



Ensuring quality

Music education hubs

Introduction

We are all aware that the quality of leadership, management, teaching and learning is critical to the success of Music education hubs and the positive outcomes for children and young people. There are many organisations that have an interest and responsibility for the quality of music education, including hubs, the Arts Council, the Department for Education (DfE), Ofsted and schools. 'Ensuring quality' helps hubs to understand their role and how the Arts Council can support them. In the first two years of operation we have largely focused on establishing hubs and the operational mechanisms to deliver and monitor. We are keen to focus on quality to ensure that the aims and outcomes of the National Plan for Music Education are achieved.

Excellent Music education hubs consider quality in everything: planning, communications, their relationships with partners, governance and operational considerations, and the delivery of their activities. The Arts Council encourages and supports ambition and excellence across the hub network. We have worked with hubs and the DfE to develop a holistic approach to quality that is aligned to the Arts Council's quality principles¹, a peer development programme, tools and resources and seminars and training.

In the event that our monitoring of individual hubs identifies serious concerns, the Arts Council will offer additional support according to the criteria for support and challenge, which can be found on page 6.

¹ The seven quality principles were agreed by the sector and encourage greater critical thinking about goals which children and young people's arts/culture practitioners seek, and what 'great' and 'excellent' look like (<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/children-and-young-people/quality/>)

This document should be read alongside the Relationship Framework <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/funding-programmes/music-education-hubs/> , which contains our approach to monitoring and risk assessment and your funding agreement with us.

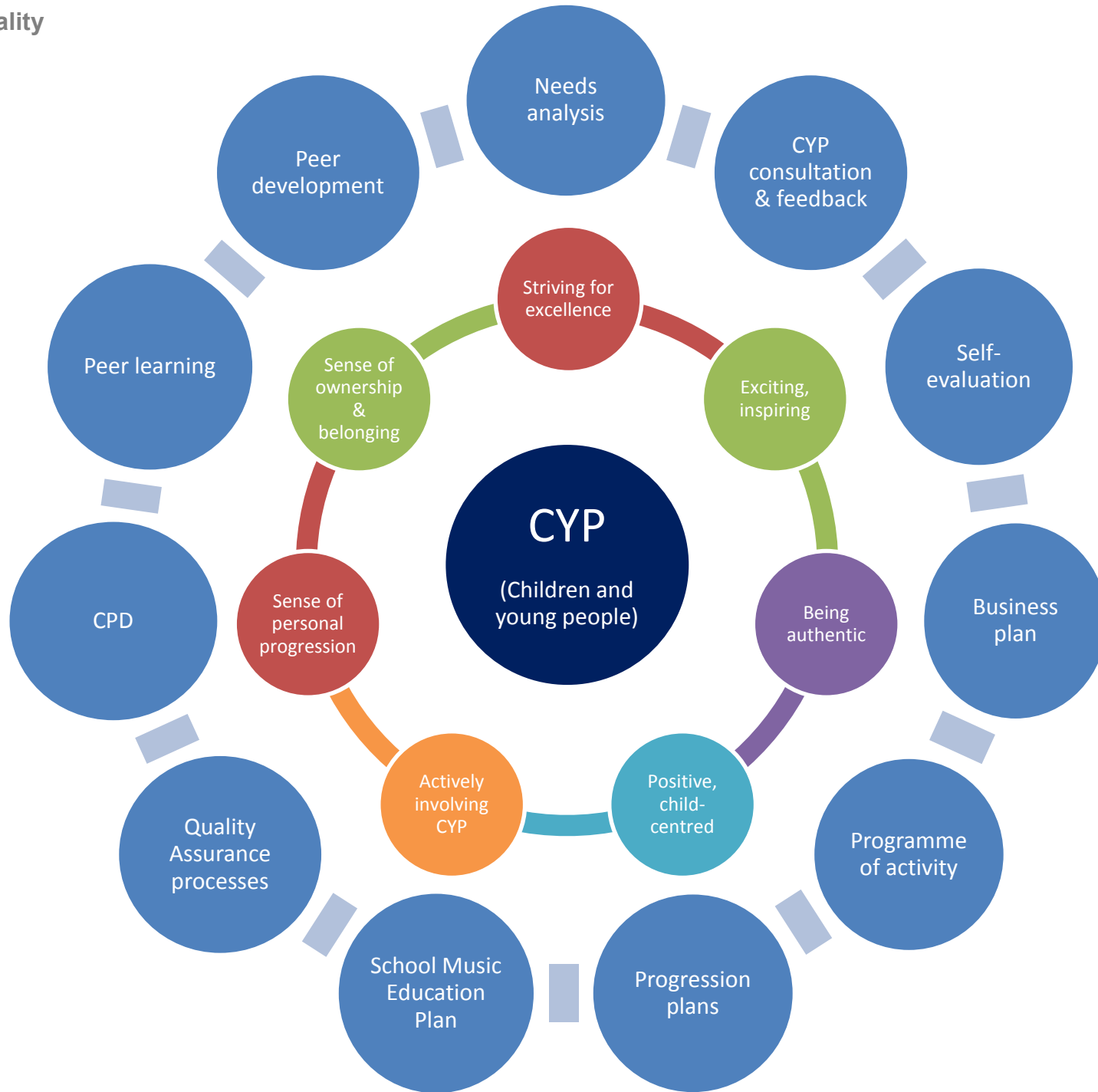
A hub's approach to quality

Quality is paramount. The quality of leadership, management, teaching and learning will have an impact on the outcome for children and young people. An excellent hub that promotes quality could be described as follows:

- It is always striving for excellence.
- Consideration of quality is central to the business planning.
- A process of continuous needs analysis feeds self-evaluation and evidence-based decision making.
- The hub is child-centred and its offer is authentic, meaning that the views of children and young people and other stakeholders are sought and responded to, ensuring that children and young people are actively involved and feel a sense of ownership.
- It is a good strategic broker and there are excellent partnerships across the hub resulting in high quality, inspiring and engaging musical and progression opportunities for children and young people.
- A strong school music education plan results in high engagement and impact in schools and colleges across the hub's area.
- The hub advocates for peer learning and other forms of continuing professional development (CPD) within and beyond the hub and is actively engaged with peer development.
- Excellent CPD opportunities are available and sign-posted, and thorough quality assessment (QA) processes are in place to monitor activities taking place across the hub.
- The hub's data evidences excellent reach and impact.
- Income streams are progressively diversifying and include trusts and foundations, revenue and other non-grant sources.

The Arts Council recognises that hubs have differing policies and systems for ensuring quality. This diagram outlines the plans, processes and ways of working that could support a hub to ensure quality, with the child at the centre. It also shows how working in this way can also support the Arts Council's sector-agreed quality principles:

A hub's approach to quality



Arts Council support

The Arts Council encourages excellence and ambition across the whole hub network. It offers the following support to all hubs.

Arts Council guidance notes and templates

The Arts Council has developed guidance notes and templates to support hubs with many of their plans, processes and ways of working. These are available on our [website](#) and include guidance notes and templates for business planning, programmes of activity, governance, needs analysis, management accounts, board papers and financial statements. These are to be used at a hub's discretion, but all hubs should strive for excellence in these areas, and use all the tools necessary to pursue that objective.

Signposting to existing tools and resources

Hubs requiring support can currently draw on many existing tools and resources developed by music education experts and organisations. These include, for example, guidance on progression, quality assurance and self-evaluation. A list of these, with accompanying links, is available on our [website](#). New resources will be highlighted in our regular newsletters.

Peer learning

To facilitate peer learning, we encourage hubs to meet regularly, independent of Arts Council coordination, to focus on tasks or issues facing them and share skills and knowledge.

We will support a seminar programme for hubs which will take place across the country. These will be similar to the school music education plan seminars. They will be theme-based and provide an opportunity for hubs to come together, to learn from each other and to explore and debate the important issues that they face.

Peer development programme

A peer development programme will be launched in April 2015. This programme has been designed for, by and with hubs. It will enable hubs to draw on the support of their peers (hub leaders, Bridge organisations, National portfolio organisations) to explore specific areas of development identified through individual self-evaluation and needs analysis. The programme is based

on the hubs' business plans and not on pre-determined or sector-wide benchmarks. This reflects the fact that hubs are at a relatively early stage of development, serve different communities and vary significantly in size, budget, geographical spread, constitution and governance.

This approach to peer development is predicated on two key principles: that hubs are responsible for their own performance and improvement and that hubs have a collective responsibility for performance and improvement across the hubs network.

The programme is designed to focus on leadership, management and strategy. It will help hubs address high level issues such as partnership working, funding models and governance (rather than the detail of delivery) so that lead organisations can deliver the vision for hubs set out in the National Plan for Music Education.

The programme is currently being piloted by a small number of hubs that have been involved in its development. Further details about the process of engagement will be published after these pilots. However, it is expected that the Arts Council will manage the programme and any hub that requests to take part will cover the fees of the peers, capped at £400 per peer per day. Engagement will not be compulsory but we hope that most hubs will take part at some point. The Arts Council may from time to time encourage a hub to take part if we believe that a hub could benefit from support from peers on specific issues. It will not, however, be part of our criteria for support and challenge.

The Arts Council encourages all hubs to undertake regular self- evaluation. Our existing self-evaluation tool for National portfolio organisations is available at (address) for you to use.

Criteria for support and challenge

Music education hubs aim to deliver high quality music education to all children and young people, to be financially resilient and to provide strong leadership across a strategic partnership. We know that hubs could at some time also experience difficulty due to such factors as financial pressures or changes in leadership. Sometimes hub lead organisations raise concerns with us and invite us to support them. At other times, we may believe that there is increased risk to our investment and to the hub lead organisation's ability to deliver the outcomes of the funding agreement. We will support them to overcome these challenges and

have developed criteria that outline the principles we will use for deciding when and how to provide additional support and challenge, taking into account local factors and individual circumstances. The hub's chair of the board or hub leader's line manager should always be included in determining the level of support and challenge required.

The Arts Council is a public body and is accountable to Parliament for the way in which it distributes public funds. Our monitoring and risk assessment processes are necessary to scrutinise the performance of hubs, and to highlight potential risks to our investment and breaches of the terms and conditions of the grant.

Process for support and challenge

Your relationship manager will always take the context of your hub into consideration when looking at various indicators and evidence to assess if the hub requires support and challenge. Relationship managers will look at your business plan and key performance indicators (KPIs) to judge your ambition and achievement against these. They will also look at the year-on-year data from the annual data returns and the regional and statistical neighbour analysis to assess your achievement.

The following serious concerns would result in your hub being considered high risk (most of these are also breaches of the terms and conditions of the grant):

Risk area	Serious concerns for support and challenge	Indicators/evidence
Music education hub delivery	Weak or no evidence of delivery of core or extension roles across hub, as agreed in business plan and programme of activity	Quarterly board papers, termly contact, annual data return
	Weak/limited strategic and delivery partnerships in place across hub, resulting in limited high quality, inspiring and engaging musical and progression opportunities for children and young people	Partnership agreements, business plan, annual programme of activity, quarterly board papers, termly contact
	Lack of development and ambition across hub year on year	Business plan, annual programme of activity, quarterly

		board papers, termly contact, annual data return
	<p>Poor quality music delivery across hub, indicated via limited or unconvincing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs analysis • Self-evaluation • Business plan • Programme of activity • Quality assurance processes across the hub • School music education plans • Use of Ofsted reports on schools in your area • Progression plans across the hub • Stakeholder feedback across the hub • CPD opportunities for staff delivering across the hub • Peer learning opportunities • Peer development programme participation 	Business plan, annual programme of activity, school music education plans, annual data return, seminar programme participation data, peer development programme participation data
	<p>Annual data return demonstrates a lack of reach, progression and standards for hub activities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low numbers of engaged schools • Low numbers of children and young people • Poor engagement by children and young people with different characteristics, eg special education needs (SEN), ethnicity, pupil premium • Poor take up and continuation from Whole Class Ensemble Teaching • Low numbers of children and young people engaged in ensembles 	2012/13 and 2013/14 annual data returns

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited ensemble offer • Low numbers of schools supported to develop singing strategies • Poor progression to higher standards 	
Leadership, governance and management	<p>Serious breakdown in leadership, governance and management, as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak, limited or no business plan in place • Unclear decision making • Ineffective Board or equivalent • Poor retention or ability to recruit staff 	Business plan, quarterly board papers, termly contact, constitution or memorandum and articles of association
	Repeat compliance issues, eg late or non-submission of reporting documents which significantly delay payment to the hub or lack of communication with Arts Council	Arts Council monitoring of payment conditions, Relationship Framework
Value for money and financial resilience	<p>Serious collapse of financial viability, indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear or no production of financial information • Cash flow crises • Income targets not met 	Annual budget, quarterly management accounts, annual financial statements, business plan
	Poor financial management, including unrealistic/unbalanced budgets, under/overspend or ineffective use of resources	Annual budget, quarterly management accounts, annual financial statements, business plan

When a serious concern triggering support and challenge is identified, the relationship manager's first action will be to consider the local context in which the hub is operating, and determine whether this risk had already been identified by the hub, with appropriate plans for mitigation. If not, then the relationship manager will appropriately increase the risk rating for the hub.

The senior manager, children and young people for the appropriate Arts Council area will then issue a formal letter to the hub lead and CEO/chair of board to inform them of the increased risk rating and request a meeting to discuss a milestone plan as

soon as possible. A milestone plan must then be agreed with an appropriate timeline. Depending on the severity of the challenges being addressed, the timeline for their resolution may be quite extended. The relationship manager will then monitor progress.

There are other concerns that could also be considered potential causes for support and challenge (most of them are also breaches of the terms and conditions of the grant):

Risk area	Other concerns for support and challenge	Indicators/evidence
Music education hub delivery	Data return not submitted by hub lead organisation	Annual data return
Leadership, governance and management	Non-compliance issues, eg late submission of reporting documents or lack of communication with Arts Council	Arts Council monitoring of payment conditions, Relationship Framework
	Lack or/no reporting within and across partnerships	Partnership agreements, quarterly board papers, termly contact, feedback received from partners
	Underdeveloped governance model or non-transparent decision making	Business plan, quarterly board papers, termly contact, constitution or memorandum and articles of association
Value for money and financial resilience	Weak/underdeveloped fundraising strategy	Annual budget, quarterly management accounts, annual financial statements, business plan

	No efficiencies enabled through partnerships	Annual budget, quarterly management accounts, annual financial statements, business plan
	Lack of/no additional funding being brought in	Annual budget, quarterly management accounts, annual financial statements, business plan

Again, the relationship manager would consider the local context and, if appropriate, raise the risk rating. The relationship manager would then contact the hub leader to inform them of the increased risk rating and within two weeks agree a milestone plan and timeline.

Relationship managers will make a record of all communication with the hub during this time and risk assessment will be undertaken on a more regular basis.

In addition to a milestone plan, relationship managers [and hubs also] have further options that can be initiated, offered or requested by the hub itself. These are:

- **Funding conditions:** we may place additional conditions on our grant payments to ensure compliance when existing conditions or standard requirements have not been met.
- **Withholding grant payments:** if the conditions of our funding have not been met we may decide to withhold payment of a grant instalment until conditions are fulfilled.
- **Increasing reporting:** we may ask for additional reporting on certain issues, to reassure us that the areas for concern that we have identified are being addressed.

- **The right to audit:** we will reserve the right to audit an organisation if we have significant concerns about information presented to us, including financial information.
- **Financial intervention:** if a hub is at immediate and serious financial risk, but has sufficient leadership commitment and capacity to make necessary changes as required by the Arts Council, and all non-financial options have been exhausted, then we may provide additional financial support if this would mitigate the financial position of the hub. Strict conditions would be placed on any additional award.

We can also support hubs via:

- **Consultancy support:** we may commission a consultant if additional specialist knowledge is required to inform our monitoring, or if a hub requires specialist support to overcome significant challenges.
- **Co-manager/ improvement partner:** we may work in partnership with the hub lead organisation to place a co-manager or improvement partner in the hub to support the hub leader to overcome specific, significant challenges.

Accountability for the success or failure of the hub rests solely with the hub lead and Board (or equivalent). We will expect to see strong leadership from the hub lead organisation.

Transfer of leadership

If, after all possible interventions have been considered and/or implemented, a hub lead organisation remains unable to overcome the serious concerns that have been identified, then the Arts Council will consider a transfer of the leadership functions from the hub lead organisation. It is important to note that in some cases the current hub lead organisation could still be a delivery partner in the hub; but because it would no longer be the hub lead organisation it would not receive and administer the grant.

In such cases, we would work with the Department for Education, local authorities and other relevant organisations. The existing grant can be transferred from the existing lead organisation to another organisation if both parties are in agreement. This 'novation process' should result in a smooth transition and impact less on children and young people. If this is not possible, a 'withdrawal of funding' process would be undertaken, followed by a solicitation or open application process to secure a new lead organisation for the area.

A transfer of leadership process outlines the approach to be taken in these circumstances - <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/funding-programmes/music-education-hubs/> .