

# SUSSEX MUSIC HUB

## COMMISSIONING POLICY (December 2024)

### 1. Introduction

This policy outlines the procedures and principles by which Brighton Dome & Festival Ltd (BD&FL)/Create Music, the Hub Lead Organisation (HLO), and its consortium partner West Sussex Music Trust (WSMT) (“the Consortium”) will appoint and secure partners and services with the oversight of the Sussex Music Hub (SMH) Board. It ensures transparency, accountability, and value for money in the commissioning process to support the delivery of the Hub’s programme of activities and strategic functions.

This document also responds to the requirements outlined in Section 9 of Arts Council England’s (ACE) Additional Conditions for Local Plans for Music Education (LPME) and reflects local priorities for inclusion, diversity, and access to music education across the Sussex region.

### 2. Identifying partners

#### 2.1 Promoting partnership opportunities

The Consortium, supported by the Sussex Music Hub Board (SMHB), will actively promote opportunities to join the partnership and/or deliver Hub activities. This will ensure the Hub evolves in response to the developing needs and context of the Hub area.

Strategies for promoting these opportunities include:

- Publishing open calls for partners on our website(s), via Hub newsletters, social media channels, and other relevant platforms.
- Engaging with diverse community groups and organisations to encourage a wide range of applications.
- Focussed recruitment of partners to help meet the Hub’s SMART objectives.

#### 2.2 Ensuring an appropriate range of partners

The Consortium is committed to commissioning a diverse range of partners to support and deliver the Hub’s programme of activity and strategic functions. This includes:

- Seeking partners with varied expertise and backgrounds to enrich the Hub’s offers.
- Encouraging innovative and inclusive approaches to music education and engagement.
- Ensuring commissioned partners align with the strategic goals and values of the Hub.
- Ensuring that all partners have appropriate safeguarding policies and protocols in place.

#### 2.3 Reviewing and renewing the partnership

Opportunities to join the Hub and/or deliver Hub activities will be continuously reviewed to adapt to the evolving needs of the Hub area. This includes:

- Regularly assessing the performance and impact of current partners.
- Maintaining flexibility to add partners on a responsive, ad hoc, or opportunistic basis when necessary.
- Annual requirement for Hub Partners to confirm partnership details and to evidence appropriate safeguarding policies in order to remain an ‘active’ Hub partner.

### **3. Commissioning process**

#### **3.1 Commissioning of partners**

The process of commissioning Hub partners to deliver services will be managed by the HLO and Consortium, and overseen by the SMH Board, ensuring:

- Adherence to each Consortium member's organisational procurement policies.
- Clear communication of any selection criteria and evaluation processes.
- Transparency and fairness throughout the commissioning process.
- That appropriate skills and experience, safeguarding requirements, and insurances, are in place before work is delivered.
- Value for money.

#### **3.2 Activities and budget proposals**

All budget and activity proposals from Hub partners will be reviewed to ensure they demonstrate value for money and comply with the requirements set out in section 9.3 of the Additional Conditions and clause 6.6.4 of the standard terms and conditions. This will involve:

- Open tendering and competitive bidding processes.
- Cost-benefit analysis and compliance checks.
- Decisions on whether services will be contracted or sub-granted, with formal agreements covering all necessary aspects.

#### **3.3 Self-commissioning by the Consortium**

If the Consortium plans to deliver programme activities beyond the scope of the Consortium Agreement or details provided in the original Consortium application, it will be commissioned via this policy to ensure fairness and transparency. This will help manage any potential conflicts of interest between the Consortium's strategic responsibilities and its delivery role.

#### **3.4 Quality and performance monitoring**

Quality and performance will be monitored through:

- Development of an impact framework during 2024/25 to measure delivery quality and partners' performance.
- Regular reporting by partners to the SMH Board, including necessary data submissions.
- Continuous evaluation and feedback mechanisms to ensure high standards and effective use of resources.

### **4. Hub Board's oversight - approval of commissioning decisions**

The SMH Board will support the commissioning process, with practical measures including:

- Supporting effective decision-making regarding commissioning by reviewing applications and making recommendations to the Consortium, via the Hub Performance Oversight Group.
- Ensuring the full SMH Board is kept informed of recommendations without overburdening them with minutiae.

### **5. Handling complaints regarding commissioned work**

Sussex Music Hub is committed to maintaining high standards in all commissioned activities. Should a complaint be received about the work carried out by a commissioned partner, the following procedure will be followed:

### **5.1 Acknowledgment**

Complaints will be acknowledged by the relevant commissioning organisation (BDFL or WSMT) within five working days of receipt. The complainant will be informed of the next steps and expected timescales for resolution.

### **5.2 Assessment**

Complaints will be reviewed by the relevant commissioning organisation (BD&FL or WSMT) in collaboration with the SMH Board as appropriate. An initial assessment will determine whether the complaint relates to the commissioned partner's work and whether it requires further investigation.

### **5.3 Resolution process**

Minor issues will be addressed informally, where possible, through direct communication with the partner involved.

For more serious complaints BD&FL, the Hub Lead Organisation (HLO), will conduct a formal investigation, which may include:

- Gathering input from the complainant, the partner, and any relevant stakeholders.
- Reviewing contractual agreements and performance records.

### **5.4 Outcomes and actions**

The HLO will provide a written response to the complainant outlining the findings and any actions taken. If the complaint is upheld, actions may include:

- Offering remedial training or support to the partner.
- Issuing formal warnings.
- In extreme cases, termination of the partnership in line with contractual terms.

### **5.5 Learning and improvement**

Complaints will be logged and reviewed annually to identify patterns or areas for improvement in the commissioning and oversight process.

### **5.6 Appeals**

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a review by the Chair of the SMH Board.

## **6. Annual policy review**

The SMH Board will review this policy annually in advance of the main commissioning cycle, typically during the summer term. This review will consider:

- Feedback from partners and stakeholders.
- Analysis of the previous year's commissioning outcomes.
- Adjustments needed to address emerging needs and priorities within the Hub area.

## **7. Conclusion**

This commissioning policy is designed to support the strategic goals of the Sussex Music Hub, the Consortium, and HLO ensuring a transparent, accountable, and effective approach to partnering and service delivery. It will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect the evolving needs and priorities of the Hub area.