

The Power of Music to Change Lives: A Plan for Music Education

Introduction and background

In 2011, the DfE published its first National Plan for Music, *'The Importance of Music'*. Since then, much has changed, with curriculum and qualification reform, the growth of multi-academy trusts, and the publication of the Model Music Curriculum.

This refreshed National Plan for Music Education (NPME) sets out the government's renewed vision to 'enable all children and young people to learn to sing, play an instrument, and create music together, and have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents, including professionally.' It draws on the expertise of music educators across the country through an advisory panel, chaired by Baroness Fleet. It also draws on the results of a call for evidence which received over 5,000 responses from parents, teachers, and students as well as 275 responses from young people.

The NPME focusses on high-quality provision in schools, strong local partnerships, and talent pathways. It outlines 3 goals: all children and young people receive a high-quality music education in the early years and in school; all music educators work in partnership, with children's and young people's needs at their heart; and all children and young people with talent have the opportunity to progress, including professionally. The plan covers the years up to 2030 – a progress report will be published in 2025. The NPME is accompanied by a funding commitment of £25 million to help schools to purchase musical instruments and equipment, and a further £79 million a year up to 2025 for the music hubs programme. The NPME document is accompanied by a wide range of resources, including links to information about apprenticeships and internships. Useful case studies are embedded within the main document, and an accompanying document outlines the trajectories of young people who have gone on to pursue a musical career.

Key points

High-quality music education for all

- Music education is more than a set of activities – it should provide the knowledge and understanding which children need to progress. The Ofsted research review for music states that 'a central purpose of good music education is for pupils to make more music, think more musically, and consequently become more musical.'
- Schools need to work in partnership with Music Hubs and other organisations to improve their music education. Under the plan, all Music Hubs will be asked to appoint at least one primary and one secondary Lead School for Music which will be active partners in their work. These schools will work with Hubs in the design and delivery of peer-to-peer support and development for other schools in their area. This may involve activities such as workshops, lesson observations, or mentoring. They will also work closely with the Music Hub to develop an effective CPD offer for all schools in the Hub area.
- High-quality music provision which has been observed in schools shares several key features. These are: timetabled curriculum music of at least one hour a week in key stages 1-3, access to lessons across a range of instruments and voice, a school choir and/or vocal ensemble, space for rehearsals and individual practice, a termly school performance, and the opportunity to enjoy live performance at least once a year.
- A high-quality music education is the right of every pupil regardless of additional needs. Schools should not send pupils with SEND to another classroom when music is happening. One-off workshops for pupils with SEND are not enough. The new national Hub centre of excellence for inclusion (see below), will support local Music Hubs to deliver inclusive music education. There will be a requirement for Music Hubs to publish an inclusion strategy.
- Aiming towards the guidance in the NPME, all schools should aim to have a revised or new Music Development Plan in place for academic year 2023-24 at the latest. As part of their plan, schools should also consider having a music progression strategy which sets out opportunities for pupils to pursue music beyond the core curriculum.
- All primary and secondary schools will be expected to embed high-quality music education, either by adopting the Model Music Curriculum, or by implementing a curriculum that is at least comparable in breadth and ambition. A new national curriculum body will work with teachers to co-create a package of free, optional, curriculum resources that are built around the guidance in the Model Music Curriculum.
- Every school should have a designated music lead or head of department who should be given the time and resources to fulfil the role effectively. School leaders, particularly in the primary phase, should recognise that music leads have wider responsibilities for developing



the musical culture of the school, including co-curricular provision, experiences, and performances. Primary school leaders in particular should consider what this means for the time classroom staff are afforded for being a music lead.

- In addition to the local Music Hubs, 4 Music Hubs will be appointed and funded from Autumn 2024 to act as national centres of excellence in inclusion, CPD, music technology, and pathways to industry. All Music Hub lead organisations should have an inclusion lead by 2024.

Working in partnership through Music Hubs

- Music Hubs are partnerships co-ordinated by a lead organisation and made up of schools and academy trusts, local authorities, wider arts and education organisations and charities, community or youth organisations, and more. They support joined-up music education provision both within and beyond schools. The lead organisation is accountable for the effective use of the DfE funding and the development of high-quality music education in their Hub area.
- Within the NPME, Music Hub partnerships will be expected to focus on 3 key aims: to support schools and other education settings to deliver high-quality education; to support young people to develop their musical interests and talent further, including into employment; and to support all children and young people to engage with a range of musical opportunities in and out of school. Music Hub lead organisations will have responsibility for 5 strategic functions to achieve these aims. These are laid out below.
- Lead organisations will set out a Local Plan for Music Education. They will also support all schools in their area through a curriculum support offer, specialist tuition, instruments, and ensembles. They will provide a broad range of progression routes and musical experiences for all pupils
- Lead organisations will support children and young people to progress with music, into national or specialist opportunities, higher education, or employment. They will also support young people to access the wider world of music, including live performance and community music.
- Lead organisations will lead the drive for inclusion, so that all children have the chance to participate.
- Lead organisations will ensure the sustainability of the Music Hub by supporting a well-trained workforce, leveraging DfE funding, being transparent and accountable, and acting on the Hub's environmental responsibilities.

Supporting progression and furthering musical development

- Every young person who wants to pursue music beyond the curriculum should be supported to do so. They should be able to understand the available pathways and to take their musical learning as far as they would like, regardless of their circumstances.
- Graded exams, GCSEs, and A levels are not the only pathway to progression. Music educators should support young people's continued engagement, for example through continued access to role models, or helping them to develop motivation and resilience.
- This country has a rich history of musical excellence, We should be proud of creating elite musicians, just as we are proud of a sporting elite.

- For many children and young people, the foundations of musical talent will be laid through the early years and in school through increasingly advanced musical learning (for example, through 1:1 instrumental lessons), performing (such as in ensembles and bands), and creativity (through the provision of facilities and expert support for composing).
- As they progress further, pupils should be guided to opportunities for ever more advanced teaching and learning. This may include joining the junior departments of conservatoires and music organisations like the Royal College of Music or taking part in national ensembles. Pupils may be eligible for financial support to access these opportunities, including through the Music and Dance Scheme. This scheme provides means-tested bursaries up to the full cost of a day or boarding place to attend 4 leading specialist music schools: Chetham's School, Manchester, Purcell School, Hertfordshire, Wells Cathedral School, Somerset, and the Yehudi Menuhin School, Surrey.
- At every stage, musical progression will best be facilitated through a joined-up partnership of organisations putting children and young people first. This means music educators understanding what is needed to support pupils' progression (for example, higher quality instruments or mentoring) and proactively connecting with each other as organisations at local, regional, and national levels, including through the Music Hub.

Further study

- The UK conservatoires and universities offer a wide choice of music and music-related study options. The majority of those who choose to study at a conservatoire will focus primarily on performance or composition, supported by a complementary research and/or practice-led academic curriculum.
- Some students will focus on specialist vocational training opportunities in areas such as music education, music in community or therapeutic contexts, music business, music entrepreneurship, or aligned training such as technical production, audio recording, or production.
- There are a growing number of apprenticeships in the music sector. In April 2022, the DfE launched a pilot for the new Portable Flexi-Job Apprenticeship which is apprentice-led and enables apprentices to move between businesses and employers in industries where short-term contracts are the norm. The Portable Flexi-Job Apprenticeships pilot will initially run in specific standards in the creative, digital, and construction sectors (for example, live events technician).
- More needs to be done to showcase how career options in the music industry are sustainable and rewarding, including a range of roles behind the scenes, in production, composition, and more.

The full document can be downloaded from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-power-of-music-to-change-lives-a-national-plan-for-music-education#:~:text=Details,interests%20and%20talents%2C%20including%20professionally>