



Cumbria Music Hub Annual Report 2024/25

Hub Lead Organisation



**Westmorland
& Furness
Council**

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for Education



**ARTS COUNCIL
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Introduction



(Above) **Photo:** Community Strings Day

We are delighted to share with you our annual report for Cumbria Music Hub. This report highlights the range of activity delivered by our partners and the different the Hub is making to support our children and young people to access music provision. A huge thank you to everyone who has supported and engaged with the work of the Hub over the last academic year.

Cumbria Music Hub exists to ensure that every child and young person across Cumbria has the opportunity to access, experience and enjoy high-quality music education. Operating with grant funding from Arts Council England, the Hub works in partnership with schools, cultural organisations and communities to provide inclusive and inspiring musical opportunities for children, regardless of background or circumstance.

Over the past year, Cumbria Music Hub has continued to support musical learning, creativity and progression, enabling young people to develop skills, confidence and a lifelong connection to music. Through strategic investment and collaborative working, the Hub remains committed to enriching the lives of children and young people across the county through music.



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About Cumbria Music Hub

Cumbria Music Hub is part of the network of 43 national Music Hub partnerships in England.

Westmorland and Furness Council were appointed Hub Lead Organisation of the Cumbria Music Hub, following the Hub Investment programme and structural changes led by Arts Council England in 2023-24.

We are proud of the achievements of Cumbria Music Hub, and the impact of musical outcomes of our programmes of work on our young people. High-quality musical activity and opportunities have been maintained and built on for young people across Cumbria. We know that there is more to do.

We must continue to consider how we best meet the needs and aspirations for children and young people. Ensuring inclusion of all young people, including children facing disadvantage whether through socio-economic indicators, SEND, or through rural and coastal geographic isolation is deeply important to us and is a common thread through our programmes. Children and young people are at the heart of everything we do. Our strategy, programme of activity, and every decision that we take, is taken with their best interests at heart and to ensure that every child in Cumbria is able to access music education and opportunity and progress their interests should they wish to.

Cumbria Music Hub is a collaborative partnership of local, regional and national partners. We work together to deliver the vision and three goals of The power of music to change lives: a National Plan for Music Education (NPME - published June 2022), for the Children and Young People of the local authority areas of Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness.

Our core values are to Inspire, Enable, Support, and Excel. These values underpin our activity and interactions with young people, parents and carers, stakeholders and funders. They also inform our approach to Quality and Impact, and every lesson, rehearsal, performance, activity and interaction that we undertake.



(Above) Photo: Brass Academy



'The Power of Music to Change Lives', the National Plan for Music Education, outlines the Vision, three Aims and five Strategic Functions that governs the work of the Hub. This structure has been used to create a Needs Analysis, SMART Targets, and Programme of Activity. This Local Plan for Music Education is based on the delivery of those activities.

A new Executive Management Group (EMG) delivers a focussed and strong Governance plan. Comprising senior officers, and the lead officer for Cumbria Music Hub, the Executive Management Group has oversight of the leadership of the Music Hub. They rigorously support the Music Hub grant programme and programme development and provide professional guidance, support and challenge. The EMG ensures that the Music Hub meets the compliance frameworks of Arts Council England, and the Local Authority's own internal compliance procedures. They also provide cross-functional knowledge and experience to support the work of the Hub.

The Executive Management Group is advised by an independent Hub Board led by an independent chair. The Hub Board continues to volunteer their time to support the Hub and its development fully and we are very grateful for their commitment and time.

The Hub Board meets quarterly to scrutinise the reporting of the Hub to ACE. In-year developments will see the Hub Board supported through a structure of sub-advisory groups led by Board members. The Hub Board monitors the programme of activity and progress against SMART targets; make recommendations and provide professional challenge; contribute to needs analysis development and monitor financial spend.

Vision and Mission

Our vision

Cumbria Music Hub is committed to enabling all children and young people in Cumbria to access high-quality music education so that they learn to sing, play an instrument and create music together, and have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents, including professionally.

Underpinning Aims

1

To support schools and other education settings to deliver high-quality music education.

2

To support all children and young people to engage with a range of musical opportunities in and out of school.

3

To support young people to develop their musical interests and talent further, including into employment.

4

Our Local Context

Cumbria is the most sparsely populated county in England, with a school-age population (ages 4–16) of **62,135 pupils** (DfE School Census, January 2024). Despite its largely rural character, **20 schools are located within wards ranked among the 10% most deprived nationally**, highlighting areas of significant need.

For 2024/25, Cumbria Music Hub received a grant of **£606,666**, the **lowest Music Hub allocation nationally**, equating to approximately **£6.90 per pupil** (excluding the 20% back-office allocation).

The Hub supports a diverse education landscape comprising 317 schools: 266 primary and infant schools, 38 secondary schools, 3 alternative provision units/PRUs, and 6 special schools.

EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENTS IN SCOPE BY LOCALITY AND PHASE	Cumberland						Westmorland and Furness						CUMBRIA TOTAL	CUMBRIA TOTAL %				
	Allerdale Area	Allerdale %	Carlisle Area	Carlisle %	Copeland Area	Copeland %	Total CBLD	CBLD %ages	Barrow Area	Barrow %	Eden Area	Eden %	South Lakeland Area	South Lakeland %	Total WAF	WAF %ages		
Nursery					3		3	1.76	1				1		2	1.36	5	1.58
All Through							0	0.00	1						1	0.68	1	0.32
Infant	8		3		4		15	8.82	5		1		1		7	4.76	22	6.94
Primary	50		45		35		130	76.47	26		38		50		114	77.55	244	76.97
Secondary	8		6		5		19	11.18	4		5		10		19	12.93	38	11.99
Special	1		1		1		3	1.76	1				2		3	2.04	6	1.89
AP	1		1				2	1.18	1						1	0.68	3	0.95
16+					1		1	0.59	1				1		2	1.36	3	0.95
TOTALS	68	0.40	56	0.33	46	0.27	170	100.00	39	0.27	44	0.30	64	0.44	147	100.00	317	100.00

(Above) **Table 1: Number of education establishments by phase of education and locality, with % of schools in each locality, and each phase of education.**

(Nursery Schools are not in scope but are listed in this table)

Our Local Context

NCY	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total
Cumberland	2550	2693	2684	2878	3014	2992	3018	3064	3020	3112	3083	2954	35062
Allerdale	872	882	973	1007	1017	1010	1035	1159	1136	1222	1322	1239	12874
Carlisle	1056	1207	1052	1177	1254	1257	1286	1198	1204	1224	1192	1172	14279
Copeland	622	604	659	694	743	725	697	707	680	666	569	543	7909
Total by Key Stage	R: 2550	KS1: 5377		LKS2: 5892		UKS2: 6010		KS3: 9196		KS4: 6037			
WAF	1856	2016	2032	2150	2182	2151	2191	2520	2481	2492	2473	2529	27073
Eden	456	462	462	459	475	484	499	619	587	567	556	564	6190
Barrow	667	711	695	757	776	752	731	485	458	448	444	473	7397
South Lakeland	729	813	855	911	913	893	939	1153	1148	1201	1199	1229	11983
Total by Key Stage	R: 1856	KS1: 4048		LKS2: 4332		UKS2: 4342		KS3: 7493		KS4: 5002			

ACE per pupil funding data (aged 5-19 and on roll in-scope schools), as of the 16 July 2023

Cumberland	39,139
Westmorland and Furness	29,809
Cumbria Total	68,948

(Above) **Table 2: Number of children and young people aged 4 to 16* living in Westmorland and Furness and Cumberland (census data 2024)**

Total school population aged 4 – 16:

62,135 (Source DfE School census

State Schools and AP 18 January 2024)

Note*: Number



(Above) **Photo: Cumbria Youth Orchestra**

Our Music Hub Board



(Above) Photo: Cumbria Youth Orchestra

Our Music Hub Board has been led by our independent Chair Charlotte Dumbill for several years, and as Charlotte is stepping down from this role and we will be recruiting a new chair, we are taking this opportunity to thank Charlotte and acknowledge her passion and commitment to music in Cumbria. She will be missed.

Our Board have recently taken on new members and held a development day in October to help us shape our focus moving forwards.

Our current Board Members:

- Independent Chair – Charlotte Dumbill (retiring from role November 2025)
- Stephen Threlfall - Lake District Music, Director
- Annie Mawson MBE -Sunbeams, Chief Executive
- Peter Fitzpatrick - Furness Music Centre
- David Pipe - Freelance Organist, Pianist and Conductor
- Catherine Parums - Royal British Legion
- Katrina Stephens - Westmorland and Furness, Director of Public Health
- Joe Davies - English Symphony Orchestra, Conductor and
- UK Proms, Musical Director
- Sue Lowndes – Cumberland Council
- Dominic McTavish - South Cumbria Pupil Referral Unit
- Rebecca Le Breton - Nelson Thomlinson School
- Rachel Battersby - Cartmel Priory School
- Sharyn Duffey – Senior Manager Westmorland and Furness Council (HLO)
- Marion Hinds – Music Hub Manager

Our Delivery Partners

The following partners delivered projects on behalf of the hub during the academic year 2024-25:

Westmorland and Furness Music Service	Blue Jam Arts	Live Music Now
Cumberland Music Service	Furness Music Centre	Playground Proms
Sunbeams Music Trust	Conductive Music	Charanga
Carnegie Theatre Trust	Orchestras Live	Carlisle Cathedral
Cumbria Youth Orchestra	Kendal Brewery Arts	Cumbria Arts and Culture Network
Horizon Studios	Gabrielli Roar	Young Sounds
British Kodaly Academy	The Brass Academy	Charanga
Sing Up	Westmorland Youth Orchestra	Pick 'n' Mix Strings
Cumbria Community Orchestra Collective		



(Above) Photo: Royal Northern Sinfonia Play Day

What We Delivered

Participation and Engagement Highlights

School-Based Programmes

167	primary schools engaged in the Classroom Instrumental Learning (CIL) programme
30	schools took part in AmaSing live events, reaching 1,000 children , with a further 4,000 children participating through live online AmaSing workshops and performances.
27	schools engaged with the Carlisle Cathedral Vocal Programme.
24	schools participated in Playground Proms.
26	schools engaged with LIVE MUSIC NOW.
16	schools took part in the Orchestras Live Royal Northern Sinfonia Day.
26	schools attended Charanga CPD events.
18	schools, involving 1,491 children , participated in Conductive Music workshops.

What We Delivered

Ensembles, Progression and Talent Development

149	young musicians regularly engaged in Music Centre activity.
100	young musicians attended Strings Playing Days.
24	young musicians participated in Brass Academy workshops.
43	young musicians took part in the County Youth Orchestra.
38	young musicians participated in the Westmorland Youth Orchestra.
120	vocalists from 6 schools engaged with the Gabrieli Roar programme.

Inclusion and SEND Support

107	children with SEND from 14 schools were supported through the Sunbeams programme, with a total of 1,740 visits delivered.
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Focus Priority Areas and Targets

Classroom Instrumental Learning (CIL)

Music Service/ Local Authority	Schools (Infant, Primary & All Through)	Total Schools Engaged	% of scope
Westmorland and Furness	123	91	74% (of WAF range)
Cumberland	145	76	52% (of CBLD range)
All	268	167	62% of Primary range)



(Above) Photo: Playground Proms

Focus Priority Areas and Targets

SMART Targets Evidence

Target: Tailor Hub programmes to meet the needs of children and young people (CYP), including those engaged through Virtual Schools, Home Education and CCC, and develop new delivery pathways.

- **Targeted provision** continues through Blue Jam, Saturday Music Club and Friday Jam, with focused recruitment from under-represented groups, including home-educated learners.
- **Sunbeams** is delivering **five strands of SEND provision**, operating year-round (weekly, monthly and holiday activity), including support for children with profound and multiple disabilities.
- **The Lab (with Horizon Studios)** has delivered **three programmes** (one in partnership with RNCM), with a fourth programme for looked-after children and unaccompanied refugees commencing in Carlisle. Delivery remained flexible, informed by feedback from partners including Virtual Schools and Family Hubs.
- **Bursary Scheme** support has been awarded to several young people, including cared-for children, a highly advanced musician offered places with NYO and NYWO, and a gifted female French horn player identified through Brass Academy and Cumbria Youth Orchestra, addressing under-representation in the instrument.
- **Place-Based Music Activity** has experienced some slippage and is being re-profiled for Summer half-term and Summer holiday delivery, targeting identified areas of need.

Focus Priority Areas and Targets

SMART Targets Evidence

Target: Increase music engagement for CYP from under-represented groups (including SEND, children cared for or looked after, FSM and Armed Forces Covenant).

- **Of 318 schools in scope, 243 have engaged to date.** Engagement is strong across schools with higher FSM levels, with remaining schools receiving multiple offers of support. Some unmet tuition requests reflect wider workforce capacity challenges.
- **Sunbeams partnership programmes** remain on track, supporting **107 high needs SEND children**, with strong attendance and positive feedback from families.
- **The Lab** has established effective partnerships in Cumberland to support looked-after and refugee children, alongside targeted programmes in Barrow and Whitehaven, with further delivery planned this term.
- **The Young Sounds Connector** continues to support children in challenging circumstances, offering targeted opportunities including free concert attendance and Youth Congress engagement, reaching **17 schools**.

Capital Grant - SEND and AP Engagement

- All Special Schools and Alternative Provision/PRU settings engaged in consultation to plan capital investment in adaptive instruments. Tranche one purchasing is now underway.

For context across Cumbria, 85 schools have 25% or more children eligible for free school meals. 78 of those settings have engaged with the music service. (92%)

Focus Priority Areas and Targets

CPD and Musical Participation

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- 176 teacher engagements were recorded through CPD activity over the academic year.

Singing and Instrumental Lessons (including individual and group tuition)

- 1,614 pupils participated, an increase from 1,387 in 2023/24.
- Of these, 471 pupils (29%) were eligible for Pupil Premium, identified as SEND, or both — a significant increase from 18% in 2023/24, demonstrating improved reach to priority groups.

Ensembles and Group Music-Making

- 70 ensembles, choirs and other musical groups were delivered or supported during the year.
- Six ensembles reported the use of adaptive instruments to support children and young people with SEND.

Area-Based Group Activities

- 447 pupils participated in area-based group activities, compared with 549 in 2023/24.
- 31.5% of participating pupils were from priority groups



Focus Priority Areas and Targets

Capital Grant

As part of the Hub Funding **£199,942** was allocated through the Capital Grant, to be spent on instruments and equipment.

Tranche 1 – our focus was on inclusion with an offer made to our Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units to work with us to identify how we could best utilise this funding to support them to provide accessible music for their pupils.

Electronic and adaptive music equipment were delivered in September 2025 to the following settings: South Area Pupil Referral Unit, George Hastwell Special School Barrow, Sandside Lodge Special School, Ulverston, Sandgate Special School, Kendal, James Rennie Special School Carlisle, Mayfield Special School, Whitehaven.

The instruments have ranged from IPADS to DJ decks, from Electronic Guitars to Chordas. 44 different instrument types were delivered. Our immediate feedback has been brilliant.

Tranche 2 – Will be spent on instruments to replenish and replace ageing and beyond repair stock of the Music Services to support the delivery of individual and group instrumental lessons as part of the hub programme, as well as new equipment such as turntables to support hub programme delivery.



Just to let you know that we had an amazing unboxing day today. Lots of kids were very excited and tried out the instruments. I can't begin to describe the difference this will make to our pupils and the school.

~ Dominic McCavish, South Cumbria Pupil Referral Service

Case Studies and Impact

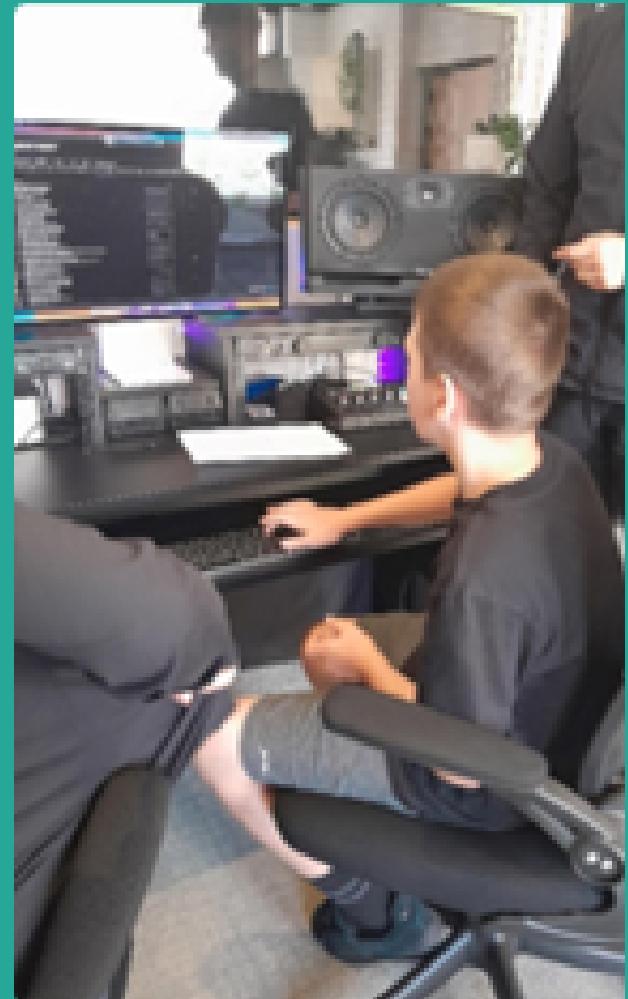
Horizon Studios

8 care experienced young people through two workshops developed DJ Skills, mixing tracks, creating beats and sounds, writing lyrics and music, playing instruments.

This project enabled young people to learn the unique set of skills required to create a finished track. They learned to layer sounds, create atmosphere and use their voices as an instrument.

Alongside these taught skills these young people developed a noticeable shift in their self-confidence. This was evident from the way a handful of shy and reluctant performers then became confident; young people bursting with ideas. From the outset there was an expectation of showing respect to each other and learning together. By the end of day two, when listening to each other's work, the young people were able to complement each other and identify where each had succeeded.

This project was an excellent opportunity for our young people as it gave them a chance to learn and experience new skills creating music, form new friendships and develop confidence and teamwork.



(Above) **Photo:** Horizon Studios

Case Studies and Impact



Embrace our students for who they are, recognise what they can achieve and allow them to celebrate their unique creativity in a safe, warm environment.

Conductive Music

Going to multiple schools, including James Rennie sixth form which we've not managed to engage with in recent years. The feedback from the Conductive Music Sessions was overwhelmingly positive.

“Can I say how impressed I was with the recent visitor session? I haven't received this much positive feedback from both staff and students in a very long time. The impact on our students—and staff—was remarkable. The session with Conductive Music and the gamified experiences was truly eye-opening, especially as it was an area I had very little prior exposure to. You know something has made a real impression when students and their parents are telling you the very next day that they've continued engaging with the resources at home. Thank you again for organising such a meaningful and inspiring experience.

It was so refreshing to have an external visitor embrace our students for who they are, recognise what they can achieve and allow them to celebrate their unique creativity in a safe, warm environment led by a confident, responsive and pragmatic teacher. We have seen the benefits these sessions have brought. The impact of these sessions being that staff are looking into using new/alternative technologies to engage students with complex learning difficulties and sensory needs. Staff feel less threatened by free apps/programs and are now more willing to 'give it a go' and try new things. Students are building on ICT skills that they use within other ICT applications. Enabling students to use ICT in a variety of contexts.”

~ James Rennie Special School

Case Studies and Impact



We need to stop seeing music as just another subject and start seeing it as a living, breathing experience—something that shapes individuals, strengthens communities, and stays with people for life.

Tamsin

“My name is Tamsin Crook, and I’m a 17-year-old composer and trumpet player from Cumbria. Music has shaped my life in ways I could never have imagined—from composing for national ensembles to playing the trumpet in groups like the Hallé Youth Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra, National Youth Concert Band, and Penrith Town Band.

Some of my most valuable musical moments haven’t come from exams or structured lessons, but from experiencing music—playing alongside incredible musicians, hearing my compositions performed, or simply feeling the energy of an ensemble working together.

Every student should have access to these moments. But in many schools, music is reduced to the bare minimum—a few lessons squeezed into a packed timetable, with little time for real exploration. If we want young people to truly engage with music, we need to give them the space to experience it fully.

The question today is whether we need a cultural shift to enable schools to empower young people in music and the creative arts. I believe we do. We need to stop seeing music as just another subject and start seeing it as a living, breathing experience—something that shapes individuals, strengthens communities, and stays with people for life.

*I am incredibly lucky to have had so many musical experiences both inside and outside school. **But music education shouldn’t be a privilege—it should be a right.** Every student deserves the chance to feel the joy of making music, to experience its power, and to carry that with them, whatever path they choose. ”*

Finances

Our Core Revenue Hub Grant - £608,666

During the year, Cumbria Music Hub received grant funding of £608,666 and generated a total income of £1,296,552. This included £480,631 from schools and £26,687 from parents, demonstrating continued partnership support and parental engagement alongside core grant funding.

Our Capital Grant - £199,942

Cumbria Music Hub received capital grant funding to support investment in musical instruments, equipment and resources. This funding enabled the Hub to enhance the quality and sustainability of the provision within special schools initially, ensuring that children and young people across Cumbria have access to high-quality musical experiences and learning opportunities.

Our Priorities for 2025/26

- Working with our new Board to establish strategic intent and focus in terms of targets and delivery
- Developing our strategic partnerships
- Sustainability



(Above) **Photo:** Brass Academy