

South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA)

Commissioning Policy for the South Yorkshire Music Hub (Consortium Model)

1. Introduction

The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) is committed to fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and high-quality music education ecosystem across South Yorkshire. This policy outlines the procedures, principles, and criteria by which the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA), as the Hub Lead Organisation (HLO) for the South Yorkshire Music Education Hub (SYMEH), will appoint and secure partners and services. This process will be conducted under the oversight of the Hub board and in collaboration with consortium partners: darts (Doncaster Open Arts), Rotherham Music Hub, Sheffield Music Hub, Barnsley Music Hub, and Doncaster Music Hub. The policy ensures transparency, accountability, and value for money in the commissioning process, supporting the delivery of the Hub's programme of activities and strategic functions, as outlined in the Local Plan for Music Education (LPME).

2. Commissioning and Collaborative Principles

SYMCA's commissioning and collaborative activities within the consortium will be guided by the following principles:

- **Objectivity and Transparency:** All commissioning and partnership decisions will be made through a clear, transparent, and unbiased process, ensuring fairness across all local authority areas.
- **Collaborative Leadership:** SYMCA will foster a strong collaborative framework within the consortium, encouraging shared leadership and joint decision-making to meet the collective goals of the SYMH.
- **Inclusivity and Diversity:** The consortium will ensure a diverse and inclusive range of music education offerings, tailored to meet the unique needs of each local authority area, while promoting opportunities for new partners to join and contribute to the evolving needs of the Hub.
- **Quality and Excellence:** The consortium will prioritize high-quality delivery, focusing on achieving the best educational and artistic outcomes for young people across South Yorkshire.
- **Value for Money:** Proposals and activities will be evaluated on their ability to provide cost-effective solutions while adhering to the financial guidelines set by SYMCA and the strategic objectives of the LPME.
- **Sustainability and Responsiveness:** The consortium model will encourage innovation, adaptability, and responsiveness to local needs, informed by a comprehensive needs analysis conducted across the entire Hub area.

3. Role of the Hub Board

The Hub board will play a crucial role in the governance and strategic oversight of the commissioning process. The board will:

- **Approval and Oversight:** Approve and oversee the implementation of this commissioning policy, ensuring it aligns with the Hub's strategic objectives and the LPME.
- **Annual Review:** Review and update the commissioning policy annually in collaboration with consortium partners, ensuring it reflects current needs and priorities.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Monitor the performance and quality of commissioned activities across the consortium, ensuring they contribute to the achievement of the Hub's strategic vision as outlined in the LPME.
- **Sub-Group Delegation:** Given the board's broader responsibilities, a commissioning sub-group may be established to scrutinize the commissioning process and decisions in more detail, reporting back to the full board.

4. Identifying and Promoting Partnership Opportunities

4.1 Promoting Partnership Opportunities

- **Open Access:** Opportunities to join the consortium and/or deliver Hub activities will be promoted widely to ensure the Hub evolves in response to the developing needs of the Hub area.
- **Strategic Fit:** The consortium will seek to expand and diversify its partnerships, ensuring that a broad range of partners, including those with a focus on diverse communities and underrepresented groups, are included.
- **Transparency:** SYMCA will ensure that all partnership opportunities are communicated transparently, with clear criteria and application processes.

4.2 Reviewing and Renewing Partnerships

- **Dynamic and Responsive:** The consortium will periodically review its partnerships to ensure they remain aligned with the strategic objectives of the LPME and can adapt to changing local needs.
- **Ad Hoc Commissioning:** SYMCA may reserve the power to commission partners on a responsive, ad hoc, or opportunistic basis, ensuring the Hub can swiftly address emerging needs or opportunities.

5. Commissioning Process

5.1 Partner Selection and Appointment

- **Clear Criteria:** Partners and services will be appointed and secured by SYMCA through a transparent process, which will be overseen by the Hub board. The criteria for selection will be based on strategic fit, capacity, quality of service, and value for money.
- **Competitive Bidding:** Where appropriate, SYMCA will utilize open tendering and competitive bidding processes to ensure fairness and objectivity in partner selection.

- **Contracting and Sub-Grants:** Depending on the nature of the services required, partners may be contracted or provided with sub-grants. All formal agreements will adhere to the conditions set out in section 9.3 of the Additional Conditions and clause 6.6.4 of the standard terms and conditions.

5.2 Budget and Activity Proposals

- **Rigorous Evaluation:** All budget and activity proposals from partners will be rigorously reviewed to ensure they demonstrate value for money and adhere to ACE's requirements.
- **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** SYMCA will employ a cost-benefit analysis approach, including setting limits on unit costs where necessary, to ensure that proposed activities are financially sustainable and effective.
- **Financial Accountability:** Partners will be required to demonstrate robust financial procedures and compliance with public funding requirements, ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of funds.

5.3 Self-Commissioning by SYMCA

- **Equitable Standards:** If SYMCA intends to deliver any part of the programme of activity within the Hub area, it will subject itself to the same commissioning standards and processes as other partners to ensure transparency and avoid conflicts of interest.

6. Quality and Performance Monitoring

6.1 Monitoring Framework

- **Impact Framework:** SYMCA will develop an impact framework during 2024/25, outlining how the quality and performance of partners will be measured. Until this framework is finalized, interim measures will be in place to monitor delivery quality.
- **Reporting Requirements:** Partners will be required to provide regular reports to SYMCA, detailing progress, challenges, and outcomes against agreed objectives. This will include both quantitative data and qualitative insights.
- **Site Visits and Evaluations:** SYMCA and the Hub board will conduct site visits and evaluations to directly assess the quality of delivery and gather feedback from participants and stakeholders.

6.2 Funding Distribution and Monitoring

- **Fair Allocation:** Funding will be distributed based on the strategic priorities set out in the LPME and the capacity of partners to deliver high-quality services. SYMCA will ensure that all financial transactions are monitored closely, with regular audits to ensure compliance.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The consortium will promote a culture of continuous improvement, using performance data and feedback to refine and enhance the quality of its music education offerings.

7. Local Plan for Music Education (LPME)

- The LPME is a strategic document outlining how the SYMH will deliver the three aims for Hubs set out in the National Plan for Music Education (NPME). This commissioning policy supports the implementation of the LPME by ensuring all consortium activities and partnerships are aligned with its strategic objectives and operational requirements.
- The LPME will be evidence-led, informed by a comprehensive needs analysis, and regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the evolving needs of the Hub area.

8. Review

- **Annual Review:** The policy will be reviewed and updated annually by the Hub board, in collaboration with consortium partners, to ensure it remains relevant and effective in delivering the strategic goals of the LPME.
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