GSW Music Hub
Gloucestershire
Swindon
Wiltshire

Commissioning Policy



Version 7 – Autumn 2026

Introduction

This document details the protocols and guidelines governing GSW Music Hub Consortium and delivery partner funding processes, overseen by the Hub board. It aims to ensure a transparent, accountable, and cost-effective commissioning approach to support the Hub's strategic objectives and programme of activity.

Identifying partners

GSW Music Hub has a diverse list of delivery partners inherited through the previous three music hub structures. All existing delivery partners will be required to re-register through the new application process before being placed onto a delivery matrix and be offered commissioning opportunities as required by our Local Plan for Music Education (LPME) and our most recent needs analysis report.

Any new organisation applying to join the hub will go through an induction/application process to ensure quality of delivery, track record and to enable GSW to avoid duplication of offer where it's not required.

The new application process was implemented for the first time in the commissioning process in 2024-25 and uses the Glide platform that has been developed further by the Hub with V88. This enables our commissioning process to have parity across the GSW area and provides an efficient and focused platform for partners and a one-stop shop to monitor the grant usage and targets set throughout the year.

Promoting partnership opportunities

GSW Music Hub welcomes partnerships with individuals and organisations delivering music education to young people within the geographical area[1]. The foundation of any partnership is a shared commitment to positively impact children and young people's lives through music.

Partnership Process:

1. Introductory Meeting:
    - Prospective partners must participate in a meeting with the Hub Lead Consortium representative
    - Purpose: To discuss mutual goals, support for the aims of the DFE/ACE Music Hubs Grant, alignment with the Needs Analysis, and potential partnership benefits for young people

[1] Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire

- Outcome: Determine partnership type and potential collaborative opportunities.

2. Standards and Requirements:
   - The Consortium Executive Team will outline minimum partnership standards, with particular emphasis on Safeguarding, EDI, Quality and a needs-led approach including consultation with young people.

3. Commissioning Matrix:
   - Successful applicants may be placed on the commissioning matrix for future funding opportunities.

4. Partnership Agreement:
   - Typically covers one Academic Year
   - Reviewed annually at a minimum
   - New agreements issued prior to each new period.

This framework ensures that all partnerships align with GSW Music Hub's mission and maintain high standards of quality and safeguarding in music education delivery.

Reviewing and renewing the partnership

1. Annual Review:
   - Partnership Agreements are subject to annual review through submission of annual bids.
   - Renewal depends on:
     a) Established local need and priority for services
     b) Available funding

2. Non-Funded Partners:
   - Remain on the commissioning matrix
   - May receive additional opportunities throughout the year on an ad hoc basis.

3. Partnership Termination or Non-Renewal:

The Hub reserves the right to terminate or not renew a partnership if:
- It no longer supports the Hub's aims
- It fails to benefit children and young people
- Failure to uphold commitments to equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Serious concerns arise regarding:
  a) Safeguarding
  b) Quality
  c) Impact

In such cases:
- The agreement may be terminated mid-year, or

- It may not be renewed at the end of the agreement period

This approach ensures that partnerships remain aligned with the Hub's mission and maintain high standards, while also providing flexibility for new opportunities and addressing any significant issues that may arise.

Commissioning process

The ACE grant, held by the Hub Lead Organisation, Gloucestershire County Council, will be sub-granted through a Sub-grant Agreement to Swindon Music Service (on behalf of Swindon and Wiltshire) and The Music Works Charity (for the Inclusion and youth voice strategic lead and inclusion delivery across the Hub area). Ongoing grants will be issued through a local sub grant Partnership Agreement for those delivering programmes of activity.

New identified work will be offered on an ad-hoc basis through the Hub's commissioning Matrix and agreed with a Partnership Agreement. Further granting to delivery partners does not require procurement or an open tendering process. This can be achieved through a Partnership Agreement that must mirror the ACE grant T&Cs. As long as the grants are clearly for the purpose of services for children and young people for educational purposes – the Subsidy Control Act will not apply.

GSW Music Hub is split into two counties – Gloucestershire & Wiltshire/Swindon. Separate annual commissioning processes will take place in each county before being scrutinised by the Commissioning Board & Consortium Executive Board and then presented to the Hub Board.

Consortium back-office support funding will be issued through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in each county prior to any commissioning process taking place. This is to be no more than 20% of the revenue grant offered by DfE through ACE.

Partners and potential partners will, through partnership agreements, demonstrate they have sound financial procedures in place appropriate for handling public money. This is because they are under an obligation to meet all obligations imposed under the terms of the Funding Agreement as necessary for partners to fulfil their agreed activities. These Partnership Agreements must also be submitted to ACE as part of the payment conditions.

Due to the nature of partnership working, it is acceptable to submit several shorter-term partnership agreements to cover the full period. The Hub Lead Organisation (HLO) will need to notify ACE of key changes to, or the creation of new partnership agreements which occur within the funding agreement period, which utilise the Hub grant.

Activities and budget proposals

1. Ongoing Activities:
    - Includes: music centres, county groups, instrument hire, etc.

- Identified providers submit annual costs for continued service delivery

2. New Opportunities and Gap-Filling:
   - Commissioned on an ad hoc basis.
   - Process:
     a) County leads identify potential partners from the Commissioning Matrix.
     b) Selection based on track record and workforce capacity.
     c) Selected partners invited to submit proposals and indicative budgets

3. EDI and Youth Voice in commissioning:
   - The commissioning process will actively consider how proposed activities promote equality, diversity, and inclusion
   - Young people representatives will be involved in the identifying the priorities for our commissioning, ensuring that young people's perspectives are central to our funding choices.

4. Applications:
   - Commissioning Board reviews applications.
   - Board submits recommendations to the Consortium Executive Team.

5. Final Decision:
   - Consortium Executive Board presents decisions rationale to the Hub Board.

This streamlined process ensures continuity for ongoing services while allowing flexibility to address new needs or gaps in provision. It also maintains a fair and transparent selection process for new opportunities, involving multiple levels of review before final decisions are made.

Delivery partner services will receive funding through a Delivery Partnership Agreement, to be submitted and agreed by the ACE regional manager.

Delivery by Consortium members

Where consortium members are identified for delivery, their funding will be shown through an SLA by each county lead from the Consortium Executive Team but will also be placed on the Commissioning report for scrutiny by the Hub Board.

Quality and performance monitoring

Partnership Agreements are tailored to the specific type of partnership being established. These agreements outline:

- The fundamental operations of the partnership
- Agreed-upon outcomes
- Expectations for both parties
- Methods for monitoring quality and performance against set outcomes

GSW Music Hub prioritises safeguarding and takes its responsibilities in this area very seriously. Any breaches of the Safeguarding policy or raised concerns may result in immediate termination of the partnership.

To assess Quality, Impact & Performance, GSW Music Hub employs the following frameworks:

- Inclusion & Quality Principles
- Quality Assessment and Observations Framework
- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Access (IDEA) Framework
- Evaluation through Youth Voice and stakeholder feedback

Partners are required to:

- Complete termly reporting to provide data on progress, reach, and overall impact
- Submit detailed project evaluation data upon completion of a project
- Sign up to the Quality Assurance Framework and provide evidence of quality delivery through peer observations, case studies, videos, evaluations etc.

This structured approach ensures comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of partnerships while maintaining a strong focus on safeguarding and quality standards.

In 2025-26 our new Quality Assurance Framework was rolled out to delivery partners as we asked them to sign up to the Quality Assurance Charter and undertake the annual choice checklist of how they choose to evidence such quality. This has been embedded into the commissioning process / requirements for any programmes of activity for the academic year 2026-27.

Hub board's oversight

The Hub Board will be provided will the overview of the commissioning process and the applications and outcomes of the partners that sit on the framework (or who have applied to) for scrutiny. The 'programme of activity' will be shared, which will detail demographics being targeted; value for money considerations; needs analysis and outcomes expected etc.

Rationale around the recommendations made by the Commissioning Board and decisions made by the Consortium Executive Board will be shared for transparency and will allow for considerations and challenges to be made for future commissioning rounds. This will be fed back to the Consortium Executive Board and the Commissioning Board.

Annual policy review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.