

OMH Grant Funding Guidelines

Guidance for organisations applying for Octagon Music Hub grant funding to support music education activity across Dorset and Somerset 26.27

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About Octagon Music Hub Grant Funding

The Octagon Music Hub (OMH) is the Arts Council England-funded Music Hub for Dorset and Somerset, led by Somerset Council as the Hub Lead Organisation. OMH works in partnership with schools, music services, arts and cultural organisations and community providers to ensure that all children and young people have access to and can progress in high-quality music education.

The work of Octagon Music Hub is informed by national policy and guidance, including the Arts Council England Music Hub programme and the Department for Education's *The Power of Music to Change Lives* (2022), which sets out the National Plan for Music Education. OMH's approach reflects these priorities, with a focus on access, progression, inclusion and high-quality music education for all children and young people.

Working across a large and diverse geographic area, OMH supports urban, rural and coastal communities across both counties. Our local priorities are informed by the Octagon Music Hub Needs Analysis, which identifies local strengths, gaps in provision and areas of unmet need, ensuring that investment is targeted where it can have the greatest impact. The full Needs Analysis is available on the Octagon Music Hub website.

The Octagon Music Hub works alongside The Octagon Theatre's Arts Engagement and Outreach Service (Somerset Council), part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio (NPO). Together, we create high-quality cultural opportunities for children, young people, families and communities, while maintaining distinct roles, funding and governance.

1. Grant Making Approach

OMH distributes funding through grant awards to delivery partners to design and deliver activity that contributes to shared local and national priorities for music education. Funding is awarded to support:

- Music education activity that responds to identified need across Dorset and Somerset
- Delivery that contributes to the OMH priorities and ambitions based on evidence of need
- A connected, inclusive and sustainable music education system providing access and progression in music to children and young people across Dorset & Somerset

Grant funding enables organisations to deliver their own programmes and activity in alignment with OMH priorities and agreed outcomes. OMH takes a structured and strategic approach to allocating funding. Funding may be awarded through a combination of:

- Open application processes
- Targeted funding aligned to identified need
- Strategic continuation of key delivery roles where appropriate

All funding decisions are made in line with principles of transparency, fairness and good governance and are subject to the availability of funding.

Purpose of the Funding

Octagon Music Hub (OMH) grant funding is designed to support activity that strengthens the quality, reach and impact of music education for children and young people across Dorset and Somerset. Funding is intended to deliver against the priorities identified in the OMH Needs Analysis and Investment Framework, and to contribute to the national aims of the Music Hub programme.

Specifically, funding will support activity that:

1. Improves access to high-quality music education for all children and young people, particularly within schools and local communities.

2. Supports progression, enabling children and young people to continue their musical development beyond initial engagement.
3. Advances inclusion and equity, ensuring that children and young people who face barriers to participation are actively supported.
4. Develops the workforce, building confidence, skills and capacity across teachers, practitioners and organisations
5. Strengthens early years provision, supporting children aged 0–5 and their families to engage with music
6. Builds a connected system, supporting collaboration between schools, music services, cultural organisations and communities

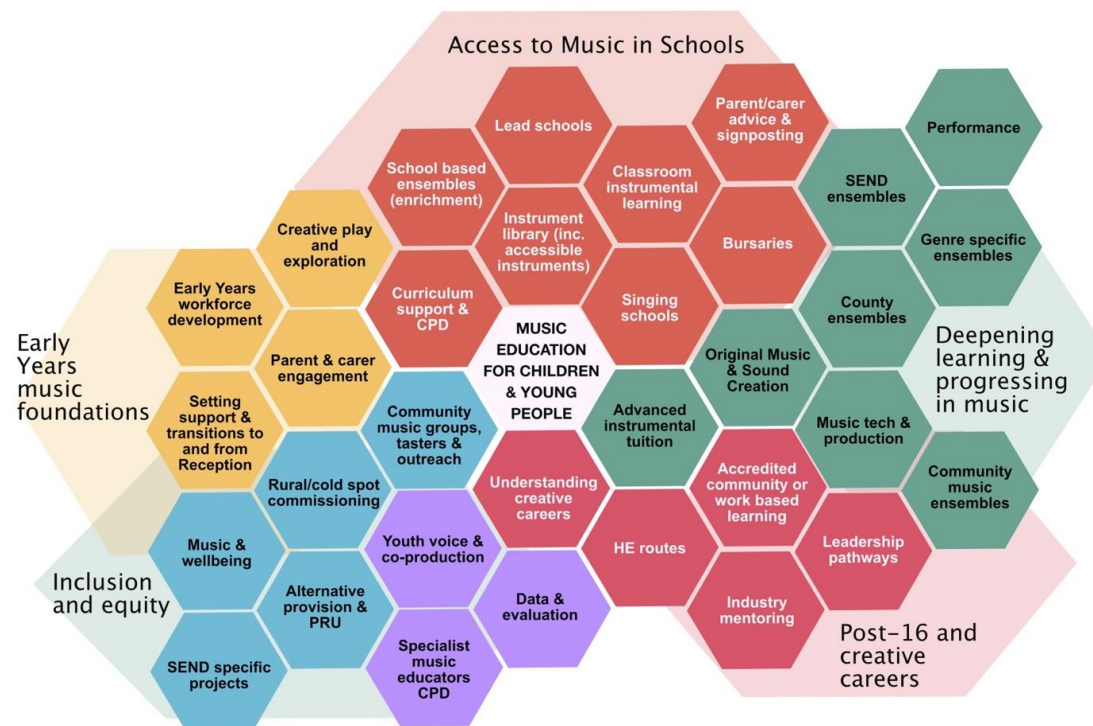
OMH funding prioritises activity that contributes to a coherent and joined-up local music education system, rather than isolated or one-off provision. Funded organisations are expected to:

- Align their activity to one or more of the OMH priority areas
- Demonstrate how their work responds to identified local need
- Contribute to shared outcomes for children and young people
- Work collaboratively with other partners where appropriate

The Hub recognises that organisations bring different strengths, expertise and delivery models. Funding is therefore intended to support a diverse range of organisations and provision, while maintaining a clear focus on shared priorities and collective impact. All funded activity should aim to create sustained benefit, including clear pathways for continued engagement, musical progression and development wherever possible.

2. Funding Priorities

The Octagon Music Hub's funding priorities are informed by the 2026 Needs Analysis, which identified key strengths, gaps and areas for development across Dorset and Somerset. These priorities reflect a move towards a more connected and equitable music education system, where activity is aligned, progression is clearer, and all children and young people have the opportunity to engage and develop musically. The diagram below illustrates the key components of this system and how they connect across different stages of a young person's musical journey.



a. Access to Music Education: Schools & Settings

The OMH has developed system-wide indicators to ensure all children and young people can engage in high-quality music education, particularly within schools in Dorset & Somerset. The following indicators represent the OMH's overall expectations and ambitions in each county recognising that funded partners individual contributions will be proportionate to the scale and nature of funding awarded.

School-Based Music Education Delivery:

- $\geq 80\%$ of primary schools engaged in direct or co-delivered WCET/CIL
- $\geq 20\%$ of secondary/middle schools engaged in hub-led or supported direct or co-delivered music education activity
- $\geq 40\%$ of SEND schools engaged in hub-led or supported direct or co-delivered music education activity
- 20% increase in take-up of hub-led or supported direct or co-delivered music education activity in areas identified in the needs analysis as relative cold spots.
- $\geq 75\%$ of schools have access to ensemble provision (in-school or via Hub-supported community routes)
- $\geq 90\%$ of schools have access to hub-led or supported singing provision
- $\geq 70\%$ of schools participate in at least one performance opportunity annually
- $\geq 90\%$ of identified instrument access need is met, with priority given to disadvantaged pupils
- Targeted engagement with PRU/AP settings, with year-on-year increase in activity and participation
- Increase pupil participation, with proportional representation of SEND / FSM / Pupil Premium

Music Education Workforce & School Capacity Building & Family Engagement: OMH recognises that high-quality music education depends on a confident, skilled and connected workforce across schools, music services, cultural organisations and community settings. Funding may support workforce development activity that strengthens music curriculum delivery, inclusive practice, progression pathways and wider system capacity but this must be balanced with direct delivery to children and young people. The following indicators represent the OMH's overall expectations and ambitions:

- $\geq 70\%$ of schools (or equivalent workforce) engaged annually
- $\geq 80\%$ of participants report increased confidence in delivering music education to children and young people

- ≥ 90% of engaged schools have a School Music Development Plan in place or have accessed support for the music education curriculum
- ≥ 80% demonstrate measurable improvement in curriculum delivery
- Parent / Carer Engagement - evidence of engagement activity in all localities
- Case studies on improved practice in delivering music education to children and young people as a result of CPD and training

To help us achieve these ambitions we are looking to find activity that includes:

- Whole class instrumental learning (WCET/CIL)
- Instrumental learning and singing programmes
- Curriculum support and delivery in schools
- Live music experiences (e.g. in-school performances, concerts, tours)
- Large-scale and flagship performance opportunities (e.g. festivals, concerts, showcases)
- Instrument access schemes (hire, loan, subsidy)
- Digital resource platforms to support teaching and learning (where embedded in delivery)
- Music education workforce training, CPD and networking events
- Parent/carers engagement events and campaigns
- Activity or support addressing barriers such as cost, transport or access
- Targeted and co-designed provision for children and young people attending Alternative Provision (AP) and PRUs, or other underrepresented or disadvantaged groups

Applicants delivering within this strand must demonstrate how their proposed activity will contribute to these system-wide expectations and clearly identify which elements they will lead or support. Applicants are expected to provide realistic and proportionate delivery plans based on the level of funding requested.

b. Progression & Continued Engagement

Musical progression is understood as the opportunities for children and young people to realise and explore their musical potential. This may include movement between playing levels, settings, genres, instruments or types of musical activity, as well as increased frequency of participation, development of musical complexity, growing independence, or progression into more specialised

activity. OMH recognises the important role that high-quality performance opportunities play in motivation, progression, celebration, confidence-building and public engagement with music education.

The following indicators represent system-wide expectations for progression across the Music Hub.

- $\geq 30\%$ of participants in first access programmes progress to a next-stage opportunity within 12 months
- Targeted programmes are defined as sustained, structured music activities (minimum 6 weeks over 2 terms) designed to support progression as outlined above
- $\geq 50\%$ of participants engaging in progressive music activity do so over two or more terms
- Year-on-year increase in the number of pupils moving from school-based activity into local or community ensembles
- $\geq 50\%$ of secondary schools engaged in progression activity beyond first access
- Year-on-year increase in participation of SEND and FSM / Pupil Premium pupils in progression activity
- At least one sustained progression programme (6–10 weeks) in PRU/AP settings in each priority geography
- 20% increase in progression activity in priority areas (Purbeck, North Dorset, Mendip, Taunton West)
- Evidence of progression between performance levels
- Year-on-year increase in children and young people performing beyond school-level activity
- $\geq 80\%$ of schools report improved understanding of progression pathways
- 100% of funded partners provide clear progression information to participants and schools
- $\geq 80\%$ of teachers report increased confidence in supporting pupil progression
- Evidence of at least one cross-organisation progression pathway per locality
- Opportunities for children and young people to engage with a broad range of musical styles, genres and traditions, supporting exploration, progression and the development of individual musical interests

Applicants delivering musical progression activities for children and young people must demonstrate how their work will contribute to sustained engagement and clear progression pathways. Grant funded partner contributions will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the funding awarded.

Activity we are looking to fund includes:

- Ensembles, bands, orchestras and group music-making
- Music centres and regular out-of-timetable group music-making
- Community-based progression opportunities (e.g. open mic, youth-led activity)
- Opportunities linked to further study, training and creative careers
- Industry pathways, mentoring and skills development
- Performance opportunities at increasing scale and level
- Targeted progression programmes (e.g. for NEET, SEND or vulnerable groups)

The examples above are not exhaustive. OMH welcomes proposals that contribute to these priorities in innovative ways.

c. Inclusion & Equity

Inclusion and equity are central to the OMH approach. Music education should be inclusive by design, with targeted activity addressing inequity and improving access, participation and progression for underrepresented groups. Inclusion is understood as a core delivery standard across all provision, ensuring that music education is accessible, adaptable and responsive to a wide range of needs, abilities and starting points.

Equity is understood as targeted intervention, providing additional and sustained support for children and young people who face barriers to participation. The following indicators represent system-wide expectations for inclusion and equity across the Octagon Music Hub.

- Year-on-year increase in participation from: Children and young people with SEND; those in AP/PRU settings; children eligible for FSM / Pupil Premium
- Year-on-year increase in participation in priority geographies and identified cold spot areas
- Evidence of sustained engagement for targeted groups
- Evidence of progression from targeted provision into further music activity
- Evidence that barriers to participation are actively reduced.
- Evidence activities co-designed with children and young people experiencing barriers to taking part in music-making

Applicants delivering inclusion and equity activity must:

- Demonstrate how inclusive and developmental practice is embedded across all delivery
- Clearly identify the groups and communities the activity is designed to reach
- Provide a clear rationale based on identified need and local context
- Demonstrate how activity will support sustained engagement and progression
- Show how barriers to participation will be actively reduced
- Provide realistic and proportionate delivery plans aligned to the system-wide KPI framework

Activities we are looking to fund include

- Inclusive provision embedded across all delivery
- Targeted programmes for children and young people with SEND

- Activity in AP/PRU settings
- Music nurture groups and mentoring programmes
- Place-based programmes in priority or underserved areas
- Small group or intensive provision supporting engagement and progression, in particular with underrepresented children and young people

The examples above are not exhaustive. OMH welcomes proposals that contribute to these priorities in innovative ways.

d. Early Years

Early years music provision plays a vital role in supporting children's development, strengthening family engagement and creating pathways into sustained music education. Early years activity is understood as provision for children aged 0–5, including work with parents, carers and early years practitioners. High-quality early years music provision should support early communication, creativity and confidence, while establishing positive foundations for ongoing musical engagement. The following indicators represent system-wide expectations for early years activity across the Music Hub.

- Year-on-year increase in the number of:
 - o Early years settings engaged
 - o Children and families participating
 - o Evidence of regular and sustained engagement, rather than one-off activity
 - o Evidence of parent and carer engagement in early years music activity
 - o Evidence of transition into school-based music provision, including:
 - o Links with local schools
 - o Progression into Reception / Key Stage 1 music activity
 - o Increased engagement in priority geographies and underserved communities

Applicants delivering early years activity must:

- Demonstrate understanding of early childhood development and inclusive practice in relation to young children with (un) diagnosed SEND, SEMH
- Clearly identify the settings, families or communities they will work with
- Show how activity will support both children and their parents/carers
- Demonstrate how provision will link to wider music education pathways, including transition into school-based activity
- Provide realistic and proportionate delivery plans
- Support regular engagement, rather than one-off sessions

Activity we are looking to fund includes:

- Music sessions in early years settings and community contexts
- Parent/carers and family music programmes

- Early years workforce development and training
- Programmes linked to family hubs and community services
- Activity supporting transition into school-based music provision

e. Partnerships & (Music Education) System Development

Supporting a more connected and sustainable music education system. This includes:

- Place-based working
- Cross-sector collaboration with arts venues, music venues, health and community organisations
- Alignment between schools, cultural organisations and communities
- Youth voice and co-design, ensuring that children and young people help shape provision and influence decision-making
- Sustainable and environmentally responsible approaches to music-making, resource use and delivery
- Development of locality-based leadership and peer support networks, including Lead Schools and practitioner networks

Funding will prioritise activity that demonstrably responds to the needs identified through the OMH Needs Analysis, including geographic areas of lower engagement, groups currently underrepresented in music education, and gaps in progression and workforce capacity. The full OMH Needs Analysis is available on the Octagon Music Hub website.

Outcomes:

- Stronger collaboration across the music education system
- Improved coordination and sustainability of provision
- Increased engagement by schools, settings and children and young people in local cultural provision
- Increased awareness and adoption of environmentally sustainable practice across music education activity and partnerships

Indicators:

- Evidence of active partnerships in all localities
- Evidence of cross-sector delivery (schools, cultural organisations, community partners)
- Engagement of at least 90% of schools with the wider music education system
- Evidence of co-investment and additional funding leveraged
- Evidence of environmentally sustainable approaches to delivery, resource use or partnership activity where appropriate

OMH expects to fund activity that strengthens collaboration and connectivity across the music education system. This may include:

- Cultural partnerships and collaborative projects
- Leading a coordinated youth voice approach across the Hub footprint, including development of youth panels, advisory groups or representative structures
- Gathering and synthesising insight from children and young people across different settings and localities
- Residencies and work with professional artists and organisations
- Cross-sector work (education, arts, community, health)
- Activity that strengthens progression pathways across organisations
- System coordination, networking and shared delivery
- Cross-sector or OMH system-wide CPD and training activities
- Peer learning and practitioner networks
- Leadership development particularly with those underrepresented in the creative industries
- Environmentally sustainable music education projects, including creative reuse, recycled instrument projects, repair and reuse schemes, or collaborative activity exploring sustainability through music and creativity
- Mentoring and coaching
- Lead School activity and locality-based music education networks supporting school engagement, workforce development, curriculum support and progression pathways
- Workforce inclusion, development and diversification

f. Post-16 & Creative Careers

Supporting progression into post-16 music education, training and creative careers is a developing priority for the Octagon Music Hub. Post-16 provision is understood as activity that supports young people aged 16–25 to continue their musical development, access further study and explore pathways into the creative industries. The following indicators represent system-wide expectations for post-16 and creative careers activity across the Music Hub.

- Year-on-year increase in participation of young people aged 16–25 in structured music activity
- Increased engagement with post-16 settings, including:
 - o Further Education (FE) colleges
 - o Sixth forms
 - o Training providers
- Evidence of progression into further study, training or employment, including:
 - o Music courses
 - o Creative industry pathways
 - o Apprenticeships or portfolio careers
- Evidence of engagement with industry professionals, including mentoring, workshops or performance opportunities
- Increased participation from young people facing barriers, including:
 - o Those not in education, employment or training (NEET)
 - o SEND and disadvantaged young people

Applicants delivering post-16 activity must:

- Demonstrate understanding of post-16 pathways and the creative industries
- Show how activity will support progression beyond school-based music
- Provide opportunities for real-world experience, including performance, production or collaboration
- Demonstrate how young people will develop:
 - o musical skills
 - o confidence and independence
 - o knowledge of career pathways
- Identify relevant partners, including FE settings, cultural organisations or industry professionals

Activity we are looking to fund could be:

- Post-16 ensembles, groups and advanced music-making opportunities
- Industry-focused programmes (e.g. production, recording, music technology, live events)
- Mentoring and coaching from industry professionals
- Projects supporting routes into further study or employment
- Targeted programmes for NEET young people or those at risk of disengagement
- Partnerships with FE colleges, training providers and cultural organisations
- Performance opportunities, including public and professional contexts
- Digital and creative industry pathways

Post-16 provision should:

- Be youth-led and responsive to young people's interests and ambitions
- Reflect the practicalities of portfolio careers in the creative industries
- Support both artistic development and employability skills

The examples above are not exhaustive. OMH welcomes proposals that contribute to these priorities in innovative ways.

3. Who can apply

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for OMH grant funding, organisations must:

- Be a formally constituted organisation (e.g. charity, company, CIC, public sector organisation or equivalent)
- Have a UK bank account in the organisation's name
- Have appropriate governance and financial management arrangements in place
- Have up-to-date quality assurance, safeguarding and health and safety policies and procedures relevant to working with children and young people
- Be able to demonstrate relevant experience and a track record of delivery
- Have the capacity to manage and deliver the proposed activity within the funding period

Where applications are submitted by partnerships or consortia, a lead organisation must be identified. The lead organisation will be accountable for the funding and all associated reporting requirements. Evidence of partner arrangements must be available on request.

Additional Expectations

Funded organisations will be expected to:

- Work in alignment with the OMH Needs Analysis and Investment Framework
- Collaborate with other partners where appropriate
- Contribute to a connected, system-wide approach to music education
- Engage with OMH reporting, monitoring and evaluation processes in a timely manner

OMH is unlikely to fund:

- Individuals (applications must be from organisations)
- Organisations without appropriate governance or safeguarding arrangements
- Organisations without a demonstrable track record of relevant quality music education delivery
- Organisations unable to evidence financial transparency, stability or accountability
- Activity that sits outside the Dorset and Somerset geography (unless there is a clear and direct benefit to local children and young people)

4. Funding & Financial Expectations

OMH will consider applications from £1,000 upwards where activity clearly aligns with the Hub's strategic priorities, identified local need and investment framework.

Types of Costs We Can Support

Funding may contribute towards:

- Staffing and delivery costs (including freelance practitioners)
- Programme and project delivery costs
- Resources, instruments and materials (where essential to delivery)
- Training and development costs
- Access and inclusion costs (e.g. transport, support staff, adapted resources)
- A proportion of organisational overheads directly related to delivery (**no more than 18% of the total grant value**, where clearly justified)

Ineligible or Restricted Costs

- Costs not directly related to the delivery of the funded activity
- Retrospective costs (activity that has already taken place prior to the funding period)
- Activity designed primarily to generate profit
- General organisational running costs that are not attributable to the funded programme
- Unjustified or disproportionate overhead costs
- Capital expenditure that is not essential to delivery (e.g. large-scale building works)
- Purchase of equipment or instruments where there is no clear plan for use within the funded activity
- Costs associated with fundraising activity or bid development
- Activity or costs that fall outside the agreed funding period

Expected Levels of Co-Investment

As a guide, OMH expects the following levels of contribution:

- Core school-based provision (e.g. music services): typically, 40–75% co-investment, reflecting the potential to generate income through schools and delivery models.
- Community, cultural and partnership activity: typically, 25–60% co-investment, reflecting opportunities to access trusts, foundations and other funding sources.
- Targeted inclusion activity (e.g. SEND, AP/PRU, priority groups): typically, 0–25% co-investment, recognising the need for higher levels of subsidy.

Where activity generates a surplus, organisations are expected to reinvest this into the development, sustainability and improvement of music education provision, including widening access and supporting progression.

Grant funding must be used for the agreed activity within the funding period. Any underspend must be clearly reported as part of financial monitoring. OMH reserves the right to recover or reallocate unspent funds.

Evidence of Co-Investment

Co-Investment **must be evidenced clearly for example through** signed funding agreements, grant confirmation letters, payment records (for example bank statements) or management accounts (certified by an internal financial controller e.g. Treasurer or similar for public sector applicants).

Subcontracting

Delivery partners may, where appropriate, work with other organisations or individuals to support delivery of the specified activity. However, the following conditions apply: the Lead, Grant-funded or Contracted Partner remains fully accountable for all delivery, performance and compliance requirements. **Subcontracting or partnership arrangements must have written agreements** in place and must be: -

- declared in advance, clearly defined with details of subcontracting arrangements provider or partnership role expectations
- aligned with the objectives set out in this specification

- OMH reserves the right to contact subcontracted partners to quality assure activity

Quality Assurance

Funded organisations are expected to maintain appropriate quality assurance and reflective practice processes to support high-quality music education delivery. This may include planning and evaluation processes, staff supervision, participant feedback, safeguarding oversight, workforce development and continuous improvement activity. OMH expects funded activity to demonstrate a commitment to safe, inclusive and high-quality practice for children and young people.

Inclusion & Accessibility

OMH expects inclusion, equity and accessibility to be embedded across all funded activity, not solely within targeted inclusion programmes. Funded organisations should consider how barriers to participation are identified and reduced, including barriers relating to cost, geography, disability, neurodiversity, language, culture or confidence. Activity should support meaningful participation, progression and belonging for children and young people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

Environmental Sustainability

Funded organisations are encouraged to consider the environmental impact of their activity and take proportionate steps to reduce this where practical. This may include reducing unnecessary travel, using local venues and practitioners where appropriate, sharing resources, reducing waste, using digital communication methods and supporting the repair, reuse or loan of instruments and equipment.

5. Decision-Making Process

Octagon Music Hub (OMH) will allocate all grant funding through an open application process for the 2026/27 academic year. This approach ensures transparency, fairness and alignment with identified need across Dorset and Somerset. OMH operates a single, cross-county investment framework across Dorset and Somerset. Funding decisions are made against identified need, strategic priorities and system-wide outcomes rather than fixed geographic allocations alone.

Somerset Council acts as the Hub Lead Organisation (HLO) and administers funding on behalf of the Octagon Music Hub partnership. Strategic oversight is provided through the Octagon Music Hub Strategic Board, which includes senior representation from both Somerset and Dorset local authorities.

5.1 Open Call for Proposals

All organisations seeking OMH funding will be required to submit an application. Applications must:

- Align to the OMH Funding Priorities
- Demonstrate clear need and impact
- Meet the requirements set out in these guidelines

5.2 Funding Strands and Budget Allocation

All funding allocations indicative and **subject to confirmation of final grant settlements** from Arts Council England. In 25.26 the Octagon Music Hub’s **delivery** budget from ACE/DfE was c.£940,000. The funding is split between counties based on pupil numbers, no. of education settings, SEND needs, geography and deprivation indicators meaning the delivery budget is roughly split c.34% Dorset and c.66% Somerset.

It is expected that **some applicants may apply for**

- **one or more strand, OR**
- **a defined activity within one or more strands**

Funding Strands	Approximate percentage allocation per pillar b.
Access to Music Education (Schools & Settings)	53%
Inclusion & Equity	15%
Progression & Continued Engagement	14%
Early Years	8%
Partnerships & System Development	4%
Post-16	6%

5.3. Assessment and Decision-Making

As stated above, applicants may apply to one or more strands, or one or more components within a strand, depending on their expertise and delivery model. Applications will be assessed against:

- Alignment with OMH priorities and the Needs Analysis
- Delivery capacity, track record and experience
- Flexibility and partnership working approach
- Value for money and financial sustainability
- Contribution to a balanced and effective system

- Evidence of good governance

Within each funding strand, OMH will seek to ensure:

- Appropriate geographic coverage across each Dorset and/or Somerset locality
- Delivery in identified areas with a focus on underserved areas
- A balance of provision across the system
- Strong and sustainable delivery models
- OMH reserves the right to fund a combination of organisations within each strand, fund proposals in full or in part and decline applications where they do not meet required criteria

Applications will be reviewed and moderated through an OMH assessment and governance process involving officers, relevant specialists and strategic oversight arrangements such as the OMH Strategic Advisory Group. OMH reserves the right to manage any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest through appropriate governance and decision-making processes.

Final funding recommendations are subject to approval through the OMH governance framework and Somerset Council processes as Hub Lead Organisation.

5.4 Transition and Continuity

OMH recognises the importance of maintaining continuity of provision. Existing providers who demonstrate strong performance, good governance, clear impact and alignment to OMH priorities are expected to remain an important part of the delivery landscape, subject to the outcome of the open application process. However, continued funding is not automatic and will be subject to the outcome of the open application process.

All organisations, including existing partners, will be expected to:

- Demonstrate delivery against agreed outcomes and indicators
- Show how provision aligns with the OMH Needs Analysis and Investment Framework
- Provide evidence of effective governance and financial management
- Demonstrate value for money and appropriate use of public funding

6. Monitoring, Reporting & Data Requirements

All funded organisations are required to participate in the OMH monitoring and reporting framework. This ensures consistent data collection, demonstrates impact and supports compliance with Arts Council England and Somerset Council requirements.

Reporting Requirements

Funded partners will be required to submit:

- Termly reports (delivery, participation and risk updates)
- Mid-year review (performance, risks and any required adjustments)
- End-of-year return (full dataset and impact summary)

Additional reporting may be required to support Arts Council England returns.

Funded organisations will be expected to collect and report on:

- Participation (children and young people engaged, frequency and duration)
- Inclusion and equity (SEND, AP/PRU, disadvantage and geographic reach)
- School engagement (name, number and type of schools engaged and how they engaged)
- Progression (movement between levels and sustained engagement)
- Quality and outcomes (feedback, case studies and evidence of impact)
- Financial and co-investment (income, contributions and budget variance)

All data must be:

- Accurate and based on actual delivery
- Consistent with OMH definitions and categories
- Submitted in line with agreed reporting timelines
- Supported by appropriate evidence where required

- Proportionate to the level of funding awarded

Partners may use their own data systems but must ensure alignment with OMH reporting requirements and provide data in the required format. OMH reserves the right to request supporting evidence, conduct audits or sample checks, and review data quality.

Payment of grant funding will be linked to the submission of required monitoring and reporting information. Full reporting requirements, templates and data specifications will be provided as part of the grant agreement.

7. Application Process & Timeline

To request an Application Form please email octagonmusic@somerset.gov.uk

Applicants will be required to submit:

An application including a clear delivery proposal aligned to one or more OMH funding priorities and strands. The form includes:

- Information on organisational governance, delivery capacity and relevant track record
- A detailed income and expenditure budget, including co-investment and financial contributions where applicable
- Estimated delivery outputs and intended outcomes
- Information on partnerships, subcontracting or collaborative delivery arrangements
- Identification of the geographic areas, localities or communities the activity will support
- Evidence of how delivery will respond to identified need, including priority communities, cold spot areas or underrepresented groups
- Information on how activity will be made accessible, inclusive and appropriate for rural and underserved communities
- Information on quality assurance, safeguarding and workforce support arrangements
- Information on environmental sustainability approaches proportionate to the proposed activity

Timeline

Open call launched	Early May 2026
Application deadline	23:59 on 11th June 2026 (please send to octagonmusic@somerset.gov.uk)

Eligibility and assessment process	June 2026
Moderation and decision-making	June 2026
Applicants notified of outcome	Late June/July 2026
Funding agreements issued	July 2026
Delivery period begins and end	1 September 2026 – 31 August 2027