



NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK MUSIC HUB INCLUSION STRATEGY

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INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

The Norfolk & Suffolk Music Hub Inclusion Strategy outlines a long-term vision for ensuring all children and young people, regardless of background or circumstance, have access to high-quality, meaningful and progressive musical opportunities. This strategy builds on significant previous inclusion work in both counties and aligns with national policies, including the National Plan for Music Education (2022) and Arts Council England's inclusion expectations for Music Hubs.

This strategy will be implemented from April 2025 and will provide a foundation for a three-year strategy developed in consultation with Dr. Phil Mullen who will undertake comprehensive interviews with partners, stakeholders, families and the wider workforce to inform future development.



CONTEXT: NORFOLK & SUFFOLK'S INCLUSION LANDSCAPE

Key Challenges and Considerations

Both counties share similar demographic and socio-economic challenges that impact young people's access to high quality progressive music education.

These include:

- **Rural isolation:** particularly in North Norfolk, Mid Suffolk, and West Suffolk
- **Disparities in educational attainment:** with lower than national average GCSE results
- **Significant deprivation in urban areas:** notably in Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Ipswich and Lowestoft
- **Increasing numbers of young people with vulnerabilities:** including those with SEND, children in care or those who are care experienced (CIC), young people in the youth justice system and those with significant mental health and wellbeing challenges

- **Diversification of workforce:** with a specific need for training in inclusive and trauma informed practice
- **Lack of consistent progression pathways:** all the way through from early engagement in music making to routes into industry
- **Gaps in digital inclusion:** particularly in remote areas where young people lack access to online music resources
- **Limited localised opportunities for underrepresented musical genres:** for example grime, hip-hop, electronic music and fantasy



POLICY ALIGNMENT AND SECTOR EXPECTATIONS

This strategy aligns with:

- The **2022 National Plan for Music Education** which sets out expectations for inclusion within music education
- **Youth Music's IDEA framework (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility)**
- **Arts Council England's Music Hub Investment Programme** ensuring funding is used to drive inclusive practice
- **DfE expectations for Music Hubs** emphasising access, progression and high-quality teaching



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This strategy focuses on six key priorities, extending its scope beyond previous iterations to ensure a robust multi-year plan.

PRIORITY 1: EMBEDDING INCLUSION AT THE CORE OF THE HUB

- Inclusion will be embedded across governance, partnerships and workforce development with regular auditing to ensure representation
- Inclusion Charter: A clear framework for all Hub partners and schools
- Regular CPD training and leadership development in inclusive practice
- Ensure inclusion is a standing item at all Hub governance meetings

PRIORITY 2: EXPANDING ACCESS FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS



- Targeted work with alternative provision programmes, youth justice offer, virtual schools, SRBs, PRUs, complex needs settings, school refusers, care experienced young people and for those in the home educated community
- Support for young people with SEND to develop long-term music-making pathways including the provision of specialist programmes such as SENDfest, Free Flow, Sounds of the East and feeding into the SEND inspection framework, community of practice and SEND Local Offer
- Partnerships with mental health services for young people to integrate music as a therapeutic and educational tool working with both local and regional providers – continuation of action research programmes and our work with the Child and Educational Psychology Practice

- Establish a Music & Wellbeing programme utilising prior learning from the national Artful Alliance programme to support children dealing with trauma and mental health challenges
- Expansion of the work in the Home Education space to provide further opportunities for engagement including our CIL offer, taster sessions and group instrumental learning provision
- Implementation of a programme of workforce development targeted at increasing confidence in the delivery of music making in SRB settings across the region



PRIORITY 3: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

- Comprehensive CPD in inclusive and trauma informed practice for all tutors, teachers and partner organisations
- Diversification of leadership roles to ensure wider representation
- Development of a co-mentoring programme for inclusion champions working with other Hubs from across the country under the direction of Dr Phil Mullen
- Membership of the I.D.E.A.L network: a community where individuals leading inclusion efforts can learn, grow and connect



- Through our work across the Eastern Region, fostering a culture of collective learning by sharing valuable resources, meaningful networking and building lasting connections to tackle challenges collaboratively
- Mandatory unconscious bias and accessibility training requirement for those engaged in music education across the region
- Continuing to work across our highly successful Tri-Hub partnership to ensure continued success at a regional level with shared best practice to enable high quality outcomes



PRIORITY 4: YOUTH VOICE AND PROGRESSION



- Regular meeting of our youth advisory panel to help shape Music Hub activities across the region facilitated through youth strategy away day activity
- Increased engagement in more contemporary genres established through regular engagement with young people across the region
- Strengthening progression routes from Classroom Instrumental Learning (CIL) to enable continued participation

PRIORITY 4: YOUTH VOICE AND PROGRESSION

- Remissions strategy to support disadvantaged young people to progress their ongoing musical journeys
- Industry connections to provide mentorship and career pathways into the music sector including our valuable partnership with Pathways into Music



PRIORITY 5: DATA-LED AND SUSTAINABLE INCLUSION PRACTICES

- Regular monitoring and evaluation using Youth Music's Quality Framework underpinned by Arts Council's Quality Principles
- Use of local demographic data to ensure targeted engagement
- Strategic partnerships to sustain and grow inclusive initiatives
- Annual Inclusion Audit to assess barriers to engagement and propose interventions



PRIORITY 6: PREPARATION FOR A THREE-YEAR STRATEGY (2026-2029)

- Dr. Phil Mullen will lead comprehensive interviews and research with partners, stakeholders, families and the wider workforce
- Data collection and analysis will inform a longer-term inclusion strategy across the region
- Community and family consultations to ensure young people and families have a direct voice in shaping future plans – supported by the Family Hubs network, Economic Development and School and Community Zone teams
- Implementation of pilot projects in culturally underrepresented areas to assess the effectiveness of new inclusion approaches



4. ACTION PLAN (APRIL 2025 – SEPTEMBER 2026)

Action	Timeline	Lead Responsibility
Launch Inclusion Strategy	April 2025	Hub Board & HLO
Deliver CPD on Inclusive Practice for workforce	Ongoing	HLO
Expand work with PRUs, CIC, and youth mental health services	Ongoing	Inclusion Manager
Continue to support a Youth Advisory group	Ongoing	Youth Participation Lead
Develop and implement targeted progression routes from CIL	April 2025	HLO
Conduct first phase of stakeholder interviews for the 2026-2029 strategy	April 2025	Dr. Phil Mullen
Launch Music & Wellbeing Programme	October 2025	HLO
Evaluate impact of inclusion efforts using data insights	December 2025	Hub Board
Implement recommendations from the stakeholder research	March 2026	Hub Board & HLO
Secure additional funding for long-term inclusion projects	Ongoing	HLO
Publish the finalised 2026-2029 Inclusion Strategy	April 2026	Hub Board

5. ALIGNING WITH APPENDIX C: INCLUSION STRATEGY GUIDANCE

This strategy adheres to the guidance set out in **Appendix C of the Local Plan for Music Education Guidance (2024-25)**:

- **Broad Vision for Inclusion:** Embedding IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility) across the Hub
- **Action-Oriented Plan:** Setting measurable targets for increasing engagement in underrepresented groups
- **Structural Integration:** Ensuring inclusion is reflected in governance, workforce and delivery mechanisms
- **Regular Evaluation:** Using data-driven assessments to track impact and inform future strategy – this will feed into the work of our wider Impact Advisory group and overall Impact strategy

6. STRATEGY IMPACT



The set up was professional, well-considered and beautiful. I was a bit emotional listening to such inclusive music performed so confidently!

'It was amazing and a privilege to see so many young people regardless of there background, working together towards the same goal. Just inspirational'

'A real inclusive positive project that felt like we were all working together to get it right for our children and young people!'

'As a parent I have never seen such inclusion!!!!'

'It felt a bit like how heaven might be – accepting, peaceful, full of joy and people being themselves'

'This is inclusion'

7. SUSTAINABILITY AND NEXT STEPS

Beyond April 2026 the Hub will:

- Expand successful pilot projects into multi-year programmes
- Develop further inclusive digital engagement strategies
- Use findings from Dr. Phil Mullen's research to shape the next three years across the region
- Strengthen long-term funding models for sustained inclusion efforts
- Continue to feed-in to the National Inclusion Network to share best practices and resources with other Hubs



6. SUSTAINABILITY AND NEXT STEPS

By implementing this strategy, Norfolk & Suffolk Music Hub reaffirms its commitment to making music education **accessible, meaningful and transformative for all young people regardless of background or circumstance**



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