

# Inclusion Strategy 2021 - 2025

The strategy sets the foundations to build an inclusive music education culture where all children and young people are valued and recognised for their unique qualities, ideas, voices and perspectives and where they can see the hub as providing a range of diverse and suitable musical opportunities and progression pathways.

## Context

- Berkshire is a county in South East England, which does not have a county council. The county town is Reading.
- Berkshire has a young population with an average age of 38.7 compared with the national average of 40.3 years.
- Berkshire's ethnicity is 88.7% White, 6.8% South Asian and 2% Black.
- Reading has a large population of Polish residents, with a community that was established over 30 years ago.
- In West Berkshire children from low socio-economic groups achieve significantly less well than others and less well than the regional or English average.
- There is a very mixed picture of deprivation across Berkshire and often there are large differences in levels of deprivation within one borough.
- In 2020 Wokingham has been named the least deprived area of England and yet use of the borough's food banks soared by 218 per cent between March and August 2020.
- Nearly half of all children in care in Berkshire have possible emotional and behavioural problems.

# Research Findings

## LIFE CONDITION

- Berkshire Music Trusts (BMT) inclusion work in this area is of good quality and alongside their early years work it is some of the organisation's best inclusive practice. It can be developed significantly further.

## GEOGRAPHICAL ISSUES

- Berkshire is a complex county with significant differences between urban and rural and between affluent areas in West Berkshire and areas of significant deprivation in Reading and other towns. The hub's activities are spread across the County but there are some areas with gaps in provision.
- In Reading the hub is less embedded and there is high deprivation particularly in areas such as Whitley. Another important geographical consideration is an investigation into future provision possibilities in Bracknell Forest and Maidenhead.

## BACKGROUND AND IDENTITY

- Given that parts of the county are very multi-cultural I recommend that honouring and developing musics of the different cultures in Berkshire becomes a more prominent feature of BMT over the next four years
- Among the cultures to be explored should be both South Asian and also Polish and Eastern European music as these communities form significant parts of the make up of the county especially in terms of young families in the more urban areas.

## LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES

- This category involves a range of groups of children who can often fall through the cracks in terms of music provision. It includes young carers, children of armed service personnel, bereaved children, children who are looked after and many other groups and individuals.
- Currently the hub has no partnerships with non-music organisations working with children in challenging circumstances. This presents a great opportunity for the inclusive development of the hub.

## BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES

- This is an area where Maestros can develop a number of new initiatives over the next four years. Much of the work in Reading has till now be done through Readipop and I recommend partnership building and joint working with them during the course of the strategy.

# Inclusion - strategic priorities

---

## Strategic Priority 1

Both the make-up of the team and the music offered by the hub has diversified to more closely reflect the diverse cultures represented within the county and the interests of the young people the hub wishes to engage

## Strategic Priority 2

Cultures, policies, procedures and resources are put in place to support inclusion and to ensure that appropriate and continuing resources are secured to enable the inclusion strategy to succeed

## Strategic Priority 3

The workforce has appropriate and sufficient skills to deliver musically inclusive practices and appropriate musical and creative development with all children and young people.

## Strategic Priority 4

There is a widely held perception of the hub as one that embraces and foregrounds inclusion and diversity. The hub has used a partnership building approach to engage with a range of new partners in the county and has engaged with schools, parents and communities to advocate for the positive benefits of musical inclusion. In addition the hub has reviewed and updated its communications with regard to inclusion.

## Strategic Priority 5

The work of the hub to engage in sustainable ways with new groups of children in challenging circumstances has expanded.

## Strategic Priority 6

The offer for children with SEND has been expanded, building on current good practice.

## Strategic Priority 7

The hub has increased and sustained engagement with children with SEMHD, including those at risk of school exclusion or at risk of becoming involved in the youth justice system

## Strategic Priority 8

Data is used as a driver for inclusion.

## Strategic Priority 9

There is an increased emphasis on a move to long-term engagement in music and a culture of progression for all children (including those in challenging circumstances).

## Strategic Priority 10

Monitoring and evaluating the quality of inclusion across the hub is embedded and influences future strategy.

## Strategic Priority 11

The ensemble programme has been critically reviewed and updated to further develop inclusion and progression for all children and young people

## Strategic Priority 12

The hub has considered its geographic spread and ensured that as far as possible, provision is balanced across all regions of the county.