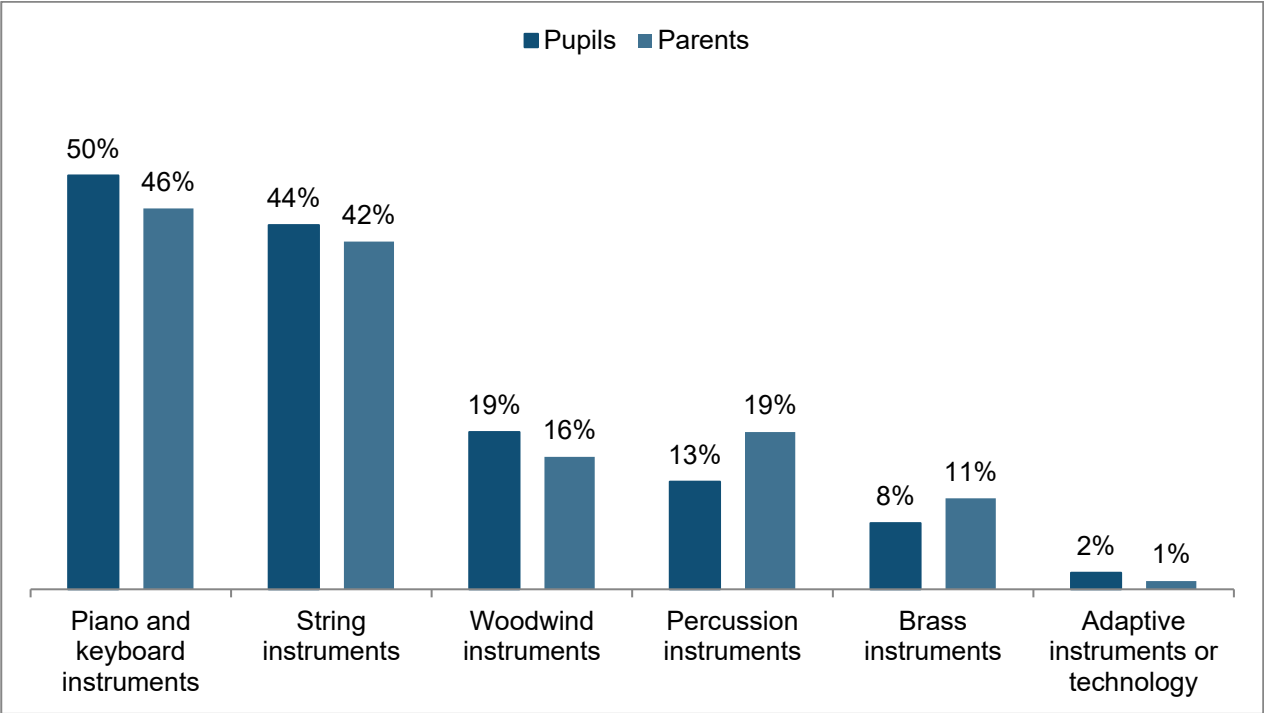
80% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “The school and/or the local Music Hub has helped my child make good progress in their music skills.”

3.6. Children and young people’s music activities

3.6.1. Background: Playing music and/or singing

Most parents (89%) reported that their children played musical instruments. This was slightly lower for the pupil survey (66%). Figure 11 shows the different types of instruments played.

Figure 11: Pupil and parent reports on what instruments pupils play



Source: Stage 1b parent survey and pupil survey, Autumn 2024

Less than half (40%) of the pupils reported that they sang. Of these, 83% sang as a part of a choir or a group, and 38% received singing lessons. This was very similar to the parent survey, where 43% of the respondents stated that their children sang. 86% of parents reported that their children were a part of a choir or a group, while 32% reported that their children received singing lessons.

Most pupils (70%) and parents (85%) described that they/their child had music lessons for instruments and singing. This commonality is not surprising given who the surveys

were directed at. Where music lessons were taken, 70% of pupils stated that their lessons were one-to-one, 23% attended lessons in small groups, while 19% attended in pairs. This composition was similar in the parent survey responses.

A little less than half (48%) of the pupils reported that they were a part of an orchestra, ensemble, band, or choir. Of these, 55% were a part of a choir, 42% were in a band, 36% were in an orchestra and 30% were in an ensemble. Just under two-thirds of parents (65%), that is, higher than in the pupil survey, reported that their children were a part of an orchestra, ensemble, band, or choir, either at school or outside school.

A little less than half of the parents (46%) reported that their children had started learning musical instruments or singing before year 4. 34% of parents reported that their children had started learning between year 4 and year 6, while 20% reported that their children started learning music in year 7 or later. Pupil responses were similar.

Parents and pupils reported that school lessons were the most common place where pupils had initially learned playing instruments or singing (40% of pupils and 35% of parents). Pupils also mentioned being self-taught (24%) or having tutors in school for one-to-one or group lessons (20%), private music teachers after school or at weekends arranged by parents/carers (20%).

Parents reported slightly higher percentages for tutors who came to school (35%) and private music teachers outside of school (29%). This trend remained similar, with 47% of pupils reporting at the time of the survey that they were learning music at their school lessons, while 23% mentioned private music teachers outside of school and 21% mentioned that a tutor came to their school for these lessons. 43% of parents reported that their children were learning how to play music or sing in their school lessons, followed by 38% mentioning tutors who came to school and 31% mentioning private music teachers outside of school.

Only 5% of parents and 3% of pupils reported that they (or their children) were learning music or singing at a Music Hub. It is possible that this low figure may be due to limited awareness of Hubs and their role, as parents and pupils might not be directly aware of any partnerships between school music lessons and Hubs. Just under half (49%) of the parents mentioned that their children had taken graded music examinations.

3.6.2. Music events

More than three-quarters of parents (77%) reported that their children had performed in music events in the last 12 months. Of those parents, most (89%) said that those performances had taken place in school. 52% of parents said that their children had performed in music events outside school. As with music lessons in Chapter 3.5.4, there could be a lack of awareness that these events are organised with or through Music

Hubs as almost all Hubs had said that they organised concerts or events for young people.

Just under two-thirds (65%) of pupils reported that they had performed in music events in the last 12 months. Of these, 84% had performed in school, and 51% had performed outside school. Parents and pupils viewed performing at music events positively. Most parents (85%) either agreed or strongly agreed that their children had enjoyed performing in music events in the last 12 months. Similarly, 85% of pupils agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I enjoyed performing in music events in the last 12 months.”

Just under half (48%) of pupils said that they had not attended any music performances outside school, such as concerts and recitals, which had been organised either by their school or by their local Music Hub in the last 12 months. 40% of pupils had attended such music performances, while 12% were unsure. 53% of parents said their school or Music Hub had organised trips to music performances, 39% said there had been no such trips, and 8% were unsure.

Only a small minority of children and young people attended a music camp during school holidays (at their school or somewhere else) in the last 12 months: 11% of parents and 7% of pupils reported attending a music camp.

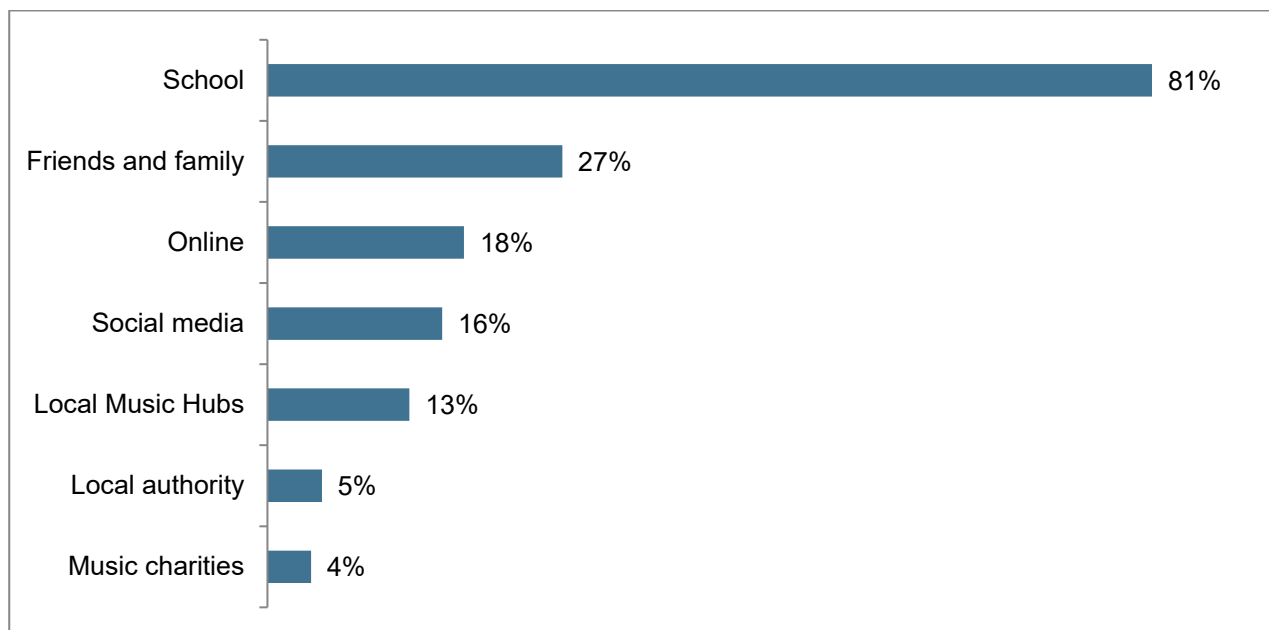
3.7. Parental attitudes to music activities

Almost all (99%) parents reported that it was very or quite important to teach music at secondary school, while only 1% reported that it was not very or not at all important.

Overall, parents had a positive view of their child’s progression with 37% strongly agreeing and 43% agreeing that their child is making good progress in their musical learning. Only 8% of parents disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 12% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Parents reflected on the information that was available to them about music opportunities. Most (81%) said that they found out about music opportunities through school, with few using their Music Hubs (see Figure 12). There were no clear patterns of differences by disadvantage or by region, although parents in London were somewhat more likely than parents in other areas to mention finding out about music opportunities through friends and family, their local Music Hub, or their local authority.

Figure 12: Sources of information about music opportunities, reported by parents



Source: Stage 1b parent survey, Autumn 2024

66% of parents said that they were either very or fairly well informed about the music opportunities that were available to their children. 28% said that they were not very well informed, while 6% stated that they were not at all informed.

3.8. Benefits of music activities for children and young people

Most parents (91%) reported that their children enjoyed playing music or singing – 65% of parents strongly agreed and 26% agreed. Similarly, 76% of pupils strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “I enjoy playing musical instrument(s) / singing.”

Parents overall had a high level of confidence about their child being “confident in playing an instrument/singing” with 81% of parents strongly agreeing or agreeing. This confidence level was lower in pupils themselves (58% agreement). Responses to this question did not vary between boys and girls but did by key stage, with pupils in KS4 having the highest levels of confidence (80%), those in KS3 the lowest levels (53%) and pupils in KS5 in between these two (69%).

62% of pupils reported that they strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “Playing music / singing makes me feel good about myself.” This was echoed by a large majority of parents (89%) who reported that they strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that music had improved their children’s wellbeing.

66% of pupils described that playing music was a good way for them to spend their free time, while 20% neither agreed or disagreed and 14% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement.

Of those pupils who were a part of music groups such as an orchestra, ensemble, band or choir (80%), two-thirds (67%) said that they enjoyed being part of these with 18% disagreeing and 15% remaining neutral.

There was no clear consensus on whether playing music can help children and young people make friends. Only 32% of pupils agreed or strongly agreed that playing music/singing helped them make friends. However, parents had a more positive view of this, and 69% of parent respondents strongly agreed or agreed that playing music helped their children make friends.

3.9. Learning music at GCSE and beyond

Among KS4 pupils, 60% of pupils were studying for a music GCSE. Among KS3 pupils, 23% said they would like to study for a music GCSE in the future, 39% said they would not, and 38% were unsure. Some of the reasons that KS3 and KS4 pupils mentioned for not pursuing a music GCSE included not being interested in music GCSEs and finding it boring (26%), viewing music as a hobby rather than an academic interest (21%), music GCSE being too hard and feeling like they did not have enough skills for it (14%) and music GCSE not being helpful for career ambitions (7%). An additional reason mentioned by parents of pupils (12%) in the same key stages included children preferring a music BTEC over a GCSE.

Of pupils completing the survey, just 2% were studying for a music A level¹⁴ and 1% said they had already completed one. In the parent survey, 4% of respondents said their child was studying for a music A level. Pupils in KS4 were asked whether they would like to study music at A level in the future. 15% said that they would, 43% said they would not, and 41% were unsure. Some of the reasons why pupils did not want to pursue a music A level included not liking music/ finding music boring (16%), having other career ambitions (15%), viewing music as a hobby rather than an academic interest (13%), not feeling confident enough to pursue it, finding it too hard (8%) and not having completed a music GCSE (3%). Parents also mentioned such reasons for not pursuing a music A level as their child doing a BTEC instead (6%) and their child having not enjoyed doing their music GCSE (5%).

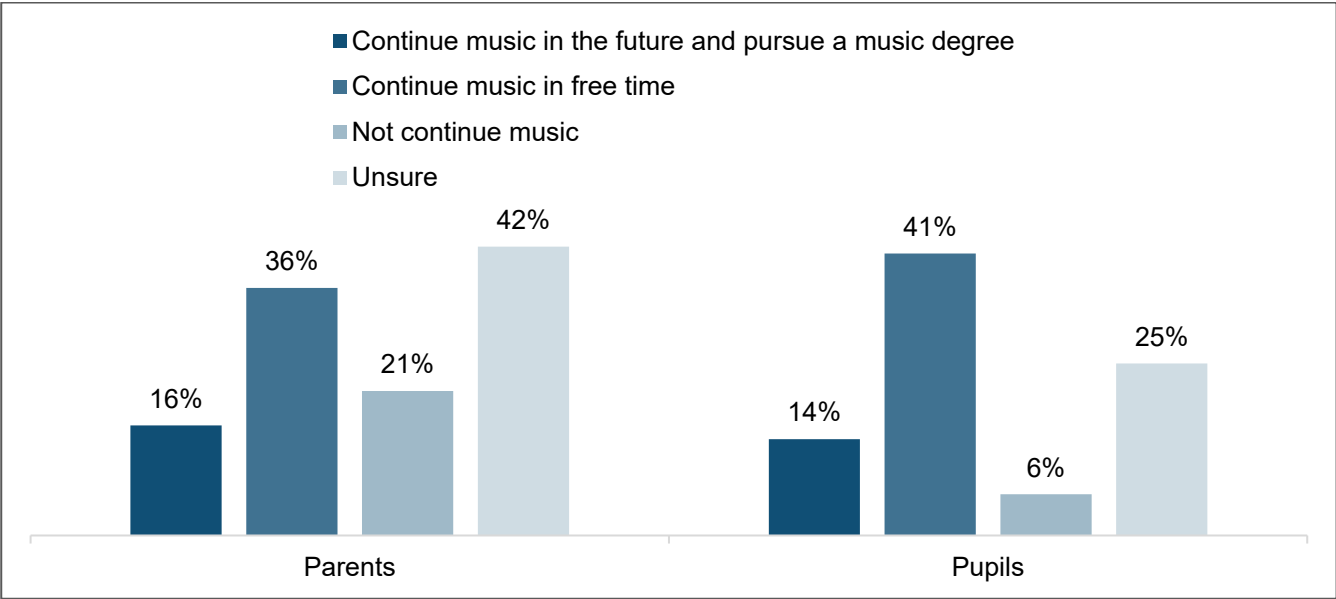
Of pupils completing the survey, 2% were studying for a music BTEC and 1% were studying for a T level in Media, Broadcast and Production. In the parent survey, 8% of

¹⁴ It is important to note that there was a small number of respondents of the age that is relevant to KS5 pupils.

reported that their child was studying for a music BTEC and almost no one had a child studying for a T level.

41% of pupils mentioned that they would like to continue learning music in the future, but in their free time rather than through formal routes. Parents' responses were similar, but they were more likely to be unsure how to answer compared to the pupils (42%) (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Thoughts on pupils' pursual of music in the future



Source: Stage 1b parent survey and pupil survey, Autumn 2024

The reasons that parents described for their child not wanting to pursue music in the future included the child losing interest in the subject, finding it difficult to pursue music at GCSEs and beyond, the expenses associated with learning music and shifting priorities to other subjects at universities. Pupils mentioned mostly not enjoying music and not being interested in it, with other reasons including a preference for learning other things and not being good at music.

It is important to highlight that progression can extend beyond formal qualifications to include ongoing musical learning, participation, and development, reflecting the wider pathways Hubs can support.

3.10. Chapter summary

Chapter 3 set out baseline evidence for the new Music Hubs model, drawing on surveys of Hubs staff, parents, and pupils conducted in late 2024. It provides a picture of how Hubs were established, the services they offered, and how these were perceived by schools and parents.

Most Hubs were still in the process of setting up, but the majority of staff felt their organisations were well prepared to deliver core functions like supporting schools, fostering inclusion, enabling progression, and building partnerships. Strategic capacity was rated positively overall, though financial sustainability was a concern. Recruitment and retention of peripatetic teachers also emerged as significant challenges.

Hub staff reported extensive provision, from instrument loans and lessons to ensembles and performance opportunities and rated the quality highly. Parents and pupils echoed this, with three-quarters of parents satisfied with their local Hub and over 80% describing quality as good or excellent. Pupils reported high enjoyment of music lessons and activities, both in and out of school.

At the same time, awareness of Hubs among parents was limited. Only a third of parents and 30% of pupils knew about their local Hub, with most opportunities instead mediated through schools. Affordability and accessibility remained barriers, particularly for families in rural areas or with limited financial means.

Overall, the baseline findings highlight a sector in transition. Hubs were broadly confident in their role and delivering valued services, but faced structural challenges around funding, workforce capacity, awareness, and equitable access. These issues provide an important context for assessing the first year of implementation, as presented in Chapter 4.

4. Experiences of schools and Hubs staff at the end of year 1 of the new Music Hubs' model

4.1. Overview

This chapter presents findings from Stage 2 fieldwork, which comprised online surveys with Hubs staff and teachers. The questions in the surveys were similar to those in the baseline surveys to allow for comparisons across different time points. Qualitative encounters included 4 focus groups with teachers, peripatetic teachers, and Hubs staff. Evidence from Stage 2 is considered alongside findings from Stage 1 to show how the new Music Hubs model is developing in practice.

4.2. Establishing the new Hubs model

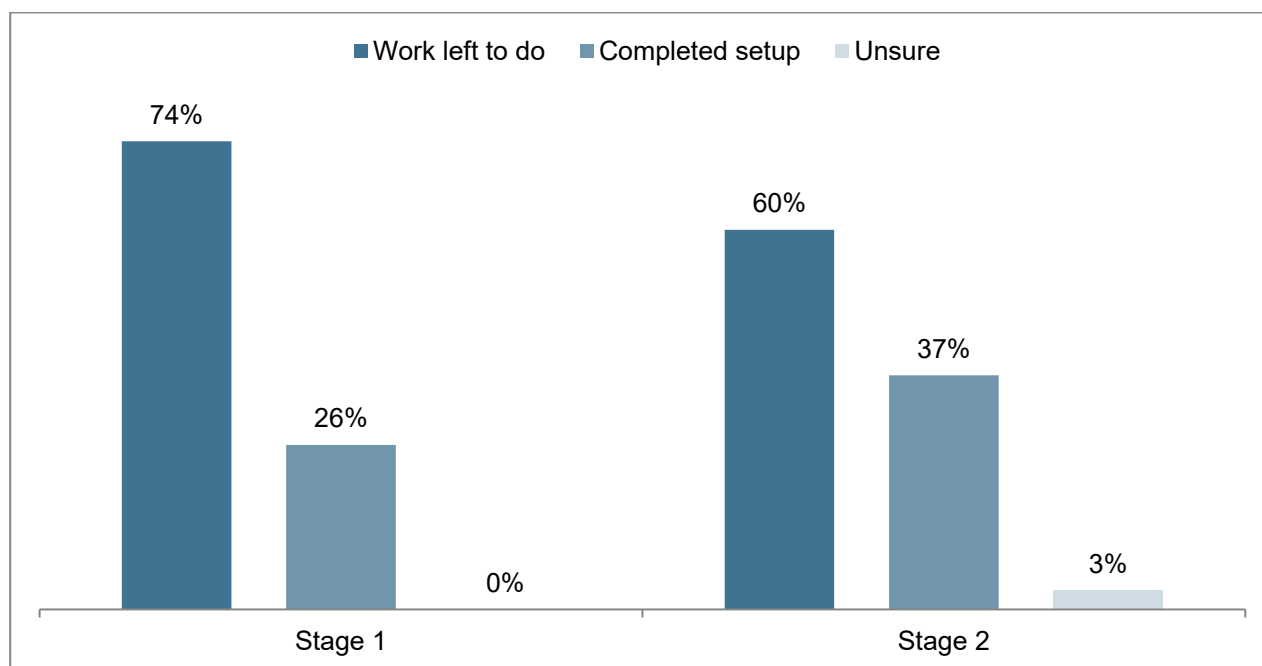
The Hubs staff survey included questions about Hubs' progress with establishing the new model which were directed exclusively to the Heads of HLOs and Hub partners¹⁵.

Just over a third (37%) of Music Hubs reported being fully established within the first year of the new model, representing a notable level of progress given the scale and complexity of the organisational restructure (see Figure 14). While most Hubs are still in transition, there has been a measurable progress between the two stages and the proportion of those with work left has fallen.

Of those who had not completed set up at Stage 2, a majority (64%) estimated this would be completed in the next school year or later (2025 to 2026), 17% thought it would be in the current school year (2024 to 2025), whilst 19% were unsure. Compared with Stage 1, when most Hubs expected to complete setup within 2024 to 2025, these findings suggest that many have revised their timelines to allow more time for embedding systems across their areas.

¹⁵ This was because Stage 1 findings suggested that peripatetic teachers were much more likely to be unsure how to answer these questions compared to staff in other roles.

Figure 14: Hub setup progress (Stage 1 vs Stage 2)

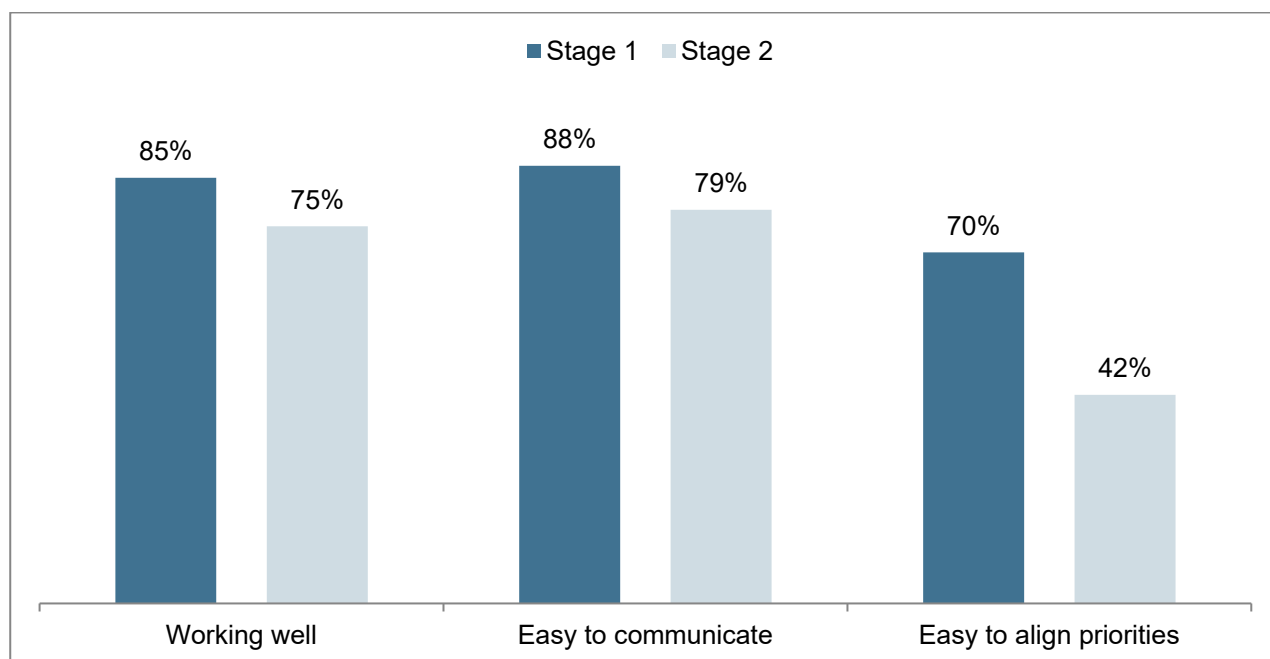


Source: Stage 1 and Stage 2 surveys of Hubs staff, Autumn 2004 and Summer 2025

The main types of work that remained to be done were finalising the delivery strategy (e.g. Hub integration, shared ways of working across the larger area, governance, policies-59%), financial tasks (e.g. secure more funding, financing plan, buy equipment-54%), partnerships (e.g. developing or improving partnerships, or gaining more partners-51%), administrative tasks (e.g. contracts, data agreements, training staff-38%) and staffing and recruitment (19%). The nature of outstanding work has evolved from immediate administrative and staffing tasks toward longer-term strategic and financial priorities.

Those who formed new Hub partnerships were generally positive about the transition. More than three-quarters (79%) said that it had been very or fairly easy to communicate with the other partners/ services in their partnership or consortium and 75% believed that their new partnership or consortium had been working very or fairly well. However, only 42% reported that it had been very or fairly easy to align priorities and ways of working with other partners since the transition. When compared to Stage 1, positivity about partnerships remained strong overall, but there was a notable decline in views on the ability to align priorities (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Positive partnership ratings (Stage 1 vs Stage 2)



Source: Stage 1 and Stage 2 surveys of Hubs staff, Autumn 2004 and Summer 2025

Several benefits for partnership working and collaboration of the new Music Hubs model were cited by participants in qualitative encounters. This included more capacity to tailor work towards local areas' needs, joint ventures and strategic working, and opportunities to share the workload between different music services across the region. Although some participants referred to collaborative working under the previous model, they explained that the new model helped to formalise this type of working and increase its regularity. Participants also linked the increased capacity to other benefits, including a larger pool of staff for delivery, access and delivery to more schools and pupils, and the ability to draw on colleagues' skills and expertise to improve service delivery.

“[W]e’ve been able to [...] tap into areas of expertise or specialisms in different areas. [...] I’ve found it useful that we can divide and conquer when it comes to workload and drawing up the various required policy documents, policies, strategies and action plans and stuff. It hasn’t felt like me as one person, which it previously was having to do all that stuff.” (*Music Hub participant*)

In contrast, some participants felt partnership working had not improved as intended under the new model. Challenges cited included a loss of control over the work itself, and the shift to the new model being more difficult in practice than expected as a result of changes in staff members' roles.

“We’re not dealing with all the strategy, but we actually do still need to be present. So, that’s 2 sides to one coin. There’s a benefit in some respects. You

gain a bit of headspace; you gain a bit of time and the flip side of that is sometimes you lose some sense of control maybe. I think that's probably been trickier because it's on a blank paper exercise, making a big shift like this feels very easy, but when you're dealing then with the reality of actually people in post and people trying to find out where their new role is, it can be a little bit more challenging." (*Music Hub participant*)

Additionally, participants outlined specific barriers to effective partnership working. Some felt that differences in ways of working made collaborative working challenging and harder to align activities. For example, participants referred to some Hubs being more proactive than other Hubs, meaning workload is not evenly distributed, and that different Hub governance would lead to varying approaches (e.g., local authority-run compared to charity Hub partners). For example, the sharing of budgets and financial reporting with the new HLO, where previously this was managed themselves as a former HLO. A view among some participants was that the new model demonstrated a lack of understanding around governance, including limited understanding of how the governance model within local authorities and the governance model for Music Hubs intersect, which they cited as challenging.

Participants shared reflections aimed at strengthening the implementation of the delivery model. Some Music Hub staff noted that aspects of the funding allocation had felt responsive rather than strategic and there was recognition that a multi-year budget would support longer-term planning and delivery. Participants also highlighted opportunities to streamline administrative processes and paperwork to not detract from Hubs focus on strategic priorities. Feedback also indicated that enhancing direct communication between the DfE and Music Hubs could help clarify strategic objectives.

Most (92%) of the Hubs staff reported that their Hub delivered to a wider geographical area under the new model. This was higher than in Stage 1 (81%). Most (79%) described that their Hub was very well or fairly well set up to successfully deliver music education to a wider geographical area.

30% indicated that the question about whether their Hub adapted provision to meet schools' individual needs did not apply to them – either because no adaptations were needed or because they delivered to the same schools as before. Of those who made adaptations to their provision, 73% said that their Hub was able to do so very or fairly well, while 9% were unsure.¹⁶

Most reported that their Hub's offer very or fairly successfully met the needs of schools in their area (86%) or the needs of children and young people in their area (84%). This

¹⁶ The question asked respondents to answer based on 'overall' provision across the areas (if the areas that they work in varied in provision).

broadly aligns with schools' views (see Chapter 4.7). Similarly, in Stage 1, the majority felt their Hub's offer successfully met the needs of both schools (96%) and children and young people (90%). This suggests that while most continued to feel their Hub was meeting needs effectively, confidence was somewhat lower compared with previously.

When asked to reflect on consistency of provision, most (76%) described their Hub's provision as very or fairly consistent in their area. Some Hub Leads fed back in qualitative encounters that there was a lack of consistency in staff members' involved in provision. For example, they reported high levels of turnover in the ACE relationship managers' role resulting in working with several different relationship managers over a few years. New relationship managers had to familiarise themselves with the role and complexities of Hubs and this meant participants having to rebuild relationships and rapport with each new manager. Participants also raised concerns around the lack of clarity on what is defined as good quality music education; guidance around quality frameworks suggests Hub Leads define what 'quality' means for their own Hub, which participants felt was confusing and may lead to inconsistencies.

Funding continued to be a concern (as found at Stage 1 for the previous model), and participants noted that there were substantial funding difficulties associated with the new model. For example, although there has been an increase in the workload¹⁷ to establish the new model, there has not been any increase in the funding received to deliver it. In addition, funding uncertainties, concerns, and constraints were seen as a barrier to effective partnership working within Hubs. An increase in strategic and policy functions was reportedly creating a strain on Hub staff's capacity, and wider societal changes, including competitors trying to undercut to make profit from music education, created difficulties for the Hubs regarding financial sustainability. Allocating funds to partners was also challenging, requiring a new approach to commissioning and distributing the grant funding across the Hub area.

4.3. Music Hubs' strategic functions

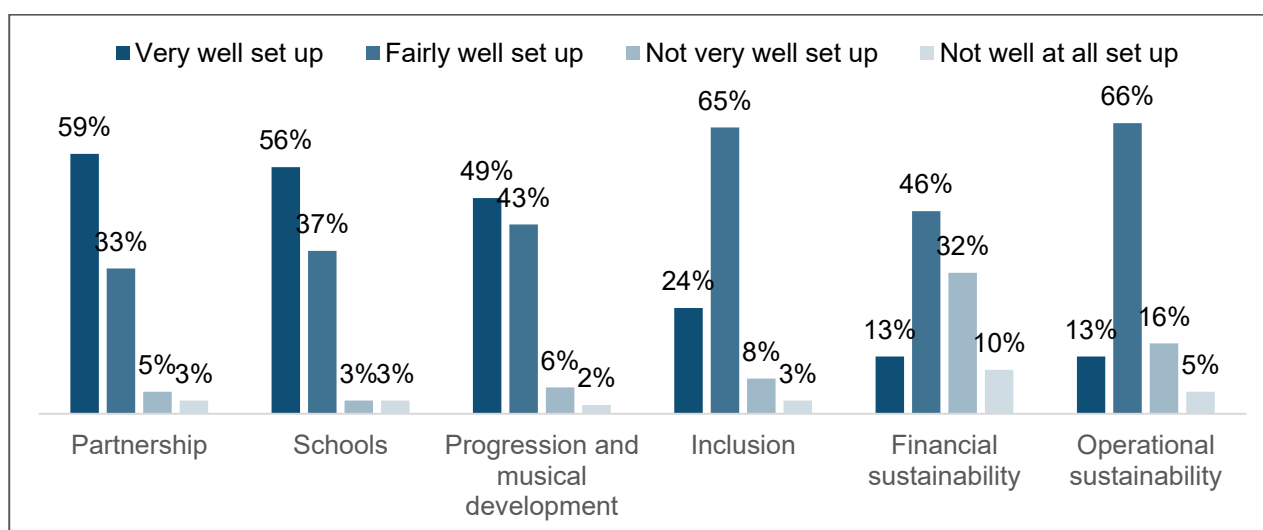
As at Stage 1, Heads of HLOs and Hub partners answered questions around the delivery of strategic functions.¹⁸

Hubs are widely seen as well prepared to deliver core functions in partnership, school support, progression and inclusion, but views are more mixed when it comes to financial and operational sustainability (Figure 16).

¹⁷ Requirements for Hubs have not changed under the new model, but there is a need to form new partnerships under the new geographical coverage.

¹⁸ As in Stage 1, responses from these participants showed a high level of certainty, with 'unsure' answers ranging from 0% to 1.6%. As a result, these responses were excluded from the analysis presented below.

Figure 16: Views of Heads of HLOs and Hub partners on how well their Hub is set up to deliver strategic functions



Source: Stage 2 survey of Hubs staff, Summer 2025

These findings closely mirror those reported in Stage 1 (see Chapter 3.3), with consistently high proportions rating their Hubs positively across all 5 strategic functions, although to a lesser extent for the sustainability function. The overall patterns of response remained broadly consistent, suggesting a stable perception of Hub strengths and challenges across both stages of the survey.

4.4. Capital Grant

The Stage 2 Hubs survey asked Heads of HLOs and Hub partners about the Capital Grant for Musical Instruments, Equipment and Technology, as set out in the background section 1.1. This process was new to Hubs to administer as the first payment was available in 2025.

Most (86%) described that they had conducted a Needs Analysis to secure the funding, whereas 11% said that they did not, and 3% were unsure. However, it is important to note that all Hubs were required to conduct a Needs Analysis as part of the funding process. Therefore, it is possible that some who indicated they had not conducted one may have been unaware that this step had been completed. Of those who had conducted a Needs Analysis, 68% said that they found the process very or fairly easy, 19% said that it was not very easy and 13% said it was not easy at all.

When asked to rate the overall process of receiving the Capital Grant funding, half (50%) rated it as very poor or poor, 30% rated it as fair and 20% rated it as good or excellent. Similarly, there was a general negative view around the process of purchasing

instruments and equipment, with 60% saying that the process was very poor or poor, while 24% rated it as fair. Only 16% thought that the process was good or excellent.

The main types of musical instruments and equipment that were purchased with the Capital Grant were acoustic instruments (87%), amplified, electric or digital instruments and equipment (78%), other technology and equipment used to enable or support music-making (75%), amplified, electric or digital adaptive instruments and adaptive equipment and accessories (68%).

Acoustic adaptive instruments and adaptive equipment and accessories were reported to be purchased with the grant by 65% of Hubs. This suggests that many Hubs prioritised investment in adaptive instruments, reflecting a strong emphasis on inclusive provision. The Capital Grant's defined parameters appear to have supported this focus. However, Hub's survey data indicated that only a small proportion of Hubs had provided CPD related to the use of adaptive instruments (see Chapter 4.6.1), highlighting a potential gap in supporting staff to make full use of adaptive equipment.

Hubs had a positive view about the impact of the Capital Grant on the provision of music services. Most (61%) strongly agreed or agreed that it had improved the music services that their Hub offered to schools and families. Similarly, 67% strongly agreed or agreed that the funding had helped their Hub to better support participation for SEND pupils. Substantial proportions neither agreed nor disagreed with these statements (28% for both).

Music Hubs fed back that funding such as the Capital Grant was necessary to enable staff to better support children and young people. The grant allowed Hubs to invest in higher quality musical instruments to help musical progression, particularly in deprived areas. However, the administration of the Capital Grant was not considered an effective use of resource. Hubs felt the application process and timelines reflected a lack of understanding from ACE and DfE as to how Music Hubs operate. The short-term timeline for the funding application process and allocations affected how staff could strategically spend funding.

Additionally, Hub staff reported a lack of information to support writing Memorandums of Understanding, and large amounts of administrative paperwork and legal involvement in applications. While staff did not always specify individual documents or processes, concerns centred on the volume of paperwork, requests for technical amendments, and limited clarity at the outset of the process. Paperwork had also been repeatedly sent back to Music Hubs to complete missing details which staff felt were insignificant, resulting in a lengthy application process.

Once funding was approved, however, one member of staff reported feeling that Music Hubs "are just being forced to spend money just to hit [...] the funding criteria [timescales]."

There was viewed to be a lack of flexibility with how funding could be spent once it was allocated. which reflects a misunderstanding that could be used for repairs which was set out at the outset. The Capital Grant was for purchasing new instrument stock, not investing in repairs, which can instead be covered by the Revenue Grant. Music Hub staff were concerned about the level of funding they would need to allocate to repairing and maintaining instruments, in addition to funding training for careers in instrument repairs.

Hub staff also questioned the timing of introducing the Capital Grant to the Music Hub model, suggesting that it could have been introduced later to allow staff more time to adjust to the new model and way of working.

Positive early outcomes from the Capital Grant were also reported. For example, one Music Hub used the funding to support different initiatives and groups of pupils through the allocation of funds towards adaptive instruments and early years education.

4.5. Peripatetic music teachers

More than three-quarters of peripatetic music teachers (or other teaching music practitioners contracted by the Hubs) completing the survey (78%) had 10 years or more experience of teaching music, while 9% had between 5 and 10 years and 14% had less than 5 years. This was very similar to the profile of respondents from Stage 1.

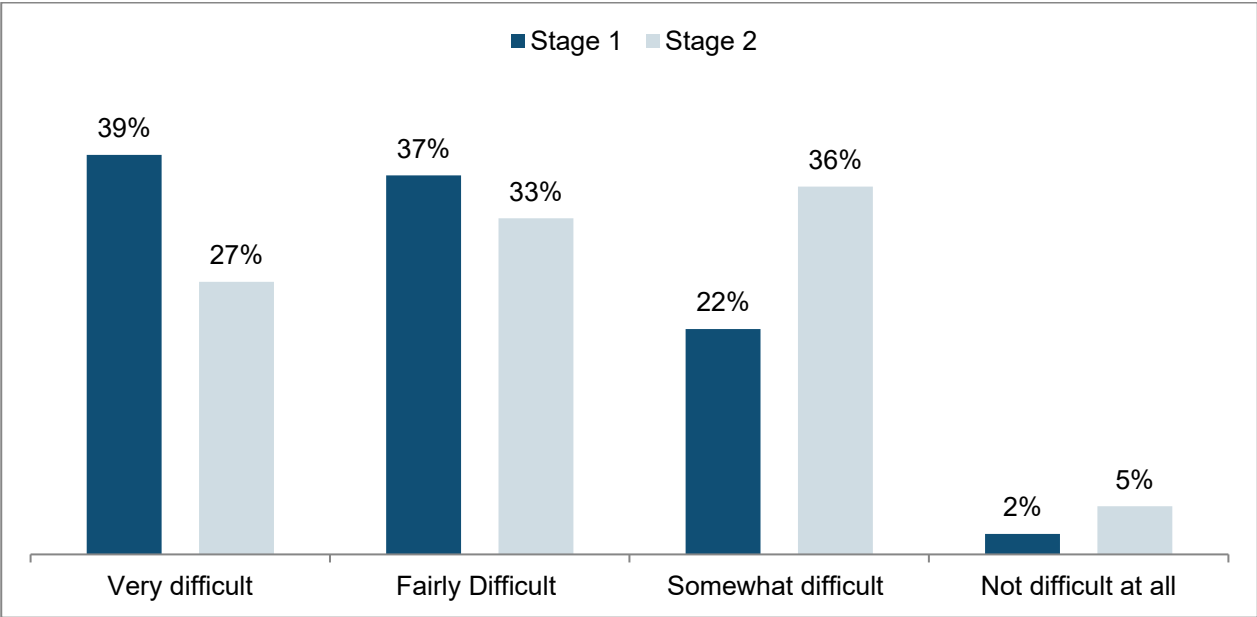
Similarly to Stage 1, almost all (99%) Heads of HLOs and Hub partners reported that their Hubs offered CPD for the peripatetic music teachers. Where CPD was offered, 23% said it was once every year, 16% said it was once every 6 months, 45% stated that it was once every 3 months, while 16% said it was more often than once every 3 months.

Most peripatetic music teachers (74%) said that they received CPD from their Music Hub or HLO in the last 12 months that was related to their role as a peripatetic music teacher. This was slightly lower compared with 86% in Stage 1. 79% of peripatetic music teachers reported the quality of the support that they received from their Hub or HLO as excellent or good (82% in Stage 1).

Most (68%) reported that they could still see themselves working as a peripatetic music teacher in 3 years, while 6% said that they did not see themselves working as a peripatetic music teacher, and 26% were unsure. The main reasons for them not continuing were retiring (39%), pursuing a role not in music or education (16%), prioritising performing at music events (15%) and doing classroom teaching instead (7%). 23% provided other miscellaneous reasons like pursuing music therapy, music administration, carrying out portfolio work, freelancing etc. The main reasons for leaving or uncertainty were consistent across both stages.

A majority of Heads of HLOs and Hub partners (59%) described difficulties hiring¹⁹ peripatetic music teachers with the necessary skills and experience (see Figure 17). Comparatively, retaining peripatetic music teachers with the necessary skills and experience was reported as being less difficult than hiring them (see Figure 18). It appears that the Hubs were finding it somewhat less difficult to hire and retain peripatetic teachers at Stage 2 than at Stage 1.

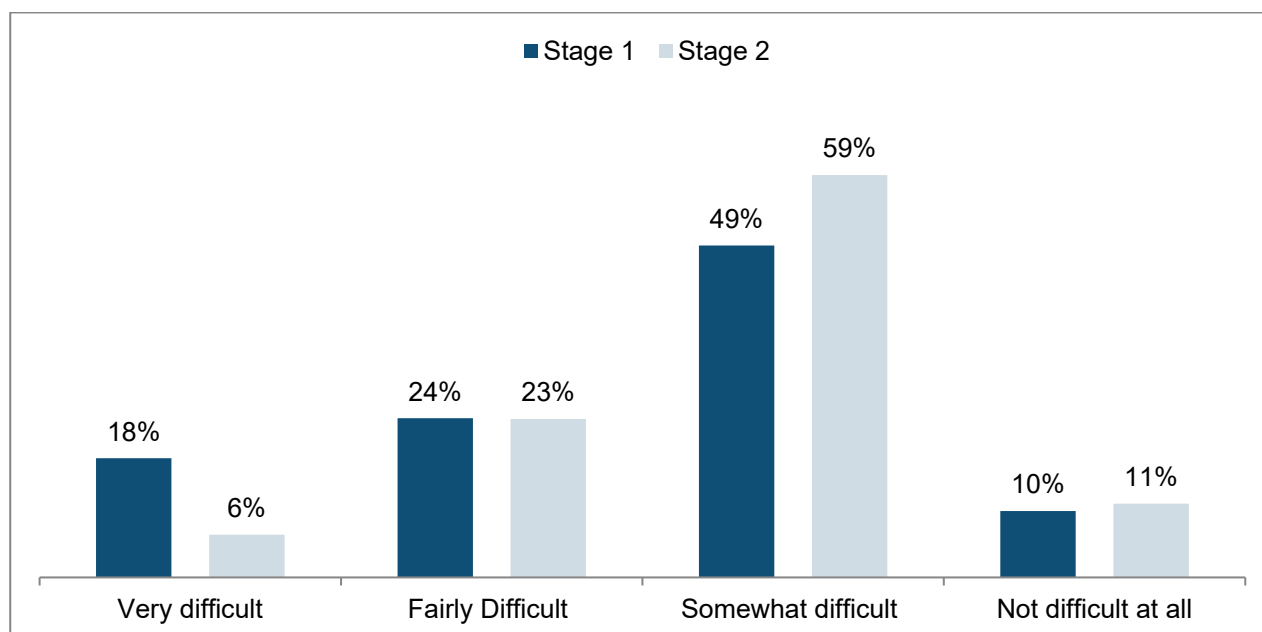
Figure 17: Difficulty hiring peripatetic teachers (Stage 1 vs Stage 2)



Source: Stage 1 and Stage 2 surveys of Hubs staff, Autumn 2004 and Summer 2025

¹⁹ referring to employing, contracting, or commissioning

Figure 18: Difficulty retaining peripatetic teachers (Stage 1 vs Stage 2)



Source: Stage 1 and Stage 2 surveys of Hubs staff, Autumn 2004 and Summer 2025

Most (90%) Heads of HLOs and Hub partners were positive about how well their Hub met schools' needs for peripatetic music teachers. 7% said that they were not able to meet the schools' needs very well, and only 3% said they couldn't meet the needs well at all.

Across both stages, peripatetic teachers were highly experienced, almost all Hubs offered CPD, and most teachers reported receiving good-quality support. Hiring peripatetic teachers remained a significant challenge, though retention was perceived to be improving (29% found it very or fairly difficult to retain peripatetic teachers in Stage 2 compared to 42% in Stage 1).

Peripatetic music teachers in managerial positions identified challenges related to the contractual arrangements of their staff in addition to difficulties with the administrative elements of their role during qualitative encounters. Contractual arrangements and pay rates varied between and within music services, which could be challenging to overcome. Furthermore, managers shared that peripatetic music teachers may not be paid for travel time required as part of their role.

Additionally, staff noted the volume of paperwork required with short deadlines for completion. The workload also increased depending on the number of Hubs in an area. To allow staff more time and capacity to plan, participants suggested the introduction of a multi-year budget. Further challenges were noted among peripatetic music teachers which affected their music education delivery. These included:

- Operational differences and ways of working between Music Hub partners to achieve the same end goal, which can affect collaborative opportunities between them.
- Challenges encouraging some schools to support instrumental lessons and musical progression. For example, participants noted that schools may select the perceived easier instrumental sessions for pupils.

4.6. Hubs and music teaching in schools

4.6.1. Support for teachers and music staff in schools

The Hubs staff survey included questions on the support that Hubs provided to music staff in schools.

95% of Hubs staff indicated supporting music staff in schools at various levels of music curriculum: key stage 2 (97%), key stage 1 (96%), key stage 3 (89%), Early Years Foundation Stage (85%), music GCSEs (73%), music A-levels (56%) and music BTECs (48%). This mirrors the Stage 1 pattern, where support declined at post-16.

Three-quarters of Hubs staff (75%) reported that their Hub provided CPD training to teachers in the last 12 months, 23% were unsure, and 2% said that CPD was not offered by their Hub. This was slightly lower than the 80% of Hub staff who stated this in Stage 1.

The most common types of CPD training that was offered by Hubs to teachers were related to teaching music (91%), music curriculum planning (78%), understanding and teaching composition (55%), musical leadership (52%), and other types (18%) such as inclusion and support for children with SEND, music technology, adaptive instruments and leading ensembles. The types of CPD remained broadly similar across both stages.

65% of Hubs staff said that their Hub organised networking events for music staff in schools in the last 12 months, 30% were unsure, and 4% said that their Hub did not offer such events.

The teacher survey also asked questions about support for music teachers that schools had received from local Music Hubs since September 2024. In Stage 2, a much higher proportion of schools (88%) had a Music Development Plan when compared to under the previous model (62%). Of those who reported that their school had a Music Development Plan in place, 14% described the support they received from their Music Hub in creating it as excellent, 34% as good, 12% as fair, and 5% thought it was poor or very poor, while 35% said they did not receive any support from their Hub.

Half of the teachers (50%) reported that their local Music Hub was one of the places where they drew guidance and resources from to inform their school's music curriculum.

Of those who received support from their local Music Hub, 19% rated their Hub's guidance and resources as excellent, 57% as good, 20% rated it as fair, and 4% as poor or very poor.

More than half (57%) of teachers said that music teachers at their school received some support from their local Music Hub with planning or delivering Music provision, and 43% did not receive or require any support. Primary schools (60%) were more likely to report that they received support with planning or delivering music provision than secondary schools (43%). For those whose schools received this type of support, the most common reasons for this support were for musical events and performances for pupils to attend or perform in (67%), co-curricular music provision including group activities (ensemble music making) (41%) and music curriculum planning (31%). A little more than three-quarters (78%) who had received support from their Hub since September 2024 rated it as excellent or good.

A little more than half (52%) stated that they received some support from their local Music Hub for (CPD) opportunities since September 2024. This was lower than what was reported for the previous model where 61% reported receiving CPD support from their Hub.

The most common types of CPD accessed by schools were related to teaching music (66%), musical leadership (43%), music curriculum planning (35%), and understanding and teaching composition (24%). The majority of teachers (84%) who received support related to CPD rated it as excellent or good (compared to 77% under the previous model).

Music Hubs held meetings with schools at the start of the academic year to ensure staff were familiar with the music curriculum and provided schools with assistance and documents to support curriculum planning and implementing the National Plan for Music Education. They also ran conferences, networking sessions and learning schemes.

Teachers felt well supported by their Music Hub and positively described the sessions and CPD opportunities that they attended. They were applicable to their work with pupils in the classroom and included a range of organisations for schools to work with. Music Hub staff engaged with schools to a point where they knew staff personally, and Hub staff were available to answer questions. They also worked flexibly and with consideration of pupils and teachers to ensure that provision was suitable for their needs. These opportunities were viewed as necessary to support staff in delivering music education and curriculum planning, thus supporting pupils and schools. However, not all schools were able to engage in these opportunities due to budgetary or time constraints.

“Unless you’ve got the time to sit and rewrite the curriculum to include all of these things, or you’ve got the people with the knowledge to go and find all of these extra parts, it can be really, really tricky.” (*Teacher participant*).

Additionally, some participants had found the conferences “sales-pitchy” or had never been offered opportunities to attend a conference by their Music Hub. Lastly, another form of support offered by Music Hubs was the placement of peripatetic teachers in schools, and assistance with financing lessons.

4.6.2. Music provision and support for schools and children and young people

Similar to Stage 1, almost all Hubs staff (98%) reported that their Hub provided instruments and/or equipment to schools, or to children and young people directly, through an instrument loan service.

Where this service was available, Hubs staff had generally positive views with 89% saying that their Hub met schools’ needs for music instruments very or fairly well, and 75% describing their Hub as meeting schools’ needs for other music equipment or services very or fairly well, while 15% were unsure.

Views of the quality of provision were also generally positive with 66% of Hubs staff describing the quality of instruments as excellent or good and 30% describing it as fair. This was a slight improvement on Stage 1 where 62% described it as excellent or good.

Similarly, most teachers (89%) were aware that Music Hubs provided instruments for pupils through their instrument loan service. Of these, 66% reported that pupils at their school had received instruments from their local Music Hub, a slight decrease from 73% in Stage 1.

Views about this instrument provision were very positive among teachers – 96% said the instruments from their local Music Hub met pupils’ overall needs to a good or excellent standard; 93% mentioned that the quality of the instruments was excellent or good; and 91% described the accessibility²⁰ of the instruments as excellent or good. Perceptions of quality were comparatively more positive under the new Hubs model (62% rated the quality of instruments as excellent or good under the previous Hubs model).

Additionally, teachers expressed that the placement and loans of instruments in schools from Music Hubs were good value for money, with some Music Hubs offering free instrument loans to schools which improved access for pupils, including those in deprived areas. Instrument loans often included activities such as concert opportunities and tutoring sessions. While it may take time for the full impact of the Capital Grant to be seen, early evidence from qualitative feedback suggests that Hubs have begun to use

²⁰ ease of getting the quantity and range of instruments the school needed when they needed them

the new funding to replace and expand instrument stock, meaning more and higher-quality instruments are expected to reach schools as the new model progresses.

The majority of schools (94%) provided co-curricular music activities. These included one-to-one individual lessons (63%), small group ensembles (58%), whole class ensemble teaching (55%), and opportunities and time for individual practice (24%). 31% mentioned that their school provided other types of co-curricular music activities like composition classes, choirs, and music clubs. Of the 69% of teachers who received support for co-curricular music activities from their local Music Hub, 82% rated it as excellent or good.

Most Hubs staff (92%) reported that their Hub offered instrument or singing lessons to pupils at school by arranging for peripatetic music teachers to visit the schools. 78% mentioned that their Hubs offered lessons not on school premises, while 14% were unsure. Of those that mentioned that lessons were offered, 94% said that their Hub met the needs for instruments and/or singing lessons in their area very well or fairly well.

Hubs staff said that their Hub offered music ensembles to pupils at school (82%) as well as not on school premises (89%). A vast majority of Hubs staff (96%) indicated that their Hub organised concerts, recitals, or other music events for children and young people to perform in, while 1% said they did not organise such events and 3% said they were unsure.

Almost all schools (98%) organised music events or provided other opportunities for pupils to perform in. These included performing during assembly or class (85%), a termly or annual school performance (82%), Music Hubs performances and experiences (42%), and other school music performance opportunities (38%) like choir events, charity events in the community, churches, and performances with professional musicians.

A little less than three-quarters of schools (74%) organised trips for pupils to attend music performances outside of school. Of those that organised such trips, 56% received support from their local Hub. Most respondents (81%) rated this support as excellent or good.

64% of teachers mentioned that their school organised opportunities for pupils to attend performances by external musicians at school. Of these, 62% received support from their local Music Hub for organising these opportunities. 78% rated this support as excellent or good.

Only 24% of teachers stated that they required support from their local Hub for providing or arranging access to rehearsal or practice spaces. Of these, 66% described the support provided as excellent or good.

Teachers reported that Music Hubs offered a variety of support for children and young people that inspired and encouraged them to participate in music education. This included:

- Resources such as free songbooks and instrument loans for use in music lessons.
- High-quality ensembles from entry-level to more advanced and performing abroad, which were praised as highly valuable.
- Collaborative concert opportunities with other schools. Teachers mentioned that this may have been the first experience of a theatre environment for many pupils. Big Sing events offered pupils opportunities to perform with other schools, which were felt to improve pupils' confidence in music, as well as their music progression.
- Demonstration assemblies for different musical instruments, which exposes pupils to them, generating enthusiasm to participate in these opportunities.
- Funding for a 'musician in residence' project, which saw a professional musician invited into a school to perform and assist in delivering music education. This approach was praised by teachers for assisting the delivery of music education and applying music into other subjects. It was also shared that the professional musician built a strong rapport with staff and pupils.

Participants felt that the support offered by Music Hubs was effective in meeting the needs of staff and pupils. Support was viewed as high quality, with Hubs offering strong provision for pupils to access a range of opportunities.

Teachers responded positively to support offered by Music Hubs, expressing that Hubs had provided opportunities and initiatives for children and young people to engage with. The support offered in the provision of music education was invaluable, particularly for teachers who may be non-specialists. The passion and dedication of Music Hub staff were highlighted in discussions.

"We would be absolutely stuffed if we didn't have the support of [...] professionals. It's not everybody's favourite thing to teach [...] not everyone is lucky enough to be from a musical background so it can be quite daunting. So just having that kind of consistent, constant support is really valuable."
(Teacher participant).

Teachers also praised the flexibility of their support to ensure its effectiveness. When teachers had fed back the expense associated with attending an external choir to their Music Hub, they responded by offering their own free concert for schools to attend. Teachers also shared that they felt Music Hub staff have improved accessibility to music

education through offering online sessions, which has removed the added cost of providing transport to these events.

In contrast, participants also detailed multiple barriers which may limit the effectiveness of the support offered by Music Hubs within schools. These included:

- Attitudes towards music education in schools, and its statutory requirements (up until age 14). For example, Music Hub staff identified challenges in identifying school support needs resulting from Ofsted not exploring music provision as part of school inspections.
- Funding constraints for music provision affected schools' ability to access and invest in Music Hub support and what Music Hubs were able to deliver in schools. For example, peripatetic music teachers shared that live music performances were popular and enthused pupils about music education. However, these are carried out less frequently now due to funding constraints.
- Some teachers also mentioned the challenges of funding instrument loans, as a refundable deposit is required to access instrument stock. Therefore, some teachers reported being unable to continue with these schemes due to a lack of available funding in schools.

School music teachers expressed that more frequent engagement with their Music Hub could increase the amount and frequency of support available to enable delivery of music education. Music Hub staff identified that staff turnover may contribute to challenges engaging schools with support, as Music Hubs need to continually rebuild relationships with schools once music leads change. To improve their support offer, Music Hub staff suggested that there needs to be a shared understanding of what good music provision looks like, as participants felt that many schools struggled with it.

4.7. Schools and Music Hubs: awareness, engagement and partnership working

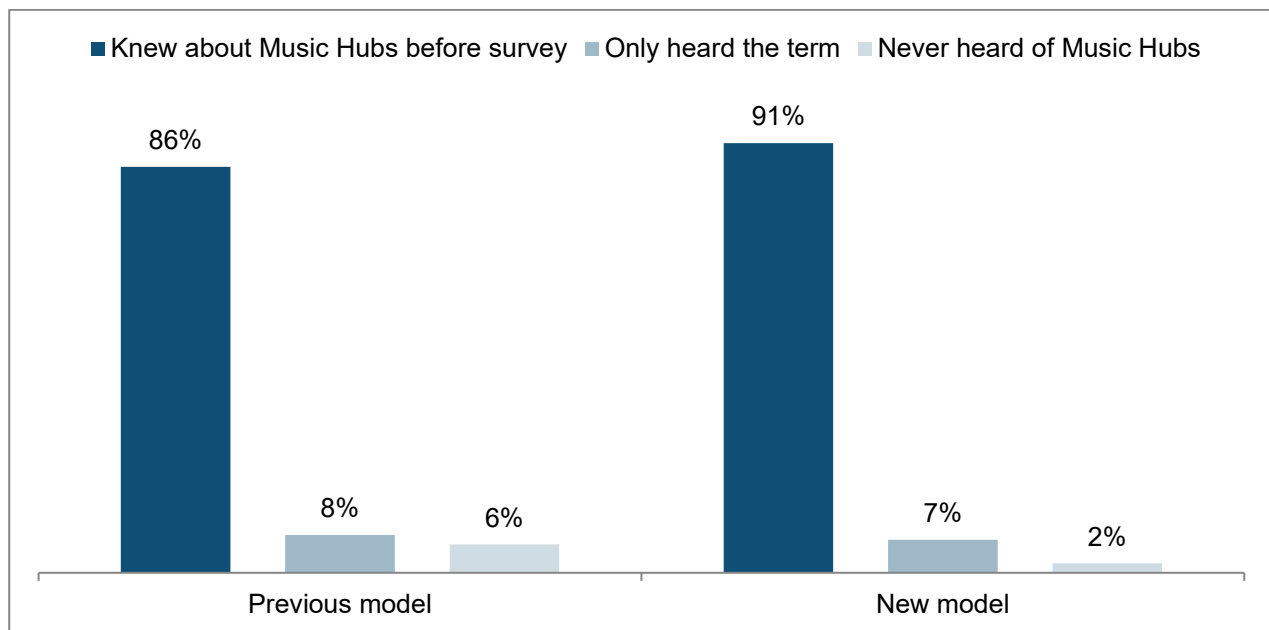
4.7.1. Information and communication

83% of Hubs staff indicated that schools and families within their area were very or fairly well informed about their Music Hub's offer. This was broadly consistent with Stage 1 (85%).

The most common ways Hubs communicated with schools and local families were email (94%), social media including their Hub's website (86%), presence at community events (60%), paper or online newsletters (55%), in person or virtual meetings (50%), and telephone calls or online messaging (46%).

Similarly, most teachers (91%) knew about Music Hubs before the survey which shows a slight improvement in awareness compared to the previous model (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: Teacher awareness of the previous and new Music Hubs models



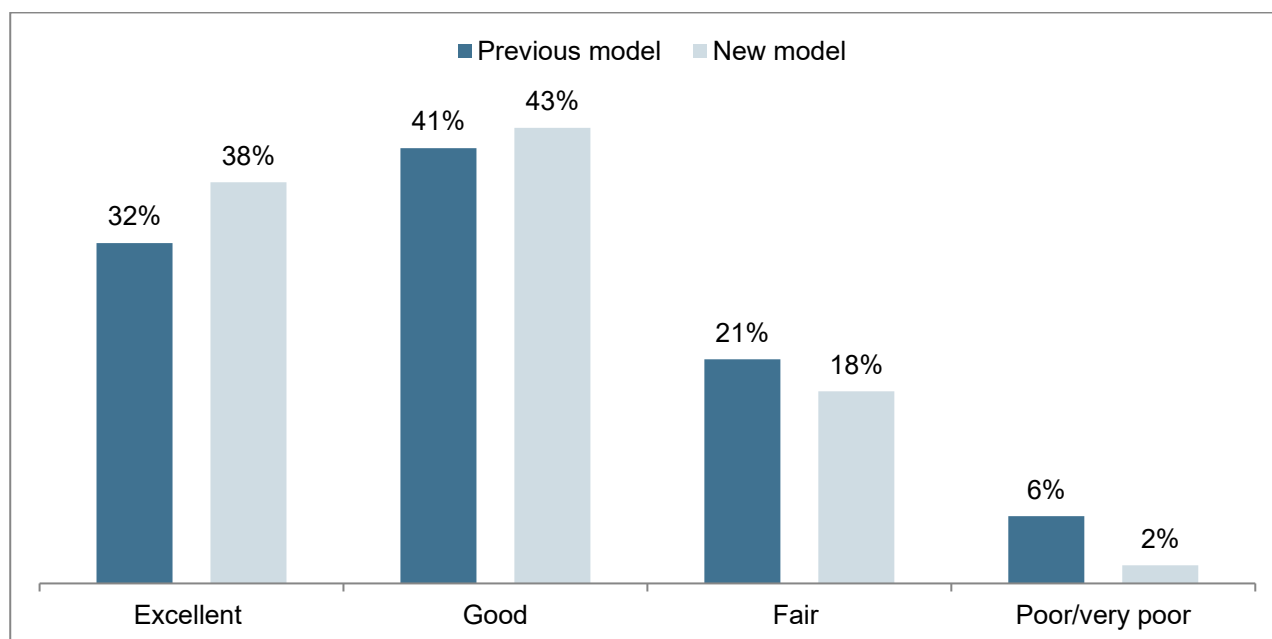
Source: Stage 1 and Stage 2 surveys of teachers, Autumn 2004 and Summer 2025

Of those teachers who had heard of Music Hubs, 45% reported that their school engaged with their Music Hub a lot; 48% said their school engaged a little; and only 7% said they did not engage with their local Hub. Engagement levels were very similar in Stage 1. There was no difference in engagement level between respondents from primary schools and those from secondary schools.

According to teachers, the main reasons for schools not engaging with Hubs since September 2024 were that they did not know what was on offer (38%), their local Hub did not reach out or they did not know whom to contact (35%), teachers did not have time to coordinate engagement (32%), lack of support or interest from other school or music department staff (8%), lack of support from senior management (3%), Music Hub lacked the capacity to support (3%) and reasons related to changes to the Music Hubs model (3%). The nature of these barriers has evolved since Stage 1: awareness and communication issues are gradually improving, while teacher time pressures and the ongoing transition to the new model have become more salient factors.

Of those teachers whose schools had engaged with their Hub, a majority (81%) reported their relationship with their Music Hub positively, which was higher overall than for the previous model (see Figure 20).

Figure 20: Teacher ratings of Music Hub relationships (Stage 1 vs Stage 2)



Source: Stage 1 and Stage 2 surveys of teachers, Autumn 2004 and Summer 2025

For the teachers who described their relationship with their local Music Hub as poor, the same factors that limited engagement explained these less positive relationships, particularly weak communication, Hubs having limited capacity, or teachers lacking time and institutional support to coordinate involvement.

The majority of teachers (80%) reported that the communication they received from their local Music Hub since September 2024 was excellent or good, 18% described it as fair, and only 3% thought it was poor. This was an improvement when compared to the previous Hubs model where 71% rated the communication as excellent or good.

Just under three-quarters (74%) of teachers said that the effectiveness of support and resources that they received from their local Music Hub was excellent or good, 22% described it as fair, and only 4% as poor or very poor.

Teachers who described the effectiveness of support and resources as fair, poor, or very poor were asked to reflect on what was missing from the Music Hubs' offers to schools. Suggestions included less expensive support options (53%), CPD and training opportunities for teachers (41%), clearer information and communication about what Music Hubs offer (38%), more skilled staff that can come to schools to teach ensembles or one-to-one lessons (37%), support for setting up extracurricular music activities (31%) and support for infant and early years settings (17%).

Music Hub staff recognised the importance of a streamlined communication approach which allows schools to easily locate their contact details and information in qualitative

encounters. Awareness of Music Hubs among schools was also supported by the advisory inspectorate educational service, which signposted schools to the Music Hub as part of the school improvement plan.

Music teachers' experiences of communication with their Music Hub ranged from receiving regular contact and newsletters to very limited contact. It was suggested that the inconsistency of communication may detract from the benefits of support offered by Music Hubs, as some teachers expressed a lack of awareness regarding available opportunities. Teachers felt that a more consistent communication approach between the Music Hubs and schools would be beneficial to hear about recommendations and research in the music sector.

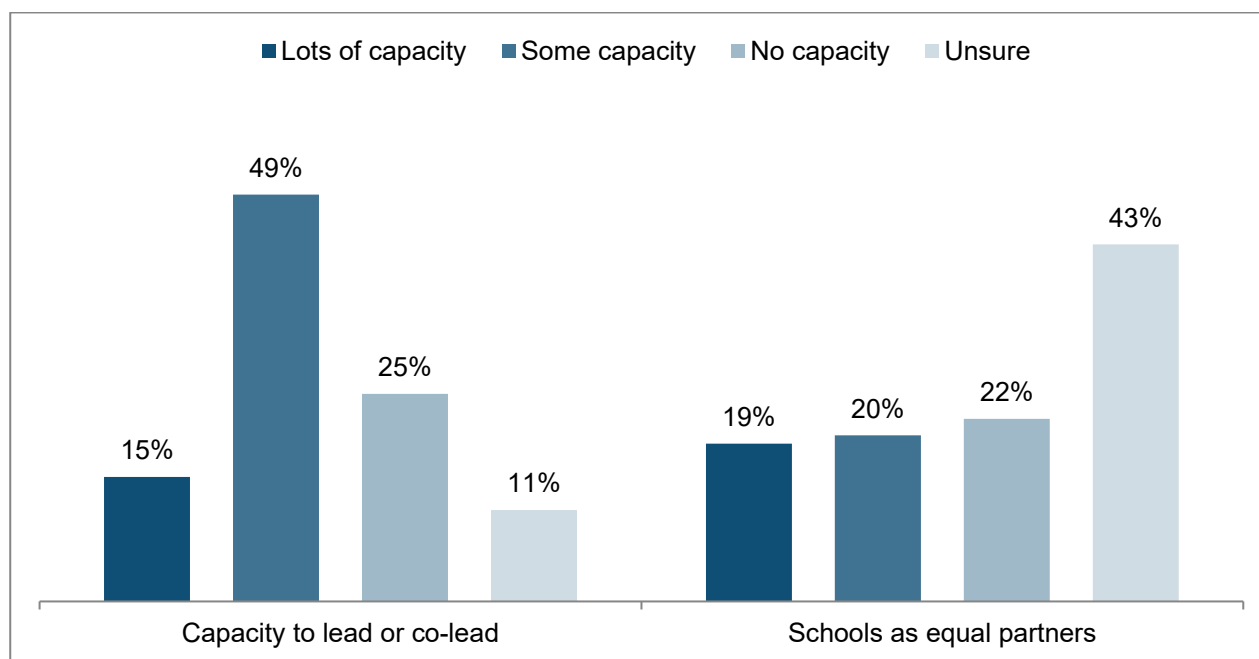
In primary school settings, teachers detailed that the Music Hubs going paperless limited engagement, as pupils are less likely or able to communicate with parents and carers how to sign up for music opportunities, compared to if they were handed a sheet of paper. Furthermore, the functionality of the Music Hub website was regarded to be poor, and parents expressed difficulty to one music teacher when navigating the website to locate opportunities. These difficulties were similar to those identified in Stage 1 of the evaluation, however in both encounters it was not identified as a significant barrier to accessing opportunities.

4.7.2. Schools as leaders and equal partners

Most teachers (68%) mentioned that their school had not led on music projects in their school with support from their local Music Hub since September 2024. 20% mentioned that their school had led on one music project. Only 12% of teachers stated that their school had led on more than one music project. There were no differences in responses from primary and secondary schools.

Figure 21 shows teachers views of capacity to lead or partner in music projects, with more believing they had capacity to take on leadership roles.

Figure 21: Teacher's perceptions of project leadership and partnerships



Source: Stage 2 survey of teachers, Summer 2025

4.7.3 Engagement with music education

In qualitative interviews and focus groups, peripatetic teachers noted that school and teachers' engagement with music education and Music Hubs is "massively variable," with some barriers to engagement outlined in Chapter 4.7.2. For example, peripatetic teachers explained that engagement was largely dependent on storage space (e.g., for instruments) and classroom space to deliver music lessons without disrupting the rest of the school.

Some teachers referred to difficulties getting pupils to attend school following the pandemic, alongside the increase in both pupils on an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and diagnoses in neurodivergent conditions among pupils. Music Hubs and the provision of music education have been seen by teachers to improve pupils' attendance and ability to integrate at school, and in turn has improved pupils' behaviour and levels of engagement.

School buy-in (particularly senior leadership teams) can impact how music education is viewed within schools and was perceived by teachers as integral for engagement and Music Hub's ability to work with pupils and offer music progression opportunities.

"If the leadership really has a focus around the importance of the arts, it's great and we get really good feedback from those leaders." (*Music Hub participant*)

For example, a consistency in school staffing, particularly in the headteacher role, was seen as pivotal in encouraging school engagement.

Similarly, support from the school was deemed essential to pupil engagement in the music lessons, especially accompanied with messaging about pupils continuing to attend music lessons. Peripatetic teachers highlighted the importance of building strong relationships with schools, so that there is a firm foundation for the delivery of music education.

“In an ideal setting, we’d go in, do a free term, you’d capture all those children’s enthusiasm, and you’d get some small-group tuition and a presence in the school. But it does very much depend on the headteacher’s take on that, but I think visiting members of staff, it’s just crucial that you build those relationships, and it’s that, often, that they want that person in. As much as I’ve worked for the music service for a long time, if you’ve built that relationship, it’s you they want! They want that teacher that’s really inspired those children in their school.” (*Peripatetic staff participant*)

4.7.4. Supporting children and young people’s progression in music

Almost all (98%) Hubs staff reported that their Hub supported children and young people with accessing music progression opportunities. The most common opportunities were out-of-school (weekend, holiday, and after school) provision (90%), music board exams (86%), ‘advanced’ ensembles, or ensembles of different ‘levels’ (79%), and local, regional, and national opportunities and ensembles (76%).

In the teacher survey, 63% reported that their pupils accessed music progression opportunities. The most common progression activities accessed were music board exams (69%), out-of-school provision (weekend, holiday and after school) (42%), local, regional, and national opportunities and ensembles (36%), and ‘advanced’ ensembles or ensembles of different ‘levels’ (27%). Of the 72% of teachers who received support from their Hub for accessing these opportunities, most (71%) rated this support as excellent or good. It is possible that fewer schools now report pupils accessing progression through the school because some pupils engage directly with Music Hubs. This aligns with qualitative findings suggesting that Hubs deliver activities directly to children and young people, rather than solely through school-based channels.

4.8. Teachers’ confidence and attitudes

Overall, teachers reported similar levels of confidence and attitudes towards teaching music to Stage 1. Just over half (52%) strongly agreed that they were confident teaching music. Similarly, 49% strongly agreed they were confident teaching singing. Enjoyment of

teaching music also remained high, with 89% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they liked teaching music.

Full results by school type, including attitudes towards reading music and playing an instrument in lessons, are provided in Appendix B.

4.9. Inclusion

The Hubs staff survey and the teacher survey included a number of questions about the types of support and music activities that Hubs provided in order to improve inclusion. As shown in Table 7, the majority of Hubs reported offering targeted provision for pupils from disadvantaged groups. This was similar to Stage 1.

Table 7: Hubs' provision for pupils from disadvantaged groups

Disadvantaged group	% who offered targeted provision	Not offered	Unsure
FSM or PP	84	3	14
SEND	71	4	25
Pupils in AP settings	52	9	40

Table shows column % of targeted provision including reduced fee or free music activities and/ or specifically adapted music activities/ events

Source: Stage 2 survey of Hubs staff, Summer 2025

SEND provision and ratings of its quality remained fairly consistent across both stages. 64% rated the services that their Hub provided for children and young people with SEND as excellent or good. Additionally, most Hubs staff (73%) rated the services that their Hub provided for children and young people who were eligible for FSM or PP as excellent or good.

Table 8 shows the inclusion support received by schools from Hubs split by the disadvantaged groups.

Table 8: Support received from Music Hubs for inclusion, by disadvantaged groups

Area of support	% of schools receiving inclusion support	FSM/PP	SEND	Minority ethnic groups
Improving instrument access	42	87	53	25
Accessing music progression opportunities	35	83	67	53
Performance opportunities	34	85	74	49
Co-curricular music activities	31	81	57	26
Attending music performances outside school	28	85	75	53
Attending music performances at school	28	82	83	54

Table shows column %

Source: Stage 2 survey of teachers, Summer 2025

As Table 8 shows, support for participation in performance opportunities rose from 29% under the previous model to 34% under the new model, with stronger provision for pupils eligible for FSM or PP.

The proportion of schools supported to attend music performances also increased from 22% to 28% for events outside school and from 23% to 28% for those held in school. Support for progression opportunities grew from 25% to 35%.

In our qualitative encounters, Music Hub staff described the focus on equity of music education provision and targeting resources for underrepresented children and young people. Music Hubs and schools took a range of actions to help improve inclusivity of underrepresented groups in music.

The Music Hub remissions policies and additional funding supported children and young people (including PP and SEND pupils), by improving affordability and supporting engagement with music education. For PP pupils, examples included discounted music lessons and additional funding to enable attendance at events.

To support schools with engaging SEND pupils, Music Hubs offered support with their music curriculum and provided adapted or tailored provision. For example, language support and development groups for pupils with speech and language difficulties and SEND music classes that schools could buy into.

Music teachers responded positively to the effectiveness of Music Hub support in meeting the needs of pupils and improving inclusivity. Teachers continued to emphasise that support is high-quality (as identified in Stage 1) and supported underrepresented pupils in engaging with music education, including pupils with SEND and those eligible for FSM.

In addition to Music Hub support, teachers described the support which they planned to or already offered independently. For example, singing opportunities exclusively for male pupils to help increase confidence and engagement in music education among this group. A school also offered sensory experiences for SEND pupils awaiting places at special schools. In-school events to support SEND pupils' engagement in music education were reported to have improved attendance, which had a positive impact on engagement and behaviour in education more widely.

Peripatetic music teachers also shared that the support of teachers when delivering in-school music provision can further promote inclusivity. Teachers hold pre-existing relationships with pupils, which was felt to be beneficial for supporting peripatetic music teachers in building rapport.

The qualitative encounters also identified barriers that may affect a wider range of pupils when accessing music education both within and outside of school settings.

- Orchestral groups run by Music Hubs may include a minimum grade level entry requirement, which was expressed as a challenge for encouraging children and young people to progress with their musical education due to a lack of access to clubs to develop their skills.
- Music Hub staff and peripatetic music teachers identified a significant increase in the number of children and young people diagnosed with SEND post-Covid, making support provision more challenging. Participants suggested that music teachers considered the needs of SEND pupils when planning and delivering lessons, however sensory challenges may still affect their engagement.
- A reported lack of diversity within the music curriculum and in those who teach music was felt to deter minority ethnic and male pupils engaging with music education.

“It can really put some children off going into it. If you don't see someone that looks like yourself, you're not going to do it.” (*Teacher participant*).

- Music Hubs staff reported that a lack of funding for music education (as reported at Stage 1) continued to be viewed as a barrier to promoting the inclusivity of music. The funding-per-pupil was regarded as too little to support all children and young people according to their individual needs, and it was suggested that subsidised costs of music education may still be unaffordable for some. Music Hub

staff expressed that a decrease in real-terms funding of the core grant for Music Hubs has made it more difficult to meet the increased delivery costs, thus potentially excluding children and young people (including those eligible for FSM and PP) from signing up to music opportunities. Teachers also expressed that the rising costs of events may limit the number of pupils able to participate. Schools also identified wider budget pressures as a challenge for music provision. For example, schools may not have teaching staff available to support SEND pupils in whole-class lessons or be able to afford to hire music staff. One school who had hired music teachers for multiple years no longer had the funds to continue. In this instance, the Music Hub offered continuous support for them.

- Participants also described barriers around accessibility and living circumstances, including for low-income families, and those living in rural areas. This included the cost of transport to access musical opportunities, and Music Hub staff described difficulty arranging staff travel to remote areas.

“I can’t fault what the Hub puts on, but sometimes I feel that it’s the children who are in walking distance who get to go to most of these things with a big variety of children that they can take [...] we need buses to get there.”
(*Teacher participant*).

- Unreliable internet connections could also impact accessibility to online opportunities for those in rural areas, and those living in apartments may be unable to practise outside of the classroom due to potential noise complaints.

Lastly, in addition to describing the range of actions to help improve inclusivity and barriers above, participants reported changes that could help further improve inclusivity in music. For example, teachers of SEND pupils would welcome concert opportunities, like performances with professional musicians, specifically tailored to the needs of SEND pupils to support access to further music progression.

4.10. Chapter summary

Chapter 4 examined how the new Music Hubs model was operating after its first year, based on follow-up surveys with Hub staff and teachers in summer 2025, alongside qualitative interviews. It provided insight into progress made, challenges encountered, and the extent to which the restructure are beginning to embed.

By mid-2025, most Hubs had completed or were close to completing their set-up. Staff generally felt well placed to deliver core strategic functions like supporting schools, inclusion, and progression, though financial sustainability continued to be a concern. Teachers reported improvements in communication and relationships with their local Hubs, with 80% describing their Hub relationship as good or excellent, up from 73% under the previous model.

The Capital Grant was welcomed for improving instrument access, but its administration was widely viewed as burdensome, with application processes and timelines described as complex, limiting staff's ability to plan and spend funding strategically. Recruitment and retention of peripatetic music teachers remain major challenges for Hubs, despite some improvement since Stage 1. Fewer Hubs now describe hiring and retention as very difficult, but most continue to experience ongoing capacity pressures that affect delivery and sustainability. The persistence of these challenges aligns with sector concerns and highlights the need for continued tracking of this metric and investment in staffing stability.

Partnership working remained valued but uneven. Schools were more likely to lead projects with Hub support than to act as equal partners and aligning priorities across larger Hub geographies remained difficult. Inclusion was widely prioritised, with targeted support for disadvantaged groups, but funding and geographical barriers continued to limit reach.

Overall, the first year of implementation showed encouraging signs of stability and improvement. Relationships between schools and Hubs strengthened, communication improved, and many of the most valued services from the previous model were maintained. A wide range of musical opportunities also continued to be taken up including lessons, ensembles, performances, and progression routes indicating that Hubs have sustained their reach and impact for children and young people during a period of significant change. At the same time, structural pressures around funding, geography, workforce, and administration highlighted risks to sustainability and equity that will need continued attention in the next phase of delivery.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Views about the Music Hubs model overall

Evidence collected for this interim stage of the evaluation shows that perceptions around Music Hubs and their work with schools were positive overall and have remained positive over the course of the restructure. Just under three-quarters of teachers (73%) described their relationship with their Music Hub under the previous model as excellent or good, which increased to 80% for the new model. This positivity was echoed by parents, 75% of whom reported that they were very satisfied or satisfied in general with their local Music Hub.

Participants praised the effectiveness and quality of music services provided by their local Music Hub. Just under three-quarters (74%) of teachers at Stage 2 said that the effectiveness of support and resources that they received from their local Music Hub was excellent or good. The majority (80%) also reported that the communication they received from their local Music Hub under the new model was excellent or good. This was an improvement when compared to the previous Hubs model where 71% rated the communication positively. 83% of parents described the quality of the services provided by their local Music Hub as excellent or good and almost half (47%) agreed that their child could not have accessed musical activities and opportunities without support from their school / local music Hub.

Persistent contextual challenges remain around funding and perceptions of value. Teachers expressed concern that insufficient funding and the rising costs may limit pupil participation and reduce schools' ability to hire music teachers. A broader perception, raised by participants, was that music and arts education has been undervalued by previous governments. This perceived undervaluing was thought to influence how schools and parents prioritise music. It was suggested that Music Hubs received fewer requests because parents and schools did not view music education as a priority area, other curriculum subjects received a greater focus, or that music education standards were not well assessed.

5.2. Partnership working

One of the key strengths of the Hubs model mentioned by schools and Hubs was partnership working between Hubs and external partners like schools and local music services, both under the previous and new model. They emphasised the significance of these relationships with teachers communicating that Music Hubs had a clear purpose to address the needs of a given school and would stretch to meet these needs. A key strength of this attention to detail has been the Hubs' ability to foster partnerships

between schools and Hub partners. These partnerships have allowed schools to access opportunities that they could not typically, such as participation in large events or access to music professionals in good quality venues.

Most Hubs had to work on developing new partnerships within their Hubs in the first year of the new model. Overall, their perceptions of how well their partnerships were working were positive at baseline and remained positive at the end of the first year. However, there is some evidence that the positivity about partnership working was less prevalent at the end of the first year compared to earlier in the year. For example, only 42% of Heads of HLOs and Hub partners reported that it had been very or fairly easy to align priorities with other partners within their Hubs, a drop from the 70% at Stage 1.

While collaboration is valued and progress has been made, evidence suggests that partnership working remains uneven, and often Hub-led, rather than joint partnerships with schools. Examples of schools leading or acting as equal collaborators were relatively limited, and deeper, more balanced partnerships are still developing across the system.

Despite the challenges, participants mentioned a number of advantages of the new Music Hubs model over the previous model when it came to partnership working. These included more capacity to tailor work towards local areas' needs, joint ventures and strategic working, and opportunities to share the workload between different music services across the region. Although some participants referred to collaborative working under the previous model, they explained that the new model helped to formalise this type of working and increase its regularity. Participants also linked the increased capacity to other benefits, including a larger pool of staff for delivery, access and delivery to more schools and pupils, and the ability to draw on colleagues' skills and expertise to improve service delivery.

5.3. Inclusion

Research participants felt that the strong relationships between schools and Hubs gave Hubs a detailed understanding of the particular inclusion needs that specific schools had and enabled them to work better on supporting those. Examples given included adjusting music event schedules to take account of Ramadan, offering alternative music provision for neurodivergent pupils and children with other SEND, and supporting schools with developing their music curriculum to be more inclusive.

Over both stages, a similar number of Hubs staff reported that their Hub offered reduced fees of free music activities for pupils who were eligible for FSM or PP (84% at Stage 1, 82% at Stage 2). Additionally, a similar number of Hubs staff reported that their Hub offered music activities and/or events that had been specifically adapted (or where

additional support had been arranged) for children and young people with SEND (72% at Stage 1, 71% at Stage 2).

The main barriers to increasing participation of pupils from underrepresented groups in music activities included funding constraints that were specific to music making. Music Hub staff expressed a view that a decrease in core grant funding for Music Hubs had not kept up with increased delivery costs, thus potentially affecting participation of pupils eligible for FSM and PP and pupils with SEND. Participants felt that the funding-per-pupil was too low to support all children and young people according to their individual needs.

In terms of barriers affecting children from underrepresented groups, participants mentioned difficulties meeting the entry requirements for orchestral groups run by Music Hubs, and an increase in the number of pupils with SEND since the Covid pandemic. Additionally, a lack of diversity within the music curriculum and in those who teach music could be preventing male pupils and those from ethnic minority backgrounds from engaging in music.

5.4. Challenges associated with the Music Hubs model

In addition to funding constraints discussed above, research participants mentioned a number of other challenges associated with the Music Hubs model. Many of the challenges identified reflect the early stage of implementation of the new model and may reduce as it becomes more established. One of the main barriers mentioned was geographical inaccessibility of the Hubs to some schools and pupils, particularly in rural areas but also where Hubs were covering wider areas. This issue was also present under the previous model and reflects a long-term challenge. This affected both the ability of peripatetic music teachers to travel to the schools and the ability of pupils to travel to their Hub to take part music activities. Just under two-thirds of parents (63%) reported that it would be very difficult or somewhat difficult for their child to get to their local Music Hub on their own if they needed to. There were also challenges presented when delivering online sessions, as some pupils in remote areas experience unreliable internet connections. It should be noted, however, that most Hubs survey participants (79%) believed that under the new model, their Hub was very well or fairly well set up to successfully deliver music education to a wider geographical area.

Low levels of engagement with music education from some schools was a theme that came up in both Stage 1 and Stage 2 qualitative encounters. Peripatetic teachers explained that engagement was largely dependent on space to deliver music lessons and on the school buy-in (particularly from senior leadership teams). Consistency in school staffing, particularly in the headteacher role, was seen as pivotal in encouraging school engagement with the Music Hubs.

Regarding the transition to the new model, Hubs mentioned such challenges as a loss of control over the work itself, greater changes in staff members' roles than expected, and differences in ways of working between different parts of a new Hub. For example, participants referred to some Hubs being more proactive than other Hubs, meaning workload was not evenly distributed, and that different Hub governance would lead to varying approaches (e.g. local authority-run compared to charity-run Hubs). A view among some participants was that aspects of the new model did not sufficiently account for these differences in Hub governance, resulting in expectations that were not equally well aligned across Hub types.

Finally, concerns were also raised by some Hubs over a perceived lack of strategy from DfE and ACE in implementing the new model, and a more reactive approach to funding allocation. These concerns were primarily linked to the use of short-term funding rounds and uncertainty around future allocations, which participants felt made longer-term planning more difficult. Participants felt that a multi-year budget would be helpful and aid planning. Music Hub staff also expressed frustration over the 'paperwork involved reducing Hubs' ability to work on more strategic activities.

Similarly, one view among Music Hub staff cited a lack of direct communication with DfE (as funders) as a key barrier to clarity on strategic objectives.

5.5. Capital Grant

In contrast to the generally positive perceptions around the Music Hubs model overall, despite the challenges, perceptions of how the new funding from the Capital Grant was implemented were rather negative. Half of Heads of HLOs and Hub partners (50%) rated the overall process of receiving the funding as very poor or poor, 30% rated it as fair. They also had a generally negative view about the process of purchasing instruments and equipment, with 60% rating this as very poor or poor. This was considered administratively burdensome, with participants mentioning that large amounts of administrative paperwork were needed for the applications. Additionally, the short-term timeline for funding applications and allocations and considerations, affected how staff could strategically spend funding. These issues are something Hubs would appreciate greater consideration around for the next round of funding.

Hub staff had a positive view about the impact of the Capital Grant on the provision of music services. Most (61%) strongly agreed or agreed that the funding had improved the music services that their Hub offered to schools and families and had helped their Hub to better support participation for SEND pupils (67%). Participants mentioned that the grant allowed Hubs to invest in higher quality musical instruments to help musical progression, particularly in deprived areas.

6.Recommendations

The first year of the restructured Music Hubs model has demonstrated that strong relationships, responsive provision, and inclusive practice are highly valued by schools, teachers, and families, and should remain central to delivery. The recommendations below are intended to reflect areas for consideration and refinement, rather than to imply that addressing them alone will lead to substantial or immediate system-wide impacts.

To build on early progress, consideration should be given to:

- **Sustaining investment and support:** Funding constraints continue to be the most significant barrier to equitable access. Ensuring that Hubs and schools best utilise resources and maximise investments to improve access and meet demand is essential. See Chapter 5.3 for a summary of the funding constraints.
- **Strengthening the workforce:** Recruitment and retention of peripatetic teachers require targeted action, including professional development, fair terms and conditions, and long-term workforce planning. This should also include investment in CPD and training pathways to develop skills, ensuring a sustainable pipeline for peripatetic teachers. Findings on workforce capacity and CPD can be found in Chapters 3.5, 4.5, and 4.6.
- **Streamlining administration:** Simplifying the Capital Grant processes could maximise impact. Consideration should also be given to the timelines for funding. See Chapter 4.4 for findings on Capital Grant administration and sustainability challenges.
- **Raising awareness and visibility:** Low awareness among parents and pupils limits take-up of opportunities. Strengthened communication strategies by Music Hubs and closer collaboration with schools are needed to improve visibility. See Chapters 3.5.1 and 4.7.1 for findings on family awareness and communication routes.

Taken together, these interim findings suggest that while the new Music Hubs model has established a solid foundation in its first year, ongoing attention to these areas may help to support its continued development and longer-term sustainability.

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Appendix A: Methodology

Data collection in September-October 2024 (Stage 1a)

Teacher survey

The survey of schools' music teaching staff was carried out in September to October 2024. It was an online survey, which took about 15 minutes to complete. The sample of schools was drawn from a list of state schools, which was collated and shared with the Department for Education (DfE) by the Arts Council England (ACE). This list identified which schools fell within each Hub's remit and tracked schools' engagement with Hubs. The sampling frame was stratified by (previous) Hub, local authority, phase of education and engagement with Hubs. From that stratified list, a random sample of 500 schools was drawn for the pilot stage and a sample of 7,020 schools for the main stage. Response rate in the pilot stage was 7%, and 10% in the main stage (these respondents completed key sections of the questionnaire). In total, data from 757 teachers was available for analysis of key survey questions about schools' engagement with Music Hubs, with a slightly greater number of schools (up to 766 teachers) being available for analysis of teacher confidence and attitudes.

Qualitative encounters

We conducted 10 interviews and 4 focus groups with a total of 29 participants with responsibility for the provision or planning of music education at schools before September 2024. These were:

- Music Hub staff: 5 interviews and 2 focus groups.
- School teachers: 5 interviews and 2 focus groups.

Participants were sampled via contact details shared by the DfE and ACE. Music Hub staff were recruited from a range of different regions and Hubs were sampled based on the 114 Hubs from the previous model. The sample of schools was drawn from a list of state schools stratified by Music Hub, local authority, phase of education and engagement with Hubs. From that stratified list, a random sample of 188 schools were contacted for Stage 1. The invitation for school music teachers to participate was shared with the lead school contact who was then asked to forward on, as necessary.

Focus groups and interviews were conducted online using Microsoft Teams and lasted approximately 60 minutes.

Tailored topic guides were used to ensure a consistent approach across all the interviews and focus groups and between members of the research team. The guides were used flexibly to allow researchers to respond to the nature and content of each discussion. Researchers used open, non-leading questions, and answers were probed to elicit

greater depth and detail where necessary. Slightly different versions of the guide were used for interviews with different participant groups to ensure that topic guides reflected the nature of participants' role and/or involvement.

Data collection in November-December 2024 (Stage 1b)

Hubs staff survey

The Hubs staff survey took place from 3 December 2024 to 20 December 2024. The questionnaire took on average 11 minutes to complete. All 43 Music Hubs were approached with an invitation to take part in the survey. ACE provided NatCen (via DfE) with names and contact details of 61 individuals based within Hubs, who were emailed with information about the survey and asked to distribute the survey link to all eligible groups. These groups included managers and staff at the HLOs, managers and staff at the music services comprising the Hub (where there were more than one), peripatetic instrumental and singing teachers and any other staff contracted to deliver music provision. The survey was completed by 420 participants, of whom 57% were peripatetic music teachers (see Table 9).²¹

Table 9: Hubs survey responses, by staff role

Staff role	Number of responses	% of responses
Head of Hub Lead Organisation (HLO)	29	7
Head of music service (not HLO)	23	5
Other manager	58	14
Administrative staff	49	12
Peripatetic music teacher	241	57
Other (response too vague to classify)	13	3
Prefer not to say	7	2
Total	420	100

Source: Stage 1b survey of Hubs staff, Autumn 2024

Survey responses were received from Hubs across all regions of England, with West Midlands and, to a lesser degree, North West being overrepresented compared to the other regions (see Table 10).

²¹ It is possible that some peripatetic music teachers were not technically 'staff' and were employed by Music Hubs on a freelance basis.

Table 10: Hubs survey responses, by region

Region	Number of responses	% of responses
East	21	5
East Midlands	26	6
London	30	7
North East	33	8
North West	72	17
South East	33	8
South West	33	8
West Midlands	114	27
Yorkshire and The Humber	55	13
Prefer not to say	3	1
Total	420	100

Source: Stage 1b survey of Hubs staff, Autumn 2024

Parent and pupil surveys

The parent survey was carried out from 26 November 2024 to 20 December 2024 and the pupil survey from 19 November 2024 to 20 December 2024. The questionnaires took about 8-10 minutes to complete. Both parents and pupils were recruited through schools. Separate samples of schools were drawn from a list of state schools in England. To be eligible, the schools had to have secondary-school age pupils (years 7-13) and had to engage with their local Music Hub. The sampling frame was stratified by Music Hub, local authority, phase of education (grouped into secondary vs other) and engagement with Hubs. From that stratified list, a random sample of 400 schools was drawn for the parent survey and of another 400 schools for the pupil survey. Schools were asked to administer the surveys to parents of pupils/pupils who engaged in co-curricular music activities at the school. For the parent survey, all secondary-school year groups (years 7-13) were in scope. For the pupil survey, the instruction from the evaluation team was to invite pupils in years 7, 9, 10 and 12 only to reduce burden.²² However, in reality, both parent and pupil survey responses were received from all year groups. Before administering the

²² The aim of focusing on selected year groups was to reduce research burden on schools. The rationale behind choosing these specific school years was that year 7 is the year of transition from primary school, with memories of primary school being most recent; year 9 is when pupils choose options for GCSEs; year 10 is the first GCSE year of learning, and it would be useful to have input from KS4 pupils; and year 12 is the first year of A levels, so this would ensure input from KS5 pupils. An additional rationale was to avoid burdening pupils in exam years.

survey, schools were asked to inform parents about the evaluation and to offer parents an opportunity to opt their child out.

Survey questionnaires were completed by 657 parents and 647 pupils in total. Survey responses covered all regions. However, some regions were overrepresented (e.g. South East in the parent survey and West Midlands in the pupil survey) and some others underrepresented (e.g. East Midlands in the parent survey and Yorkshire and The Humber, North East and North West in the pupil survey; see Table 11).

Table 11: Parent and pupil survey responses, by region

Region	Parents: Number of responses	Parents: % of responses	Pupils: Number of responses	Pupils: % of responses
East	83	13	22	3
East Midlands	14	2	51	8
London	78	12	62	10
North East	47	7	5	1
North West	89	14	11	2
South East	169	26	78	12
South West	76	12	45	7
West Midlands	43	7	302	47
Yorkshire and The Humber	43	7	6	1
Prefer not to say	15	2	65	10
Total	657	100	647	100

Percentages add up to more than 100% due to rounding.

Source: Stage 1b parent survey and pupil surveys, Autumn 2024

The profiles of parents and pupils who completed the surveys are outlined below:

- The parent and pupil surveys both received a greater number of responses from KS3 respondents. 78% of the pupils were from KS3, 18% were from KS4 and 4% were from KS5. Similarly, 53% of parents had children in KS3, 37% had children in KS4 and 10% were from KS5.
- 59% of pupils were female, 40% were male and 1% identified with a different gender. In the parent survey, 52% of children parents answered about were female, 46% were male, and 1% identified differently.
- 79% of the pupils were White, 11% were Asian/Asian British, 4% were Black/African/Caribbean/Black British and 6% were from Mixed/Multiple ethnic

groups. The profile of children by ethnic background in the parent sample was similar.

- 8% of parents reported that their child was eligible to receive FSM at the time of completing the survey, 2% were not sure, and 90% said their child was not eligible.

21% of parents reported that they considered their children to have SEND, based on learning, development, or behavioural difficulties. When answering this question, we asked parents to base their answers on what they thought, rather than on official diagnoses. Three-quarters of parents (75%) said they did not think their child had a SEND, and 4% were not sure.

Data collection in June-July 2025 (Stage 2)

Hubs staff survey

The Hubs staff survey took place from 10 June 2025 to 4 July 2025. All 43 Music Hubs were invited to take part in the survey. This was done in a similar way to Stage 1 where ACE provided NatCen (via DfE) with the names and contact details of 61 individuals based within Hubs, who were emailed with information about the survey and asked to distribute the survey link to all eligible groups. These groups included managers and staff at the HLO, managers and staff at the music services comprising the Hub (where there were more than one), peripatetic instrumental and singing teachers and any other staff contracted to deliver music provision.

The survey was completed by 431 participants, of whom 54% were peripatetic music teachers (see Table 12).

Table 12: Hubs survey responses, by staff role

Staff role	Number of responses	% of responses
Head of Hub Lead Organisation (HLO)	32	7
Head of music service (not HLO)	38	9
Other manager	84	19
Administrative staff	28	6
Peripatetic music teacher	231	54
Other (response too vague to classify)	15	3
Prefer not to say	3	1
Total	431	100

Source: Stage 2 survey of Hubs staff, Summer 2025

Survey responses were received from Hubs across all regions of England, with the North West and South West being slightly over-represented (see Table 13).

Table 13: Hubs survey responses, by region

Region	Number of responses	% of responses
East	37	9
East Midlands	38	9
London	39	9
North East	56	13
North West	74	17
South East	31	7
South West	67	16
West Midlands	33	8
Yorkshire and The Humber	54	13
Prefer not to say	2	0
Total	431	100

Source: Stage 2 survey of Hubs staff, Summer 2025

Teacher survey

The survey of schools' music teaching staff was carried out from 3 June 2025 to 4 July 2025. It was an online survey, which took about 15 minutes to complete. Similar to Stage 1, the sample of schools was drawn from the list of state schools, which was collated and shared with the DfE by the ACE. The sampling frame was stratified by Hub, local authority, phase of education and engagement with Hubs. From that stratified list, a random sample of 6918 schools was drawn for the survey.

In total, 613 teachers participated in the survey. Table 14 shows how these responses varied by school type. The profile of schools taking part in the survey was consistent with the number of different types of schools in England.

Table 14: Teacher survey responses, by school type

School type	Number of responses	% of responses
Primary	484	79
Secondary	99	16
Other	28	5
Total	611	100

Source: Stage 2 survey of teachers, Summer 2025

Table 15 highlights the regions from which teacher survey responses were received. The survey covered all regions of England with a slight over-representation of the South-East.

Table 15: Teacher survey responses, by region

Region	Number of responses	% of responses
East	52	8
East Midlands	57	9
London	47	8
North East	28	5
North West	81	13
South East	137	22
South West	84	14
West Midlands	54	9
Yorkshire and The Humber	70	11
Prefer not to say	2	0
Total	612	100

Source: Stage 2 survey of teachers, Summer 2025

Qualitative encounters

In the second stage of the evaluation, we conducted 4 focus groups and 1 depth interview with a total of 21 participants working in music education since the move to the new Music Hubs model. These were:

- Music Hub staff: 2 focus groups.
- Peripatetic music teachers: 1 focus group.
- School music teachers: 1 focus group and 1 interview.

Participants were sampled and invitations were sent in the same way as Stage 1. A random sample of 265 schools were contacted and invited to participate in a focus group for Stage 2 of the evaluation. Additionally, the research team drew on the pool of Stage 2 teacher survey participants who agreed to be re-contacted about participating in a focus group and who had engaged ‘a lot’ with their Music Hub.

Encounters were conducted online in June and July 2025 and represented a range of different regions in England.

For the second stage of the evaluation, we updated the topic guides used at Stage 1 to capture ongoing engagement with Music Hubs, including experiences and the perceived effectiveness of the new Music Hubs model since September 2024 and the Capital Grant. A guide was also developed for the focus group with peripatetic music staff. Once

again, the guides were used flexibly to allow researchers to respond to the nature and content of each discussion.

Reflections on the evaluation design

A final point to make is that there were a lot of topic areas to cover in the qualitative encounters, and it was difficult at times to cover areas in depth. One reflection among participants was that this may have meant a greater focus was placed on challenges rather than facilitators to delivery, and one view was that the Capital Grant could be the focal point of a whole focus group rather than a small sub section.

Appendix B: Teacher characteristics and attitudes at Stage 2

Teacher characteristics (Stage 2)

This appendix outlines characteristics of teachers who took part in the teacher survey, with differences highlighted by school type.

The profile of schools who took part in the survey remained consistent with the number of different types of schools in England. 79% were based in primary schools, 16% in secondary schools, and 5% were in other types of schools (special schools, middle schools, all-through and alternate provision schools). This split was similar to Stage 1.

Similar to Stage 1, respondents in primary, secondary and other types of schools tended to have different roles in their schools. Among primary school, 51% were teachers who taught all subjects, 30% were the music leads or Heads of music departments at their schools, and 19% had other roles. On the other hand, 91% of teachers from secondary schools were music leads or Heads of music departments. In other types of schools, 41% were music leads or Heads of music departments, 40% were teachers who taught all subjects, and 18% held other roles.

61% of the respondents across all types of schools reported that they had 10 or more years of experience teaching music. This was highest for secondary schools (69%), compared to primary schools (59%) or other types of schools (56%). Only 9% of primary schools, 8% from secondary schools and 4% from other types of schools had been teaching music for less than 3 years.

The highest educational qualifications in a music subject varied for the teachers based on the type of school. For primary schools, 44% did not have any academic qualifications in music, 25% had a bachelor's or master's degree in music, 11% had completed a music A-Level or T-Level, 17% had completed a music GCSE or equivalent, and 4% had other qualifications in music. For secondary schools, only 1% did not have an academic qualification in a music subject, while 94% had a bachelor's or master's degree.

71% of teachers reported having achieved a music board exam grade, diploma, or certificate of any level. Primary schools largely indicated their highest achieved exam as grades 6 through 8 (35%), or grades 1 through 5 (20%), and 37% has not achieved any exam grades. The majority of teachers from secondary schools indicated that their highest achieved exam was grades 6 through 8 (46%) or a diploma (42%), and only 5% had not achieved any exam grades. Percentages for respondents from other types of school were somewhere in between.

Teacher attitudes and confidence (Stage 2 tables)

Teachers had high levels of confidence about teaching music. However, there was variation in responses based on type of school. 80% from secondary schools reported that they strongly agreed with the statement “I am confident about teaching music”, compared to only 45% of from primary schools and 69% from other types of schools (see Table 16). Confidence in teaching music remained high across both stages of the survey (50% strongly agreed under the previous Hubs model, 52% in Stage 2).

Table 16: Agreement with the statement “I am confident about teaching music to my class”, by type of school

Agreement with the statement	Primary	Secondary	Other types of schools	All
Strongly disagree	3	7	-	3
Disagree	5	-	-	4
Don't know	10	2	4	9
Agree	38	11	27	33
Strongly agree	45	80	69	52
<i>Bases</i>	<i>480</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>608</i>

Table shows column %. Other types of schools include special, middle, all-through and alternative provision schools.

Source: Stage 2 survey of teachers, Summer 2025

Similarly, teachers had high levels of confidence about teaching singing to their class. There were no major differences by school type in the responses to this question (see Table 17). Confidence in teaching singing shows consistency across both stages of the survey (47% strongly agree in the previous Hubs model, 49% in the new Hubs model).

Table 17: Agreement with the statement “I am confident about teaching singing to my class”, by type of school

Agreement with the statement	Primary	Secondary	Other types of schools	All
Strongly disagree	4	6	-	4
Disagree	6	2	11	6
Don't know	10	2	11	9
Agree	32	39	26	33
Strongly agree	48	51	52	49
<i>Bases</i>	<i>481</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>610</i>

Table shows column %. Other types of schools include special, middle, all-through and alternative provision schools.

Source: Stage 2 survey of teachers, Summer 2025

Secondary schools had higher levels of ability to read music than those in primary and other types of schools, which matches the data on teachers' qualifications in music and exam board grades (see Table 18). This was similar to the finding under the previous Hubs model.

Table 18: Agreement with the statement “I am able to read music”, by type of school

Agreement with the statement	Primary	Secondary	Other types of schools	All
Strongly disagree	8	3	7	7
Disagree	15	1	4	12
Don't know	7	2	-	6
Agree	26	9	32	23
Strongly agree	45	85	57	52
<i>Bases</i>	<i>481</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>611</i>

Table shows column %. Other types of schools include special, middle, all-through and alternative provision schools.

Source: Stage 2 survey of teachers, Summer 2025

In secondary schools , 88% strongly agreed that they could play an instrument sufficiently well to use in music lessons, while only 36% strongly agreed to the statement in primary schools and 54% in other types of schools (see Table 19).

Table 19: Agreement with the statement “I am able to play an instrument sufficiently well to use in music lessons”, by type of school

Agreement with the statement	Primary	Secondary	Other types of schools	All
Strongly disagree	11	4	7	9
Disagree	18	-	4	14
Don't know	9	-	11	8
Agree	26	8	25	23
Strongly agree	36	88	54	46
<i>Bases</i>	<i>480</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>610</i>

Table shows column %. Other types of schools include special, middle, all-through and alternative provision schools.

Source: Stage 2 survey of teachers, Summer 2025

The majority of teachers enjoyed teaching music: 89% overall agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I like teaching music”. Similar to the previous Hubs model, this was highest for secondary schools (94%), followed by other types of schools (93%) and 87% for primary schools (see Table 20).

Table 20: Agreement with the statement “I like teaching music”, by type of school

Agreement with the statement	Primary	Secondary	Other types of schools	All
Strongly disagree	1	2	4	1
Disagree	1	-	4	1
Don't know	10	4	-	9
Agree	36	12	11	31
Strongly agree	51	82	82	58
<i>Bases</i>	<i>480</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>610</i>

Table shows column %. Other types of schools include special, middle, all-through and alternative provision schools.

Source: Stage 2 survey of teachers, Summer 2025



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