CUMBRIA MUSIC HUB

Chair of the Hub Board

Help every child in Cumbria sing, play and make music, wherever they live.



Role	Time	Pay	Closing date	Starts
Independent Chair	**Approx 5–6 days a year**	**Voluntary, expenses paid**	**Monday 4 January 2027**	**1 March 2027**

Want to talk it through first? We'd welcome an informal conversation before you apply, with our interim Chair, our Vice-Chair or the Hub's lead officer. Email **cumbriamusichub.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk** and we'll arrange a call at a time that suits you.





A partnership led by Westmorland and Furness Council, funded by the Department for Education through Arts Council England.

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Westmorland & Furness Council

Why this role matters now

Cumbria is one of the most sparsely populated counties in England. Around 62,000 children aged 4 to 16 attend 317 schools, many of them small and in rural communities, often a long way from the nearest music teacher, ensemble or concert hall. In 2024/25 the Hub received the smallest grant of any music hub in England, about £6.90 per pupil. Enabling a child to access music in a village school in Eden or on the west coast takes more effort and costs more than it does in a city.

The next three years will change how music education is funded and delivered:

- From **September 2027**, a new National Centre for Arts and Music Education takes over funding and oversight of music hubs from Arts Council England.
- From **September 2028**, music becomes a curriculum entitlement for every pupil, under the government's plan for music, Turn It Up.
- Funding is still confirmed one year at a time, so the Hub needs to plan carefully and build income beyond the core grant.

The new Chair will lead the Board through that change. You won't be starting from scratch. The Board has had an experienced interim Chair, has a new Vice-Chair and a strategy and success framework for 2026–29 due for agreement in November 2026. It is has also established sub-groups for ensembles, commissioning and lead schools. What it needs now is a Chair who can keep it focused on what makes a difference for children, and who can speak up for Cumbria regionally and nationally.

About Cumbria Music Hub

Cumbria Music Hub is one of 43 music hubs in England. It is a partnership that covers the two council areas of Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness. Westmorland and Furness Council is the Hub Lead Organisation. It holds the grant, employs the Hub team and is accountable for how the money is spent. More than 20 partners deliver the work, including the two council music services, Sunbeams Music Trust, Furness Music Centre, Lake District Music, Carlisle Cathedral, Live Music Now, Conductive Music, Drum and Brass, Orchestras Live, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) and Blue Jam Arts.

Our funding for 2026/27 is £599,636 from the Department for Education, through Arts Council England. Around £480,000 of that goes to partners to deliver activity for children and young people.

What the Hub does

Figure	Highlights *(2024/25 unless stated)*
167	primary schools in whole-class instrumental lessons
5,000	children singing through AmaSing, in person and online
107	children with special educational needs in the Sunbeams programme, across 1,740 visits
149	young musicians taking part regularly in music centre activity, with more in the county and Westmorland youth orchestras
22%	of music service learners have SEND, receive Pupil Premium, or both (September 2026)

How the Hub is governed

Arts Council England funds and monitors the Hub, and the National Centre takes over that role from 2027. Westmorland and Furness Council runs the Hub through its Executive Management Group of senior officers. The **Hub Board** advises the Council and holds the Hub to account for its plans, spending and results. It has about a dozen members from schools, delivery partners, the two councils and the wider community, led by an independent Chair and Vice-Chair.

Because the Council holds the grant and employs the staff, as a Chair and board member you would not carry the legal and financial liabilities of a charity trustee or company director.

The role

What you'll do

- Chair four board meetings a year and keep them focused on decisions and results for children, not just updates.
- Work with the Hub's lead officer to plan agendas and make sure the Board gets the information it needs.
- Ask the questions that matter: is the plan working, is the money going where it is most needed and who is still missing out?
- Make sure every voice round the table is heard and manage conflicts of interest openly. Many Board members also lead organisations that receive funding from Cumbria Music Hub.
- Lead the Board through the move to the National Centre in 2027 and help the Hub build a sustainable future.
- Speak for the Hub with schools, councils, funders and at regional and national events.
- Support the Vice-Chair, who chairs sub-groups and stands in for you when needed.

Time commitment

We expect the role to take about **5–6 days a year**, spread across the year:

- Four Board meetings of around two and a half hours, plus reading time. Meetings take place online and we aspire to an in-person development session annually.
- A short planning call with the lead officer before each meeting.
- One or two strategy or sub-group sessions a year.
- Some concerts, events and school visits, as and when you can.

What you'll get

- A proper induction and a handover from the interim Chair, including the chance to observe the February 2027 Board before you start.
- An experienced Vice-Chair and a Hub team that prepare papers, takes minutes and follow up actions.
- Travel and other reasonable expenses by agreement.
- The chance to see first-hand what music does for children and young people across Cumbria and to shape how it's delivered.

Who we're looking for

You don't need to be a musician or an expert in music education. We're looking for someone who cares about children and young people having music in their lives, and can lead a group of committed and knowledgeable people to make good decisions.

Essential	Helpful, but not essential
A commitment to music and to opportunities for all children and young people	Knowledge of Cumbria, or of rural communities elsewhere
Experience of chairing, or of leading meetings where people disagree and decisions have to be made	Experience as a trustee, governor or board member
Confidence to ask searching questions about plans, money and results	A background in education, the arts, local government, business, finance, or youth and community work
Ability to build good relationships with a council, schools and arts organisations	An understanding of how disadvantage, SEND or distance affect children's access to opportunities
Independence from organisations funded by the Hub (see below)	Contacts that could help the Hub raise money or build partnerships

First-time chairs are welcome. If you have led teams, projects or meetings and are ready to chair a board, we'd like to hear from you. We would particularly welcome applications from people who are under-represented on boards, including younger people, people with disabilities, and people from a full variety of backgrounds.

What we mean by independent

To avoid conflicts of interest, the Chair cannot be employed by, or sit on the board of, an organisation that receives funding from the Hub. Having children in Hub activities, or working in a school that takes part, does not rule you out. You would declare it, as all Board members do. If you're unsure, ask us.

All Board members are expected to follow the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles): selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

How to apply

1. **Talk to us (optional but recommended).** Email **cumbriamusichub.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk** to arrange an informal, confidential conversation with the interim Chair, the Vice-Chair or the Hub's lead officer.
2. **Send us** your CV, or a short summary of your experience, and **one** of the following:
   - a statement of no more than two sides of A4, or
   - a video or audio recording of no more than three minutes.

In either case, tell us why you want the role, what you would bring to it, and give one example of when you chaired or led a group through a difficult decision. Please say in your email where you heard about the role.

EMAIL: cumbriamusichub.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk

3. **Meet the panel.** If you are shortlisted, we'll invite you to a conversation with a small panel, including a member of the Board, and ask for two referees at that point.

Timetable

Stage	Date
Applications open	16 November 2026
Informal conversations	Any time up to the closing date
Closing date	11.59pm, Monday 4 January 2027
Shortlisting	By Friday 8 January 2027
Panel conversations	Week of 11 January 2027
Appointment confirmed	By end of January 2027
Induction and handover	February - March 2027, including observing the 24 February Board
Start	1 March 2027

Equality, diversity and adjustments

Cumbria Music Hub values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination. We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds. If you need any adjustments to the application process, or this pack in another format, please email us.

We are a Disability Confident employer. If you tell us you are disabled and your application meets the essential criteria, we guarantee you a conversation with the panel.