

Leeds Music Education Partnership (LMEP) – Partnership in Action

“A hub is a concept not an organisation. What if a hub was also not bound by the Core & Extension roles, but was a collaboration, a partnership between all those working in a local area to provide services for those who want to access & enjoy a quality musical education?” (Bridget Whyte, Music Mark October 2019)

- In Leeds that’s what we’ve always subscribed to, so when hubs first came into being back in 2012 we were delighted.
- From the outset LMEP was keen to invite as many organisations, with an interest in music education, as possible to contribute to our Hub.
- As a result we’ve got a very large partnership.
- ArtForms, the City Council’s Music Service is the hub lead.
- In a city the size of ours, with so many schools, we’ve always recognised that it’s impossible for any one organisation to deliver a full range & breadth of musical opportunities for every child.
- However, we also knew that Leeds has got a fantastic array of professional music organisations who, together, could provide a terrific, comprehensive offer.
- With such a wide choice of providers both in our partnership and beyond, we’ve had to work very hard over the years to help schools understand what the hub is, and what we can do for them.
- Music Connect, our hub’s CPD service for schools, has been key to getting our message across.
- LMEP currently has 21 Full Partners and an additional 18 organisations who, together, comprise our network group.
- Our partners range from specialist music education services like ArtForms, through small community operators and studios including DJ School UK and the Big Hoo ha Company, to specialists like Opera North and South Asian Arts UK, plus two large academic institutions, namely Leeds College of Music and the University of Leeds’ School of Music.
- Whilst music may not be the primary function of some of our partners, all of them have a commitment & proven track record of education work within their specialism.
- Our network, in essence, functions rather like a Medieval Guild, under the umbrella of LMEP’s Strategic Advisory group, in mutual pursuit of a common goal.
- Our annual activity and offer for schools responds to feedback from partners, schools and the Arts Council, and is overseen by a Strategic Advisory group.
- The network has a number of topic-specific development Pods which contribute to LMEP’s strategic vision: helping to revise and progress our Singing Strategy; looking at our CPD offer; enabling Young People’s Voices to be represented in our planning; working on identifying progression Pathways for the post-16 cohort.

- In addition to supporting schools with bursaries & subsidies linked to the Core & Extension roles, LMEP has always made funding available direct to our partners to enable them to develop educational offers.
- We expect our funded projects to be collaborative, have clearly identified learning outcomes, and incorporate some element of CPD
- We want our funded work to complement the LMEP Music Connect offer and fit with our Progression Documents which we recommend to schools as part of their SMEP (school music education plan).
- As well as funding clearly defined and time-limited projects, LMEP is keen to support and enable our partners to do research and development pilots which could benefit our learners.
- When the hub works in this way with its partners we get an all-round win-win. The hub ends up with a product that we can wholeheartedly recommend to schools; schools are confident that what they're paying for is value for money; the partner's reputation as an excellent organisation to work in schools is cemented; above all the children get an extended musical experience that progresses their learning, sparks their enthusiasm, and enhances their own musical journey.

Jo Richardson (Partnership and Development Manager for ArtForms & LMEP, November 2019)