Cumbria Music Hub Small Bursary Scheme

1. Introduction

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.

Applications for this small bursary scheme will be considered in the context of the wider landscape of financial support that is available to support children and young people with their musical education, both locally and nationally. More information can be found here **[cumbriamusichub.com/bursary]**. Cumbria Music Hub reserves the right to signpost applicants to what it thinks may be other more appropriate routes via which the applicant may be able to receive support with their musical education journey.

2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out the principles, criteria, and process used to assess applications for the Cumbria Music Hub Small Bursary Scheme. It is designed to ensure that decisions are fair, transparent, consistent, and aligned with the Hub's strategic objectives around inclusion, access, and progression in music education.

The policy applies to all applicants, staff, partners, and panel members involved in the application, assessment, awarding, monitoring, and review of bursary applications.

3. Purpose of the Small Music Bursary

The Music Bursary is designed to:

- Reduce financial barriers to participation in high-quality music education
- Support children and young people who would otherwise be unable to access musical opportunities
- Enable progression and sustained engagement in music
- Promote inclusion, equity, and access across the Hub's provision

Bursaries may support costs including (but not limited to):

- Instrument hire or purchase
- Tuition or ensemble fees
- Participation in performances, courses, or progression opportunities
- Associated costs such as resources or transport where relevant

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3. Eligibility

3.1 Eligible Applicants

Applications may be made on behalf of children and young people who:

- Are aged 0–19
- Live, study, or receive music provision within the Cumbria Music Hub area
- Demonstrate financial need and/or face barriers to access

Priority will be given to applicants who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Eligible for Free School Meals or Pupil Premium
- Identified as SEND
- Cared for or care experienced
- From families facing financial hardship
- Experiencing barriers due to geography, mobility, or family circumstances
- From Armed Forces families

As set out above in determining eligibility the panel reviewing the applications will give consideration as to whether there are other more appropriate sources of funding available to the applicant.

4. Assessment Principles

All bursary applications will be assessed in line with the following principles:

- **Equity and inclusion** - recognising different starting points and barriers
- **Transparency** - clear criteria and decision-making processes
- **Consistency** - applications assessed against the same criteria
- **Confidentiality** - personal data handled in line with GDPR and safeguarding requirements
- **Impact** - funding awarded where it will make a meaningful difference
- **Value for money** - appropriate use of limited funds

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5. Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

5.1 Financial Need

- Evidence of financial hardship or inability to meet costs
- Eligibility for recognised indicators (e.g. FSM, benefits, low income)

5.2 Barriers to Access

- Practical, financial, social, or geographic barriers preventing participation
- Additional barriers linked to SEND, care status, or family circumstances

5.3 Musical Engagement and Progression

- Current or intended musical activity
- How the bursary will support sustained engagement or progression
- Commitment and interest of the child or young person
- Does this meet the musical instrument endangered species criterion?

5.4 Impact of the Bursary

- Likely impact of the funding on access, confidence, skills, or wellbeing
- Evidence that the bursary will make a clear and measurable impact

5.5 Appropriateness of Request

- Costs requested are reasonable and proportionate
- Funding request aligns with bursary purpose and available budget
- Other alternative routes have been explored as set out in
- Appropriate evidence will be required in support of application.

6. Assessment Process

6.0 Availability of Funds

The Small Music Bursary operates within a fixed annual budget. Once the available bursary budget has been fully allocated, no further applications will be considered for that funding period. This will be clearly communicated on application materials and the Hub's website, and the scheme will reopen when new funding becomes available.

The first window for bursary applications will open on **6 November 2026** and close on **30 November 2026 (12 midnight)**. All applications will be considered by a panel including members of the Cumbria Music Hub Board.

6.1 Application Submission

- Applications must be submitted using the online application form
- Applications may be submitted by parents/carers, schools, practitioners, or partners but all applications must be signed by both parent/carer and (were relevant) other applicant.
- All required supporting information must be provided and appropriate evidence in support of the application may be requested by the panel. CumbriaMusicHubWAF@cumbria.gov.uk

6.2 Initial Screening

- Applications will checked for eligibility and completeness by the Cumbria Music Hub Central Team.
- Incomplete applications may be returned for clarification and must be re-submitted within the timescales for the relevant application window.

6.3 Assessment Panel

- Applications will be assessed by a panel including members of the Cumbria Music Hub Board.
- Conflicts of interest will be declared and managed appropriately in accordance with Cumbria Music Hub's governance arrangements.

6.4 Decision-Making

- Decisions will be based on the published criteria
- Where demand exceeds available funds, priority will be given to applicants with the highest level of need and potential impact set against the criteria set out in section 5 above.
- Decisions will be recorded to ensure transparency and auditability

7. Award Levels and Conditions

- Bursaries are typically small-scale and time-limited
- Requested funding may be awarded in full or in part

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- Awards will wherever possible be paid directly to relevant lead musical organisations i.e. schools, recognised Hub delivery partners.
- Recipients and relevant lead musical organisations may be required to provide evidence how the bursary has been used

8. Monitoring and Review of Awards

- Recipients may be asked to provide feedback on impact
- Schools or providers may be asked to confirm participation and progress
- Data will be held by Cumbria Hub in accordance with GDPR and used by Cumbria Music Hub to monitor equity, reach, and effectiveness of the bursary scheme.

9. Appeals and Complaints

Applicants and Lead Musical Organisations will receive written feedback on decisions taken by the Small Bursary Scheme Sub-Group.

Appeals will only be considered where:

- There is clear evidence that the published process was not followed and relevant criteria not applied.
- Relevant information was not considered at the time due to administrative error
- Within the agreed designated timeline – within 14 days of the notification of the decision.

10. Data Protection and Safeguarding

- All personal data will be handled in accordance with GDPR and data protection legislation
- Safeguarding concerns identified through the application process will be managed in line with Hub safeguarding policies

11. Equality and Diversity

The Hub is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. This policy will be implemented in a way that does not discriminate on the basis of protected characteristics and actively seeks to reduce inequality of access to music education.

12. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if:

Cumbria Music Hub Small Bursary Scheme

- Funding criteria change
- Strategic priorities are updated
- Learning from implementation indicates a need for revision
- Changes to available bursary funding require amendments to eligibility or assessment processes

Approval Date: 6 November 2026

Review Date: 31 August 2027